

# YOUR GUIDE TO GORILLA TREKKING

*Gorilla Trekking is a once in a lifetime experience which can be enjoyed in both Uganda and Rwanda. Our in-depth guide will assist in planning your gorilla itinerary along with a few hints and tips to get the most out of your experience.*



## MOUNTAIN GORILLAS

The gorillas you will visit are the critically endangered mountain gorillas, the largest living primate, with just over 1,000 spread across 4 national parks in 3 countries: Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These gorillas differ from other species such as the lowland and eastern gorilla. The males are up to 182cm tall and weigh close to 181kg and females up to 152cm tall and 97kg.





## UGANDA



*Known as the “Pearl of Africa”, Uganda is home to half of the world’s population of mountain gorillas and the unique experiences one can have with these incredible animals are once in a lifetime. Staying in very comfortable lodges and camps, trek into the bush anywhere from 30 minutes to a few hours in search of one of the rare habituated gorilla families. Operators of the gorilla treks know where the families are at any given time and therefore spotting them and spending time watching them is almost guaranteed. If time permits, opt for a longer safari – Uganda actually has diverse wildlife, including over 1,000 bird species!*

### WHERE CAN THE GORILLAS BE FOUND?

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is the ideal habitat for gorillas due to its dense growth of vines and shrubs which cover its ground.



### WHAT ARE THE TREKS LIKE?

Gorilla trekking in Uganda can be up to an 8 hour day and can be challenging so a good level of fitness is recommended. Once you reach the gorilla family, you will have maximum of one hour to spend with them.

### HOW MUCH DO PERMITS COST?

Gorilla trekking permits in Uganda are USD\$800pp

### WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO SEE THE GORILLAS?

The gorillas can be tracked any time of year in Uganda, however it will be more comfortable during the drier seasons of December – February and June – September.

### WHAT ELSE DOES UGANDA HAVE TO OFFER?

#### QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

Home to nearly 100 animal species, along with over 600 varieties of birdlife. The park is also home to lion, leopard, jackal, hyena and hippo. Visitors can also enjoy tracking chimpanzee which can be spotted year round.

#### MURCHISON FALLS NATIONAL PARK

The country’s largest protected wildlife sanctuary where the Nile River bursts through a narrow gorge and flows into a calm river with an abundance of wildlife on its shores including hippo, crocodile and herds of buffalo. Other wildlife includes lion, leopard, elephant, giraffe and a large variety of bird species.

#### KIBALE NATIONAL PARK

Located in western Uganda and one of the best places to experience a chimpanzee trek. The scenery is spectacular and incredibly varied with tropical forest, savannahs, and wetlands. Visitors can enjoy encounters with chimpanzee along with 12 other species of primates such as the red colobus monkey, grey-cheeked mangabey, olive baboon and red tailed monkey. The park also offers incredible bird viewing (more than 300 species), butterflies and other wildlife such as leopard, buffalo and elephant.

#### KIDEPO NATIONAL PARK

A remote conservation area in northeast Uganda, Kidepo National Park has incredible wildlife sightings including kudu, cheetah, lion, leopard and elephant. It is also home to over 400 bird species making it suitable for bird watchers.

# RWANDA



*“The Land of a Thousand Hills”, Rwanda is a green undulating landscape of hills, gardens and tea plantations. It offers visitors a one of a kind journey as it home to one third of the world’s remaining mountain gorillas, one third of Africa’s birds species, several species of primates, volcanoes, game reserves, resorts and islands on the expansive Lake Kivu, graceful dancers, artistic crafts and friendly people.*

## WHERE CAN THE GORILLAS BE FOUND?

Volcanoes National Park (also known as the Parc National des Volcans) is located in the northwest corner of Rwanda and is home to the rare mountain gorilla. The setting of lush volcanoes offers incredible dramatic scenery.



## WHAT ARE THE TREKS LIKE?

Terrain in Rwanda is less challenging with treks often shorter than Uganda although the higher altitude can have an effect on some people. Safaris in Rwanda are shorter making them suitable for those short on time.

## HOW MUCH DO PERMITS COST?

Gorilla trekking permits in Rwanda are USD\$1500pp

## WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO SEE THE GORILLAS?

The dry season is from May to October. It rains more frequently and heavily in the northeast, where the volcanoes are covered by dense rainforest.

## WHAT ELSE DOES RWANDA HAVE TO OFFER?

### AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK

Located along the Tanzanian border, Akagera National Park is Rwanda’s oldest national park and is a great place to enjoy birding. With the reintroduction of black rhino and African lion, the park is now home to all of Africa’s “big five”.

### GOLDEN MONKEYS

An added attraction for Rwanda is tracking the Golden Monkeys, as two habituated groups live in the Volcanoes National Park. These active creatures jump from tree to tree and are quite difficult to photograph, but are a rare and delightful experience!

### DIAN FOSSEY RESEARCH CAMP

The Karisoke Research Centre in Volcanoes National Park was founded by Dian Fossey in 1967 to study the endangered mountain gorilla. This renowned American conservationist and primatologist studied mountain gorillas daily in the forests of Rwanda, and wrote the book *Gorillas in the Mist*.

### NYUNGWE FOREST

A great location for chimpanzee trekking which can be combined with a gorilla trek in Volcanoes National Park. The Nyungwe Forest Canopy walk is a 90m walk taking visitors through the canopy 50m above the ground and is a great way to see monkeys move around in the treetops.

### LAKE KIVU

The largest lake in Rwanda and the 6th largest in Africa, it is one of the largest freshwater lakes lying along the Great Rift Valley. Small towns occupy the lake’s edge along the route from Nyungwe Forest National Park to Volcanoes National Park.



## WHAT IS THE ACCOMMODATION LIKE?

*World Journeys prides itself on dealing only with lodge owners and safari companies who have a core ethos of giving back to the land, the people and the wildlife. These safari operators work with local communities for the good of the community and conserve wildlife in these special areas.*



### **BUHOMA LODGE** | Uganda

Buhoma is an intimate, top quality lodge offering guests a cosy, relaxing environment and spectacular views of the forest.



### **SANCTUARY GORILLA FOREST CAMP** | Uganda

Located within Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, this camp features eight spacious tents with comfortable beds and jungle views.



### **CLOUDS MOUNTAIN LODGE** | Uganda

Overlooking the Virunga volcanoes, this 5 star luxury eco-lodge boasts stunning views and warm, welcoming private cottages.



### **VOLCANOES VIRUNGA LODGE** | Rwanda

Virunga Lodge features uniquely decorated rooms, exceptional service, and fantastic food to enjoy after a day of trekking.



### **SABYINYO SILVERBACK LODGE** | Rwanda

Located close to the headquarters of Volcanoes National Park, this beautifully constructed lodge is a perfect trekking base.



### **BISATE LODGE** | Rwanda

Situated in the natural amphitheatre of an eroded volcanic cone, Bisate offers dramatic views and six sumptuous ensuite rooms.

## THINGS TO NOTE

- Trekking times can vary depending on the location of the gorillas (anything from an hour to 6 hours). Once the gorillas have been found you get a maximum of one hour with them.
- A specific number of gorilla trekking permits are available each day so make sure you book well in advance!
- A reasonable level of fitness is required to trek the gorillas as paths can often be steep and slippery. Your guide will see to it that you are well looked after, ensuring you still have a full hour with the gorillas.
- Gorilla trekking is limited to people aged 15 or above.

## CONTACT YOUR TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL