

10 Interesting Facts About Mount Kilimanjaro



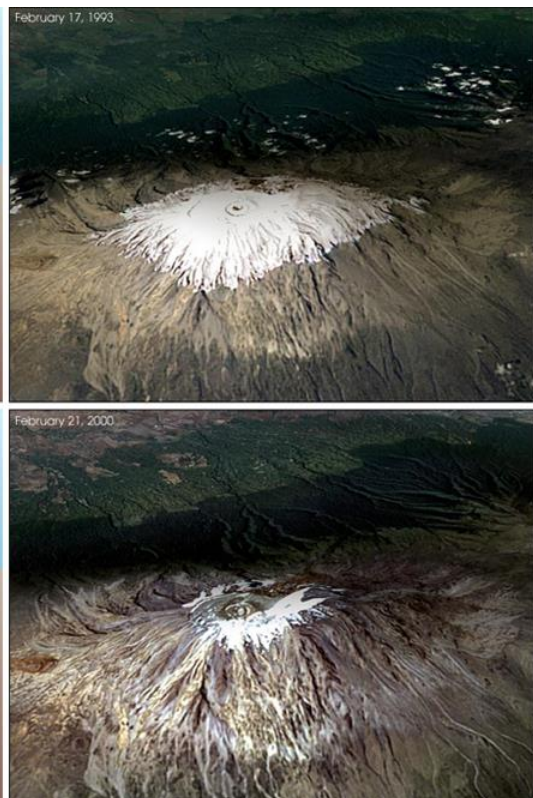
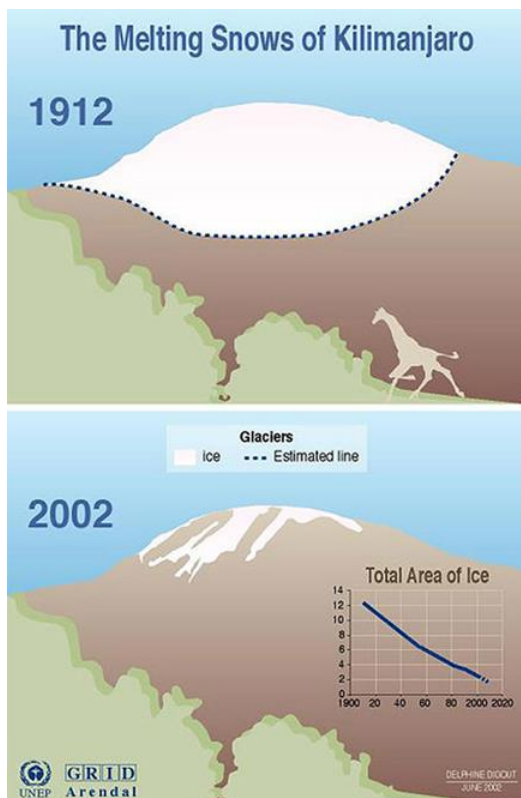
- 1) Mount Kilimanjaro is the tallest mountain in Africa, making it one of the seven summits. It is very popular with both experienced hikers and first-time adventurers because it is considered to be the easiest of the seven summits. Scaling the mountain requires no technical skills or equipment, such as rope, harness, crampons or ice axe. It is a hiking peak, not mountaineering.
- 2) Kilimanjaro is not only Africa's tallest peak, but also the world's tallest free-standing mountain. The summit, named Uhuru Point, is 5,895 meters (19,341 feet) above sea level. While most high mountains are part of ranges, such as Mount Everest's Himalayan Mountain Range, free-standing mountains like Kilimanjaro are usually a result of volcanic activity.



- 3) Kilimanjaro lies just 205 miles from the equator, in the country of Tanzania. The equator is an imaginary line that divides the Northern Hemisphere and Southern Hemisphere. When early explorers reported seeing glaciers on the top of Kilimanjaro, people did not believe them as they thought it was impossible for ice to form so close to the hot, equatorial sun. Scientists now believe that the glaciers shrink and then regrow during the planet's ice ages.
- 4) The origin of the name Kilimanjaro is not certain. The most popular answer is that the name comes from the Swahili word "Kilima" (mountain) and the Chagga word "Njaro" (whiteness). Another possibility is that Kilimanjaro is the European pronunciation of a KiChagga phrase meaning "we failed to climb it."
- 5) Now approximately 30,000 people climb Kilimanjaro every year. Unfortunately, about 50% of climbers fail, mostly due to altitude sickness. Many who fail choose to climb on the Marangu Route, which is the shortest path (five days round trip) to the peak. However, the best way to climb is to use a longer route to aid in acclimatization.
- 6) The fastest ascent and descent of Kilimanjaro was completed by Swiss Karl Egloff in just 6 hours and 42 minutes in 2014. Athletes who do perform speed climbs of high-altitude mountains have already acclimatized to the altitude prior to their attempt. The established Kilimanjaro routes range from five to nine days on the mountain.



- 7) The oldest person to successfully climb Kilimanjaro is 88 year old Dr. Fred Distelhorst, a retired American orthodontist who broke the world record in 2017. The oldest woman to climb Kilimanjaro is 86 year old [Angela Vorobyova](#), a retired Russian school teacher, who climbed in 2015.
- 8) The minimum age for climbing Kilimanjaro is 10 years old, but the park authority grants exceptions to children who have significant experience trekking. The youngest person to climb Kilimanjaro is American Coaltan Tanner, who summited at age six in 2018. The youngest girl to summit is Montannah Kenney, who was seven years old when she accomplished the feat.
- 9) While climbing Kilimanjaro, trekkers will experience five distinct ecological zones on their way to the top. Each zone gets colder and drier as the elevation increases. Plant and animal life also disappear. The summit is in the arctic zone, which is characterized by ice and rock. At this altitude, categorized as “extreme”, there can be no permanent human habitation as the body is in a state of deterioration (short exposures are OK).



- 10) Kilimanjaro's glaciers have shrunk 82% since 1912. Scientists estimate the glaciers may be completely gone in 50 years. The cause of this is thought to be due to deforestation, and not necessary global warming. Nearly 5 million indigenous trees were planted around the base of the mountain in 2008 to combat the issue.