

Africa: Day Six

Yet another beautiful morning presented itself as we sat around the breakfast table well rested and brimming with anticipation. The choices of food provided had waned, but the volume remained strong. Our bodies were more than sufficiently fueled throughout the trek. I am of the opinion that any meal that I don't have to cook is a good meal!



Kilimanjaro still looked enormous, but I felt like we were finally finished with the approach and now actually ascending the peak itself. There was plenty of mountain left to climb, the glaciers looked like mere snowfields from this distance. At day's end we would be well positioned for a shot at the summit. This would be our shortest day yet as we would amble only 3 miles and 1640 vertical feet across the alpine desert to reach our next stop, Barafu camp. Barafu is the Swahili word for ice – was that an indication of what the camp would be like?



Mount Meru, Kili's smaller sister to the west proudly bid us farewell as we marched east, like an army of ants, towards our next goal. The porters added additional water to their loads as there would be no water available at the next camp – an easy day for us did not mean an easy day for them.

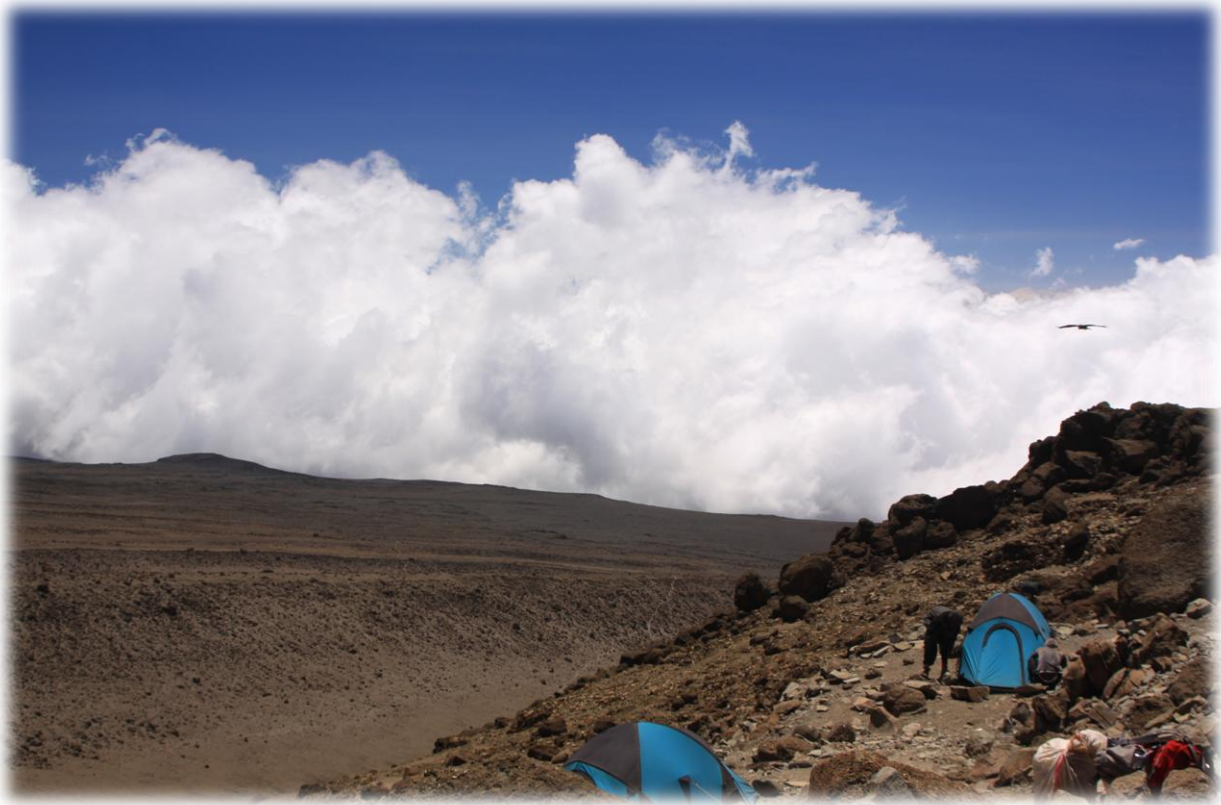






Mawenzi Peak





Rooms with a view



"Bathrooms" with a view...



The Barafu camp is perched on a steep slope in the cold, thin air at 15,091ft. Most climbing groups return to this camp for a bit of rest after a summit attempt before trudging back down the mountain. We arrived at camp around noon to find our porters jockeying with other teams for level spots to pitch our tents. While our camp was established, we enjoyed the views of Mawenzi Peak to the east and one of Kili's glaciers above us. The last of the climbers who had attempted the summit on this day filtered into the camp. Some wore a tired but jubilant look of success, others, the obvious pangs of defeat. I couldn't help wondering what story my face would tell tomorrow...

