

KILIMANJARO SEPT 14TH - 21ST 2004

I have to confess that ive been counting the days until i departed for Africa. I have been so stressed out here in London with trying to finalise sponsorship, do interviews and organise the logistics with Guy Cotter on the remaining five mountains i feel completely exhausted. I dont think ive worked so hard at anything before and im longing for the peace and quiet of being on a mountain! If i want to get my daily one hours exercise in, i need to be up at 6.00am so i can maximise the hours in a day to get things done. I didnt even get up this early when i was a director of FPD Savills in HK! Some days ive been skipping the run because im so tired. Somehow im packed and vaguely organised and sitting on the plane waiting to take off to Nairobi. British Airways have kindly sponsored me 2 long haul trips as their contribution towards my 7 summit challenge.. After some of the dodgy flights iv taken in remote places i just love sitting on British Airways and feel a lot more secure - i hate flying despite my monumental flying schedule, i get really nervous and often end up clutching the poor unsuspecting person next to me when we go through areas of turbulence! I have been told by one guy to remove my hands and nails from his arm - i thought men liked damsals in distress but apparently not!

As soon as we land in Nairobi we are connecting straight onto a small propellar plane that will take us to Kilimanjaro where we will quickly shower and change and get straight onto the mountain to walk 4 hours to our first camp.

Im flying with my great girlfriend Kat Pooley and her husband Rob whom will be climbing with me and Guy Cotter. I feel awful when i heard Kat was climbing Kili, i was so excited about climbing with her that i booked Guy and i onto the same trip. I have just found out that they are celebrating their wedding anniversary which we are now crashing!

Guy Cotter is meeting us at Kilimanjaro as he flew in from New Zealand yesterday, about 2 days of travel to get to our meeting point! I plan to always have either Guy or Luis climb with me on the next 6 mountains. Luis is taking me to Vinson and Aconcagua in November. I havent seen Guy since Everest but hes been really fantastic helping me put this all together with the help of the indispensable Suze and Kelly who are so organised - a calming influence on my chaos!

I have never been to Africa before and im so excited to go and explore a new continent for the first time. My mother was born in Uganda so it will be nice to at least have been to the continent that she was born in and exposed to new cultures.

We are about to take off now so im going to sign off here and try and get some rest before i end up not being able to make the 5 hour walk in that we are meant to be doing tomorrow! Good night from BA 089!!