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Eva Melusine Thieme

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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.

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From Reader Review 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 for online ebook

Elizabeth says

Probably my second favorite Kilimanjaro memoir to date- my only complaint is that it was a bit whiney- and absolutely obsessive about the whole toilet thing, but other than that, it was a funny book and worth the read if you are planning on, or are presently, climbing Kilimanjaro.

Priscilla says

As someone who also never envisioned herself wanting to climb a mountain (ever), I can't say enough how much I related to this story.

My fiancé and I have decided to go to Tanzania for our honeymoon in 2018, and attempt to climb Kili while we are there. He has already climbed Kili once before, a decade ago, and he speaks of it with such incredible emotion and intensity that he managed to convince me I could too experience this and hopefully reach the summit.

I came across Kilimanjaro Diaries and absolutely ate up every word. Eva had me laughing out loud many times, and a minute later I'd be crying as she poignantly described the intense mix of emotions throughout the experience and, most of all, the feeling of extraordinary accomplishment. After reading this, I am even more obsessed with this upcoming adventure in my life!

Highly recommend and thank you, Eva!!

Shirley Tharp says

I absolutely LOVED this book! Funny, informative, well-written, and real. I laughed out loud at the potty images. I will be going to Kili myself in less than a month (July 2017), and I will be sure to pack wet wipes, toilet paper and a beanie. Thanks for the great read, and I'm sure your experience will help make my trek, at least the packing part, a bit easier.

Mark says

I never thought of climbing the Kilimanjaro, but after reading this funny, entertaining and thought provoking book, it doesn't look as such a far fetched possibility to do it.

It starts off with a perfectly "normal" family, none of whom you would immediately link to a mountain climbing "expert". But that is also, why you feel so connected, as if you are living it through the preparations.

Once the climb starts, you can almost feel the physical exhaustion, but also the natural beauty of the ever changing landscape, all the while keeping the light-heartedness and humour alive.

After "having climbed" the Kilimanjaro with the Narrator, you realize, this is a project, which would not only give you a new and achievable physical challenge of climbing a mountain, but which could also give you a new perspective in life (even if you might not seek one)...

So, definitively a book worth picking up, whether you plan to climb the Kilimanjaro or not.

Kirsty Louise says

Im not sure how to rate this book. On one hand I was thankful for such a down to earth guide to the Kilimanjaro experience: no detailed slog of information or being made to feel like an inferior 'traveller' as some travel books do. It was quite like reading a diary which helped immerse me into the everyday, insignificant details of the climb (which you wouldn't get in a typical travel guide). On the other hand I generally felt a little irritated by the author (Sorry Eva!). But I guess that is just my gut feeling. I think this book would go down particularly well with women with older children. She describes how it was a struggle to get her son to pack his bag each day on the climb (she packed it for him) and how she did all the planning for him and he wasn't really interested at all. For me I just didn't get this. Overall the book is useful as a no frills, yummy mummy's account of the Kili experience. Particularly useful for amateur trekkers (like me!) or families embarking on the climb.

JC says

When I saw the toilet on the cover art I thought it was weird, but after reading this humorous, frank, and entertaining account of one "regular" mom's experience climbing Kilimanjaro - I get it!

Thieme recounts a lot of the nitty gritty (and poopy!) details about making such a guided trek - sort of like "everything you wanted to know about climbing a mountain but were afraid to ask". Aside from the trials and obstacles to basic bodily functions, she paints such a gorgeous picture of the mountain, and a conveys the sense of accomplishment one gains from such a journey.

I enjoyed that it was a good story about real people - not super-human mountaineers - with plenty of humor throughout. Her no nonsense approach to the whole trip and the re-telling of it will keep you entertained and leave you contemplating your own climb of Kilimanjaro! (The bathroom situation would need some serious overhauling before I, myself, could consider it...)

Noushin Jedi says

Brilliant story,enjoyed every second of the adventure!

Judy Gaffney says

hilarious and heart-lightening

Eva must have been in my head! She puts to words the thoughts I've been having about why I want to undertake this journey. Her experiences on the mountain encourage me to continue toward this goal. Fun read!

James Field says

Amusing in places, moderately informative, and mildly inspirational. And that is the extent of my positive appraisal.

Ms Thieme strikes me as a fickle woman who is easily distracted. Her Kili diary is filled with ramblings about what happened one Christmas, or during holidays somewhere else, or her many moves from country to country, or her laborious role as an overworked mother. I admit I had to skip through these sections in search of Kilimanjaro material. Her motive and attitude for climbing the mountain left me rolling my eyes and shaking my head. For example, she agreed to join a gang of acquaintances during a pub binge, immediately bought a pair of walking boots that she broke in by wearing while she sat at her computer, and couldn't understand the need of even moderate physical training. She let others arrange the trip, not even knowing which route they would be taking up the mountain until they arrived at the gate. Her main concern while on the mountain was the lack of modern sanitary facilities, litter, and keeping her toes warm. Her greatest memories were all the coarse jokes and camaraderie with her friends, and all the childlike nicknames she gave everyone.

Some woman may read this book and be glued to every word. Many men, I predict, will yawn and sling it aside. However, I will congratulate Ms Thieme on reaching the summit with relative ease. Who knows, maybe she has the right attitude after all.

Jennifer Dziekan says

I loved this book. The writing is really good, she's funny, and honest. I had no idea what hiking Kili entailed and henceforth, I will be very impressed with whomever attempts this...which is all well and good but this book isn't just about hiking.

Lots of life lessons and realizations, some about being a mom and a wife, and how those roles can sometimes come in conflict with your own dreams and desires. The bottom line for me- we all need our own dreams and guess what?- it's okay to follow your passion once in awhile.

I was intrigued enough to buy it, awed enough to keep reading, then moved enough to cry. She made me jealous and then made me think about what it is that I want to do...

Dominique says

That title is quite a mouthful, but it cleverly lets you know that this book is not a clinical account of what climbing Kilimanjaro entails. Instead, the title tells you that everything pertaining to climbing Kilimanjaro is going to be relayed with humour and candidness, making it a book that anyone considering scaling Africa's magnificent peak should read.

I'm not one of those types who go out looking for the ultimate adrenalin rush, and climbing the world's highest mountains has not always been on my list of things to do. But when my friends Sine and Monia told me about their plan, I listened carefully, particularly since Monia had already done it before. Maybe, just maybe, I would consider it. After I heard how it was for them. Maybe.

The mountain was scaled and the two came back, exhilarated and fulfilled, and though they told us about aspects of the trip, I sensed that they were holding back. I had the feeling that there was more to this journey that could be relayed adequately in the course of a discussion over coffee. Perhaps I would need to climb the mountain myself to find out what it was.

Then Sine published her book and two things happened: First I found out that my friend's full name is Eva Melusine. Then I was overcome with excitement at having the chance to find out exactly what happened on that mountain. The book did not disappoint. Now I understood the wistful, faraway look Sine would get in her eyes as she stared into the distance while the rest of us talked about normal everyday things; and why Monia, who is bubbly and chatty most of the time, was quiet, contemplative and rather serious for quite a while after coming back.

In her book, Sine shares how her group came together and decided to go on this adventure. She tells how she prepared herself for it and gives a day-to-day account of the journey, culminating in the summit night, where the final, gruelling ascent was made toward the top of Kilimanjaro. She is very candid about the potty situation, but approaches it with such good humour and grace, that I may be able to overlook it and consider climbing the mountain despite it being littered with, well... with human waste.

An aspect of the book I enjoyed is that it refers to accounts by the first European to summit Kilimanjaro, Dr Hans Meyer. It is interesting to see how some of his advice for mountain climbers still holds true today, and equally, how much has changed since Meyer made his first summit in 1889.

Will I attempt to climb Kili now that I've read Eva Melusine's Kilimanjaro Diaries? I feel no closer to making a firm decision, but Sine's account of her experience makes me feel more confident that I too am capable of giving it a good try, and possibly being successful.

Susan says

Enjoyed reading this, both humorous and informative. However, even if I was physically capable, it didn't inspire me to climb that mountain, quite the opposite in fact. Far too many people going up and down, waiting in line to go up a route, literally bumping into others....crowded at times.

Michele says

Loved this book!

Aditi says

This was the first travel book I had ever read and was so excited to dig into it. I loved the beginning as it was leading up to the kili climb however when I got to the kili climb , I was expecting much more adventure.

The characters were lovely and if it were me I would've loved to meet them. I thoroughly enjoyed that she talked about the small things that matter when you're on an adventure like the food , toilets , water. It brought the whole story into a more realistic perspective.

I managed to get to the end and really loved going on the Kilimanjaro climb together with her and put it onto my bucket list to do sometime with someone so thank you for introducing me to new adventure Eva

Kate Klement says

While I appreciated how down-to-earth she was when telling her story, I didn't feel like she conveyed how magnificent this journey was. Climbing this mountain must have been incredibly inspiring and momentous, and I felt that she could have elaborated on this experience more. There wss too much toilet talk for my taste, and the history lessons distracted me from the main topic. It wasn't the most painful read, but I was longing for more....more substance, more inspiration, etc. She accomplished something most would only dream about, and I didn't find her story to do it any justice.
