Primates of Rwanda
DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

gorilla and chimpanzee safaris

Gorilla and Chimpanzee Safaris with Deeper Africa

Gorilla and Chimpanzee safaris are for those interested in up-close meetings with the creatures with whom we share a common evolutionary connection. Stand within feet of mountain gorillas, and watch, listen, and learn from the affectionate interactions between families. You’ll be accepted into their community without a sideways glance. Journey through tropical forests in search of chimpanzees. Listen for the rustle of leaves, the breaking of branches, and the loud hooting calls. Interacting with local communities is about so much more than just interacting with other humans.

OVERVIEW: PRIMATES OF RWANDA

From the mischievous chimps of Nyungwe Forest, to the troops of colobus, vervet, and golden monkeys found throughout the wilderness, to the gorillas in the mist of Parc National des Volcans, the primates of Rwanda are diverse and unforgettable. This 8 day safari will bring you up-close to these remarkable creatures, guaranteeing encounters with humanity’s closest relatives that will touch you deeply.

By spending more than one day trekking in both Nyungwe Forest National Park and Parc National des Volcans, you will have time to get to know these primates and observe them with their families. You’ll have close range viewing, allowing for a glimpse into individual personalities and group dynamics. Watch stately silverbacks, grooming females, and playful youngsters running and jumping. You’ll also have plenty of time to form human connections with locals in both the vibrant capital of Kigali and the rural villages of Kinigi and Musanze.
Arrive at Kigali International Airport in Rwanda. You’ll be picked up by a Deeper Africa driver after clearing customs. Look for him holding a sign that has your name on it. He will take you to the Hotel des Mille Collines and help you get checked in. The name may ring a bell for many travelers – it is the same hotel made famous by the film, *Hotel Rwanda*.

Rwanda is about half the size of Scotland. A green country of fertile and hilly terrain, this small republic bears the title “Land of a Thousand Hills.” A little known fact about Rwanda is that in 2008 it became the first country to elect a legislature that is majority female. By law, at least a third of the parliament seats must be held by women.
Enjoy daytime views of Kigali as you depart Hotel des Milles Collines. After fifteen years of rebuilding, Kigali is one of the most thriving and progressive capital cities in Africa. The city retains its feel as a garden city with an organic shape, dictated by the verdant slopes over which it sprawls. It is beautiful to behold.

Nyungwe Forest, which extends for over 24,700 acres (1,000 square kilometers) is the largest montane rain forest in East & Central Africa. It is one of Africa’s most ancient forests and dates back to before the last Ice Age. The forest possesses incredible biodiversity serving as the home to thirteen different primate species including chimpanzees, vervet monkeys, golden monkeys, L’hoests, Red Tails, Mangabeys, and large troops of black and white colobus. This biodiversity is due to a combination of several ecological factors. The Ice Age caused the drying of lower-altitude African forests as recently as 10,000 years ago. The mountainous backbone bordering the western branch of the great African Rift serves as a moist refuge to forest plants and animals. Nyungwe constitutes a significant portion of this lush, central core.
Begin the pre-dawn search for chimpanzees. Tracking chimpanzees is much more challenging than tracking gorillas. In order to support their massive brains (like the human brain), they must eat a huge variety of foods (300 recorded plants and animals compared to only a few dozen plants for gorillas). In order to find this food they must forage over a massive home range of well over 100 acres (several hundred square kilometers), compared to only 10 to 50 for gorillas. Each day, the search for food for these agile and highly mobile primates begins in the cool early morning. Part of the thrill as you walk in the thick forest tracking the chimpanzees is the scenery and sounds of birds, insects, monkeys, and other inhabitants of the forest. It can take awhile to get close to these extremely mobile primates, but once you stop and watch, the thrill and connection between human and primate is simply amazing.

There are many other primates to see. In addition to chimpanzees, you will go in search of troops of 300+ Angola Colobus monkeys and an assortment of other primate species. The name “colobus” is derived from the Greek word for “mutilated,” because unlike other monkeys, colobus monkeys do not have thumbs.
Every family of chimpanzees is distinctly different – just like human families. Today, you’ll move out in search of a different chimpanzee family. Your guide will take you into the forest where you’ll wait, listening for the tell-tale hoots and screeches that give away the noisy gang’s location.

Rwanda is one of Africa’s top birding countries, with 670 different bird species located within an area the size of Wales or Belgium. Nyungwe alone harbors 300 species of birds including giant hornbills, great blue turacos, and red-breasted sparrow hawks. The avian highlight of Nyungwe is the great blue turaco. Blue, red, and green colored birds, turacos fly from tree to tree like a procession of streamlined psychedelic turkeys. The birds in Nyungwe are spectacular. The park has an extensive network of walking trails that lead you through to various waterfalls and viewing points.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner
This morning you will drive to the local airstrip for a flight back to Kigali. Your Deeper Africa guide will meet you at the airport. You’ll have lunch in the city before setting off to Parc National des Volcans. It is a two to three hour drive into the foothills of Rwanda’s Virunga Mountain range and into the park. Created in 1925, Parc National des Volcans is Africa’s first national park, and it takes its name from a string of free-standing volcanoes that stretch across this area. The park boundaries and this “Land of a Thousand Hills,” includes six of the Virunga Volcanoes. These are great, ancient volcanoes towering up almost 15,000 feet (4,572 meters) and nearly covered by rich, green rain forest.

The Virungas were once uniformly covered with forest, but human population pressures have led to intensive deforestation – a process that accelerated to unsustainable levels in the 20th century. The region around the Virungas is one of the remnants of that original, vast forestland. When tourism proved to be a boost to the local economy and a source of hard currency, the steady shrinking of the park’s area stopped.
Rise early and meet up with the Rwandan Park Rangers that will be leading you on your trek in search of gorillas. You'll attend an introductory session at the park headquarters to learn about forest and gorilla trekking etiquette. The guides who will be with you work daily with the gorillas in Parc National. They know each of the family members and understand all the family dynamics. There is a lot that can be learned from these exceptional men. The park service employs about 80 people as guides, trackers, and anti-poaching officers, and they speak both English and French.

You'll hike to the point where the gorillas were seen the day before and track from that point onwards. Trekking can range from one to five hours as you move through the gorilla’s home range. The gorillas are remarkably tolerant of their human visitors. Once you come upon them, it’s impossible not to marvel at their complex behavior and nuanced family interactions.

Gorilla Doctors

Gorilla Doctors is a real conservation success story. The organization proves that our presence and your visits can change the future of an endangered species.

Gorilla Doctors provides veterinary treatment to gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest (Uganda), Parc National des Volcans (Rwanda), and Virunga National Park (DR Congo). Vets, rangers, guides, and other wildlife conservationists monitor the health of each gorilla. They intervene in emergency situations, observe daily interactions, and note health problems as they develop.

INCLUDED

- Breakfast
- Dinner
- Swimming Pool
Embark on another morning of gorilla trekking. There are multiple families of gorillas that live within the boundaries of Parc National des Volcans. There are currently ten groups of habituated gorillas that you can encounter.

World famous American zoologist Diane Fossey based much of her gorilla research in this national park beginning in 1967. The movie *Gorillas in the Mist* was filmed in Parc National. The Susa Family is the family that Fossey studied; they are the largest gorilla family in Rwanda with about 41 members. You usually find them on the slopes of the Karisimbi volcano.

If time and energy allows in the afternoon, your guide can accompany you through the rural countryside and villages of Kinigi and Musanze where you can experience everyday life in Rwanda. Alternatively, you may also visit the little known, but extremely beautiful, twin lakes of Burera and Ruhondo.
Morning drive back to Kigali. Choose between two activities before your international flight this evening. Your first option is to meet up with community members in Nyamirambo, a bustling multi-cultural commercial suburb of Kigali. You’ll get a glimpse into the real life of urban Rwandans, meeting first with your community guide and then visiting a local women’s center, the local market, and also the guide’s home for a cooking lesson. You’ll be able to share a traditional Rwandan meal and have the opportunity to ask questions.

Alternately, you may visit the Gisozi Genocide Museum which commemorates both the suffering of the Rwandan Genocide as well as the country’s healing process following the tragedy. This museum is an international effort, built with the help of funds from Belgium, Sweden, and US-based Clinton Foundation.

**International Flight #1**
- Departs: Kigali, Rwanda
- Arrives: TBD

**International Flight #2**
- Departs: TBD
- Arrives: TBD
INCLUDED IN YOUR SAFARI

• Full board accommodations in all lodges and tented camps
• All meals
• All park and entrance fees
• Experienced and professional safari naturalist guides
• All in-country transportation
• Laundry available at some lodges and camps
• Bottled water available at all times
• Extensive pre-departure briefing and materials including health information, reading list, and map

EXCLUDED IN YOUR SAFARI

• Gratuities
• Alcohol and certain beverages in some camps and lodges

We plan your wildlife adventures in areas where wildlife habitats are known to exist for the season and time you are traveling. Still, animals in the areas you are viewing are not in a zoo. They run freely, and we cannot always anticipate their movements.

Also, Deeper Africa uses best efforts to provide the lodging set out in this itinerary, but occasionally there are circumstances that occur in Africa that require lodging substitutions. We reserve the right to make comparable lodging substitutions whenever necessary.

All pricing is in US dollars. Arrivals and departures through Kigali Airport, Rwanda. Prices do not include international airfare. All itineraries and prices are subject to change. Gorilla permit prices fluctuate; pricing subject to park fees.

2017 CUSTOM PRICING & DEPARTURE DATES

Five Volcanoes:
January 6 - December 31, 2017  ★ Best Value
• 6 guests: $8,899 USD per person
• 4 guests: $8,599 USD per person
• 2 guests: $9,699 USD per person
• Single supplement: $749 USD

Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge:
April - May 31, 2017
• 6 guests: $9,649 USD per person
• 4 guests: $9,149 USD per person
• 2 guests: $10,649 USD per person
• Single supplement: $399 USD

January 6 - March 31, November - December 15, 2017
• 6 guests: $10,599 USD per person
• 4 guests: $10,099 USD per person
• 2 guests: $11,599 USD per person
• Single supplement: $899 USD

June 1 - October 3, December 16 - 31, 2017
• 6 guests: $11,199 USD per person
• 4 guests: $10,699 USD per person
• 2 guests: $12,199 USD per person
• Single supplement: $999 USD

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