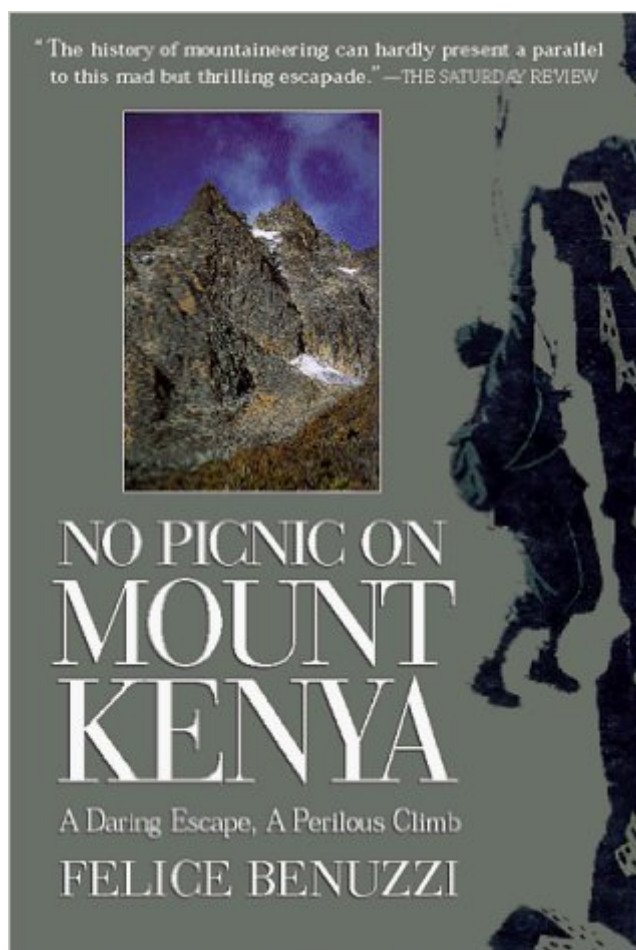


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# No Picnic On Mount Kenya: A Daring Escape, A Perilous Climb



## Synopsis

In *No Picnic on Mount Kenya*, Felice Benuzzi recounts one of the most bizarre and daring adventures of this century. In 1943, Benuzzi and two fellow Italian prisoners of war escaped from a British camp in equatorial East Africa with one goal to climb the seventeen-thousand-foot Mount Kenya. Filled with suspense and humor, it is an extraordinary story that has earned its place as a masterpiece.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I just needed to comment that the author is my grandfather, and I am very proud of both him and his work. He was - apart from his job as a diplomat - a passionate Alpinist. He loved mountains. It was not only to relieve the boredom of POW life that he and his two friends made the climb, it was also because they fell in love with Mt Kenya the first time the clouds finally cleared and they saw it... He spent a large portion of his life working to protect Antarctica from development and other human intrusions. He was a great man, and he wrote a wonderful book. Look for an upcoming T.V. documentary on their climb; it should be interesting.

I first borrowed a copy of this wonderful non-fiction book from a friend of mine 15 years ago. I have since bought several more and given as gifts. On the surface, this is a great tale: Benuzzi and several of his friends who were involved in the administration of Italian Ethiopia find themselves in POW camp in the shadow of Mt. Kenya during the early years of WWII. Bored with camp life, and equipped with an image of Mt. Kenya on the label of a tinned beef can for a map, they scrimp and

hoard materials to make mountaineering supplies and break out of the camp in order to climb the mountain. While the story is fascinating on its surface, it also has a deeper side: these young men engaged in incredibly dangerous activities, ranging from escaping a POW camp to technical climbing without adequate gear. They were motivated not by a thirst for fame or the adrenaline-junkie motivations we're familiar with from various X-games sports. Instead, they did it for the good of their soul. Benuzzi writes from the safe remove of old age, which imparts wisdom to his writing, but he does not lose the urgency or energy of his exploits as a young man.

Very unusual and unexpected. A part of WWII history that I had no prior knowledge of. Written by an Italian years ago makes the language sometimes different than I am used to. But I enjoyed the story. I learned about Africa and about the war. I had a friend living in Kenya at the time, so the name of the book got me interested. I like survival stories generally.

I have had this book for many years having read it before a photo safari I took to Kenya back in 1991. While there, our guide told us it is required reading in Kenyan schools. It is full of amazing feats both in the characters' escape from a WWII prison camp as well as their adventures and survival while climbing the mountain. I bought it as a gift to a family member who has also been a mountain climber.

This is a well written story that painted a vivid picture about life in a WW2 POW camp, and a rare adventure on Mt. Kenya. Full of details about what led to the climb, the climb itself, but most of all, the spirit of the men involved. This tale is much more than a book about climbing mountains. It is a story, universal to all men.... the need to live life to its fullest, no matter the circumstances. My only wish would be that the author's paintings of this "picnic" had been included. I know they must be somewhere!!

No Picnic on Mt Kenya is one of the great classics of mountaineering. In my opinion it is the greatest. Like Annapurna, No Picnic on Mt Kenya tries to explain why people climb mountains. Benuzzi does an excellent job of weaving his motivations into the story of the climb of Point Lenana.

As one who loves mountains and climbing, I relish great stories of exceptional mountaineering feats. At times, however, I ponder the meaning and heroics of well planned, well outfitted and well guided expeditions--even when they produce grim results. This is an almost whimsical mountaineering tale

with meaning, heroics...and a lot of heart. Bored with dreary life as an Italian prisoner in a British POW camp, Felice Benuzzi's spirit is lifted as he spies majestic Mt. Kenya break through the clouds and he contemplates the idea of escaping the camp long enough to climb the peak and plant a flag. Given the practicalities of the geopolitical map of East Africa in 1941, Benuzzi realizes he has little hope of a successful escape to friendly territory. So, Benuzzi determines to channel his energy to engaging partners in his quest, storing away supplies and manufacturing within the confines of a POW camp the technical equipment to climb a very difficult peak. After six months of preparation, Benuzzi and his two partners must escape the POW camp and avoid close encounters with Africa's dangerous big game (they are in the heart of prime hunting lands) before they can even begin their mountaineering endeavor. Already weak from their life as POWs, running short of supplies, facing unfavorable weather and lacking adequate information about the mountain's topography, they are denied Mt. Kenya's highest point on the route that also denied an earlier group led by the esteemed Shipton. However, Benuzzi savored the sweet taste of success on the mountain's second highest point before returning to camp. The lingering taste of success sustained Benuzzi through the remainder of his days as a POW. Benuzzi recounts his feat with modesty, grace and subtle humor. Fun and inspiring!

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