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Mountain Gorilla Encounters In Uganda & Rwanda

February 17 – 28, 2020 (12 days)

Join veteran guide Cathy Ann Taylor for one of the most extraordinary wildlife adventures in the world! The dense forests of Uganda’s Bwindi Impenetrable Forest and the verdant mountain slopes of Rwanda’s Volcanoes National Park are the stronghold of the endangered mountain gorilla. Seeing these magnificent creatures in the wild may be one of the most moving experiences of your life. On this trip you’ll have three opportunities to track them on foot, and once found, spend time observing them as they feed, play, and care for their young. Besides gorilla tracking, you’ll follow chimpanzees and other primates as they scamper in the treetops of Kibale National Park, and enjoy a big game safari in the beautiful landscapes of Queen Elizabeth National Park in the Great Rift Valley, with its herds of elephants, hippos, lions, baboons, and fantastic birdlife (more than 600 species!). Cultural interactions are also a part of this trip—the people are some of the most beautiful, friendly, and hospitable you will ever encounter—and you’ll spend a special day with the Batwa people, the “Keepers of the Forest,” who maintain their age-old traditions despite being displaced from their ancient homeland in Bwindi. Our accommodations are in cozy, unique lodges with lots of character.

TRIP DETAILS

Moderate to Strenuous ▶ 4 days moderate to strenuous hiking at medium elevation (maximum ~ 10,000 feet) on sometimes steep, muddy terrain, game viewing, road travel by 4WD vehicle; 9 nights permanent tented camps or lodges, 2 nights hotels

ITINERARY

Depending on your airline routing, you will likely need to leave the U.S. on February 16 (or earlier) to arrive in Entebbe on February 17 (flights departing the US usually arrive in the late evening of the following day). We also highly recommend coming in at least one day early to recover from jetlag.

Day 1, February 17 ▶ Arrive in Entebbe, Uganda

Upon your arrival in Entebbe, you will be met and transferred to the Protea Hotel, set on the shores of Lake Victoria. In the afternoon, we will have our trip briefing and then visit the Entebbe Botanical Gardens for a stroll along its trails leading through extensive collections of plants, including trees from many countries. A bonus is the wonderful birdlife and monkeys! In the evening we gather for a welcome dinner.

D...Protea Hotel

Day 2, February 18 ▶ Kibale National Park

A scenic drive through Uganda's beautiful green countryside—with stops along the way to stretch our legs—brings us through the hilly country below the Rwenzori Mountains to Kibale National Park. Our accommodation is at Primate Lodge, right within the park and sheltered in tropical forest. We stay luxury cottages that are set on wooden platforms with verandas—a great place to sit and watch the life of the forest. The rooms are decorated in an African style and feature comfortable beds and en suite bathrooms. (6-7 hours driving).

B,L,D...Primate Lodge

Day 3, February 19 ▶ Kibale Forest

In addition to harboring about 70 mammal species, Kibale is inhabited by 13 species of primates, including a large number of chimpanzees, making it one of the best places in Africa to track these fascinating creatures. Today we will join local Uganda Wildlife Authority rangers for a walk along forest trails in search of them. We usually hear their pant hoots before seeing them, and once found we try to keep up with them as they scramble overhead through the treetop canopy. Other primates include grey-cheeked mangabeys, and l'Hoest's, black and white and red colobus, and red-tailed monkeys. In the afternoon after a traditional Ugandan lunch at Tinka's we take a walk on a boardwalk trail that leads through the papyrus swamp of the Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary. This is a birder's paradise with about 138 species, and also shelters several monkey species.

B,L,D...Primate Lodge

Day 4, February 20 ▶ Queen Elizabeth National Park

A three- to four-hour drive brings us to Queen Elizabeth National Park (we game drive along the way), set in the western area of the Great Rift Valley. With its sparkling lakes, shady forests, fertile wetlands, and sprawling savannas, the park hosts a wide diversity of wildlife—ideal for our classic

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“big game” safari (there are also more than 600 species of birds). After settling into our rooms at Mazike Lodge, we set off for the first of our game drives in search of the park’s wildlife, including hippos, elephants, and buffalo that thrive in the vast grasslands. At the end of the day we return to Mazike Valley Lodge (Mazike in Luganda mean Chimps), a spectacular lodge located in the Valley of the Apes in the Kyambura Gorge Park adjacent to Queen Elizabeth National Park. The stylish cottages have a contemporary theme with the accent on local artifacts re-imagined in a new context.
B,L,D...MazikeValley Lodge

Day 5, February 21 ▶ Queen Elizabeth National Park

We spend the morning on game drives, with the hope of spotting Ugandan kob, the shy sitatunga antelope, waterbuck, and warthog, as well as some of the park’s 10 species of primates (chimps, baboons, vervet and black-and-white colobus monkeys, and more). Big cats include lion, leopard, civet, and serval cat, but they are very elusive. We also have a very exciting private boating excursion on the Kazinga Channel—just imagine cruising within yards of enormous hippos, with elephants and buffalos grazing on the shoreline!

B,L,D...Mazike Valley Lodge

Day 6, February 22 ▶ Ishasha Sector, Queen Elizabeth National Park

After a game drive in the morning and lunch at the lodge we head south to the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth National Park, famous for its tree-climbing lions that like to perch in the branches of huge fig trees (the only other place they are found is in Lake Manyara National Park in Tanzania). On our game drive to the lodge, we’re virtually assured of seeing buffalo, antelope, and elephant, and well as smaller creatures like warthog and baboon, and there are good possibilities of seeing lion and leopard here. We stay at Ishasha Wilderness Camp, a spacious and comfortable tented camp set on the banks of the Ntungwe River, featuring 10 tastefully decorated twin-bedded canvas tents with en suite bathrooms and showers. At night we’ll relax around the fire before dinner. From the veranda of our tented room, we might see elephants feeding right across the river, and the sound of the rushing water will lull us to sleep.

B,L,D...Ishasha Wilderness Camp

Day 7, February 23 ▶ Ishasha Sector – Batwa Experience – Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park

This morning we head to Buhoma for a fascinating encounter with the Batwa pygmy tribal people, the original dwellers of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest (2 hours driving). They were displaced in 1992 when the forest became a national park and World Heritage Site to protect the 350 resident mountain gorillas. Known as the “Keepers of the Forest,” they have kept their traditions and heritage alive by sharing them with visitors, and we’ll enjoy an incredible hike in the rainforest with Batwa guides, and see how they lived and hunted. We’ll share a traditional meal with them, hear ancient legends, and even test our archery skills with a Batwa bow and arrow! The Batwa Experience is part of a program to improve conditions for the tribe, including schools, hospital and clinics, water and sanitation projects, and more. The Batwa have assumed many of these responsibilities themselves through the Batwa Development Program, which is supported by the Kellermann Foundation, a U.S.-based on-profit organization.

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After our time with the Batwa, we head deeper into Bwindi Forest Park to our lodge at Gorilla Forest Camp, an exclusive permanent tented camp with just eight cabins set right within the thick forest.

B,L,D...Gorilla Forest Camp

Day 8, February 24 ▶ Gorilla Tracking, Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park

We spend most of the day tracking the gorilla families, who have been habituated to humans. They are not tame, but they have been successfully habituated to accept the presence of quiet, non-threatening human observers. We divide up into small groups and head out with our guide and porters. Sometimes the gorillas are easy to find, especially if they have not strayed far from their previous day's feeding area. Other times, we may need to hike a good distance to find them, and this can be arduous, making our way through thick vegetation, up steep, muddy slopes, and encountering stinging nettles and biting ants. Once the gorillas are located, it's an incredible experience to be with them, observing their interactions with each other—and with us (we usually have one hour to observe them). At the end of the day it's wonderful to arrive back at our camp, share stories, and relax after a somewhat tough but exhilarating day!

B,L,D...Gorilla Forest Camp

Day 9, February 25 ▶ Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda

A drive of about 9-10 hours (with many stops including lunch, photography, and border crossing) brings us through a gorgeous countryside—what some have called the “Switzerland of East Africa”—and up through volcanic uplands to Rwanda's Parc National des Volcans (Volcanoes National Park). Our accommodation is at Mountain Gorilla View Lodge, with the volcanoes of Sabinyo (11,923'), Mgahinga (11,397'), and Muhabura (13,540') in the back drop. This is an ideal base for heading out for more gorilla tracking.

B,L,D...Mountain Gorilla View Lodge

Day 10, February 26 ▶ Gorilla Tracking, Volcanoes National Park

We set off on another day of gorilla tracking, starting with a hike up the forested slopes of the Virunga Volcanoes. Our routine is much the same as before, but this park has 10 groups of gorilla families scattered over different parts of the park, from the Sabinyo Group that lives in the giant bamboo forests of Sabinyo Volcano to the Susa Group, which lives on the middle-level slopes of Karisimbi (14,787') at altitudes of 9,000-10,000 feet. We'll divide into small groups and track the gorilla family most appropriate to our strength and hiking abilities.

B,L,D...Mountain Gorilla View Lodge

Day 11, February 27 ▶ Gorilla Tracking & Drive to Kigali

In the morning we have another chance to track gorillas and see a different family group. We then take another incredibly scenic drive to Kigali and overnight at the Kigali Serena Hotel, a full-service hotel with swimming pool, café, bar, and gardens. This evening we celebrate our fantastic adventure with a festive farewell dinner.

B,L,D...Kigali Serena Hotel

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Day 12, February 28 ▶ Depart

After a morning visit to the Genocide Memorial Centre, which commemorates the horrific Rwandan genocide in 1994, we return to the hotel for lunch. In the afternoon we can visit a local crafts market before transferring to the airport for departure on homeward-bound flights, arriving home the following day.

B,L...

(You'll arrive home Saturday February 29)

LAND COST

\$9,095 per person (10-11 members)
\$9395 per person (9 members)
\$9595 per person (8 members)
\$9795 per person (6 - 7 members)
\$3,950 Gorilla & Chimpanzee & Batwa Permits

*Should you choose to pay with credit card there will be a service charge of 3%, the fee we incur from the bank.

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations.

Single Supplement—\$1550 for requested or forced singles. If you prefer single accommodations, you must pay the Single Supplement Fee. If you wish to share accommodations, we'll try our best to match you up with a roommate. If that's not possible, we will still need to charge you the single supplement.

LAND COST INCLUDES...

- Expert leadership of Cathy Ann Taylor and local guides
- Accommodations in hotels in Entebbe and Kigali and safari lodges elsewhere
- Meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Airport transfers
- Sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- Gorilla, chimp, & Batwa permit fees (see separate cost above)
- Ground transportation in comfortable, modern, 4 x 4 vehicles, customized for maximum viewing with open roof hatches
- Flora and fauna guidebooks available for use in vehicles
- Umbrellas, bean bags and blankets in vehicles
- Coolers with bottled water in vehicles
- Map of Uganda & Rwanda

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LAND COST DOES NOT INCLUDE...

International airfare to Entebbe, Uganda, and return from Kigali, Rwanda; day rooms; meals not noted on itinerary; accommodations en route to Africa (if needed); trip insurance (we strongly recommend you purchase the optional trip insurance offered by Cattara, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; excess baggage charges; visa fees for Uganda & Rwanda (currently \$100); airport taxes (usually included in your air ticket price); cost of medical immunizations; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

TRIP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation25% of land cost + permits of \$3950
120 days prior to departure25% of land cost
90 days prior to departure.....Balance

Note – Gorilla, Chimpanzee, and Batwa permits are due at the time of deposit and are nonrefundable.

CANCELLATION FEE SCHEDULE

From time of reservation
until 90 days prior to departure25% of land cost + permits of \$3950
89-60 days prior to departure50% of land cost
59 days or fewer prior to departure.....100% of land cost

EXTEND YOUR ADVENTURE

You may wish to arrive early in Entebbe, Uganda, or extend your stay in Kigali, Rwanda. We can book you additional nights at our group hotel. We also strongly recommend a visit to the Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary, which provides a safe haven for orphaned chimps. Ngamba is just a short boat ride from Entebbe in Lake Victoria. Your visit is an opportunity to watch the chimps up-close in their natural forested environment as they roam the island and forage for food. Day trips leave Entebbe twice a day—you can take a half-day trip, either in the morning or afternoon, or do a full day trip. The full day visit includes two chances to observe the chimps at feeding time. Please call our office for details.

EXPERT LEADERSHIP

Expert leadership is the key to every successful trip. Cattara attracts knowledgeable and gifted leaders who are passionate about guiding trips and truly enjoy sharing the experience with others. They understand the cultures and traditions they work in and are a fountain of information. In addition to making sure everything runs smoothly and safely, Cattara guides enhance your experience by being educators, companions, and the best of friends.

TRIP LEADER



Cathy Ann Taylor, a high altitude trekking and cultural guide for the last 29 years, will be leading his trip. Cathy Ann has trekked all over Nepal, Tibet, India and Bhutan, with well over 200 trips in the Himalayas (she still considers the Himalayas her “second home”)! She has also hiked extensively in the European Alps (Tour du Mont Blanc—five times, The Haute Route, Gran Paradiso, and the Dolomites—two times), the Georgian Caucasus—four times, South America (15 trips in Peru, 1 in Patagonia), Atlas Mountains of Morocco—one time, and Uganda and Rwanda—three times.

She has also reached the summit of Ama Dablam (22,500') in Nepal and Argentina's Aconcagua (22,834'), the highest peak in South America. A devout hiker and mountain biker, she leaves no trail undiscovered, and her passion for the mountains, caring nature, and boundless energy are renowned. Her experience, knowledge, positive attitude (she can find the good in anything!), and her wonderful rapport with the local staff will enhance your experience. With the help of caring and like-minded individuals she has been able to manage the sponsorship of 19 remote village children, all of whom are in boarding school in Nepal or in universities in India, Nepal, and the United States. She consistently gets rave reviews from members of her groups and has quite a following. Cathy Ann is active in the Breast Cancer Prevention Partners and has participated in 16 expeditions, including Mount McKinley, Mount Cho Oyu, Mount Fuji, Mount Shasta, and Mount Rainier, which helped increase awareness of breast cancer (she alone has raised over \$740,000 for the cause!). Cat's special trekking program, Sacred Treks, benefits Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (formerly the Breast Cancer Fund). Past trips include Bhutan, Mont Blanc, Peru, Everest, Ladakh, Mustang, Georgian Caucasus, Sikkim, Dolomites, Cordillera Blanca, and Annapurna Sanctuary treks, and the program has raised over \$745,000. Cathy Ann has also been active in the American Himalayan Foundation and has helped raised \$20,000 for their STOP Girl Trafficking project. Cathy Ann received an honorable mention in *Hooked on the Outdoors* magazine's Outdoor Person of the Year Awards, and also received a letter of recognition for her fundraising and environmental work from former Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi.

Sam and **Male** will be your local guides/drivers on this trip. Cathy Ann worked with them in February 2014 & 2016 and both are outstanding.

PHYSICAL EXPECTATIONS

To really enjoy this extraordinary safari, you should be in good health and physical condition, and have a spirit of adventure and positive attitude. Tracking gorillas can be challenging, and you need to be able to hike from four to six hours each day in search of them (conversely, it may take only a couple of hours to find them, or maybe a whole day!). Additionally, the terrain can be steep and muddy, the temperatures hot and humid, and the vegetation dense (at times, our trackers & guides will be cutting trails for us through the vegetation). We recommend you start training program several months before departure—this can include hiking, running, or mountain biking on hilly terrain, or using the Stairmaster or treadmill at your gym (with a weighted daypack to substitute for outdoor activities). Chimp tracking is far easier—we usually view them from a distance in the forest canopy and the trails are fairly level. Most of our travel is in 4WD vehicles, and there are a few long

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driving days. Game drives may be on roads that are rutted or non-existent. If you have severe back problems, this may not be the best trip for you.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

In addition to a passport, valid for at least six months beyond the date of completion of the trip, you will need a visa for Uganda & Rwanda.

EAST AFRICAN TOURIST VISA

- East Africa Visa \$100.00 - allows travel between Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda with the same entry visa. The holder of the East Africa Tourist Visa shall enter the region from the country that issued the visa and move within the two other countries without applying for another visa or paying another visa fee. This visa can now be applied for online for Uganda and Rwanda. It must be paid for on line in —U.S. dollars or the equivalent in pounds sterling or euros. Note if not paid one's application remains pending. It can be purchased on arrival if you are visiting Kenya first, but must be purchased in advance online if you are visiting Rwanda or Uganda first. The East African Tourist Visa allows you multiple entries to Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda for up to 90 days, and the visa is void once you've traveled outside of these three countries.

Steps to follow while applying for the visa

<https://www.visas.immigration.go.ug/>

Step 1: Choose the type of visa: "Ordinary" (single entry) and East Africa Tourist Visa are the most common.

Step 2: Fill out the requested personal and travel information. Contact in Uganda: Classic Africa Safaris 256414320121. Duration of stay: 3 months.

Step 3: Upload clear copies of current passport, yellow fever certificate and a passport photo. For an East Africa Tourist visa, a travel itinerary and proof of return ticket must also be submitted.

Step 4: Once the online application form is completed and submitted, the applicant will receive a bar-coded email notification of approval. This can take 3 or more days. Once received, this bar-coded email should be printed and brought to Uganda for presentation upon arrival. Upon arrival at any border (entry point), the bar-coded email along with passport and original yellow fever certificate must be presented. The Immigration officer will scan the barcode; take fingerprints and a photograph then a visa will be printed and pasted into the passport.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE

The E-payment was implemented around 20th April 2017. Anyone who applied after that date has to pay online. Below is the procedure: Log onto <https://visas.immigration.go.ug/#/check> with your details to make an online payment IF YOU DON'T GET THE PAY option kindly login and CANCEL the application and begin a fresh application. **OR** Go to Manage Application, fill in the required field, then a screen will pop up with Modify and Cancel options, click Modify and choose the payment option and pay for the visa.

1. MAKE SURE YOU DON'T CANCEL THE PAYMENT WHILE IT'S IN PROGRESS
2. MAKE SURE YOUR INTERNET CONNECTION IS GOOD.

3. We advise you use Google chrome as the browser
4. Without making the payment, your application won't be processed.
5. Modes of payment accepted are Visa or MasterCard

Also note that paying does not guarantee visa approval. You need to keep checking to see the status of your application, in case you need to modify anything in your application you should still use this Link <https://visas.immigration.go.ug/#/check> don't hesitate to contact us for any issues you may get.

For both Uganda and Rwanda (and possibly Kenya and Tanzania), you need to show proof of Yellow Fever vaccination as a requirement for securing your visa. Bring your signed "Yellow Card," or other proof of yellow fever immunization. We recommend CIBT Visa Service (www.cibtvisas.com) or Trivisa Outsourcing (www.trivisaoutsourcing.com). Both agencies have detailed information on obtaining visas and the correct forms. Citizens of countries other than the US should check with the consulates of Uganda and Rwanda (and Kenya or Tanzania if necessary) for entry requirements. Apply for your visas at least 45 to 60 days before departure because the process takes time.

We recommend making a photocopy of the photo page of your passport and carrying it separately from your passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, a photocopy will help the local consulate speed up authorization for replacement. Also bring several spare passport photos—they're handy in case of unexpected visa or permit requirements.

Note—most countries requiring visas need a completely blank page on which to stamp the visa, so your passport should contain at least one blank page for each country you plan to visit.

AIR TRAVEL

Airfare is not included in the land cost of the trip. For air reservations, please contact the airlines directly, either by phone or via the Internet. Plan your arrival in Entebbe by the noon of Day 1, or arrive a day early if you can to recover from jet lag. Many travelers elect to use their "frequent flyer" miles when traveling, but please check with us before purchasing or obtaining your tickets. We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip. Note—Names on air tickets and passports must match!

MEDICAL MATTERS

A Yellow Fever vaccination or a signed waiver from your physician is required to enter both countries at this time (see information under "Travel Documents," above). Not all travelers are asked to show proof of vaccination upon entry, however it is a requirement and you may be denied entry if you are not able to prove you have been immunized.

No other vaccinations are currently *required* to enter Uganda and Rwanda, but immunizations for typhoid, tetanus, hepatitis A & B, and polio are *recommended*. These regulations and recommendations change frequently, so please check with your local health department or the CDC for more information (www.cdc.gov). In addition, **malaria** is a potential health risk. The CDC website has good information on this and you should confer with your physician for further advice regarding malaria prophylaxis and recommended immunizations. Long sleeve shirts and pants are the best ways to avoid insect bites.

Mango flies are found in Uganda, especially in hot and humid areas. They can get under human skin through clothing that has not been ironed, sweaty or wet hats, pool towels, cushions from outdoor furniture, etc. We recommend making sure any laundry you have done during your stay is properly ironed or tumble dried. If you wear hats/caps during the trip, please make sure they are washed, if they get sweaty, and either ironed or dried inside. This also applies to any clothing you wash yourself.

Please advise us of any pre-existing medical conditions that may affect your health on the safari (recent injuries or surgeries, chronic illnesses, etc.). Hospital facilities for serious medical emergencies may be far away and evacuation can be difficult (and expensive).

To avoid intestinal problems while on the trip, do not drink tap water or even use it to brush your teeth—drink bottled water only. Your trip leader will also give you more guidelines on staying healthy while in Africa. Bottle water will be provided each day in the jeeps. We recommend you bring your own personal first-aid kit, which should include antibiotics (Cipro, Azithromycin, or other), painkillers, and allergy medicines if you are prone to allergic reactions. The trip leader will also carry a basic kit for emergencies, but will not have any prescription medications.

MONEY MATTERS

You should bring enough money for any souvenirs you may buy, plus a few meals that are not included in the cost of the trip (e.g. various meals in Entebbe, or meals and accommodation en route to Africa). Depending on how much of a shopper you are, \$400-\$500 is usually enough for incidentals and souvenirs. You should bring an additional amount for optional gratuities to the trip leader and local staff. Trip members often ask for guidelines on tipping the trip leaders. Typically, trip members tip the trip leader at least US \$500 per guest (presenting this personally rather than collectively gives you the opportunity to say thank you individually and is greatly appreciated) and at least \$10 – 15 per day per guest for each of the two local guide/drivers. On the gorilla tracking portion of the trip, porters are hired to carry your daypacks. We recommend a tip of about US \$5 per person per trek. Typically trip members tip porters (bellman) at hotels \$1.00 and the same for waiters at hotels/restaurants.

Bring some of your money in traveler's checks and most in cash (USD notes must be year 2006 or newer and in good condition). Bring along your credit card in case of emergencies. Credit cards are also generally accepted in Uganda and Rwanda's five-star hotels and restaurants, and ATMs are not readily available in Uganda and Rwanda. The currency in Uganda is the Ugandan shilling (approximately 3,400 shillings to the dollar) and in Rwanda, the local currency is the Rwanda franc (about 800 francs to the dollar).

WEATHER & CLIMATE

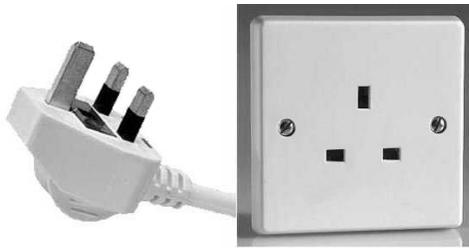
Uganda and Rwanda have generally pleasant weather year-round, with December through March the warmest months. Daytime temperature ranges from 70-80 degrees and from 60-70 degrees at night. Rain showers are always possible.

INCIDENTALS

Laundry: Laundry service is available complimentary at some of the lodges and camps and at others for a low cost. You can always hand-wash a few essentials in your bathroom basin. Synthetic fabrics are the easiest to wash, and they dry quickly.

Electricity: Uganda has the 240V system and sockets are usually the three-pin rectangular variety, but they vary. Rwanda has the 240V at 50 Hz and uses the round two-pin variety. If you are planning to use something like a hairdryer or electric shaver at the hotels in Entebbe or Kigali, bring a converter and a selection of plug adapters (you can buy these in drugstores or travel specialty stores in the U.S.).

The picture shown below is the type of plug you are most likely to find in Uganda. You may also wish to bring a cigarette lighter adapter that can be used while in vehicles.



The electrical current in **Rwanda** is also 240 volts. In addition, plugs are usually two-pin, round (as in Europe). The pictures shown below are the types of plugs you are most likely to find in Rwanda.



Telephone & Internet: Telephone communication can be quite good in Entebbe & Kigali but more difficult in the bush or mountains. Check with your mobile companies about roaming in these areas. Local sim cards (for the old flip phones) can be purchased in the airports or at local shops. Internet works at most of the lodges but it can be sporadic. In Entebbe and Kigali the connections are very good.

Time Zones: Uganda is 11 hours and Rwanda is 10 hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time. If it's 8:00 am in California, it's 7:00 p.m. in Uganda and Rwanda 6:00 p.m.

WHAT TO BRING: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT LIST

Packing Notes

It's best to go as light as possible and take only the essentials. Excess baggage can be a burden, not only to you but to support personnel.

Luggage

- Duffel bag. A good size is about 14" x 30". It should have a full-length zipper (for easy access), be soft-sided, and be sturdy and water-resistant or waterproof, wheeled duffels are okay.
- Daypack with a capacity of 1,500 to 2,000 cubic inches, with a good padded waist belt. It can double as your carryon bag. Always bring all irreplaceable items, such as camera, medications, important documentation, and hiking boots in your carryon luggage.
- Spare roll-up duffel. Great for bringing home those wonderful souvenirs! It should be lockable.

Clothing Notes

Bring comfortable clothing that will protect you from chilly mornings and possibly wet weather. (Our dawn or dusk game drives in open vehicles can be rather chilly.) Be prepared with lightweight clothing for safari to protect you from the sun. Synthetic fabrics are the most effective barriers against the cold. They provide the best insulation, are light in weight, wick away perspiration, and dry quickly if wet. Wool and wool/synthetics are also suitable. Layering is the way to go. While tracking gorillas, stinging nettles and biting safari ants can be nuisance, so shorts are not recommended, even though you will probably get hot and sweaty while hiking the steep hills. Your safari clothing, especially for tracking gorillas, should be in muted colors—bright or white clothing should not be worn. Military clothing is strictly prohibited.

Underwear

- Regular underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry.
- Lightweight thermal underwear. It can get cold at the lodge in Rwanda so you can use them to sleep at night.

Socks

We recommend you bring two outer pairs and a liner (if you wear liners).

- Lightweight hiking socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for your hiking boots. Long socks are nice for tucking your pants into to protect from insects.

Shirts

- Long-sleeved, synthetic shirts.
- Short-sleeved, synthetic shirts.

Pants

- Full-length pants, preferably of quick-drying synthetic fabric.
- Hiking shorts, preferably of quick-drying synthetic fabric. For safari only, not suitable for gorilla tracking.

Outerwear

- Medium-weight jacket of synthetic fabric, such as fleece.
- Rain/wind shell.
- Lightweight rain pants, preferably with full-length side zipper (must fit over your other pants).
- Light gloves synthetic gloves or garden gloves to protect your hands from nettles while tracking gorillas.

Head Gear

- Sun hat with wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off, or baseball cap.
- Lightweight synthetic or wool cap for warmth.
- Bandana. A generally useful item—it will keep your neck from getting sunburned and can double as a hand towel in the field.

Footwear

Please break new boots in well before the trip.

- Lightweight, sturdy hiking boots with padded ankle, good arch support, and lug sole for traction. Your hiking boots should be waterproofed and well broken in.
- Tennis shoes, river type sandals, or slip on clogs to wear in lodges and in vehicles.
- Knee-high or ankle gaiters (optional, but useful during gorilla tracking for the muddy conditons).

Other Items

- Water bottle, 1 or 1.5 quart capacity. Make sure it is leak-proof and heavy duty.
- Hiking Stick – one is useful for the tracking days
- Set of casual city clothes that are dressier than your safari clothes.
- Toiletry kit—biodegradable soap, toothbrush, etc. Many of the lodges provide amenities.
- Small roll of toilet paper to have in your daypack in the jeeps.
- Purell hand sanitizer for quick hand washing and hygiene (a must!).
- Personal medical kit.
- Ace bandage or brace if you're prone to sore knees or ankles.
- Sunglasses (100% UVA/UVB protected).
- Spare pair of prescription glasses, prescription sunglasses, or contact lenses.
- Sunscreen lotion and lipstick of SPF 25 or higher.
- Insect repellent with about 30% deet. There are biting ants (be sure to tuck your pant legs into your socks).
- Small headlamp with spare batteries.

CATTARA

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- Extra passport photos. Keep them with your travel documents as you may need them throughout your journey.
- Money belt or neck pouch to store cash.
- Pair of binoculars—essential for bird and wildlife watching.
- Swimsuit for hotel or lodge pools.

Optional Travel Accessories

- Camera and plenty of memory cards, extra batteries.
- Swiss Army-type pocket knife.
- Repair kit with needle, thread, and safety pins.
- Powdered electrolyte mixes for your water.
- Your favorite trail snacks, especially if you have allergies or dietary restrictions.
- Reading and writing material.

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