

MT KENYA - THE AREA OF THE OSTRICH



There are many reasons why adventurers head for Africa, especially Kenya. It is a fascinatingly beautiful country with a rather challenging character. One of the most popular places that lure tourists, hikers especially, from all over the world, is Africa's second highest mountain, Mt Kenya.

The original name of Mt Kenya is Mt Kirinyaga. The name has a charming history; the local tribes of Kikuyu and Kamba that lived near the mountain used to observe its rocky and snow-capped peaks from the distance and in their perception the mountain resembled the black and white plumage of a male ostrich. Kirinyaga means literally 'the area of the ostrich'. Later, the British struggled with the pronunciation and eventually, the name mutated into Mt Kenya.

It is quite easily accessible from Nairobi; depending on the weather, the tourists may reach the mountain in a 5-10-hour drive. Any adventurer fond of hiking should initially consider his/her physical fitness and abilities, as even when accompanied by reliable guides, Mt Kenya remains very challenging. Usually, the guides assist the travelers by choosing accessible routes, lead them to several bandas (or huts) where the groups spend the night and even cook soothing soups and hot tea to cheer up the tourists on cold wet nights.

There are several routes to be taken in account, varying both in difficulty and length. The most popular is the Naro Moru route, as it remains the shortest way to the peaks. However, many adventurers claim that the most beautiful route is the Chogoria route. It first opened in 1920s and compared to the others is much longer, therefore less attractive for time-dependable tourists. Less experienced hikers who prefer an easier ascend usually take the Sirimon route, which offers the most scenic access to the Northern ie of the central peaks.

Mt Kenya is also unique for its plentiful fauna and flora and therefore climbing it presents a very special and spectacular experience attractive for anyone who loves challenging yet charming environment.

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