



# Climb Mount Elgon!

## Trekking Packages & Information

Mount Elgon National Park lies on the Kenya-Uganda border and is named for the extinct volcano that dominates the park. The caldera caused by the collapse of the volcanic cone is reckoned to be the world's largest and creates an impressive feature viewable from the summit of Wagagi, the highest peak in the park at 4,321m. The most common route from the Ugandan side is via the Sasa trail from Budadiri. It's a spectacular climb that leads through farmland, forest, and heather country, before emerging onto the edge of the caldera itself and following the rim to the summit.



### **The Flying Visit – \$510 USD per person (5 days)**

2 nights at the lodge, plus 2 nights / 3 days on the mountain – 5 days total. This option is for energetic guests who are short on time.

Day 1: Arrive at Sipi River Lodge.

Day 2: After a big, early breakfast, we drive you to the trail-head at Budadiri/Bumasola, and from there you start your ascent. A strenuous first day leaves you to rest at Mude camp (12km walking distance; 1,770m – 3,500m elevation).

Day 3: You leave Mude camp for the summit at Wagagai and then hike back to camp at Mude or Sasa River (18km or 24km walking distance; 3,500m – 4,321m – 3,500m or 2,900m elevation). If you are feeling fit and making good time then there are options to climb Jacksons peak (4,165m) on your way back, check out Dirigana Falls near Mude, or just chill out and enjoy the campsite.

Day 4: Hike all the way back down the way you came, ending at Budadiri, where we will pick you up and drive you back to the lodge for a hot shower, some hearty food, and a well deserved drink!

Day 5: Depart from Sipi River Lodge.

## **The Intrepid Explorer – \$630 USD per person (6 days)**

2 nights at the lodge, plus 3 nights / 4 days on the mountain – 6 days total. Our most popular route starts out at Budadiri and follows the Sasa trail to the summit, then loops around and follows the Sipi trail back down. With this option, you walk your way back to the lodge by way of the summit! Please note that the itinerary described below includes some long, strenuous days. An alternative option would be to take the same route as described in the Flying Visit, but spend an extra day going up or an extra day exploring the summit and caldera.

Day 1: Arrive at Sipi River Lodge.

Day 2: After a big, early breakfast, we drive you to the trail-head at Budadiri/Bumasola, and from there you start your ascent. A strenuous first day leaves you to rest at Mude camp. (12km walking distance; 1,770m – 3,500m elevation)

Day 3: You leave Mude camp for the summit at Wagagai and then hike back to camp at Mude (18km walking distance; 3,500m – 4,321m – 3,500m elevation). If you are fit and making good time then there are options to climb Jacksons peak on your way back (4,165m), check out Dirigana Falls near Mude, or just chill out and enjoy the campsite.

Day 4: This is when you make your big traverse via the Sipi trail, stopping to rest at either Kajere camp (22km walking distance; 3,383m elevation) or Tutum camp (34km walking distance; 2,667m elevation).

Day 5: Hike your way from either Kajere or Tutum camp, all the way back to Sipi River Lodge, where hot showers and cold beers await (28km or 16km walking distance; 1,795m ending elevation).

Day 6: Depart from Sipi River Lodge.

## **The Full Monty – \$820 USD per person (8 days) | \$775 per person (7 days)**

2 or 3 nights at the lodge, plus 4 nights / 5 days on the mountain – 7 or 8 days total. This option is for those wishing to either take a slower pace or maximize their time on the mountain. The Full Monty give you options: do you want to ascend gradually and spend more time exploring the caldera before descending back down the Sasa trail (as in the Flying Visit)? Or would you prefer taking on the challenging traverse back to the lodge via the Sipi trail (as in the Intrepid Explorer)? The choice is yours!

Day 1: Arrive at Sipi River Lodge.

Day 2: After a big, early breakfast, we drive you to the trail-head at Budadiri/Bumasola, and from there you start your ascent. A short, but strenuous first day leaves you to rest at Sasa River camp. (6km walking distance; 1,770m – 2,900m elevation)

Day 3: From Sasa River, make your way to Mude camp to rest and prepare for your trek to the summit at Wagagai the following day. (6km walking distance; 2,900m – 3,500m elevation).

Day 4: You leave Mude camp for the summit at Wagagai and then hike back to camp at Mude (18km total walking distance; 3,500m – 4,321m – 3,500m elevation). If you are fit and making good time then there are options to climb Jacksons peak on your way back (4,165m), check out Dirigana Falls near Mude, or just chill out and enjoy the campsite.

Day 5: This is when you make your big traverse via the Sipi trail, stopping to rest at either Kajere camp (22km walking distance; 3,383m elevation) or Tutum camp (34km walking distance; 2,667m elevation).

Day 6: Hike your way from either Kajere or Tutum camp, all the way back to Sipi River Lodge, where hot showers and cold beers await (16km/28km walking distance; 1,795m ending elevation).

Day 7 [optional]: RELAX at Sipi River Lodge. You've earned it! Read, eat, drink, sleep...or, if your legs want more, hike to our beautiful waterfalls!

Day 7 or 8: Depart from Sipi River Lodge.

Prices include the following: park entry, hiking and camping fees, guides, porters, chef, local transport, food, and accommodation in the Suam bunkhouse at Sipi River Lodge for the specified number of nights.

Prices do not include: accommodation upgrades or extra nights at the lodge, drinks at the lodge, and tips for your porters, chef, and guides.

## Mount Elgon Kit List

Low temperatures, high winds, and entirely unpredictable weather mean you should be prepared! (Bring enough warm, dry clothes.)

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|---|---|
| - Waterproof rain jacket / wind breaker with hood     | - Camera (be prepared to keep it dry)   |
| - Soft shell jacket                                   | - Walking poles (or cut bamboo)   |
| - Waterproof trousers (optional)                      | - Sunglasses, wide brim hat, lip balm, and sun cream (the UV can be intense up there!)      |
| - Thermal layers – tops and leggings                  | - Water bottle(s) and/or camel pack (we'll send you up with a few bottles of mineral water) |
| - Fleece jumper/hoodie                                | - Hand sanitizer  |
| - Warm socks (keep some dry for sleeping)             | - Plasters (Band-aids)  |
| - Gloves  | - Antibiotic cream or powder  |
| - Good hiking boots                                   | - Antihistamine cream or tablets  |
| - Dry shoes for the camp                              | - Diamox (AMS prevention)   |
| - Warm extra set of clothes to wear in the evenings   | - Pain relievers  |
| - Beanie hat (very necessary)                         | - Anti diarrhea tablets   |
| - Long-sleeved walking shirt and one pair of shorts   | - 30L day pack  |
| - Buff/bandana/scarf to keep your neck warm           | - 65L pack for the rest of your gear (for your porter)                                      |
| - Tent – it may well rain so a decent tent is advised | - Waterproof inner linings to both of these packs   |
| - Sleeping bag – down to zero degrees                 |   |
| - Sleeping mat (e.g. Thermarest, etc.)                |   |
| - Head torch  |   |

If you do not have all items on the kit list please do not hesitate to let us know. We keep a modest stock of items for hire at a small cost, such as tents, sleeping bags/mats, and some basic waterproof gear.

**A note on the temperatures and mud:** It is important to have warm sleeping bags (for freezing temps) and a ground mat that will stop cold from seeping through. Strong winds can bring the chill factor down even lower. Pack warm clothes, gloves, scarfs, and beanies for sleeping. The trails do become very slippery when wet and sometimes step-downs can be more than 40cm. So tread carefully, use walking sticks, and watch each step.

## Sample Menu Options

We understand that everyone's taste is different, and we therefore want you to be involved in planning your menu. You can refer to the sample meal options below for an idea of some of the items available to you. Upon your arrival at the lodge, we'll sit down and make a meal plan for your trek, making sure that our chef packs exactly what you'd like!

### Breakfast

- Coffee and/or tea
- Eggs and toasted bread
- Oat porridge with cinnamon, sugar
- Meusli and milk
- Fresh fruit, such as apples, bananas, oranges

### Snacks

- Trail mix (typically groundnuts and dried fruit)
- Chocolate bars
- Fresh fruit, such as apples, bananas, oranges
- Fruit juice
- Popcorn

### Lunch

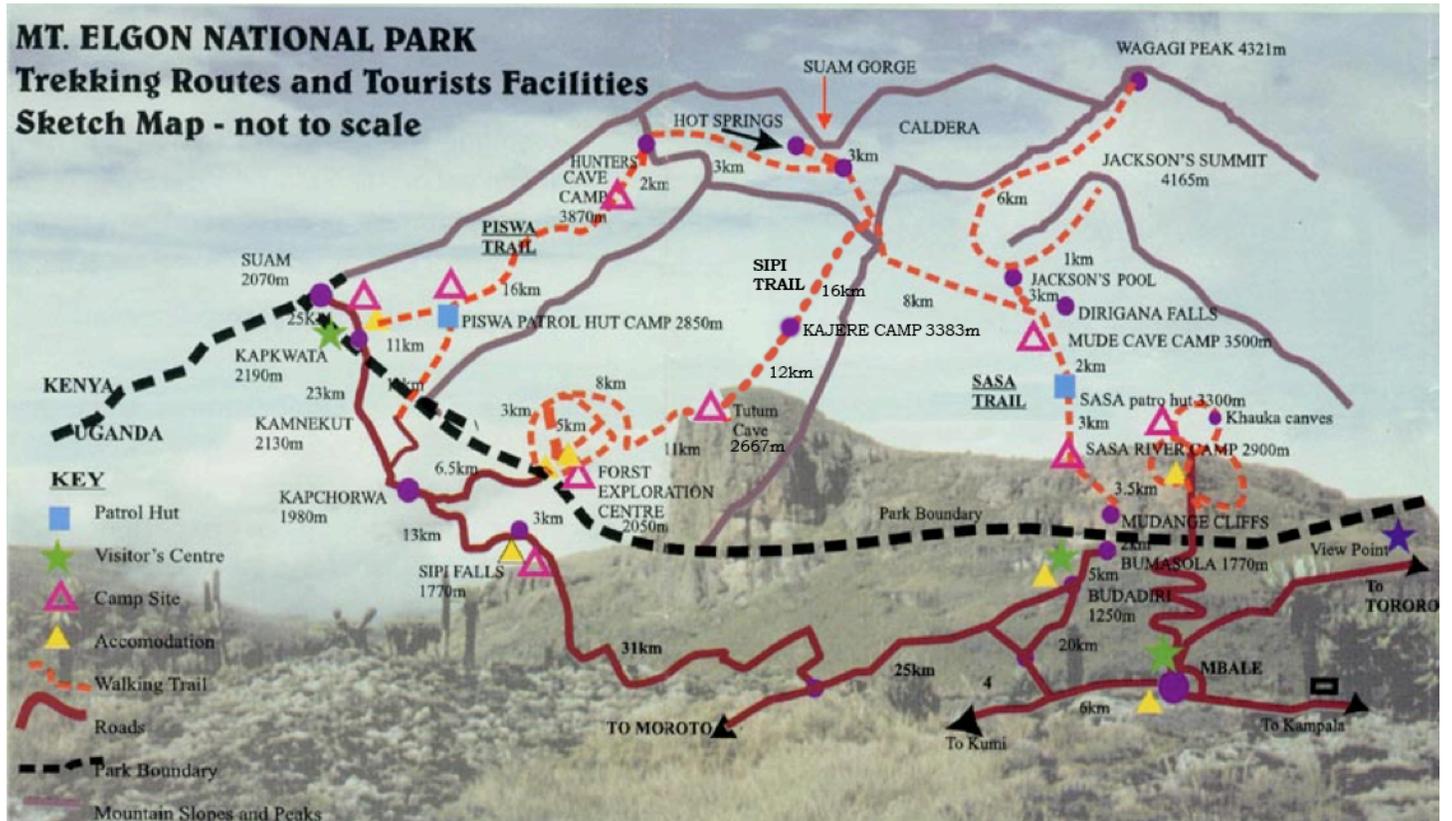
- Cheese, with either crackers or a bread roll
- Fresh fruit, such as apples, bananas, oranges
- Tuna sandwich
- Peanut butter sandwich

### Dinner

- Chick pea curry with vegetables and rice
- Pasta with tuna (or green peas or roasted eggplant) and vegetables in tomato sauce
- Tinned beef (or pork sausage) with tomatoes, onions, and mashed potatoes
- Vegetable stew with bread rolls or chapati

**A note on drinking water:** We typically use boiling and/or water purification tablets to treat water on the mountain, which will slightly affect the taste of your water (due to smoke or chemicals). If you do not like this please bring your own water purification method(s) or pack some powdered flavoring that can be mixed with the water to make juice. If you happen to have a UV steri-pen, these work extremely well when paired with a Nalgene-type bottle. Also remember that we'll send each climber up the mountain with 4.5 liters of mineral water to get you started worry-free.

## Elgon map, camp sites, and trail descriptions



### Camping on the mountain: an overview

All camps on the mountain are rudimentary in nature. The long drop toilets (pit latrines) are infrequently maintained so please do not expect luxury. Most of the camps have a kitchen hut for your chef, which doubles as the sleeping quarters for the porters and guides. At Sasa River, Mude, and Tutum camps, there are big dormitory huts made of wood and covered with iron sheets (see image below), which are meant to act as shelters for climbers. These structures are basic and lack insulation, but will provide a welcome buffer from the wind, which can be intense and quite cold. Pitching your tent inside these shelters can offer added warmth. Of course, you can also pitch a tent outside at any of the camps, which may be necessary if the camp is crowded. Each climbers' hut has wooden bunk beds inside (without mattresses), so if you'd like to use these be sure to have warm sleeping bags, mats, and thermals. Most climbers will not bathe on their treks, but if you can stand icy water you can wash in the stream with a cup and sponge. The chef/porters can also heat water for washing your hands, feet, face, etc., which can be *almost* as good as a shower!



## Trail Descriptions

SASA TRAIL | Budadiri/Bumasola (1,790m elevation) to Sasa River Camp (2,900m elevation) | 6km walking distance:

Get ready to climb! You should be prepared for a hot, strenuous day. We recommend long-sleeved shirt and shorts; don't forget your sun cream!

From the UWA office at Budadiri (1,250m) you will take boda-bodas (motorbikes) to the end of the road at Bumasola (1,790 feet), still in community land, a few kilometers shy of the park boundary. Here you begin your trek on foot, using a single gravel track; always tread carefully and take it one step at a time! Your path rises through maize fields and coffee plantations, crossing small streams, climbing steadily through farmland and small villages. The views, even at this early stage, are fantastic.

You'll soon encounter the "Wall of Death"; long ago, the only way to climb this part of the route was using frayed rope ladders. Now, however, there are well maintained metal staircases that make the ascent of the cliff quite easy. Upon entering the forest, you may see some monkey species, butterflies, and lots of birds. Think back a hundred years ... there would have even been elephants here! Your hike up to camp from here is cooler and less steep. Sasa River Camp greets you with clear, rushing waters, beautiful tall trees, and an opportunity to drop your pack, rest, and replenish!

SASA TRAIL | Sasa River Camp (2,900m elevation) to Mude Camp (3,500m elevation) | 6km walking distance:

This section of the trail is where the altitude may begin to affect you, especially if you are trekking to all the way to Mude from Bumasola in one day. Take it slow, breathe deeply, and take frequent breaks. Leaving the forest zone, you enter the heath zone, with its tall, scratchy heater plants, red-hot poker flowers, and giant lobelias. Mude camp has phenomenal views of Mubiyi Peak and the densely forested valley below. The wind can seriously blow on these slopes, so be prepared. Keep a look out for fresh scats; civit cats, hares, and rock hyrax are common in this area.

SUMMIT | Mude Camp (3,500m) to Wagagai Summit (4,321m) to Mude Camp (3,500m) | 18km walking distance (round-trip):

Your hike from Mude to Wagagai is fairly steep and at this altitude will challenge you. Take it slow and steady, and you will summit. The fantastic views are well worth the climb; begin early in the morning for your best chance at good weather and clear visibility.

SUMMIT (option) | Jackson's Peak (4,165m elevation) | 2km walking distance (round-trip) off the main summit trail:

If you're feeling strong after reaching Wagagai, you may like to summit Jackson's Peak on your way back, which will add roughly an hour to your return to Mude. Here you'll enjoy more of the afro-montane vegetation, including giant lobelias, groundsels, everlasting flowers, mosses, and lichens.

CALDERA | Mude Camp (3,500m) to Suam Gorge & hot springs (3,500m elevation) to Mude Camp (3,500m) | 24km walking distance (round-trip):

For those climbers with extra time and a desire to explore more of the mountain, this hike across the caldera to Suam Gorge and the nearby hot springs will be well worth your effort, as you explore a part of the mountain few visitors take the time to experience.

SIPI TRAIL | Mude Camp (3,500m elevation) to Kajere Camp (3,383m elevation) to Tutum Camp (2,667m elevation) | 34km walking distance:

This long hike (9 to 11 hours) features many steep ascents and descents, serving as a great challenge to ambitious trekkers. Your first option to camp will be at Kajere, 22km from Mude, though it is less developed and will require you to pitch your tent outside, as the hut facilities will be used by your support team. If you feel you need to stop here then please strongly inform your support team, as they'll be inclined to push you further.

SIPI TRAIL | Tutum Camp (2,667m elevation) to Kapkwai (2,050m elevation) to Sipi River Lodge (1,795m elevation) | 16km walking distance:

Downhill and home! This final section of trail is fairly quick and not too difficult, bringing you to the Forest Exploration Center at Kapkwai, from where it is another hour or so down through villages and plantations to Sipi River Lodge for hot showers, warm food, and a much needed drink!

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**Further Information for your climb:** Once you get to camp each evening the porters will gather wood and make a fire as well as boil the water and set up the tents, so we suggest that you pack some entertainment; a pack of cards or your book would be good. If you have wet clothes you can string them out to dry in the porter's cabin, this means you don't have to pack too many spares!! There is very limited phone reception up on the mountain; if you want to take your phone, feel free, but make sure it does not get wet!

**Guidance on Tipping:** Guides, porters, and cook are paid basic wages by UWA. Generally, UWA will send two guides with your group. we recommend two porters for each person to help spread the load of your gear and the food for your support team. We would suggest the following as guidelines for tipping (but please decide this based on your actual satisfaction with their performance).

Guides – 100,000 UGH each | Porters – 60,000 UGX each | Chef – 60,000 UGX