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DESTINATIONS   AFRICA   THE GREAT APES OF UGANDA AND RWANDA



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## Expedition Details

Expedition Details
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Set off on a once-in-a-lifetime journey into the lush hills of Uganda and Rwanda to encounter chimpanzees and mountain gorillas in the wild. Observe chimpanzees with a primatologist, and track gorillas in the forests of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Parc National des Volcans. Stay in stunning lodges, from a lakeside bungalow at the foot of the Rwenzori Mountains to a hilltop eco-lodge with spectacular views of Rwanda’s volcanoes.

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After breakfast, take a short boat ride to Ngamba Island to visit the Chimpanzee Sanctuary, established in association with the Jane Goodall Institute. The island, home to hippos, otters, monitor lizards, and many species of birds, provides a natural habitat for chimpanzees that have been orphaned or rescued from captivity. After a talk with a caretaker, watch these fascinating creatures from a special viewing platform. Later, encounter a broad spectrum of indigenous wildlife and plants at the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre.  
*Lake Victoria Serena Resort (B,L,D)*

Days 4 & 5 — **Kibale National Park**

Travel to Kibale National Park, stopping in Fort Portal, a market town at the foot of the snowcapped Rwenzori Mountains. Keep an eye out for black-and-white colobus monkeys as we continue the scenic drive to our lodge, set on a crater lake against a backdrop of high peaks. After breakfast the following day, head into Kibale National Park, whose tropical rain forests harbor 13

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different primate species, including chimpanzees, black-and-white colobus, red tailed and blue monkeys, and the rare l'Hoest's monkey. Take a short walk in the Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary, on the lookout for primates, butterflies, and some 200 species of birds. Later, a resident primatologist joins us for a special talk.

*Kyanninga Lodge (B,L,D daily)*

## Days 6 & 7 — Kibale National Park/Queen Elizabeth National Park

Spend a second morning tracking chimpanzees with our primatologist. Then stop at the Equator on our way to Queen Elizabeth National Park, home to a high concentration of Uganda's mammals, as well as more than 600 species of birds. The next morning, set out on safari to look for elephants, lions, hyenas, and Ugandan kobs among the park's volcanic craters and gorges. In the afternoon, enjoy a wildlife cruise along the Kazinga Channel, home to large concentrations of hippos, crocodiles, and water birds.

*Mweya Safari Lodge (B,L,D daily)*

## Days 8 & 9 — Queen Elizabeth National Park/Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

Leave the park via the southern plains of Ishasha, known for its tree-climbing lions. Stop to view wildlife and enjoy a picnic lunch as we travel towards Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Visit a local clinic to learn how doctors provide healthcare in this remote area. In the thick forests that blanket the hills of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, roughly half of the world's remaining mountain gorillas make a home alongside rare birds and a wealth of other wildlife. Early the next morning, head out with park rangers to track mountain gorillas. Sit among these gentle giants, observing their interactions, listening to their distinctive grumbles, and viewing one of the planet's most endangered creatures from an awe-inspiring, up-close perspective. Time permitting, take an afternoon walk to waterfalls set amid tree ferns and orchids, or pay a visit to a nearby village. This evening, watch a Batwa Pygmy dance performance.

*Bwindi Safari Lodge (B,L,D daily)*

## Days 10 & 11 — Parc National des Volcans, Rwanda

Cross the border into Rwanda and settle into your private *banda*, or villa, perched on a hilltop with stunning views of the surrounding volcanoes and lakes. Meet experts at the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund's Karisoke Research Center to learn about ongoing conservation efforts and a recent National Geographic-funded study that shed more light on ape health and evolution. Spend the next day tracking mountain gorillas with local guides in the forested hills of Parc National des Volcans, where National Geographic grantee Dian Fossey conducted research on gorillas for 18 years. In the afternoon, meet children at a local school and watch a performance of traditional Rwandan dances. Tonight, celebrate your encounter with the great apes at a farewell dinner. *Virunga Lodge (B,L,D daily)*

## Days 12 & 13 — Parc National des Volcans/Kigali/U.S.

Set out into the lower, flatter reaches of the park on the lookout for golden monkeys, a distinctly colored species now considered one of the most endangered primates in Africa. After lunch at the lodge, travel to the airport in Kigali for your flights home, arriving the next day. *(B,L)*

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