



## My trike

The Full Fat, built by ICE Trikes in Falmouth, is an expedition-tough trike that was originally designed for record setting. The Full Fat combines durability, reliability and specialist features for conquering the most challenging terrain. Rough trails, sand, snow and mud – if you pedal, it will take you there.

The Full Fat enables people to explore and go where other trikes simply cannot. Large volume off-road tyres provide float and traction over soft terrain and bumpy trails. The Full Fat is fun to ride over snow and sand, and is great for exploring forest trails. It is rear-wheel drive with a 14-speed Rohloff hub. It's also available with a powerful Shimano STEPS EP8 motor. Most Full Fats have traditional pedal cranks; mine has hand-crank.

Back in 2013 Maria Leijerstam became the first person in the world to cycle to the South Pole on the Polar Cycle, travelling over 630km. She was featured in the Dec 2014/Jan 2015 issue of *Cycle*. Maria's journey led to the birth of the ICE Full Fat. Find out more about it online: [icetrikes.co](http://icetrikes.co).

Our team was wonderfully diverse, ranging in age from 12-year-old Amelia to 55-year-old Kevin. Jannie and Bow had never climbed a mountain and were on deeply personal journeys. Our filmmakers, Mike and Sherrill, had their own unique challenges beyond gathering footage: Mike had a recent diagnosis of narcolepsy, meaning regular naps and sensory zone-outs, while Sherrill had been training hard to improve her fitness. We all met for the first time in Tanzania, quickly bonding over our captivation to explore the volcanic slopes of the world's largest free-standing mountain.

## THE ASCENT BEGINS

Altitude and mountain sickness seemed the biggest obstacles to a successful climb, so we planned a longer ascent via the Rongai route. It is the only route on the northern side of the mountain, with the added appeal of being a little more remote, rarely visited by hikers.

Our team of eight required four porters per person, according to the National Park rules, with guides and cooks on top of that. Rongai Gate was our starting point at 6,400ft, in the middle of a rainforest. We met at the head of the trail among the dense, lush vegetation, making quite a crowd. As we set out, I felt buoyed and bamboozled by the unfamiliar names, beaming smiles and positive energy of our African team. We were missing Steve, however. His fat bike was still in a Manchester airport terminal, so he had stayed back to figure out when it might arrive and what to do if it didn't.

I was generally surprised at the rideability of the trail and the capabilities of the trike. A narrow flight of steps by a waterfall needed a piggyback, but otherwise we moved quite easily. The forest transitioned into moorland grasses, the next of five biodiversity zones we would encounter. Arriving at our first camp, Simba, we were welcomed by our team dancing and singing "jambo", a Swahili greeting. It was to become a tradition, which we loved: being surrounded by our team in dance and song to celebrate the end of each day's hike.

For the next stage to Kikelewa camp we adopted the mountain mantra of "pole, pole", meaning "slowly, slowly", an antidote to altitude gain. The size of the boulders and the crevices to negotiate required my new friends to be strong both in mind and body. Musa, Amadeu, Lucas and Joel – two at the front and two at the back – were a steadfast team. I pedalled

and they frequently negotiated my wheels over giant boulders. I was astounded at what we were moving over. With spectacular ground clearance compared to other handcycles, and fitted with three Schwalbe Jumbo Jim fat tyres, the ICE trike felt as great and graceful as the elephants we had observed the previous week.

Yet it wasn't long before the effects of altitude started to kick in. Bow felt sick, and many of us lacked appetite, had headaches or felt a little breathless. Day three would require only a few hours of hiking to the next camp, but we were a little sluggish in our progress and grateful to arrive before lunchtime. We took the time to rest and adapt to the thinner air.

## KIBO CAMP

Later that afternoon, anxiety about Steve finally dissolved as he rolled into camp. Celebratory singing tugged us from our tents. We emerged to greet him cycling in on a locally sourced mountain bike. It had thinner tyres than his fat bike, giving him less room for error if he didn't see an obstacle. He had practically sprinted up the trail to catch us up, demanding that he and his team of porters adapt even more rapidly than us to the gain in altitude.

Happy to at last be together, there was an optimistic vibe as we tackled the next 10km and another 1,000m of ascent. Steve pedalled and patiently waited, enjoying moments as the rest of us steadily plodded. The vast volcanic cone of Kili was clear of cloud, high above and luring us onward. It changed perspectives of the journey ahead: from tame to tall, gentle to giant, mouse to lion, easy to insurmountable.

That night, at 4,800m and our final camp at Kibo, we did our usual health check with our guide Luhi. We measured our blood oxygen levels, pulse rates and reported a number out of 10 as to how we felt. Steve gave himself a three. It seemed a very low score for a man used to suffering. He looked pale, and soon left the tent to throw up. It was the second evening Bow hadn't made it to the dinner table, and I projected to the next day, wondering how we would all manage.

But our head guide wasn't deterred. "You are doing great!" Luhi smiled. "So tomorrow, one team, one dream, non-stop, to the top". His motivational words were lost on us as, pale faced and with heads pounding, those of us who could forced ourselves to eat.

To fall asleep that night, I found myself using the trick of curiosity to ease the angst of the unknown. I cosied into the