

The Best of Rwanda



This comprehensive private tour of Rwanda takes in the country's very best wilderness parks. Beginning in Rwanda's lively capital, Kigali, you'll travel south-west to Nyungwe Forest Reserve, where you'll explore the tree canopy on a spectacular forest walk. The tour concludes in the Virunga Mountains with a magical gorilla trek.

Day 1 – Depart UK

Depart the UK on Kenya Airlines for Nairobi (2000/0630).

Day 2 – Kigali

On arrival In Nairobi board the connecting flight to Kigali (0800/0630). On arrival at Kigali Airport you will be met and transferred to the Hotel des Mille Collines for one night (B).



Hotel des Mille Collines

Situated in downtown Kigali, Hotel des Mille Collines is a comfortable, 4-star standard city hotel, with 112 rooms and suites. The rooms are well-equipped and comfortably furnished, each with balcony, telephone, satellite TV, mini-bar and PC connection.

In the afternoon, enjoy a tour of Kigali. Founded in 1907 as a German settlement, Kigali did not become the capital until Rwanda's independence in 1962, when it replaced the colonial seat of power in Butare. Since then, the city has seen major economic development resulting in what it is today: a vibrant African city of over 1 million people. The city has wide boulevards, an international airport, world-class hotels and

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

restaurants, craft and curio shops as well as a lively, cosmopolitan population. Visit the Kandt Museum, tour old Kigali and the craft centres, and visit the city's memorial, where you will learn about Rwanda's pre-colonial history up to the 1994 genocide.

Day 3 – Nyungwe Forest

After breakfast, depart Kigali and drive south to Nyanza, the historic capital of Rwanda; visit the Royal Palace, which has recently been restored, using entirely traditional materials, in line with its original 19th century design. The dome shaped Royal museum is steeped in history and tradition going back over three centuries.

Further south is the University town of Butare, where you can visit the National Museum, home to one of the better ethnographic collections in East and Central Africa. View an exhibition of turn-of-the-century photographs as well as absorbing displays of traditional artefacts.

After stopping for lunch at a local restaurant, proceed to Nyungwe Forest National Park, arriving late afternoon at the new Nyungwe Forest Lodge, where you stay for two nights (FB).



Nyungwe Forest Lodge

The ultra-luxurious Nyungwe Forest Lodge opened in 2010. Situated in an expansive tea plantation on the edge of Nyungwe forest, the lodge overlooks the forest canopy and is ideally placed for those wishing to explore the reserve on foot.

Guest accommodation consists of 24 luxury rooms in 6 wooden villas of 4 rooms each. There are two additional suites in separate villas. All of the rooms are very spacious and come complete with air-conditioning, king size or twin beds, crisp linen, separate shower and bathtub, electronic safes, wireless internet, satellite TV, minibar, coffee/tea making machine, hair dryers and fireplace. The villas are built on wooden stilts and have views to the Nyungwe Forest from a private verandah.



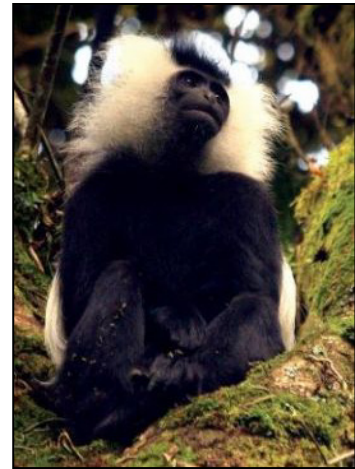
The spacious main building houses the reception, lobby, restaurant, bar and an outdoor terrace for lunches and after-dinner coffee. There is also a swimming pool.

Day 4 – Nyungwe Forest

This morning you will enjoy a thrilling trek on the Nyungwe Canopy Walk.

From the park information centre you will descend via a zig-zag footpath to the first tower deep in the forest valley. Here you will begin your 1½ hr walk along the canopy suspension bridge. The walk allows you access to the upper parts of the forest where you can see unique ‘canopy’ species, such as apes, birds, butterflies, plants, insects, and many other animals that live in the roof of the forest, and which are otherwise invisible. It is an unforgettable experience.

A true nature lovers’ paradise, Nyungwe Forest National Park is extensive. The 970 km² of rainforest, bamboo, grassland, swamps and bogs is the largest remaining ‘island’ of montane forest in East and Central Africa. It is also home to a rich variety of flora and fauna, including 200 types of trees, hundreds of flowering plants, over 100 species of orchids and sensational lobelias and 13 recorded species of primates.



As much as 25% of recorded African primates can be found here, including the acrobatic Angola colobus that move in troops of several hundred, an estimated 500 chimpanzees (often seen from the forest trails during the rainy season) as well as L’Hoest’s monkey, olive baboon, grey-cheeked mangabey and red-tailed monkey. Bird enthusiasts will not be disappointed with over 300 species including 24 Albertine Rift endemics such as the spectacular Ruwenzori turaco, and several iridescent birds.

Nyungwe enjoys a cool climate, perfect for exploring the extensive network of hiking trails that lead to various waterfalls and viewing points. However it is the intimacy of the rainforest that most impresses; the closed canopy, towering trees and delicate ferns that line the steep gorges, the mysterious calls of birds and monkeys hidden in her depths – all are part of this unique experience.

Return to the hotel for lunch. In the afternoon take a tour of a local tea plantation.

Day 5 – Lake Kivu

After an early breakfast, transfer to the park for a half-day trek in search of the Angola Colobus monkeys, found here in troops of several hundred (the largest can number up to 450 adults!) This is a fair to moderate walk which can be adapted to suit your level of fitness and lasts up to 6 hours. Besides their incredible numbers, Angola Colobus differ from the more common Eastern Colobus by the extent of their white hair and leaner frame. Other primates likely to be seen during the trek include l’Hoest’s monkey and the grey-cheeked Mangabey. The birds too are spectacular, though as in most tropical forests, one



has to look hard to spot them! Giant hornbills, great blue turacos and red-breasted sparrow hawks are amongst the highlights, 24 of them endemic to this section of the Rift Valley.

An early lunch back at the lodge then you will drive to Kibuye on the shores of Lake Kivu where you check-in at Cormoran Lodge for one night (B)

Cormoran Lodge

Another new lodge, Cormoran is situated in Kibuye on the shores of Lake Kivu and provides comfortable and intimate accommodation between Nyungwe NP and the Virungas.

Five chalets, principally built of timber and reinforced with local stone, are located on Lake Kivu's shores with magnificent views to the Lake's turquoise waters. The adjacent restaurant and lounge provide a relaxing main area for unwinding with an afternoon coffee or tea as you view the lake.



Kibuye lies on the eastern shores of Lake Kivu, Africa's sixth largest lake, and is located halfway between Gisenyi and Cyangugu. This is certainly one of the most beautiful spots in all of Rwanda.

You may like to eat out in town tonight. Rwandan towns are typically clean, comfortable and safe, and dining out at local restaurants is a great way of meeting and interacting with the local people.



Day 6 – Virunga Mountains

Morning at leisure. You can choose a sight-seeing tour in Kibuye or an activity on the lake.

Lake activities include boat trips with the chance to visit local island fishing communities, kayaking, swimming in the lake, or a walking tour of the town.

In the afternoon continue your journey through more Rwandan countryside to Kinigi which is located at the foothills of the Virunga volcanoes, arriving at Gorilla's

Nest Lodge in the evening (two nights, FB).

Gorilla's Nest Lodge

Gorilla's Nest Lodge is situated in a lovely rural setting at the foothills of the Virungas, amid a clearing of eucalyptus trees and green lawns, and barely 2kms from the Volcanoes National Park Headquarters. Constructed principally of local materials with grass thatched roofs in a traditional Rwandan style, the lodge offers stunning views of the Virunga Volcanoes and the Rwandan hills.

The 22 en-suite rooms are set around an African style courtyard and overlook the eucalyptus forest, pyrethrum farms and shambas beyond. Facilities include a restaurant and a bar.

The Virunga Mountains, a branch of the Albertine Rift, are a chain of mostly dormant volcanoes which lie along Rwanda's northern border with DR Congo and Uganda. Their lower slopes are

covered by montane forest which gives way to bamboo forest and Hagenia-Hypericum on the more humid slopes. In the higher regions, Lobelia wollastonii can be found.

These mountains are, of course, home to the rare and critically endangered mountain Gorilla, but other mammals present include the golden monkeys, black-fronted duiker, buffalo, spotted hyena and bushbuck. There are over 170 species of bird recorded here among them at least 13 species and 16 subspecies endemic to the Virungas and Rwenzori Mountains.

Activities include Gorilla and Golden Monkey tracking, volcano hikes and guided bird watching.

Day 7 – Gorilla Trekking

After an early breakfast you will drive to the Volcanoes National Park to be allocated a gorilla tracking group. You will be briefed by your trackers and then drive to the trail head for the start of your adventure.

Your trek to find the rare and critically endangered Mountain Gorillas, the largest living primate on earth, starts in the cultivated foothills of the Virungas with fantastic views in every direction. When you enter the national park you will notice the paths littered with fresh spoor of the mountains' elusive buffalo and elephant. Through gaps in the canopy the magnificent Virunga peaks, among the highest in Africa yet easily accessible, can be glimpsed.



Weaving through overhanging vines, and the moss-covered hagenia and giant lobelias that thrive in this tropical climate, the experienced trackers who spend their entire lives in this forest will bring you close to a family group. On sighting the gorillas you will stay with them for a magical hour as they go about their daily life, feeding, playing, resting and raising their young. Coming face to face with a giant silverback is an experience to remember!

Mountain Gorillas are a subspecies of the Eastern Gorilla, the largest living primate on earth. Numbering only about 700 individuals worldwide, these large hominid share 95% of their genes with humans. Tragically, they are now listed on the IUCN Red List of critically Endangered Species due to poaching, disease and war, but principally due to the loss of their habitat.



There are currently seven habituated gorilla families in Volcanoes National Park, the Susa, Agashya, Umubano, Amahoro, Sabyinyo, Kwitonda and Hirwa. The gorillas are highly mobile and each family will typically reside in a different section of the range, further or higher up the volcanoes. Gorillas are not territorial. However, when two families come together, the silver-backs will often fight, on rare occasions to the death, to defend their family but not their territory.

Trekkers who visit one of the seven habituated families will be delighted to know that their visit contributes to the preservation of these special creatures.

Gorilla Tracking Tip: It is recommended that trekkers wear camouflage bush colours that the animals are more familiar with, as opposed to bright and shiny colours that attract the animals' attention.

Return to the lodge and in the afternoon you can enjoy sightseeing around the twin lakes, Burera and Ruhondo. The deep blue waters are ringed by steep hills and tall waterfalls and a spectacular backdrop of the Virunga Volcanoes.

Day 8 – Kigali

You can choose to return to the park to spend another morning tracking and visiting a different Gorilla Family (at the cost of an additional permit) or enjoy another activity in the area, such as visiting the golden monkeys.

Following lunch you will drive back to Kigali and check in at Hotel des Mille Collines for one night (B). In the evening enjoy a final farewell dinner at one of the local restaurants.

Day 9 – Homeward

After breakfast, you have the remainder of the day at leisure; perhaps pick up some local souvenirs from Kigali's lively market before being transferred to the airport for your departure flight.

Depart Kigali for Nairobi (1830/2100). In Nairobi connect to the London Heathrow flight (2345/0655).



Price Guide:

*The cost of this itinerary is from **£3245 per person***, based on twin share and subject to availability at the time of booking. This includes gorilla permit (\$750 per person at the time of writing), Colobus monkey permit (\$70pp), and canopy walk permit (\$60pp). For more information, please [contact us](#).*

** This price applies to a group of 2. For families and larger groups of 4 or more rates are considerably lower.*

Includes:

- Gorilla permit (\$750 at time of writing)
- Meet and greet with airport transfers
- Accommodation as described
- Meals as shown (B-Breakfast, L-Lunch & D-Dinner)
- City tour of Kigali
- Park entrance fees
- Exclusive use of 4WD vehicle and services of local guide
- Medical evacuation service
- Professional trackers whilst Gorilla Tracking.

Excludes:

- International flights
- Visa fees
- Optional extras whilst in Kigali
- Drinks throughout the trip
- Tips and gratuities
- Items of a personal nature
- Porterage
- Travel insurance – ask us for a quote