

Gorilla Tracking

A pre-travel pack for gorilla and chimpanzee tracking in Uganda and Rwanda.

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“Your Journey to Africa Starts Here: Growth, Grace & Grandeur!”

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TRACKING INFORMATION

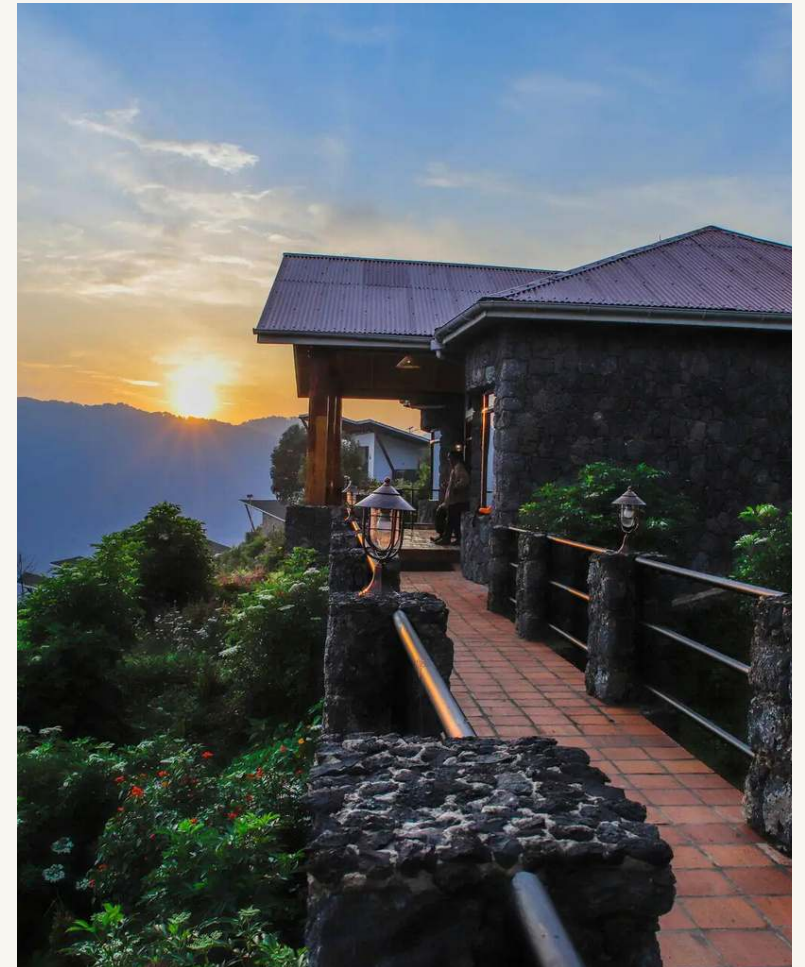
What to expect

On the morning of your trek, you'll meet your guide, who can help arrange a porter or two from the local community. Porters are invaluable for carrying your pack and helping you navigate steep, slippery terrain.

Hiring a porter costs around \$15 per day, and while tipping is optional, it's recommended to bring small dollar bills for your porter, guide and tracker.

Since porters don't hold tracking permits, they will stop a short distance from the gorillas. You'll then take only your camera and essentials, leaving valuables safely at your lodge or camp. Once you reach the gorillas or chimps, you'll have a strictly limited hour with them, maintaining a distance of 5 to 7 metres to prevent overexposure and protect them from disease.

Even from a few metres away, crouching beside a gorilla family, watching a majestic silverback and playful youngsters, is an unforgettable experience that will stay with you forever.



A photograph of a gorilla resting in a dense forest of green foliage. The gorilla is the central focus, lying down and partially obscured by the surrounding plants. The lighting is soft, creating a natural and serene atmosphere.

TRACKING INFORMATION

Gorilla & chimpanzee tracking

Gorilla trekking is undeniably one of Africa's most breathtaking wildlife experiences, but proper preparation is key to making the most of your adventure.

The top destinations to see mountain gorillas in their natural habitat are Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in Uganda, both remote, mountainous reserves with dense vegetation and unpredictable weather. Being well-prepared will ensure a more enjoyable trek.

DURATION & FITNESS

Gorilla families are constantly on the move, so your trek could last anywhere from one hour to a full eight hours of hiking through steep, humid, high-altitude terrain. The journey can be demanding, especially if your guide has to carve a fresh path through the rainforest. A good level of fitness is essential to fully enjoy the adventure.

CHIMPANZEE TREKKING

Compared to gorilla trekking, chimpanzee trekking is generally less strenuous, but it still requires a reasonable level of fitness. Chimps are fast and agile, often moving swiftly through the forest, so trekkers may have to follow them over uneven terrain.

TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Travel insurance & visas

Travel insurance is essential for every safari traveller. Safari.com can arrange cover for your trip, with a range of packages to suit different needs and budgets. Your safari specialist will walk you through the current options.

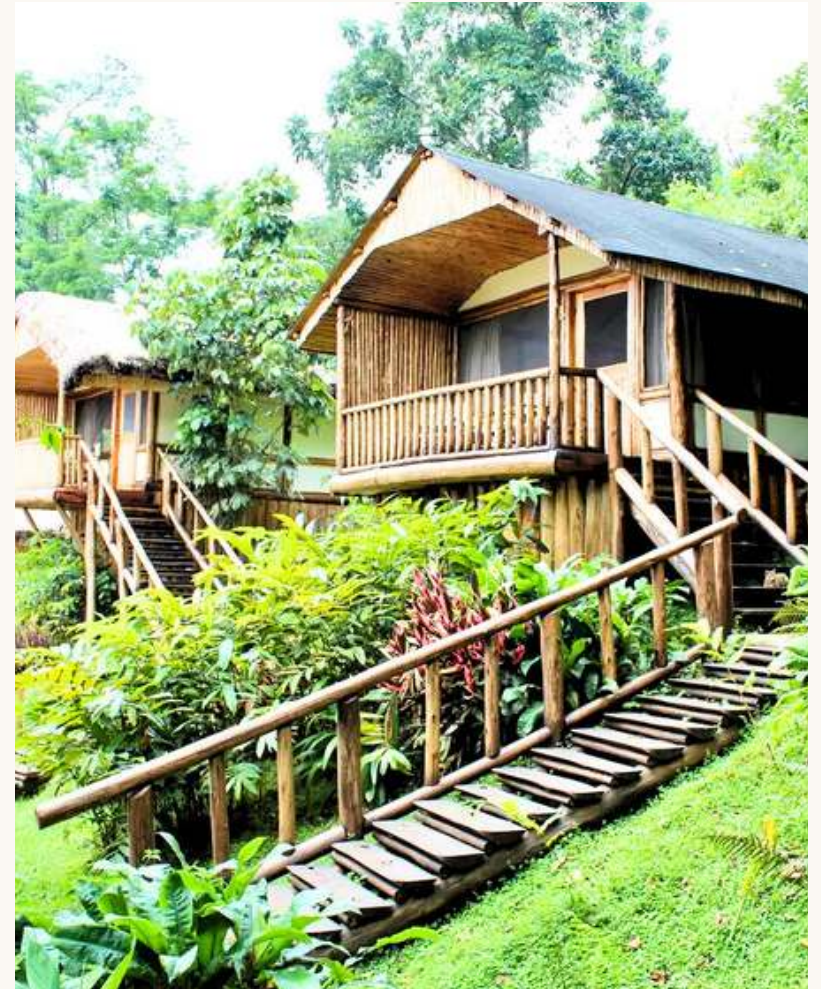
Not yet insured? [Submit the travel insurance form](#) and we will arrange it for you, time permitting.

Uganda and Rwanda both require eVisas for most nationalities. See our [Uganda & Rwanda eVisa application guide](#) for the full walkthrough, or use Sherpa for live, passport-specific entry rules:

Uganda [US passport](#) · [UK passport](#) · [Australian passport](#)

Rwanda [US passport](#) · [UK passport](#) · [Australian passport](#)

Travelling on a different passport? Click any link above and change the country of passport issue on Sherpa.



TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Essential travel documents

Passport

Must be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date. Ensure it has 4 consecutive blank pages.

Visa documents

Printout of your visa approval if required by your destination country. Confirm the visa type (tourist, business, etc.) and its validity.

Documents on travel

Printed and digital copies of your general information document including flight bookings, departure and arrival details, and confirmations of hotel bookings or stay arrangements.

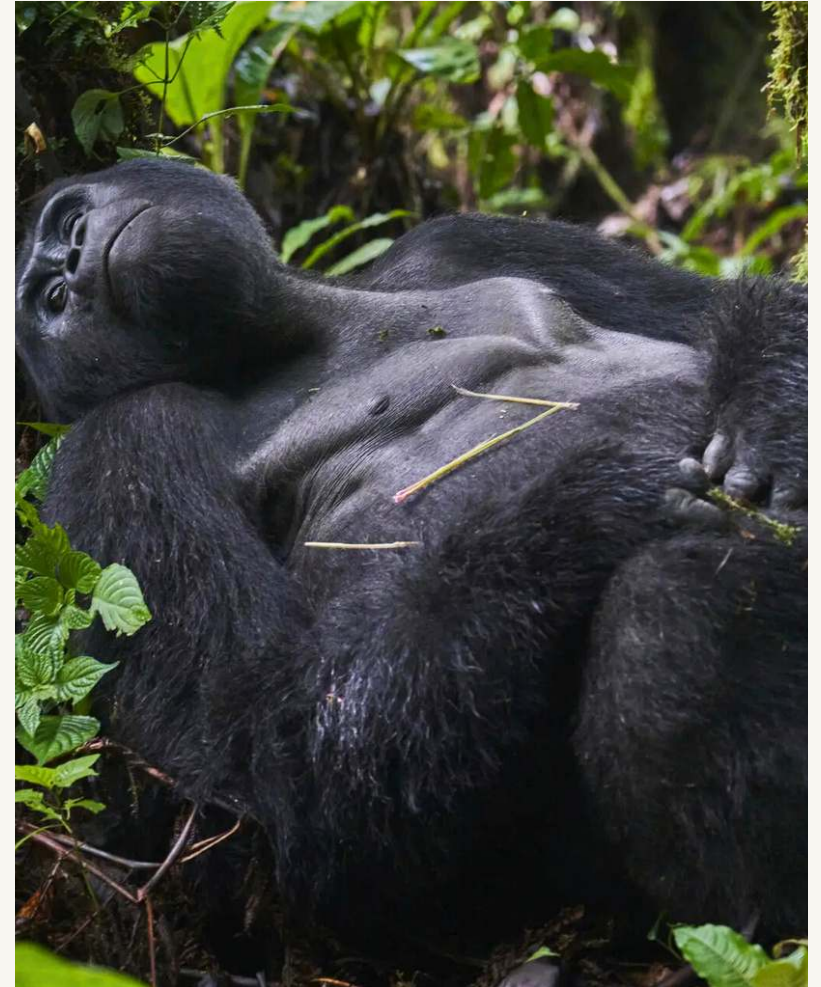
Proof of travel insurance.

Health documents

A doctor's note with prescriptions if you're carrying medication.

Emergency contacts

List of emergency contacts, including family and friends, and your country's embassy in the destination country.



TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Airport taxes and baggage

AIRPORT DEPARTURE TAXES

Many African airports charge departure taxes, typically included in your ticket price. However, some require direct payment in US dollars, ranging from \$3 to \$50 per person. For specific details, consult your Safari.com specialist or check your flight reservations online.

COMMERCIAL FLIGHT BAGGAGE POLICIES

CHECK-IN LUGGAGE

Weight: 20 kg (44 lbs)

Size: 90 cm (H) × 72 cm (W) × 45 cm (L)

HAND LUGGAGE

Weight: 8 kg (17 lbs)

Size: 56 cm (H) × 36 cm (W) × 23 cm (L)

LIGHT AIRCRAFT RESTRICTIONS

When taking charter flights on light aircraft, pack in a soft-sided bag with a maximum weight of 15 kg (33 lbs) per person. Most safari lodges offer laundry facilities, allowing you to minimise your clothing.

You can also store excess luggage at your hotel or the airport if you're returning there. Some charter companies have a weight limit of 100 kg per person; if you exceed this, be aware that you may need to pay for an additional seat due to weight distribution requirements.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

General health requirements

Travellers should be free of communicable diseases like tuberculosis and cholera, which are common in some areas. It's essential to carry sufficient supplies of any special medications along with wrist tags, physician's instructions and prescription details for emergencies.

For physically demanding activities such as walking, trekking or rafting, a physician's letter confirming fitness is required.

Entry regulations for children vary by country, so please consult your safari specialist for the latest guidance.



HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Important vaccinations & health risks

IMPORTANT VACCINATIONS FOR TRAVEL

Yellow fever requirements depend on your country of origin and country of travel. Some countries require proof of vaccination if you are arriving from a yellow-fever-endemic country. Consult your doctor or a travel clinic, and your safari specialist will flag the latest entry requirements before you fly. If exempt for medical reasons, a letter from your GP is required.

HEALTH RISKS TO CONSIDER

Travellers' diarrhoea. Common; maintain good hygiene and be cautious with food and water.

Altitude sickness. Risks associated with high-altitude trekking; acclimatisation is necessary.

Insect-borne diseases. Protect against dengue and Zika virus; use insect repellent and wear protective clothing.

Access to healthcare. Medical facilities may be limited in rural areas. Carry a basic medical kit, know how to seek help, and bring necessary medications, prescriptions and medical documents for emergencies.



MONETARY GUIDE

Manage currency in East Africa

Can I exchange currency in East African countries? You can easily convert cash to local currency at airports, hotels or banks.

TIPS FOR MANAGING CURRENCY IN EAST AFRICA

Currency exchange

You can easily convert cash to local currency at airports, hotels or banks.

Small denominations

Bring small bills for tips and gratuities, as it can be difficult to find change at lodges.

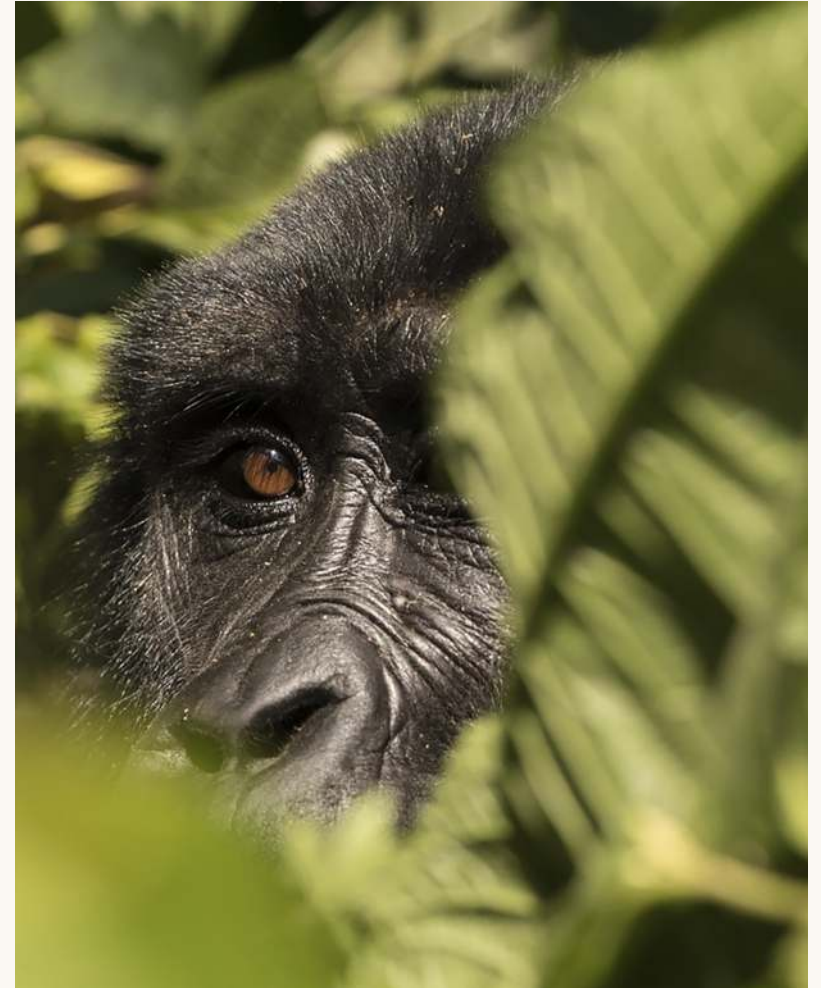
Check your bills

Ensure your USD bills are printed after 2006, as older notes won't be accepted.

Credit cards and ATMs

MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted, but transaction fees may be higher. ATMs are available in larger towns, though they may occasionally be out of order or affected by power cuts.

Always here for you, before, during and after your safari. We streamline your choices for the perfect safari.



MONETARY GUIDE

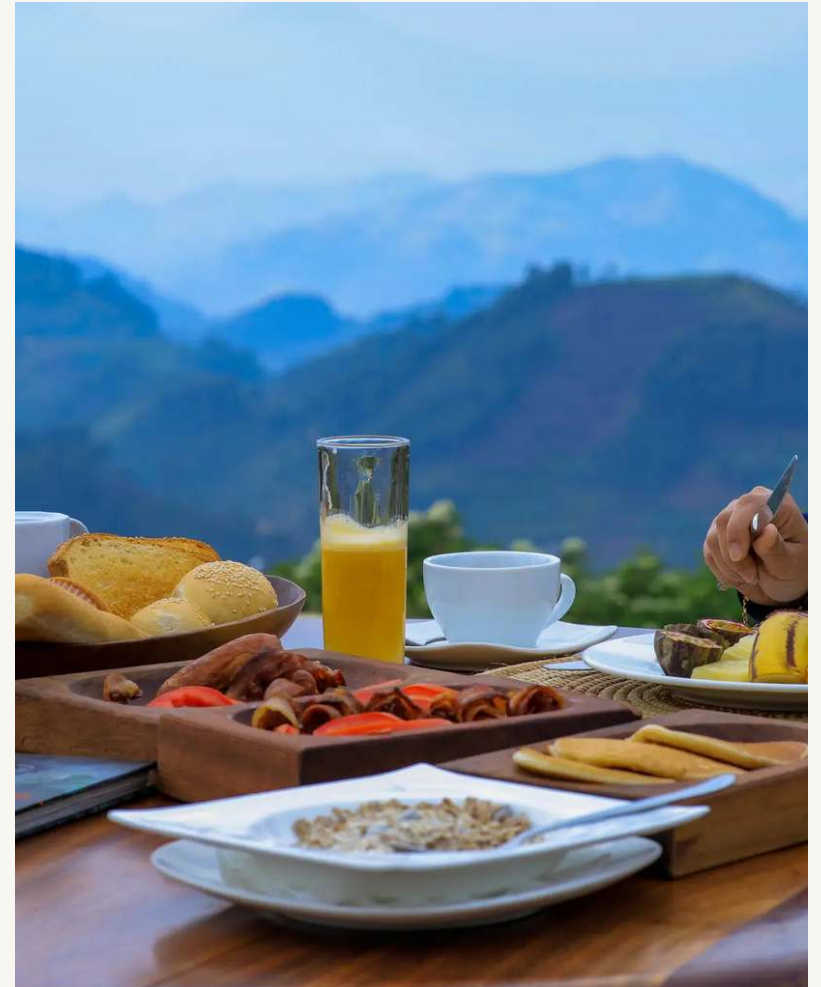
Tipping and gratuities

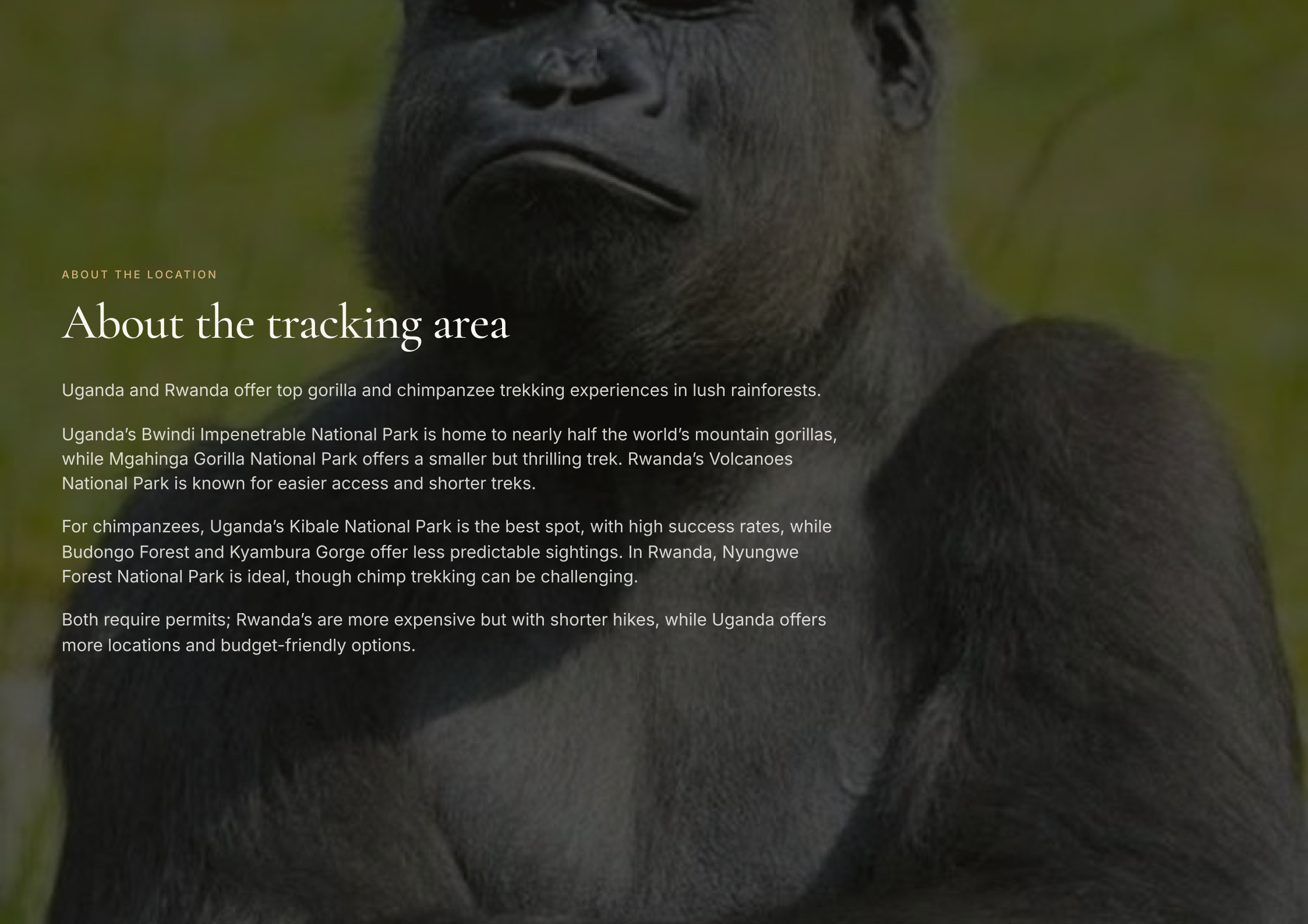
At Safari.com, we recommend tipping about \$10 per day for your guide or tracker, and a similar amount for general staff (porters, cooks, cleaners, waiters and others).

Some lodges have anonymous tip boxes, but you can also give gratuities directly to those who assist you. For city hotels in Southern Africa, a tip of R20 per person is standard for porters.

When dining out, the usual tip is 10 to 15% of the total bill, depending on service quality. Larger groups of 5 to 6 people might have a gratuity included in the bill, so check to avoid double tipping.

Remember, gratuity is at your discretion.





ABOUT THE LOCATION

About the tracking area

Uganda and Rwanda offer top gorilla and chimpanzee trekking experiences in lush rainforests.

Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is home to nearly half the world's mountain gorillas, while Mgahinga Gorilla National Park offers a smaller but thrilling trek. Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park is known for easier access and shorter treks.

For chimpanzees, Uganda's Kibale National Park is the best spot, with high success rates, while Budongo Forest and Kyambura Gorge offer less predictable sightings. In Rwanda, Nyungwe Forest National Park is ideal, though chimp trekking can be challenging.

Both require permits; Rwanda's are more expensive but with shorter hikes, while Uganda offers more locations and budget-friendly options.

ABOUT THE LOCATION

Uganda and Rwanda

UGANDA

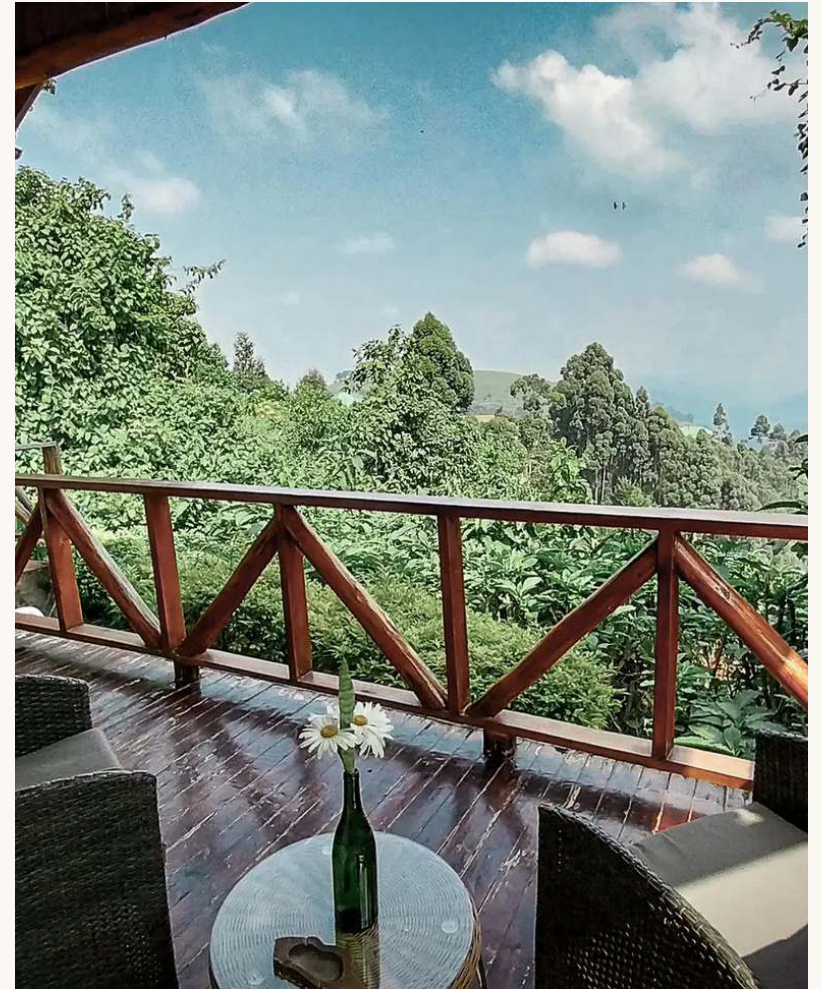
Located on the Equator, Uganda enjoys a tropical climate with an average annual temperature of 22°C (72°F). Higher-altitude areas like Bwindi Impenetrable Forest can be significantly colder, so packing warm layers is advisable.

With an annual rainfall of 125 cm (49 in), Uganda experiences frequent rain, so a waterproof jacket and a waterproof bag for your camera are essential. English is the main language, and the country's infrastructure is sound and continuously improving.

RWANDA

Rwanda has a warm tropical climate, with average temperatures ranging between 24°C and 27°C (75°F to 81°F). August and September are the hottest months, while the country experiences two rainy seasons, from March to May and June to mid-September.

The official languages of Rwanda are Kinyarwanda, French, English and Kiswahili, reflecting its diverse cultural and historical influences.



TRACKING TRAVEL TIPS

Suggested items to pack

Insect repellent

Choose a strong formula to protect against bugs, particularly mosquitoes.

Binoculars

A good pair is essential for wildlife viewing. Ensure they are lightweight and portable.

Day bag

A small backpack or tote to carry daily essentials.

Hat and sunscreen

To protect against the sun during daytime excursions.

Water bottle

A reusable, sturdy bottle to stay hydrated throughout your adventures.

Camera and lenses

Don't forget a waterproof bag to protect your gear from dust and moisture.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes or boots for game drives and hikes; sandals or flip-flops for the lodge.

Rain jacket

Lightweight and packable for sudden showers.

Since 2006, over 58,000 travellers have entrusted us with one of life's most significant journeys, a luxury safari.



TRACKING TRAVEL TIPS

Warm layers, extras & packing tips

WARM LAYERS

Sweater or fleece. Evenings can be chilly, so bring warm clothing.

Gloves and scarf. If visiting during winter, for added warmth on cool mornings or evenings.

Swimwear. If your lodge has a pool or you plan to visit the beach.

Trousers and shorts. Choose breathable fabrics and consider the season when packing.

GENERAL PACKING TIPS

Pack light. Many recommended safari lodges provide laundry services, so you can bring fewer clothes.

Luggage restrictions. Keep within charter weight limits and pack in a soft-sided bag for light aircraft transfers.

ENTERTAINMENT & EXTRAS

Reading material. A book or e-reader to enjoy during downtime.

Travel documents. Keep passport, visas and insurance details easily accessible.





TRACKING TRAVEL TIPS

Recommended clothing for tracking

When gorilla or chimp tracking, the most important piece of clothing is a comfortable, well-fitting pair of walking shoes or boots. Choose boots with ankle support to navigate uneven terrain, and wear them in beforehand to avoid blisters.

Choose lightweight trousers instead of jeans, as there's a high chance your clothes will get wet, and pair them with long, thick socks to tuck your trousers into. This will help protect against red ant bites.

A long-sleeve cotton shirt is essential to protect your arms from undergrowth and stinging nettles, and lightweight gardening gloves can provide extra protection. Given the rainforest environment, a lightweight, waterproof top is a must, and a hat can help shield you from both sun and rain.

Since your clothes will likely get muddy, it's best to pack older items rather than new or expensive ones. You may experience all four seasons in a single day, so bring warm layers like a tracksuit top, fleece or sweater. Long trousers and long-sleeved shirts are also recommended for evening wear and to help protect against mosquito bites.

TRACKING TRAVEL TIPS

Day-pack packing list

Water bottle. Reusable and insulated to keep drinks cold; consider a hydration bladder for easy access.

Snacks. High-energy snacks like nuts, energy bars, dried fruit and jerky.

Sun protection. Sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher), lip balm with SPF, sunglasses (UV protection), wide-brimmed hat or cap.

Camera. With extra batteries and memory cards.

Binoculars. For wildlife spotting.

Phone and charger. Optional power bank for extra battery life.

Lightweight poncho or rain jacket. In case of unpredictable weather.

Trash bags. For packing out waste or storing wet items.

TRACKING TRAVEL TIPS

Travel safety tips

Keep documents secure. Make copies of important documents (passport, ID, insurance) and store them separately.

Stay aware of your surroundings. Trust your instincts and be mindful of people around you.

Use reliable transportation. Opt for reputable taxi services or rideshare apps and avoid unlicensed taxis.

Keep valuables hidden. Use a money belt or keep valuables in a secure, concealed bag. Avoid wearing expensive jewellery or showing large amounts of cash.

TRACKING TRAVEL TIPS

Gorilla tracking for children

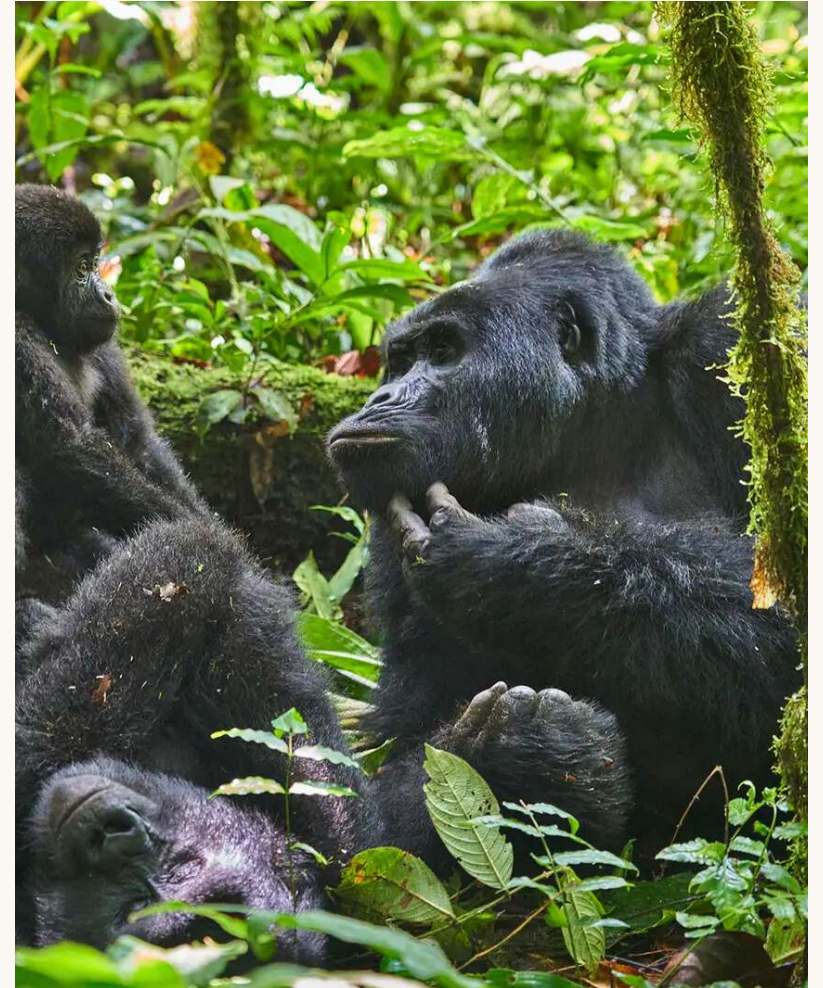
The minimum age for gorilla trekking and visiting golden monkeys is 15 years old, and park authorities strictly enforce this rule. If you're travelling with young children, they won't be permitted to join the trek.

However, children under 15 are allowed to visit Dian Fossey's tomb, accessible via a beautiful but challenging forest trail. The hike takes around two hours and involves steep, rugged terrain, so it's best suited for children aged 12 or older who can handle the physical demands.

Travel requirements

One parent. An unabridged birth certificate and consent letter from the other parent are needed. **Guardians.** Guardians need affidavits from parents granting travel permission.

A safari in Africa offers children a life-changing connection with nature and wildlife.





TRACKING TRAVEL TIPS

Photography tips

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS

A standard digital camera works well.

Bring extra batteries and memory cards (recharging may not be possible daily).

Always seek permission before photographing people or sensitive locations, such as border posts or military sites, and let your guide assist with negotiations.

PROFESSIONAL / SEMI-PROFESSIONAL

Use a dustproof case and monopod for stability.

Consider a private safari for fewer distractions.

Carry two camera bodies to avoid lens changes in dusty conditions.

The rainy season offers cleaner air and fewer tourists.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE

Road conditions, distances & vehicles

Travelling through East Africa, you will primarily navigate well-maintained tarred roads, which are generally in better condition than many other areas on the continent. However, be prepared for challenging dirt road sections, especially in remote or mountainous regions, where travel can be slow and bumpy, often kicking up dust along the way.

For those looking to minimise travel time on longer road stretches, charter flights are an excellent option. You'll traverse the region in 4×4 vehicles, predominantly Toyota Land Cruisers, which are well-suited for local conditions.

These vehicles typically accommodate 4 to 7 passengers and are customised for optimal game viewing, allowing for memorable experiences during your game drives in East Africa.



IMPORTANT TO NOTE

Electricity

UGANDA

The voltage is 240 volts, typically using 3-pin square plugs (British standard).

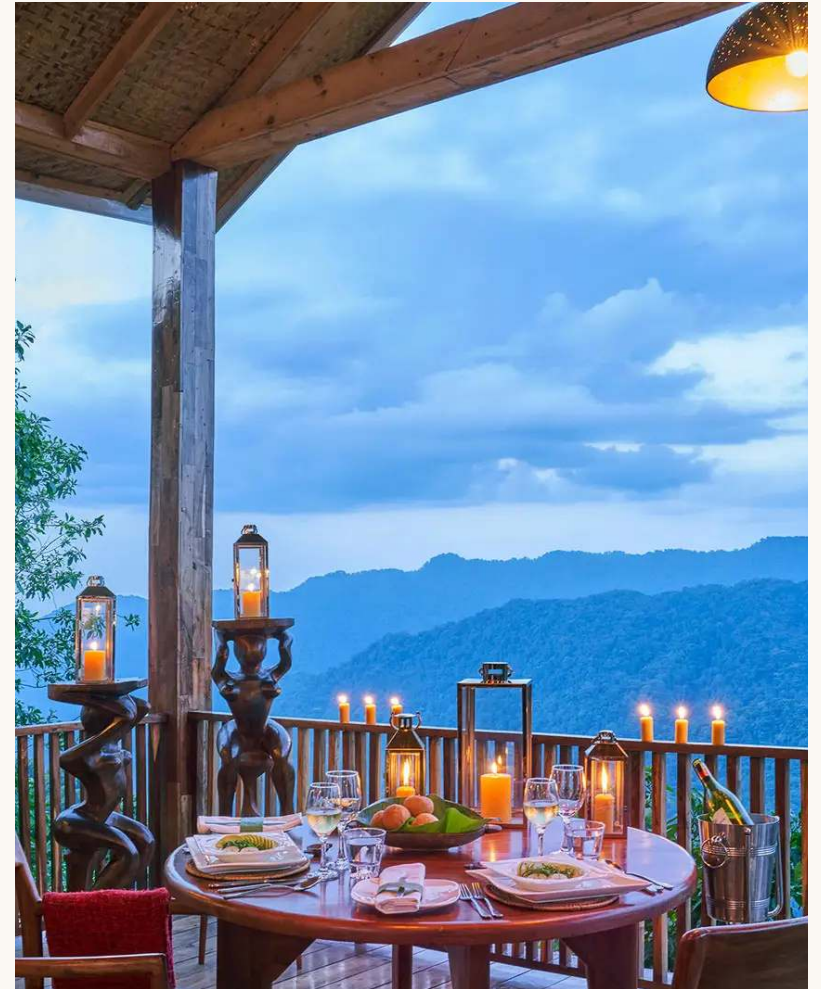
At many lodges and camps, electricity may only be available at certain times of day. You may need to charge devices like camera batteries and phones in a central area rather than your room, and you'll need to bring your own chargers.

For solar-powered lodges and camps, the amount of electricity available for charging depends on factors like sunny weather and how busy the lodge is with other guests' charging needs. Staff will do their best to assist, but daily charging is not guaranteed, so bring spare camera batteries.

For specialised equipment like CPAP machines, hair dryers, curling tongs or electric shavers, you may be able to use them at hotels in towns or lodges with large generator backup systems. Solar-powered lodges typically cannot accommodate such devices. Safari vehicle inverter systems are not always available, so plan ahead to keep your devices powered.

RWANDA

The voltage is also 240 volts, but it uses 2-pin European style plugs.



SAFARI.COM INFO

Any questions? Reach out now

Please don't hesitate to reach out. Our safari specialists are here to support you every step of the way. A safari specialist will be in touch within as little as 15 minutes during working hours.

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