

## 5 Day Gorilla and Lake Safari – Kampala to Kampala

This trip begins in Kampala, Uganda and travels to the south-west of Uganda before heading back and ending in Kampala.

This trip departs from Kampala early on Thursday morning. Should you wish to explore Kampala, an earlier arrival should be planned and accommodation booked through your consultant.

**Pre Departure Meeting:** Held at the Departure Point at 17h00 the day before your departure.

**Departure Point:** Red Chilli Hideaway, Plot 82, Sunderland Ave, Mbuya, Kampala

**Check-In Time:** The day prior to departure

**Departure Time:** 05h00

**Local Payment:** US\$210

### Please Note:

This itinerary should be used as a guide only and may vary from day to day depending on road & weather conditions, political situations and group decisions.

All prices & Local Payments are subject to change.

Due to Tourism Laws in some of the countries we visit, there may be a truck and crew change during the trip.

Your arrival transfer and pre-trip accommodation in a dorm bed is included in your trip price. Should you choose not to make use of these, or in the event that your consultant was not updated with your arrival details, no refund will be paid for services not used.

Please ensure you've received a copy of our pre departure information document with information on what to expect on this overland safari.

For booking purposes please notify our office as soon as possible should you choose not to trek the Mountain Gorillas.

### Days 1 - 4: **Kampala to Lake Bunyoni (B / L / D)**

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After an early morning departure from Kampala we drive west into the depths of Uganda to our base at the tranquil Lake Bunyoni.

Lake Bunyoni, the deepest Crater Lake in Africa and home to a large and varied number of beautiful birds, is the base from which the optional Gorilla trek takes place. Dependant on where trekking permits are available, we trek in the Magahinga or Bwindi National Parks in Uganda, the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, or the Ruhengeri National Park in Rwanda. The prices of trekking permits fluctuate and may change without prior notice – currently they are priced at US\$500. There is a local transport & handling fee of US\$65 to US\$70 per person (this covers the return public transfer and the Wildlife Authority's booking fee). For trekking in the DRC or Rwanda (the trip leader will advise at the pre departure meeting as to where the permits have been secured, and will assist with the online visa application for Rwanda en-route if needed), we will also have to purchase an additional visa to enter either country, as well as renewing our Ugandan visa upon re-entry. We also advise budgeting a little extra for tips for the local guides and rangers. Please budget accordingly as payment for the permit must be made in US\$ cash at the pre departure meeting.

Trekking Procedures: The mountain gorilla (Gorilla Gorilla Berengei), of which there are still only about 700 remaining, are one of our closest living relatives. A visit to these gentle giants in their natural environment is a unique and wonderful experience - one you'll never forget. The park rangers monitor the gorillas on a daily basis and have a fairly good idea of where they are. However, they are free roaming animals, and their sighting cannot be guaranteed. As the gorillas share much of our DNA, anyone with even the slightest cold or transferable illness will not be permitted to trek. Trekking is also only open to people over 16 years old.



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Due to the restrictions on the daily numbers of visitors to these incredible animals, we depart from our base in Bunyoni in small groups over 3-4 days, depending on the group size. We wind our way through arguably some of the most picturesque scenery in Africa en-route to the National Park. Depending on where permits are available, we may spend a night in either Kisoro or in Rwanda. The following morning, after packing our picnic lunch, we are transferred to a ranger's station where the trek commences. Your rangers will lead you through the cultivated lands and then into the dense rain forest and on to a gorilla family. Trekking can take anywhere from 45 minutes to 8 hours (not including transfer time) and it can be quite strenuous, so a reasonable level of fitness is required. To ensure the gorillas do not get too used to the presence of humans and because they share many of our genes (and therefore able to catch our diseases), the maximum time permitted to spend with them is 1 hour. You will have plenty of time to watch their activity and to take photographs. The rangers will be able to provide you with a background to the family you are visiting. Once your hour is up, you trek back out of the rain forest to your meeting point where you will be transferred back to the Lake Bunyoni campsite.

You needn't feel like you're exploiting these animals. The ever-growing number of tourists trekking them each day play a vital role in their survival. For years they have been ruthlessly hunted for their hands and heads, which have been sold as ashtrays and lampshades! In addition, large numbers have been killed whilst trying to stop poachers stealing the babies for sale to zoos, where they have never lived long. 100% of the gorilla permit cost is used to by the parks authorities to finance patrols that are instrumental in protecting the gorillas from poachers and their lethal snares and on promoting these wonderful animals.

Depending on where the trek takes place you may also pass through some of the local villages that have settled in this region due to the high number of refugees fleeing from the Rwandan Genocide, or from the continued unrest in the DRC. The villagers in this area are mostly subsistence farmers, and families that farm against the slopes of the volcanoes. It is impressive to see how they have ploughed, planted and harvest their crops in such an unlikely landscape.

### Lake Bunyoni

For those of us awaiting our day of gorilla trekking, the choice is yours, visit a local village, orphanage or church, hike in the surrounding hills, canoe, go on a bird watching walk, visit the local markets of Kabale or just spend the days relaxing or swimming in this tranquil lake.

### Day 5: Lake Bunyoni to Kampala (B / L)

After enjoying peaceful Lake Bunyoni, we begin our drive back to Kampala. We cross the Equator for the second time and stop for the classic "one foot in each hemisphere" photo opportunity. On arrival in Kampala, we exchange addresses and part ways, having just experienced a trip of a lifetime!

