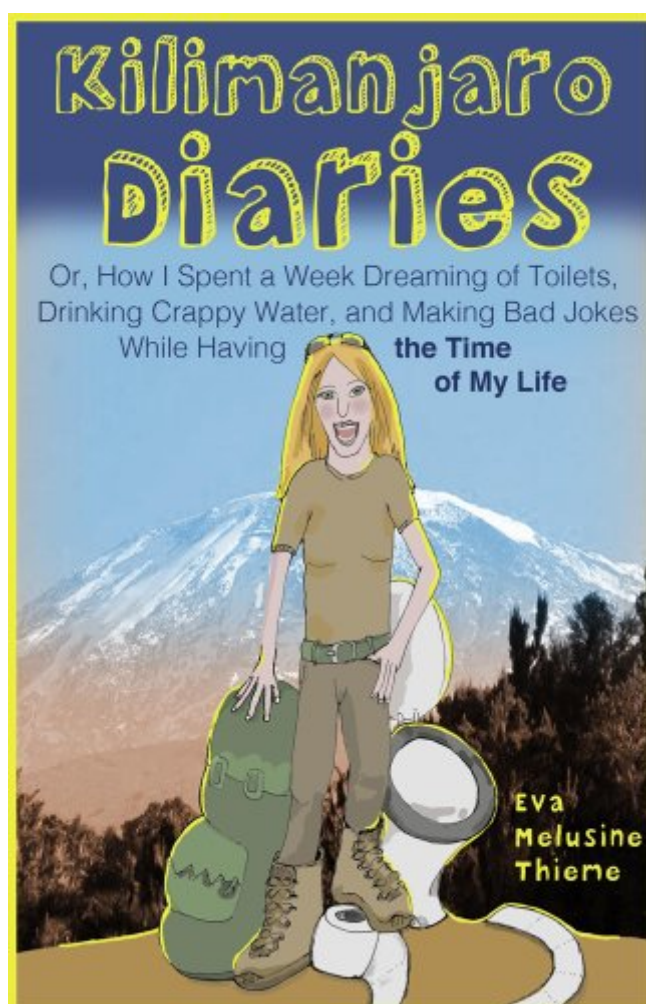


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Kilimanjaro Diaries: Or, How I Spent A Week Dreaming Of Toilets, Drinking Crappy Water, And Making Bad Jokes While Having The Time Of My Life





Synopsis

When expat blogger and mother of four Eva Melusine Thieme first harbors the idea of ringing out her three years in Africa on the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, it sounds easy. In fact, it has all the trappings of a dream vacation: no cooking, no fighting kids, and an army of porters to lug everything up the mountain. What can go wrong? Tag along as Eva takes you on her journey up the slopes of Kilimanjaro together with her teenage son and a group of hilarious South African friends. From planning the trip to shopping for supplies to trudging uphill wishing with all her heart for an ice cold sip of water untainted by chlorination tablets, you will follow her step by step on her quest to scale the world's highest free-standing mountain. But the list of challenges is long: sub-zero temperatures, blistered feet, long drop toilets (of which, you may learn, the drops are not nearly as long as they have once been, if you get the drift), and the ever-threatening altitude sickness no one can quite escape from. Eva's climb turns into the most difficult test she has ever faced, and ultimately she must make a fateful decision on that mountain. Thieme's debut travel memoir is equally poignant and laugh-out-loud funny. Part guide book, part travel memoir, and part history lesson, her story will keep you hooked until the last page - whether you're a seasoned hiker nodding your head in recognition, an aspiring Kilimanjaro trekker searching for tips, or an armchair traveler reveling in adventure stories from the comfort of your home.

Book Information

File Size: 1721 KB

Print Length: 267 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 1497599385

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publication Date: March 26, 2014

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00JAGJ7T0

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #48,492 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #2 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Africa > East #22 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoor > Adventurers & Explorers

Customer Reviews

I grew up not far from Kilimanjaro in Arusha, Tanzania. A few years ago I began to dream of returning to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro with my sons (my daughters think I'm crazy). I picked up this memoir thinking it would help me be more realistic about my dream. After all, I am over 50 and not in the best of shape. The result has been to make me even more determined to find a way to go. This is a delightful mix of humor and information. Thieme gives all sorts of helpful tips about packing for the trip; what was helpful, and what was not. She has a lovely appreciation both for her traveling companions and for the porters and guides who worked so hard to make the journey a success. I think I will have to buy copies to send to all my sons so that I can keep the dream alive!

I liked this book. It made me start researching climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. However, there are spots of the book I totally skipped. The author says she is indecisive and she talks every decision to death. Maybe she thought this was funny but I found it annoying. The story of the actual climb was interesting. I'm not sure how many books this author has written but she needs an editor who will cut out the annoying parts of the book.

This book probably took me three times longer to read than it should have, because I kept flicking over to Google to check out everything from the history of Kilimanjaro explorers to videos on how to make South African rusks! To me, wanting to search further is a sign of an engaging book. The author has a fluent writing style that makes you feel as though you are sitting down chatting with her. I laughed so many times, particularly with a vision in my mind of the difficulties of using a long drop loop on a mountain in the middle of the night and having to queue to do so. I felt her bittersweet experience of finally summiting. This is a terrific book and I thoroughly recommend it.

I'm a month away from embarking on my own Kilimanjaro climb, and in my preparation, I've read countless articles, blog posts and books by authors chronicling the story of their Kilimanjaro excursions. This book is by far the best of them that I've read. There are numerous passages from the book that I've been compelled to share with family and friends, as they so aptly describe what

I'm feeling and/or looking forward to as I prepare for my own expedition to the top of Africa -- especially the camaraderie felt among the team of climbers and porters. On many pages I was chuckling. And on many others I was welling with tears, especially about the events that transpire during the night of the summit attempt. Eva is a talented writer who "tells it like it is" about all aspects of the experience, from the practical to the emotional, and I look forward to reading more of her writing. If you're preparing for your own climb, read the latest edition of Henry Stedman's Kilimanjaro book, and also read this one. And then you'll be all set with everything you need to know.

It is a good story, well written and funny, but way too long. I felt that the author was trying to stretch the book with research and some old stories.

Excellent read. Well done, Eva. Any casual hiker thinking of climbing who wants to learn more about the mountain and the trek in a very engaging, humorous, and insightful way won't be disappointed by this book. To read about it from a mother's perspective is just wonderful. Kilimanjaro is where ordinary people come to do extraordinary things. I've visited Uhuru Peak (though via a different trail) and will likely do so again. Every hiker who comes to the mountain does so for different reasons. The author succeeds in infecting the reader with the need to climb.

This delightful book was kind of a cross between "A Walk in the Woods" and "Wild." Thieme has a fun sense of humor which she balances nicely with her personal "lessons learned" from her experience of planning for and participating in a climb of Kili. While some might prefer that the author choose between offering a sort of guidebook to the climb vs. her own personal reflections, the mixture of both elements was entertaining and educational. I don't plan on climbing Kili myself, but I'd say that this memoir would be a good addition to the readings of anyone planning this particular adventure.

As I read this mountain adventure, I felt as if I had taken every step with the author -- and I wish that I had. There were lots of challenges to the adventure, but the rewards were many, and she makes them sound so life-changing. Read this if you're planning to climb a mountain -- or a molehill. It's worth the trip.

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