

RWANDA PRIMATES SAFARI 2010

13.08.2009

Day 1 - Kigali - Huye (Butare) - Nyungwe Forest NP.

Arrival KQ 476 ETA 08h10

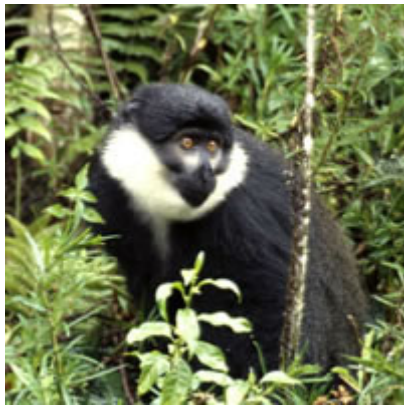
After completing arrival formalities depart for Huye (Butare), the intellectual capital of Rwanda with a university and several academic and research institutions. After Lunch at either Hotel Le Faucon or at Hotel Ibis we'll visit the National Museum - probably the finest ethnographic museum in East Africa and a fascinating source of information on the cultural history of Rwanda and the region.

Leave Butare and drive toward Nyungwe Forest National Park where we will spend the next two days.

Distance & driving times: Kigali-Butare: 135 km - 3h30 including the visits. Butare-Gisakura: 158 km - 2h30 - Good roads.

Accommodation Nyungwe Hill Top Lodge // Gisakura guesthouse (L-D)

Extending for 1,000 square kilometres across the majestic hills of southeast Rwanda, Nyungwe National Park is the largest block of montane forest in East or Central Africa, and one of the most ancient, dating back to before the last Ice Age, its rich biodiversity is unparalleled in Africa. It is home to 13 Types of Primate, over 275 species of birds (of which 25 are endemic) more than 250 different types of tree and shrubs and a myriad of flowering plants including the other-worldly giant lobelia and a host of colourful orchids.



Nyungwe is most alluring for its primates: 13 species in all, including humankind's closest living relative the chimpanzee, as well as the handsome L'Hoest's monkey and hundred-strong troops of the delightfully acrobatic Angola colobus. The avian highlight of Nyungwe is the great blue turaco - an outlandish blue, red and green bird which stream from tree to tree like a procession of streamlined psychedelic turkeys.

An extensive network of well-maintained walking trails leads through the forest to various waterfalls and viewing points.

Day 2 - Nyungwe Forest NP

Nyungwe Forest NP is a paradise for hikers. The terrain is rugged and steep, and you will be at relatively high elevation - so bring warm clothing. Wear good hiking shoes, the trails are steep and slippery!

Your day will start with an early breakfast and a briefing at Uwinka tourist information centre. Then depart with your guide for a morning walk through the forest to track the Colobus Monkeys. In the afternoon take the 4 km, 3 hour **Kamiranzovu Trail** which leads to a quite different ecosystem, a relatively low-lying marshy area rich in orchids (particularly during the rainy season) and localized swamp-associated bird species.

Distance & Driving times: Gisakura Guest House is 40 min and Nyungwe Hill Top Lodge about an hour from the headquarters of Nyungwe NP.

Accommodation

Overnight Nyungwe Hill Top Lodge // Gisakura guesthouse (BLD)

Day 3 - Nyungwe Forest NP

Another early start today as we must be at Park Headquarters by 06h00 to meet our guide for this morning's **Chimpanzee Trek**. Unlike most other primates, chimpanzees don't live in troops, but instead form extended communities of up to a hundred individuals, which roam the forest in small socially mobile sub groups that often revolve around a few close family members such as brothers or a mother and daughter. Male chimps normally spend their entire life within the community into which they were born, whereas females are likely to migrate into a neighbouring community at some point after reaching adolescence.

In the afternoon we take the **Waterfall Trail**. This superb trail takes between three and six hours to cover as a round trip, depending on how often you stop! The first part of the trail passes through the rolling tea plantations and then descends into the forest proper, following flat contour paths through a succession of tree-fern-covered ravines, and crossing several streams, before a sharp descent to the base of the pretty but small waterfall. Monkeys are often seen along the way and this trail can be very rewarding for true forest interior birds, with a good chance of spotting of Albertine Rift endemics such as Ruwenzori turaco and yellow – eyed black flycatcher.

Distance & Driving times: Gisakura Guest House is 40 min and Nyungwe Hill Top Lodge about an hour from the headquarters of Nyungwe NP.

Accommodation

Overnight Nyungwe Hill Top Lodge // Gisakura guesthouse (BLD)



Day 4 - Nyungwe Forest NP - Kibuye

After breakfast we depart for the drive to Kibuye, probably the most attractive of the 3 major towns on the shores of Lake Kivu, arriving in time for Lunch. After all of the walking at Nyungwe, some relaxing moments on the shores of Lake Kivu are bound to be appreciated! This lake is the deepest fresh water lake in Africa and has beautiful beaches, peninsulars and an archipelago of beautiful islands. Afternoon at leisure and maybe a swim - Lake Kivu is Bilharzia free! (B-L-D).

Distance & Driving times: 4h30 hours - bad roads.

Accommodation

Moriah Hill Resort // Hotel Centre Bethanie

Day 5 - Kibuye – Ruhengeri - Kinigi

After breakfast, drive along one of the finest (but difficult) roads of Rwanda with superb views over the lake and its hundreds of islands. Take your time to stop in villages, at road side markets, tea plantations, etc.... Lunch en route

Distance & Driving time:

Kibuye – Ruhengeri – Kinigi: 6 to 8 hours at a leisurely pace, including the stops

For those who would prefer a more leisurely transfer by boat this can be arranged at extra cost. The boat trip from Kibuye to Gisenyi, takes around 4 hours and includes several stops along the shores of Lake Kivu. This is followed by a road transfer from Gisenyi to Kinigi: 1h15 - good road.

Accommodation :

Mountain Gorilla View Lodge // Kinigi Guesthouse or Hotel Muhabura in Ruhengeri (B-L-D)

Day 6 - Gorilla Trekking

After breakfast you will report at the ORTPN headquarters where your driver-guide will assist you with the necessary formalities. You will meet your ranger guide(s) for a briefing about the greatest animal experience ever. We will drive you to the slopes of one of the Virunga volcanoes for your trekking.



Tracking mountain gorillas in the Virungas is a peerless wildlife experience, and one of Africa's indisputable travel highlights. It is difficult to describe the simple exhilaration attached to first setting eyes on a wild mountain gorilla. These are enormous animals: The silverback weigh about three times as much as the average man, and their bulk is exaggerated by a shaggily luxuriant coat. And yet despite their fearsome size and appearance, gorillas are remarkably peaceful creatures (certainly by comparison with most other primates) and nearly everyone who visits the gorillas experiences an almost mystical

sense of recognition. The hike up to the mountain gorillas' preferred habitat of bamboo forest involves a combination of steep slopes, dense vegetation, slippery underfoot conditions after rain and high altitude, but, in the magical hour with the gorillas the financial and physical expense are completely forgotten.

After the trekking return to your hotel for a warm shower and some lunch. In the afternoon, if time allows, we will take a drive to explore the two beautiful lakes close by - Lake Bulera & Ruhondo where, on a clear day, there will also be an excellent view of the complete Virunga chain of Volcanoes.

Accommodation :

Mountain Gorilla View Lodge // Kinigi Guesthouse or Hotel Muhabura in Ruhengeri (B-L-D)

Day 7 - Second gorilla trekking or another activity - or Departure after Breakfast

This day is available for a second Gorilla trek or a variety of other activities, all at extra cost. Chose from a visit to the endangered Golden Monkeys, a climb of the Bisoke volcano, or a trek to Dian Fossey's grave and the site of her original research station at Karisoke. The standard Itinerary will depart Kinigi after breakfast and drive back to Kigali with a visit to the **Iby'Iwacu traditional village** (a community based tourism project where the local community displays the traditional ways of living) en route. Lunch will be in Kigali, followed by a city tour including a visit to the Genocide Memorial.

Distance & driving time: Kinigi - Kigali: 2h30.

Accommodation :

Laico Hotel (ex-Novotel) // Chez Lando Pavillon (B-L-D)

Day 8 - Departure

Early wake up call and transfer to Airport at 02h00

Departure KQ 479 ETD 04h00



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