

## Technical Climbs on Mount Kenya *Batian and Nelion*



There are two major technical rock and ice climbing routes on Mt. Kenya; the Normal South East face going up to Nelion's summit and the North face standard route going up to Batian summit. Climbers choosing Nelion route can also choose to cross the Gate of Mists to Batian's summit.

### **NORMAL TECHNICAL ROUTES**

The Base Camp for the **normal route** to Nelion summit is the Austrian hut. Direct approach to Austrian hut is via the Naro Moru Route but it is also easy to access from the lengthier, but more interesting, Sirimon or Chogoria ascent trails. Getting to Austrian hut following the Naro Moru route requires a minimum of 2 but preferably 3 days.

The Base of the **normal route** to Batian summit is Shipton's Camp. This is normally approached from Sirimon or Chogoria trails requiring 2 or preferably 3 days.

Descent from Austrian or Shipton's via the Naro Moru Route can be done in a day but you should allow 2 days for descent on Sirimon or Chogoria routes.

Nelion and Batian are technical peaks with grades ranging from grade 3, 3+, 4 and 4+. Seasoned climbers with good climbing speed can manage Nelion route in 1 day, while less experienced or slower climbers take 2 days, with a night at Howell Hut on Nelion's summit. Any climber wishing to cross the Gate of Mists to Batian summit from Nelion summit must be prepared to bivouac at Howell Hut. It is always advisable to dedicate 2 days for the climb regardless of your climbing ability to caution against bad weather conditions and impact of altitude.

### ***Your Financial Protection***

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

For Batian it is advisable to take two days with a bivy at the Amphitheatre or above – thus allowing sufficient time for this long multi-pitch route.

There are fixed bolts for abseiling from Nelion but from Batian you need to build your own abseil points. The rock is solid though you can expect some loose rocks in sections of the climb.

There is plenty of running belays and scrambling while roped up. These are long climbs of 20 and 24 pitches, some of them 50 Meters and others 60 Meters long. **NB:** This is real mountain climbing and not trekking!

The climbing season for Nelion route is between mid-December and mid-March, when it is designated as grade IV+ and for Batian, June to October. We rate Batian marginally harder.



### **SUGGESTED ITINERARIES NELION AND BATIAN NORMAL ROUTES**

**Day 1:** Pick up from Nairobi airport or Nairobi hotel for transfer to Bantu Rock Lodge for lunch. In the afternoon, take a nature walk (3-4 hours) through the forest to the MauMau caves, the former hideouts for Kenya's pre-independence guerrillas. You'll be accompanied by a naturalist guide who will explain more about the flora and fauna of the forest. Dinner and overnight at Mountain Rock Lodge.

**Day 2:** Leave the lodge by 10:00am together with your guide and porters and drive for approx. two hours to Sirimon Park gate (2,600m). After completing the park entry formalities and enjoying a picnic lunch, begin a 3-4 hour hike through the forested foothills of the mountain. Today's walk will see you climb 700m through the bamboo, rosewood and heather zones to Old Moses camp. The forest and bamboo are home to buffalo, elephant, bushbuck and a plethora of bird species. Dinner and overnight at Old Moses Camp (3,300m).

**Day 3:** A long day leading to the base of the high peaks, as you trek through the moorlands and the Mackinder Valley, with good views of the main peaks and a brief stop for picnic lunch. Total walking time is approx. 7 hours, gaining 900m in altitude. Dinner and overnight at Shipton's Hut (4,200m).

**Day 4:** Today is an acclimatisation day. There will be the option to trek to Hausberg Col for fabulous views and acclimatisation, or to Point John, one of Mount Kenya's lesser peaks, where you can practice rope work and abseiling in preparation for the start of your technical climb to Nelion and/or Batian on the morrow.

**Day 5 NELION:** Early morning trek (3-4 hours) to reach Point Lenana (4,985m), the trekkers' summit, in time to watch the sunrise. On a clear day you can see the snow-capped summit of Mount Kilimanjaro miles away to the south. Then, continue round and down to Austrian Hut (4,790m) where we spend the rest of the day preparing for the technical climb of Nelion peak.

**Day 5 BATIAN:** Either choose the early morning trek (3-4 hours) to reach Point Lenana in time to watch the sunrise, then return to Shipton's; or trek up Hausberg Col and then climb Point Peter.

**Days 6 & 7:** Technical climbing – Batian and/or Nelion.

**Day 8:** Descend to Met Station and gate to connect with your transfer vehicle and other services.

Check out our [video log](#) of the Nelion and Batian route climb with the Gate of the Mists crossing, recorded and edited by climber Matthew Salamon.

### **Kenyan Technical Guides**

The local technical guides, who are contracted by our ground agent to lead climbs on Mount Kenya, are attached to the Mount Kenya National Park as part of the **Kenya Wildlife Service** mountain rescue team. To qualify for this position they need to be well trained as mountaineers. They have to be able to participate in rescue operations as well as lead climbs up the twin technical peaks of Nelion and Batian. Most of the guides hold diplomas in mountaineering from the National Outdoor leadership school (NOLS) of America and another diploma from Austrian rescue team. They all have over 10 years' experience as mountaineering guides with most of these years having been permanently engaged as a member of the KWS mountain rescue team.



Technical guides normally linkup with climbers at either Austrian or Shipton's hut a day before the climb. Technical guides lead the technical climbing section only and thus the climbers also require the assistance of regular trail guides and porters to reach the technical climbing base.

Each technical guide leads a group of 3 climbers at a time for safety reasons.

### **Technical Climbing Equipment**

Essential gear required for the climbs are categorised under personal climb gear and group climb gear. Each climber **must bring** along their own personal climb gear listed here, while group gear listed is shared among the group of 1 to 3 persons. Group gear can be supplied by the guides on request and at no additional charge but it's always advisable for the climbers to bring as much of their own climbing gear as possibly.

#### **Personal climbing gear:**

Helmet. Harness. Crampons. Ice axe. Belay device of choice. 2 slings (1 short and 1 long). 2 locking karabiners. Quick draws. Cowtail. Light and warm sleeping bag, bivy bag, good mountain boots well soled for technical climbing and optional – rock shoes. Thermal gloves and leather belay

gloves. Sufficient warm clothing, rain gear and wind breaker. Snacks, water bottle, protective sun cream, first aid kit etc.

**Group climbing gear:**

- 2 single ropes, each 60 meters in length (size 8.5 to 9mm preferably).
- Classic climbing protection, (with good range of nuts, plus sprung cams).
- Prussiks.
- Quick draws.
- At least 6 short and 6 long sewn slings and a few long unsown ones.

**PRIVATE CLIMB RATES with Bantu Mountain Lodge as the Base:**

1 pax - £2,230

2 pax - £1,625

3 pax - £1,432

4 pax - £1,412

5 pax - £1,395

Technical Guide to be paid locally in US dollars cash:

1 pax US \$600

2 pax US \$450 per person

3 pax + US \$400 per person

A second guide is required for groups of more than three climbers.

