

MOUNTAIN GORILLA SAFARI VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK, RWANDA

- Day 1** - Arrive Kigali, met by Origins Safaris representative, view Memorial Museum followed by lunch at Laico Umubano Kigali, PM transfer to Kinigi HQ, 1 o/n Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge
- Day 2** - Early breakfast, 0730 park formalities, 8 am commence 1st Gorilla trek, Pm explore Lake Kivu, dinner & o/n Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge
- Day 3** - Volcanoes National Park, am. 2nd Gorilla trek, lunch then drive to Kigali (2 hours approx), dinner & o/n Kigali Serena Hotel
- Day 4** - Transfer to airport for international flight departure.

Day 1 – Kigali - Rwanda: Land of a thousand hills



Day 1

- Arrive Kigali
- Meet & greet by Origins Safaris representative
- Visit Genocide Memorial Museum (optional tour of Genocide Sites available)
- Lunch: Laico Umubano Kigali
- PM drive to Kinigi HQ
- Accommodation: Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge
- Meal Plan: All meals

You will be met on arrival and taken to visit the Memorial site and museum. Rwanda believes strongly in sharing its recent history to emphasize the country's determination that such atrocities will never happen again. This museum is an incredible, inter-active multi-media presentation. Due to the sensitive nature of this experience we stress that this visit is optional and not for the fainthearted.

After your visit you have lunch at the Laico Umubano Kigali - from breakfast to lunch, dinner or a tasty little snack, Laico Umubano provides balanced choices and à la carte service 24/7, you can count on enjoying a relaxing meal in a friendly, stylish setting. After lunch you drive for two hours on excellent winding tarmac roads through the lush, intensively farmed and re-forested landscape of modern Rwanda to the Kinigi park headquarters. The distinctive 'smoking roofs' as wood fires escape through the gaps in the tiles, the many people you see carrying all sorts of loads and the meticulous farming and terracing is testament to the resurrection of Rwanda from its former 'ground zero', after the genocide ended.



You arrive at the Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge in the late afternoon. This newly opened lodge provides the perfect base ideal for exploring the Volcanoes.



Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge: Situated in the foothills of the mighty Virunga's, the chain of 15,000ft volcanoes stretching through Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Lodge is some 3 kilometers from the main entrance to the Parc National des Volcans in Northwest Rwanda near the border with Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The site itself is approximately one kilometer from the Park boundary on the gentle foothills of Sabyinyo, one of the most impressive of the five volcanoes visible from the site.

From the Lodge there are magnificent views to the verdant slopes of the Virunga Volcanoes to the North and over the agricultural lowlands to the South.



You can make the short journey to the Park headquarters each morning for your gorilla trek in only a few minutes, and the Lodge is a perfect base from which to explore this unique and fascinating corner of Africa.

Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge is owned by SACOLA, a Rwandese community trust with conservation and socio-economic development objectives. SACOLA, which represents some 6,000 households in the area adjacent to the Parc National des Volcans, will use rental and other income from the Lodge to achieve its

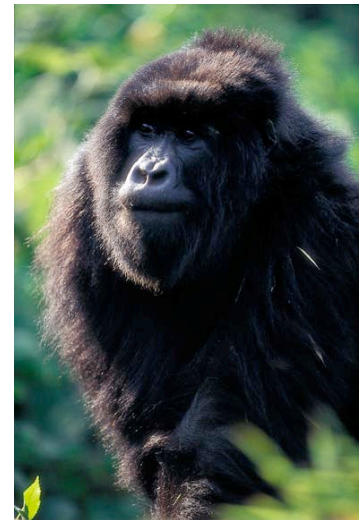
conservation and socio-economic objectives. The lodge has provided immediate benefits to the local community in the form of employment.

The lodge itself comprises a main lodge building, including bar, dining room, library, games room, reception, shop and community awareness centre, and 2 guest suites, 5 cottages and one family complex. The lodge accommodates 16 – 20 clients in the utmost comfort.

All guest rooms and suites are individual cottages carefully positioned on the undulating site to take full advantage of the wonderful views of the Virunga Volcanoes whilst retaining as much privacy as possible. All guest cottages comprise sitting room, fireplace, dressing room, large bathroom with all modern amenities and veranda.

The Virunga Volcanoes: The rainforests of the Virunga Volcanoes are the last refuge of the Mountain Gorilla. The Virungas span Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, with the Parc National des Volcans being the Rwandese element of this ecosystem. The lush slopes of the volcanoes provide an appropriately dramatic natural setting for what is perhaps the most poignant and thrilling wildlife experience to be had anywhere – to see the Mountain Gorilla in its natural habitat. Roughly half of the world's wild population of Mountain Gorillas are resident on the Rwandan slopes of the Virungas. Five habituated families of gorillas are visited, and these families have from seven to over thirty-five individuals each.

Rwanda: A tiny landlocked republic in Equatorial Africa, Rwanda lies on the eastern rim of the Albertine Rift and the watershed between Africa's two largest river systems: the Nile and the Congo. Known as 'the land of a 1000 hills' Rwanda is a mountainous country with a moist, temperate year-round climate. It is the most densely populated country in Africa. French, English and Kinyarwanda are the most widely spoken languages and the population of about 8 million people is largely Christian.



Kigali: Kigali has been the capital of Rwanda since 1965. An attractive city, it spreads over a number of hills and although it saw some difficult times through the genocide in 1994 and as power changed hands subsequently, it now has a pleasant, buoyant air. The main shopping and commercial area is centred around the Hotel Mille Collines, with the government district on the neighbouring Kacyiru hill. The markets, the handicrafts, the Muslim quarter and a new genocide memorial under construction in Gisozi are some of the main places of interest.

Social History: In 1962, under Prime Minister Gregoire Kayibanda, Rwanda gained independence. Ten years later Major General Juvenal Habyarimana came to power. His death in a plane crash in April 1994 unleashed the genocide in which about one million Rwandans are thought to have been killed and nearly twice as many fled into exile. Political and social stability returned to Rwanda in 1999 with the new Government of National Unity.

Days 2 & 3 – Volcanoes National Park

Day 2

- **0600 wake-up call & breakfast**
- **Transfer to park headquarters for park formalities**
- **AM: 1st Gorilla trek**
- **Lunch: at lodge**
- **PM optional excursion to Lake Kivu**
- **Overnight: Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge**
- **Meal Plan: Full board**

Day 3

- **Breakfast**
- **0830 Complete park formalities**
- **AM: 2nd Gorilla trek**
- **Late Lunch at Sabyinyo Silverback Lodge**
- **PM drive to Kigali (2 hours approx)**
- **Overnight: Kigali Serena Hotel**
- **Meal Plan: Full board**

The early wake-up call is rarely needed as the exciting prospect of the day's adventure grips you.. breakfast can be a little slow but freshly cooked before your eyes and a vital foundation for what will be a strenuous but exhilarating day – eat heartily!

You arrive at the park headquarters to complete the paperwork (take your passport with you) and then a short introduction from your tracker about the group you will visit and the precautions to take.

Origins Safaris PO Box 48019 Nairobi 00100. Tel +254 (0) 20 2042695, 2710171; Fax +254 (0) 20 2042698, 2710178
Emergency Cell phone: 0722 707521 Email: steveturner@originsafaris.info Website: www.originsafaris.info



Gorilla Trekking: After approximately half an hour you head off for one of the most exhilarating and moving wildlife experiences you can have: you get so close to these giant primates, observing them observing you – their almost human movements, innate dignity and social interaction make a unique connection within each of us.

The trek to find gorillas can be quite short, but on most days an hour or two of rough hiking each way is necessary. Each visit is by permit and limited to one hour with a professional Gorilla tracker in charge who will coach you in the safety rules and body language required to come close to the Gorilla troops.

The climb begins through the lush terraced farmland of the lower volcanic slopes. As the slopes become steeper and rockier, the vegetation becomes thick and tangled; the guides must use their machetes to help clear a path. Huge trees, clinging vines and undergrowth add to the challenge of swift streams and slippery red mud underfoot. Usually at around 8,000 foot signs of the huge animals become apparent.

Damage to the bamboo trees is an obvious sign as the gorillas relish the young tender shoots and break older stems to suck the sap. The smell of gorilla may waft by in the stray breeze or, if one is really near, it is strong and unmistakable.

This is not a technical climb but it can be a scramble/slide/swing experience as the Gorillas make their way through incredibly lush and dense vegetation – where they go you have to follow. As you near you hear sounds: loud crashes or dull reverberating thuds. The sounds and traces around you stimulate you beyond all normal levels of endurance! When you are within 200 metres you will meet their accompanying trackers, here you leave your bags behind and then you approach these amazing giants, so close and so mesmerising – the hour is over before you have had your fill.

The Mountain Gorilla: gorilla gorilla berengei - Mountain Gorillas were made famous by Diane Fossey who dedicated her life to their future and immortalised them in the film 'Gorillas in the Mist'.

There are no more than 668 Mountain Gorillas remaining in the world today, of which 355 live in the Virunga Volcanoes. In the past poaching and habitat destruction were the main cause for concern. However with publicity, tourism and education regarding the plight of the Mountain Gorilla, the authorities have been able to halt this rapid decline.

There are few animals in Africa about which so many legends circulate. His enormous size, his extraordinary strength and the fact that he lives in mysterious forests of luxuriant vegetation have contributed to his mystique. The troop consists usually of a dominant male and up to five or more females and their young. It is basically a stable family with the young only leaving after they reach sexual maturity. Females join another group while young males remain solitary until they have an opportunity of forming their own troop.

This primate is of impressive dimensions; some males (such as Guhonda the silverback of Sabinyo Group that you may visit) attain over six feet in height and weigh more than 440 pounds. The head is massive and the huge jaws are equipped with powerful teeth. Far from being an aggressive animal, as the legends claim, the gorilla is gentle and peaceful in its habits. It is only when threatened that he adopts an intimidating attitude in which he howls in a most frightful way and beats his chest with his fists. Should visitors find themselves in his presence at this moment, they will be advised to assume a submissive, non-threatening attitude. Once his confidence has been restored, the gorilla goes on about his business accepting the intruder. After lunch you can visit Lake Kivu – an interesting afternoon trip to the beautiful lakeshores: lovely views and local fishing activity.

Day 3: After a late lunch you return to your safari Land Cruiser for the 90-minute road transfer back to Kigali. Tired but exhilarated it's a chance to reflect on your observations of these majestic primates whose captivating behaviour and solemn gaze stay lodged in your memory for years to come...

In Kigali you check into the luxurious Serena Hotel for your last night in Rwanda. We recommend dinner in the hotel.

The **Kigali Serena Hotel:** Situated in Central Kigali, the ambassadorial and commercial heart of Rwanda and the city's pre-eminent meeting place for diplomats and business people. The Hotel is situated only 10 km from Kigali International Airport.





The accommodation comprises of 104 air-conditioned rooms from the Presidential suite, luxury suites to deluxe rooms. The elegant Diplomat Restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, while The Lounge Bar offers a choice of three purpose designed areas: the bar, the lounge and the terrace.

The Kigali Serena Hotel offers sophisticated business facilities, which include two conference rooms accommodating 600/400 delegates each, 3 other meeting rooms and an executive boardroom. A business center provides administrative services and business facilities. The hotel also has a Gymnasium, swimming pool and wifi internet access.

Day 4 – Depart

Day 4

- **Breakfast & check-out**
- **Transfer to Kigali Airport for your international flight departure**

After breakfast and checking out from the Kigali Serena Hotel you are transferred to Kigali International Airport for your international flight departure.



Safari Check-list & General Information

- **Children:** 15 years & under are NOT permitted to visit Gorillas
- **Clothing:**
 - warm clothes including a fleece or light wool sweater
 - lightweight wool socks
 - long-sleeved shirt
 - sleeveless 'bodyvest' or waistcoat with plenty of pockets
 - strong waterproof walking boots
 - sturdy trousers – lightweight advised to release moisture
 - gaiters (to protect lower legs from mud, wet & scratches)
 - sunglasses
 - sun screen
 - a soft, narrow-brimmed hat (peaked/baseball caps not recommended)
 - breathable lightweight rain poncho/parka & rain hood
 - small backpack to carry water
 - gloves recommended to those with sensitive skin or allergy to nettles
- **Communications:**
 - International telephone communication good from Kigali
 - European & American mobile phones with a roaming agreement work in Rwanda. Internet facilities are available at Novotel in Kigali
- **Currency:** Rwandaise Francs: current exchange rate approx 1 US\$ = 550 Rw Francs Any excess Rwandaise Francs are not exchangeable overseas, nor can they be converted back into foreign currency in Rwanda. Airport departure tax from Nairobi & Kigali should be included in ticket price.
- **Diet:** please advise any special dietary requirements in advance. Local specialities: chicken & fish.
- **Electricity:** 230/240 volts at 50 Hz. 2-pin (round) sockets. Some guest houses do not have 24-hour power, but arrangements for recharging batteries can usually be made.
- **Fitness Level:** The standard trek is a strenuous hike of between 1-4 hours each way, (2-3 hours more usual) tracking in thick forest at heights up to 3,000m traversing steep-sided mountains and ravines can be tough, arduous and wet. Visitors must be fit, in good health and properly equipped. Comfortable, tried and tested walking shoes with deep grip/tread are vital.
- **Health:** Anti malaria tablets are essential & visitors should seek current medical advice before travelling; any personal medication required should be carried in hand luggage. Warning: Gorillas are susceptible to most human diseases and if you are knowingly carrying a contagious disease (especially flu) DO NOT attempt to trek.
- **Guides & Chauffeurs:** English speaking
- **Language:** English & French, although Swahili is understood
- **Mineral Water:** Bottled mineral water is advised and included with meals in the tour price
- **Park Rules:** A National Parks Guide will accompany all groups to the gorillas, and on entry to the National Park will advise you of the rules for Gorilla observation
- **Passport:** All travellers to Rwanda must have a valid passport
- **Permits:** These are mandatory for Gorilla viewing. Permits are non-refundable except for medical reasons and a medical certificate has to be provided. Gorilla viewing can be denied at short notice because of national park or border closures, security changes or gorillas going out of range. In such circumstances refunds are at the discretion of the authority and are not within the company's control. Obtaining a gorilla permit therefore is not a guarantee of seeing a Gorilla
- **Time:** Rwanda is 2 hours ahead of GMT
- **Visas:** Currently for Rwanda: Travellers from the UK, USA, CANADA, GERMANY, SOUTH AFRICA & SWEDEN DO NOT REQUIRE VISAS. NB Under special circumstances we can assist in obtaining visas on arrival in Kigali. Please contact us well in advance.