Mufumbiro Cost:410$

Mufumbiro Mountains ,  volcanic range north of [Lake Kivu](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/319745/Lake-Kivu) in east-central Africa, extending about 50 miles (80 km) along the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, [Rwanda](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/514402/Rwanda), and [Uganda](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/612597/Uganda). The range runs east-west, perpendicular to the rift valley in which lie Lakes Kivu and Edward. Of its eight major volcanic peaks, the highest is [Karisimbi](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/312341/Mount-Karisimbi), at 14,787 feet (4,507 metres). The name Virunga (“Volcanoes”), probably of Swahili derivation, has prevailed over the earlier Mufumbiro (“That Which Cooks”), which is still used in Uganda. Individual volcanoes bear Rwandan descriptive names, such as [Sabinio](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/515089/Sabinio) (Sabinyo; “Old Man with Large Teeth”) and Muhavura (“Landmark,” or “Guide”).

The six volcanoes of the centre and east are extinct. [Mikeno](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/381973/Mount-Mikeno) and [Sabinio](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/515089/Sabinio) are the oldest of these, dating from the early part of the Pleistocene Epoch (the Pleistocene began about 2,600,000 years ago and lasted until about 11,700 years ago); their craters have disappeared, and erosion has imposed a jagged relief. Later in the Pleistocene (about 900,000 to 130,000 years ago), Karisimbi, Visoke, Mgahinga, and Muhavura appeared, all but Karisimbi possessing a crater summit. The crater of Muhavura contains a small lake. Not more than 20,000 years ago [Nyiragongo](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/423132/Mount-Nyiragongo) and [Nyamulagira](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/423002/Mount-Nyamulagira) emerged at the western end of the chain, both with extensive craters. The main crater of Nyiragongo is about three-quarters of a mile (1.2 km) across and contains a liquid lava pool. The lava field of these two volcanoes has remained active, with notable eruptions occurring in 1912, 1938, 1948, the 1970s, and 2002. On several occasions a lava stream reached the shores of Lake Kivu. The 2002 Nyiragongo eruption destroyed much of the nearby city of Goma, Congo, leaving thousands homeless. Many lesser cones flank the major volcanoes.

In 1861 the British explorer John Hanning Speke saw the Virunga Mountains from a distance; in 1876 the British explorer Sir Henry Morton Stanley obtained a clear though distant view of the three eastern volcanoes; and Count Adolf von Götzen, a German, explored the two western volcanoes in 1894. The first maps resulted from the major expedition of Adolf Friedrich, duke of Mecklenburg, which was undertaken in 1907–08. Modern access to the western volcanoes is from Goma and Gisenyi (Rwanda); the remaining mountains are located within the circuit of roads connecting Goma and Rutshuru (Congo), Kisoro (Uganda), and Ruhengeri and Gisenyi (Rwanda).

The Virunga Mountains rise out of densely populated plateaus that are inhabited mostly by Rwandan cultivators and, in certain areas, by cattle herders. The southern sector of Congo’s [Virunga National Park](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/630228/Virunga-National-Park) includes those portions of the mountains that are within Congo; the southern flanks of the central and eastern mountains comprise Volcanoes National Park in northwestern Rwanda; and Gorilla National Park includes the Ugandan slopes of Mgahinga. Conservation protects the mountains’ alpine vegetation, as well as wildlife that includes the golden monkey and the mountain gorilla.