



GORILLA TRACKING IN VIRUNGA 2017



WEAREAFRICA

TOUR DATES: 26 SEPTEMBER - 1 OCTOBER 2017

Join acclaimed conservationist and philanthropist Jochen Zeitz and extraordinary Chief Warden Emmanuel de Merode, to explore Virunga National Park; the UNESCO World Heritage Site in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, on the border of Uganda and Rwanda. Virunga - the subject of last year's Oscar-nominated documentary - is Africa's oldest national park and is also the continent's most biologically diverse protected area.

The park's 3,000 square miles include forests, savannahs, lava plains, swamps, erosion valleys, active volcanoes, and the glaciated peaks of the Rwenzori mountains. Virunga is also home to about a quarter of the world's critically endangered mountain gorillas. The park's two other Great Ape species, eastern lowland Grauer's gorillas and chimpanzees, make Virunga the only park in the world to host three taxa of Great Apes. Another prominent inhabitant of the park is the Okapi, an endangered species, along with large colonies of hippopotamus, forest and savannah elephants, lion, and numerous rare bird species.

Enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore Virunga with the park's own extraordinary chief warden and the endangered gorilla's that he has dedicated his life to protecting.



DAY 1

Depart Kigali, Rwanda, for the DRC border (3 hours). Arrive at Grand Barrier, where you will meet your Virunga National Park guide, who will guide you through the permit process and, together with a Ranger, begin your journey to Bukima (2 hours). En route, soak up the surrounding culture and get a taste of rural village life, before arriving at Bukima for a relaxing first evening and on a clear night, the glows of the Nyiragongo and Nyamalagera volcanoes.

DAY 2

After a revitalizing morning feast, your exciting journey will begin with a detailed briefing followed by a 3-5 hour trek through beautiful forests to locate and watch the key gorilla characters and families. Visiting a mountain gorilla family at Virunga is a life-changing experience. Mountain gorillas are highly intelligent, well natured and fascinating to observe. The silverback's powerful presence is awe-inspiring, yet his calm clearly earns him the title, "gentle giant". People are equally struck by the tenderness and care that mother gorillas show their young, and then of course, there are the juveniles who spend most of every waking hour at play making visitors smile.

DAY 3

In order to have more time to familiarize yourself with Virunga's mountain gorillas, today you will make a second gorilla trek. After spending another incredible day with the gorillas in Virunga's forests, you will be transferred to Mikeno Lodge.

DAY 4

At Mikeno, you have the opportunity to visit and learn about the Senkwekwe Center, home to Virunga's gorilla orphans, or choose to see a demonstration by the Congo Hounds, Virunga's important anti-poaching unit. Other activities are serene forests walks or visits to the nearby coffee estate.

DAY 5

Today begins with a transfer from Mikeno to Kibati (1 hour), where you will meet a dedicated, expert porter to begin your trek up Nyiragongo volcano. After a spectacular 4-6 hour hike, you will spend probably the most unique and adventurous night of your life, sleeping out on top of the volcano.

Nyiragongo is a beautiful stratovolcano that features the world's largest lava lake. The volcano's forested lower slopes are home to a variety of animals including chimpanzees, monkeys and bushbuck. In contrast, Nyiragongo's summit rim is largely without vegetation and sometimes even dusted with snow. From the rim, visitors can peer down into a churning lava lake, seeing and hearing hot gas exploding up through a mosaic of molten lava. Although predictable and therefore safe for tourists, Nyiragongo is greatly feared during eruptions. Due to the low silica content of its lava, Nyiragongo's lava flows are extremely fluid and during its 2002 eruption, some of the lava reached speeds of 100 km/hr (62 mph) and travelled all the way to Lake Kivu.

DAY 6

Following an early departure from the summit, today's more gentle walk down the volcano will take about 4 hours, after which you will be transported to Goma, followed by Grande Barrier, and finally returning to Kigali (3 hours) feeling inspired, rejuvenated and savoring the memories of a life-changing trip.

DOUBLE \$2,362 PER PERSON
SINGLE \$ 2,726

THIS INCLUDES:

- Full board accommodation
- Transport
- Permits
- Laundry
- Transfer to/from Kigali

NOT INCLUDED IN THIS PRICE:

- Drinks
- Porter fees (\$10 per porter for Bukima)
- \$24 per porter for Nyiragongo
- Gratuities



MIKENO LODGE is situated in the lush Mahura forest in Rumangabo, Virunga National Park.

Virunga is one of the most biodiverse places in the world and Africa's oldest park. It is home to three taxa of Great Apes, as well as two bubbling volcanoes and a range of glacier-clad mountains. The lodge is in prime position for spectacular views across the beautiful Albertine Rift. Wildlife abound, guests often enjoy seeing many species of birds, blue and colobus monkeys, baboons and sometimes even the elusive bushbuck. The morning chorus of birds and chimps can be enjoyed from your cosy bungalow.

The main lodge features a full restaurant and bar service as well as a large circular fireplace where guests gather at night to share stories from their day. Each large, private bungalow is equipped with a fireplace, seating area, soaking tub and natural stone shower.

Follow Mikeno Lodge on Facebook and Twitter by searching for @MikenoLodge

ACTIVITIES

Senkwekwe Center
Congo Hounds
Forest Walks
Chimp Habituation Walks
Katale Coffee Plantation Walk
Rumangabo Village Walk

AMENITIES

Electricity Matebe Hydroelectric power (24hrs)
Water Piped in from a spring
Charging points In bungalows as well as main area
Plugs - EU two round pin
Rooms: 12 Twin Rooms: 6
Double Rooms: 6

Visit

VIRUNGA

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Booking & Information: visitvirunga.org | visit@virunga.org



Virunga National Park is one of the most biodiverse places in the world and Africa's oldest park. It is home to three taxa of Great Apes, two bubbling volcanoes as well as six dormant volcanoes.

NYIRAGONGO is a beautiful stratovolcano containing the world's largest lava lake. The volcano's forested lower slopes are home to a variety of animals including, chimpanzees, blue and colobus monkeys, bushbuck, the three-horned chameleon, as well as myriad species of birds, making the walk to the top all the more gratifying.

The trek is split into five sections, with a 15 minute rest at each stop. Expected climbing time is between 4-6 hours and the time down is approximately 4 hours; the slowest person on the trek sets the pace. The first part of the trek will take you into the verdant forests at the base of Nyiragongo. This ascends into the next level comprising rocky lava balls that require sure footedness. The third section takes you across the old lava flows and past the volcanic fissures from the 2002 eruption. After delving back into the forest, the last part of the climb is an energetic scramble up the final 225m. Once at the top, visitors are rewarded with an exhilarating view of the lava lake churning away with the hot gases exploding up through a mosaic of molten lava.

The most breathtaking spectacle is saved for last, when the sun goes down, and Nyiragongo begins to glow.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

All water, charcoal, food and cooking equipment have to be taken up. If clients would like to hire equipment and a chef from the park, it is at an extra cost. One can hire porters at the start of the trek at Kibati Ranger Post.

No of Shelters: 12 (2 pax per shelter)

Communal longdrop toilet

Nyiragongo Backpack: \$80 (includes a sleeping bag, warm clothes, food picnic lunch, dinner and breakfast - cost includes a cook to prepare the meals)

Hire of Porters: \$24 for 15kg backpack (to be paid before the trek)

Porter fee to carry people up Nyiragongo: \$400 per person

Please ensure that all trekkers are at Kibati before 9h30 to complete their paperwork, hire their porters and receive a briefing on the trek. All treks will start at 10h00.

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NYIRAGONGO VOLCANO TREKS