



CONGO

LAC KIVU SAFARI

Democratic Republic of Congo
11 Day Route combining Goma & Bukavu
Virunga National Park + Kahuzi-Biega + Idjwi Island



PLANNING | Virunga & Kahuzi National Park Combination

Date	Accommodation	INCL.	Room	ACTIVITY INCL.
Day 1	Goma - Lac Kivu Lodge	B&B	Standard Room	Meet & greet on arrival in Goma with your guide & transfer to your hotel in Goma
Day 2	Virunga Park - Mikenno Lodge	FB	Private Chalet	After breakfast pick up by your guide & driver from Lac Kivu Lodge & drive to Mikenno Lodge Virunga - lunch at the lodge - free afternoon with guide
Day 3	Virunga Park - Ngila Tented Camp	FB	Luxury Safari Tent	Transfer to the gorilla sector, briefing Mountain gorilla trek (1 permit pp incl) Lunch back at Ngila Camp - Free afternoon with guide -
Day 4	Virunga Park - Mikenno Lodge	FB	Private Chalet	Briefing - Mountain gorilla trek (1 permit per person incl.) Transfer to Mikenno Lodge - Late lunch at the lodge
Day 5	Virunga Park - Mikenno Lodge	FB	Private Chalet	Free day to visit the head quarters, the village & women's project, gorilla orphanage and do other optional activities
Day 6	Nyiragongo Vulcano - Cabins	FB	Cabin with tent	Transfer to base camp of Nyiragongo Hike to the summit / Enjoy the view and dinner on top
Day 7	Lake Kivu - Tchegeza Island	FB	Safari Tent	Hike down back to the base camp of Nyiragongo Road & boat transfer to Tchegeza island - Free time to kayak or swim or to walk the island
Day 8	Bukavu - Orchids Safari Club	B&B	Standard Room	After breakfast pick up by private speed boat & road transfer to Bukavu - Visit Lwiro chimpanzee centre on the way. Have a picnic lunch on the way (Tchegeza lunchpack) - Overnight at Orchids Safari Club.
Day 9	Idjwi - Hopeland Guesthouse	B&B	Standard Room	After breakfast leave to Kahuzi National Park, short briefing on the family you will visit the Lowland Gorilla - trek (1 permit per person) - Picnic lunch on the way - Visit the Tshibati waterfalls in the afternoon Boat transfer to Idjwi island
Day 10	Idjwi - Hopeland Guesthouse	B&B	Standard Room	Idjwi island tour where you will visit the local pygmies, the king of the island & the plantations
Day 11	The end - Depart	-	- Fly out -	After a late breakfast get on a fastboat to Goma. Road transfer back to Goma airport incl. - end of guide services -



Virunga Nat. Park

Gorilla Sector

Nyiragongo Volcano >

Tchegera Island > 5

Idjwi Island

< Lwiro Chimp Centre

Kahuzi Nat. Park

1. Goma - Lac Kivu Guesthouse
2. Virunga - Mikenso Lodge
3. Gorilla Sector - Ngila Lodge
4. Nyiragongo Volcano
5. Lac Kivu - Tchegera Island
6. Bukavu - Blue Orchid Safari
7. Idjwi Island - Hopeland Guesthouse

Day 1 | Arrival in Goma

Welcome to the Democratic Republic of Congo!

You will arrive at Goma Airport with Ethiopian Airlines. Here you will be awaited by our guide from **Congo Safaris**.

He will also assist you at the border with your passport and visa for the D.R.C.

Our guide will stay with you for the rest of your stay in Congo, he will travel with you and always be in the area of your lodge when you need him.

Overnight: Lac Kivu Lodge

Lac Kivu Lodge is located at only 15 minutes from the airport. It is a beautiful property in lush tropical grounds on the shore of Lake Kivu!

In the hotel, all 20 rooms have been delicately renovated in an African modern style. Some rooms have a view on the lake while others overlook the garden, where honeybirds can be observed popping in and out of the colourful hibiscus flowers.

All rooms are equipped with modern bathrooms, Italian showers, Nespresso coffee machines, Wi-Fi and other items to provide comfort and well-being to our guest.



Lac Kivu Lodge



Lake Kivu is considered to be one of Africa's great lakes, and lies in the Albertine Rift Valley sharing the border of Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The lake is surrounded by hundreds of hills and volcanoes.



Lac Kivu



Day 2 | Enter Virunga National Park

Today you will drive from Goma into the Virunga National Park. To explore the park you'll mainly stay at the main lodge next to the Virunga HQ, the Mikeno Lodge.

The Lodge is located in pristine forest and has an abundance of primates (Blue Monkey, Black & White Colobus Monkey, Bush Babies, Olive Baboon and L'hoest Monkey), it also has some spectacular birding with the great blue Turaco being a prize sighting.

Together with your guide you can partake in the there activities around Mikeno Lodge:

1. Visit the Canine Anti-Poaching Unit, meet their ranger caretakers and see a demonstration.
2. Visit the Senkwekwe gorilla orphanage. This is within walking distance from the lodge. You have the **possibility to meet André** from the Oscar nominated documentary 'Virunga.' Note the Senkwekwe orphanage closes at 3pm.
3. Tour the Virunga National Park Head Quarters and meet with some of the rangers, giving you more in depth information of the work that the rangers do and how the park operates.
4. A forest walk around the lodge - great for birding!
5. There is also the possibility of doing a chimpanzee habituation from Mikeno Lodge. This depends on where the chimpanzees are on the day and will need to be decided at the time. The cost is US\$100 per person per trek.
6. A guided walk to the nearby caves and coffee plantation visit, at extra cost, payable directly to Mikeno Lodge.

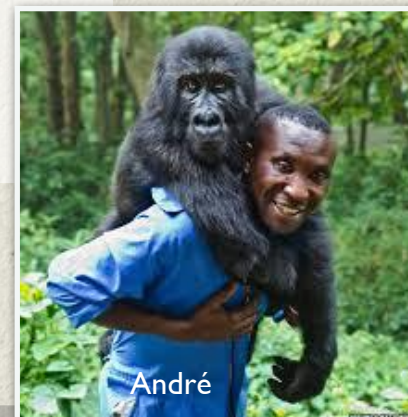
*Mikeno is located next to the Virunga headquarters. In the evening you have a good chance to meet & chat with **André** from the VIRUNGA Netflix Documentary or The Belgian Pilot **Anthony Caere** and the park's director **Emmanuel De Merode***



Mikeno Lodge



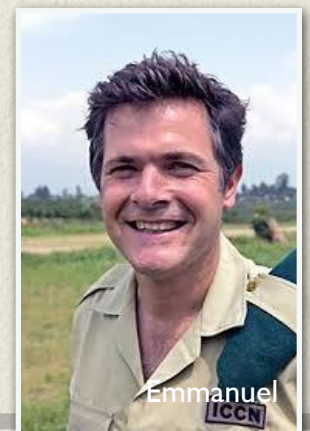
Mikeno Lodge



André



Anthony



Emmanuel

Day 3 | Your first Mountain Gorilla Trek!

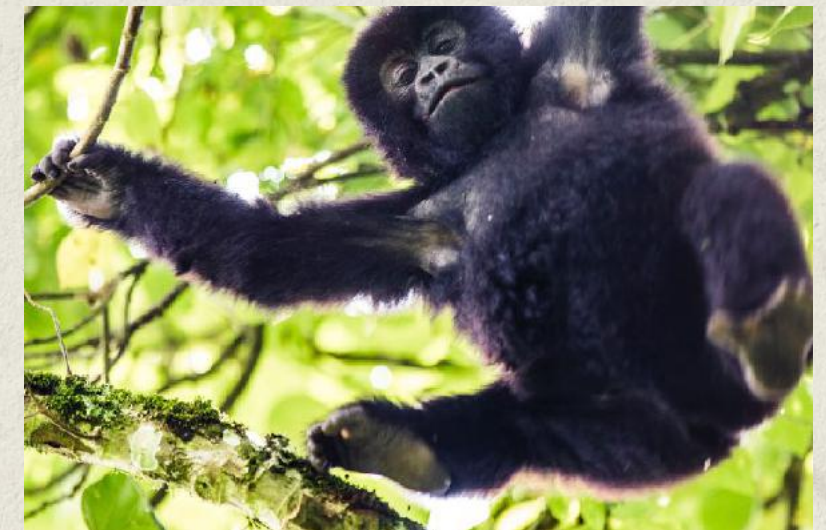
From Mikenno Lodge you transfer to the Gorilla Sector.
Here you'll spend one night to do two Mountain Gorilla Treks.

After an early breakfast at Mikenno you will be brought to the Gorilla Sector. Here you'll first get a detailed briefing about the Gorilla's and then you'll get hiking around 08h30.

A complete trek can take 2 to 5 hours, depending on where the gorilla family that you are visiting is that day. Once you've reached the Gorilla's you get to stay with them for max. 1 hour. Afterwards you'll head back to the briefing point.

From here you walk to Ngila Lodge, where you spend the night.

Ngila Lodge is the newest addition to the lodges in Virunga Park, built in 2020, this place offers fantastic views over the two active volcanos and accommodates its guests in spacious safari tents with an en-suit bathroom.



Day 4 | Mountain Gorilla Trek number two!

This morning you'll wake up right next to the Gorilla Sector at Ngila Lodge.

There is no transfer so you'll be able to enjoy a lovely long breakfast before you head out for your second Mountain Gorilla Trek inside the Virunga National Park.

Today there is also no need for a long briefing, you'll get assigned a Virunga Park ranger and another Gorilla family than yesterday.

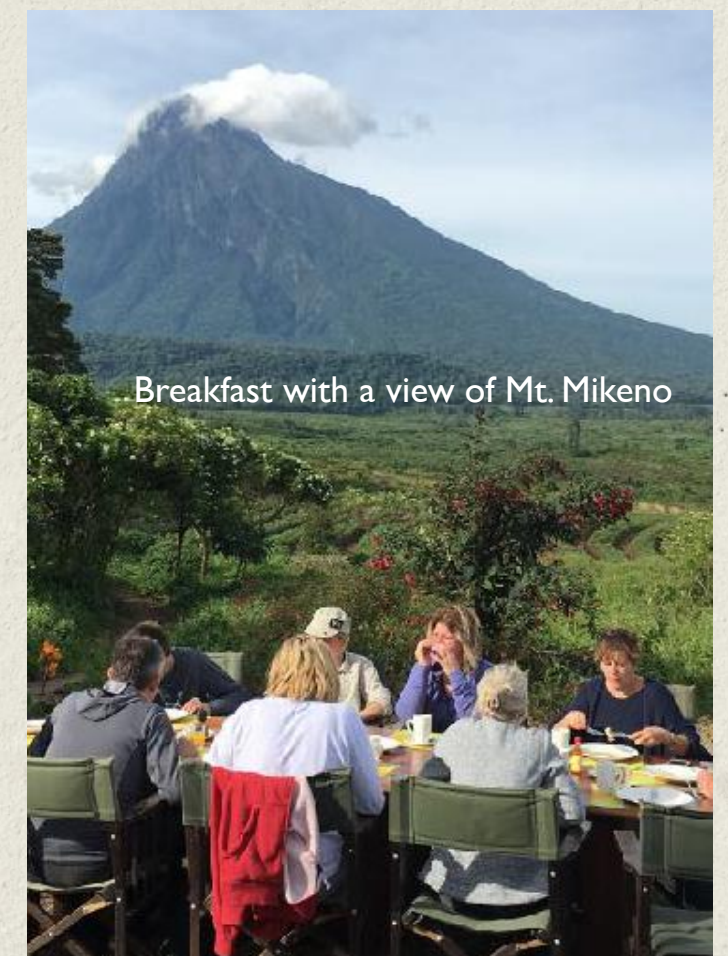
So you will visit 2 Mountain Gorilla families inside the Virunga National Park, meaning that you'll get to see at least 2 large male "Silverback" and there is a good chance to see more small baby gorilla's also by visiting two families on your trip.

Depending on the location of the different families, you'll have to walk for about one to two hours to get to them. You can spend one hour with the gorilla family and the very professional rangers and guards of the Virunga Park will provide you with a superb viewing spot from a safe distance. It's necessary to wear mouth-masks to protect the gorillas from human diseases during your visit.

After the Gorilla Trek you will be brought back to Mikeno Lodge where you'll have lunch and the rest of the afternoon and tomorrow to explore some of the many amazing projects there Virunga Park is running.



Baby's & Silverback Gorilla



Breakfast with a view of Mt. Mikeno



Drive to Mikeno Lodge



Ngila Lodge

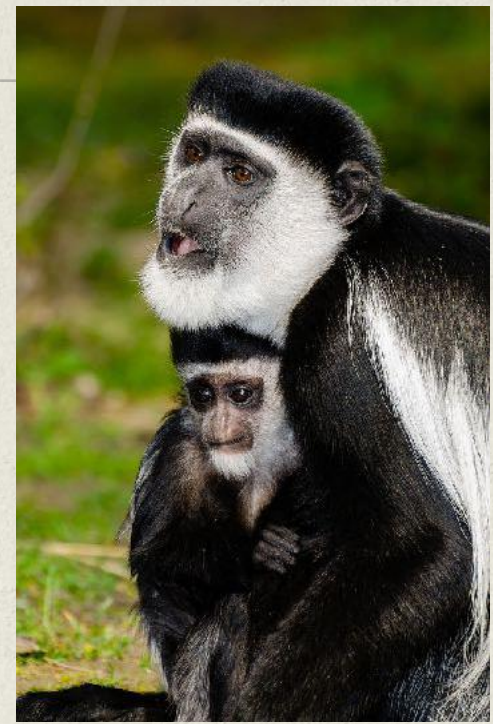
Day 5 | Mikenno & Virunga National Park

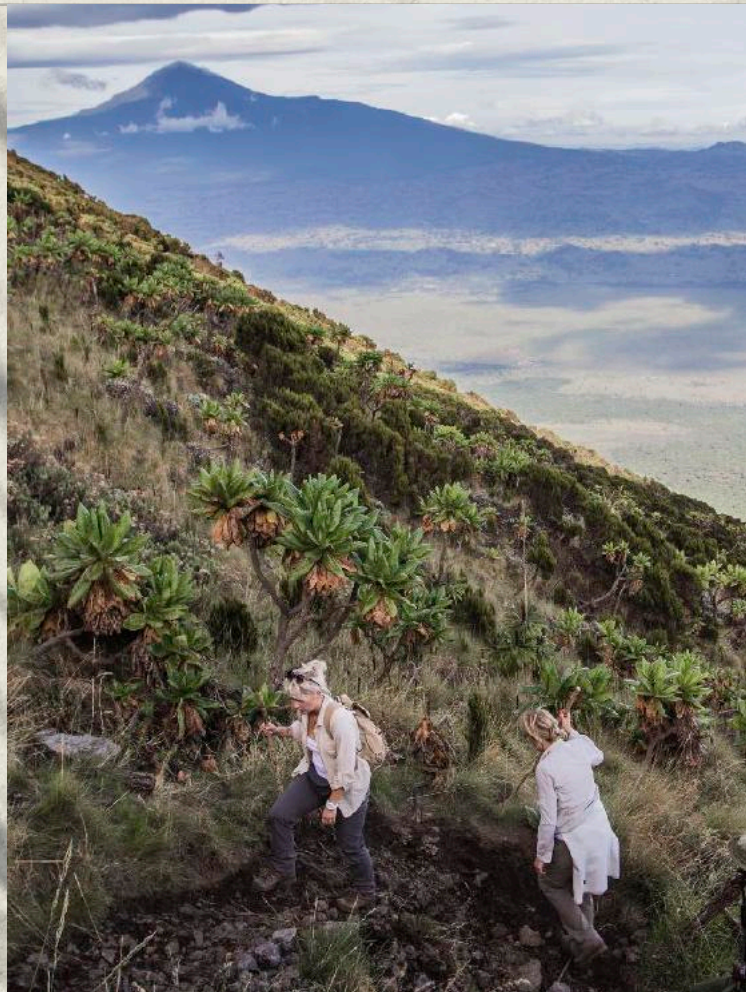
After your second Gorilla Trek on Day 4 you'll have the afternoon and on Day 5 you'll have the whole day to explore the area and activities around Mikenno Lodge.

The Lodge is located in pristine forest and has an abundance of primates (Blue Monkey, Black & White Colobus Monkey, Bush Babies, Olive Baboon and L'hoest Monkey), it also has some spectacular birding with the great blue Turaco being a prize sighting.

Optional activities at Mikenno Lodge include:

1. Visit the Canine Anti-Poaching Unit, meet their ranger caretakers and see a demonstration.
2. Visit the Senkwekwe gorilla orphanage. This is within walking distance from the lodge. You have the **possibility to meet André** from the Oscar nominated documentary 'Virunga.' Note the Senkwekwe orphanage closes at 3pm.
3. Tour the Virunga National Park Head Quarters and meet with some of the rangers, giving you more in depth information of the work that the rangers do and how the park operates.
4. Go on a forest walk around the lodge - great for birding!
5. Visit the Kindergarten in **Rumangabo Village**
6. Take a walk with the lodge chef to the Organic Vegetable garden just outside the park in Rumangabo Village. Help pick what is needed for that day's meals, while marveling at what grows in these extremely fertile volcanic soils. This is the source of all the fresh goodness on your plate at the lodge.
7. Primate Spotting from the lodge's main terrace, look out for Black & White **Colobus Monkeys**, Blue Monkeys, Olive Baboons, Bush Babies and the very rare L'hoest Monkey .
8. Guided Walk to local **caves and coffee plantation**
(\$15 per person, payable direct to Mikenno Lodge)
9. If the **chimpanzee's** are in the area you can trek towards them to help habituate them.
(\$100 per person, payable direct to Mikenno Lodge)





Day 6 | Climb Mount Nyiragongo

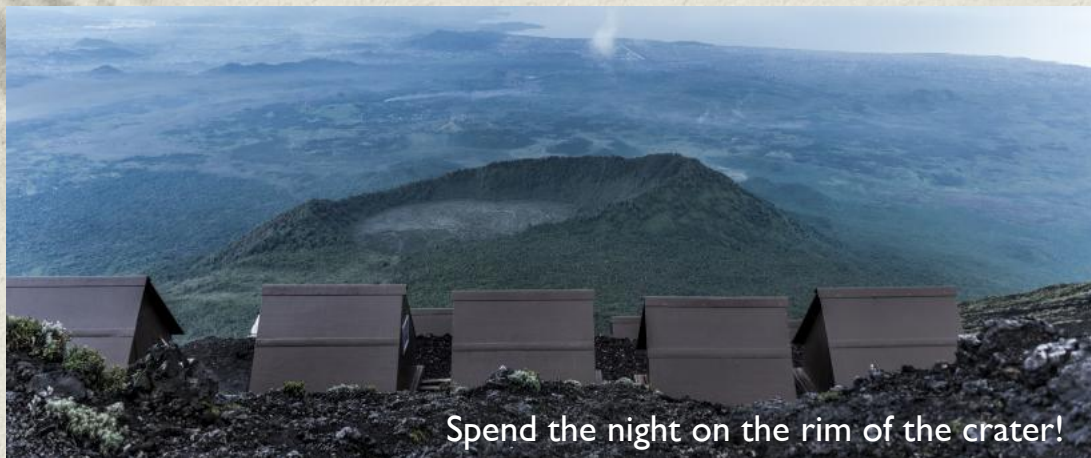
Hike to 3470m and see the largest Lava Lake in the World!

After breakfast you will head out on a 1 hour's drive to the base of the Nyiragongo volcano to start your hike to the summit.

We will provide you with a mountain rucksack containing a poncho, long sleeved shirt, a very warm jacket and a sleeping bag as well as a cook who will prepare all your meals and snacks on the trip.

It's about a 4-7 hour hike to the summit, where you will spend the night in the rustic shelters looking at the biggest lava lake on the planet, one of the most spectacular sights in the world.

A true once in a lifetime experience!



Spend the night on the rim of the crater!



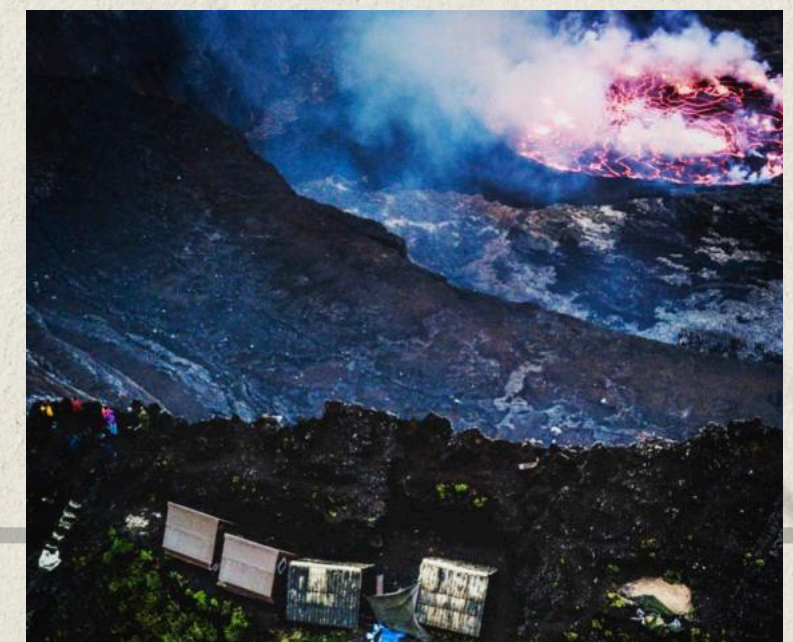
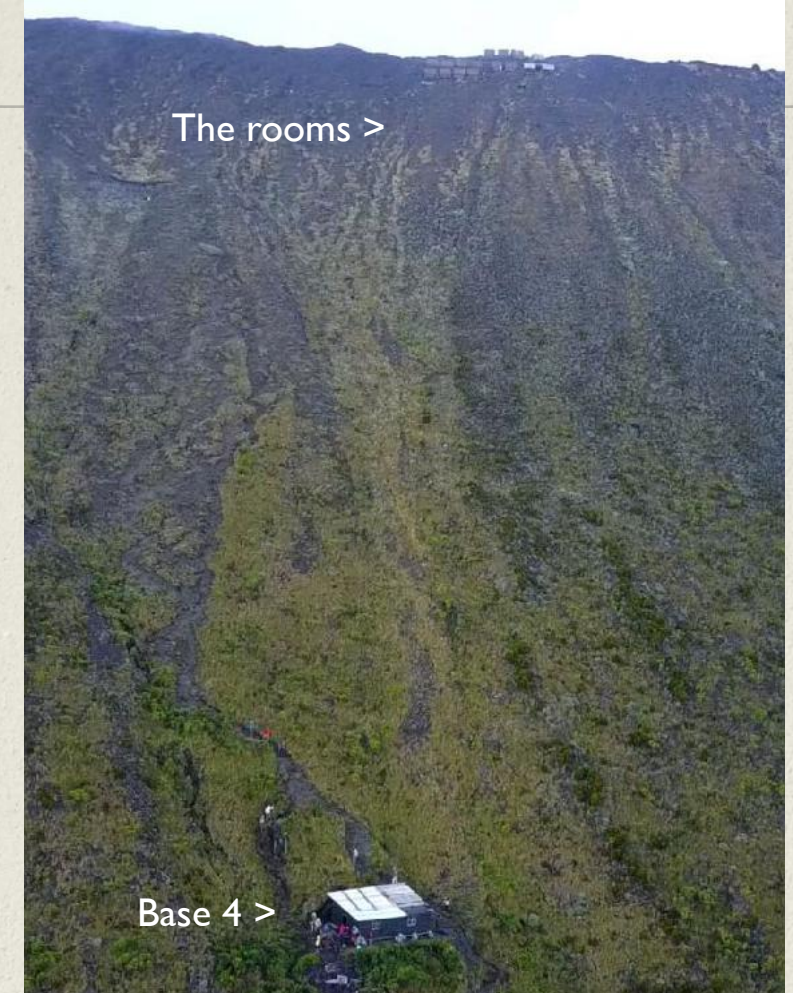
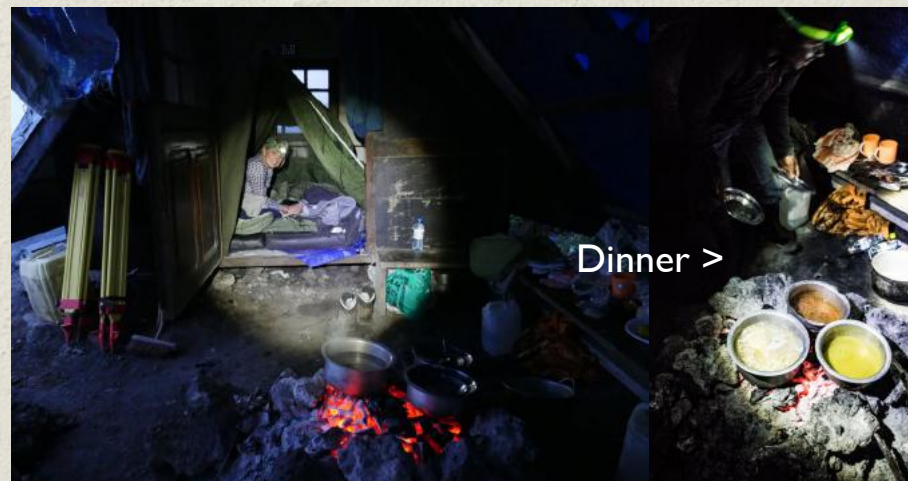
Day 6 | Climb Mount Nyiragongo

Climbing the Nyiragongo Volcano is not an activity you can underestimate, but it is without doubt one of the most exciting activities you can do in Africa.

At the end of this hike with a comfortable pace, you will reach the top of this very active volcano and you'll witness the beauty of the World's largest lava lake!

Dinner is served on the rim of the crater and from your room it is only a few seconds walk to see the spectacular power of the Nyiragongo Lava Lake.

This lava lake is one of only 5 lakes in the world and the largest of them all. It is so big, all other 4 lakes can fit inside the Nyiragongo lake!



Day 7 | Tchequera Island on Lake Kivu

Descend the Nyiragongo & boat transfer to Tchequera Island on Lake Kivu.

After a basic breakfast on the summit and a last look at the lava lake you will head back down the mountain. This will take anywhere from 3 to 4 hours depending on your group's level of fitness.

You will reach the base of the mountain around 11am-12pm.

A Virunga NP car will meet you at the bottom of the volcano and drive you to Lake Kivu, from where you will be transferred to Tchequera Island Camp by boat. An ideal place to relax, go swimming, kayaking and recover from a tough climb on the mountain.

The perfect location for the end of your Virunga National Park experience and to get away from the busy hustle in **Goma**, is without a doubt the **Tchequera Island Camp**. We recommend a stay of two nights, it's the perfect opportunity to relax for a couple of days after climbing the Nyiragongo volcano or visiting the gorillas.

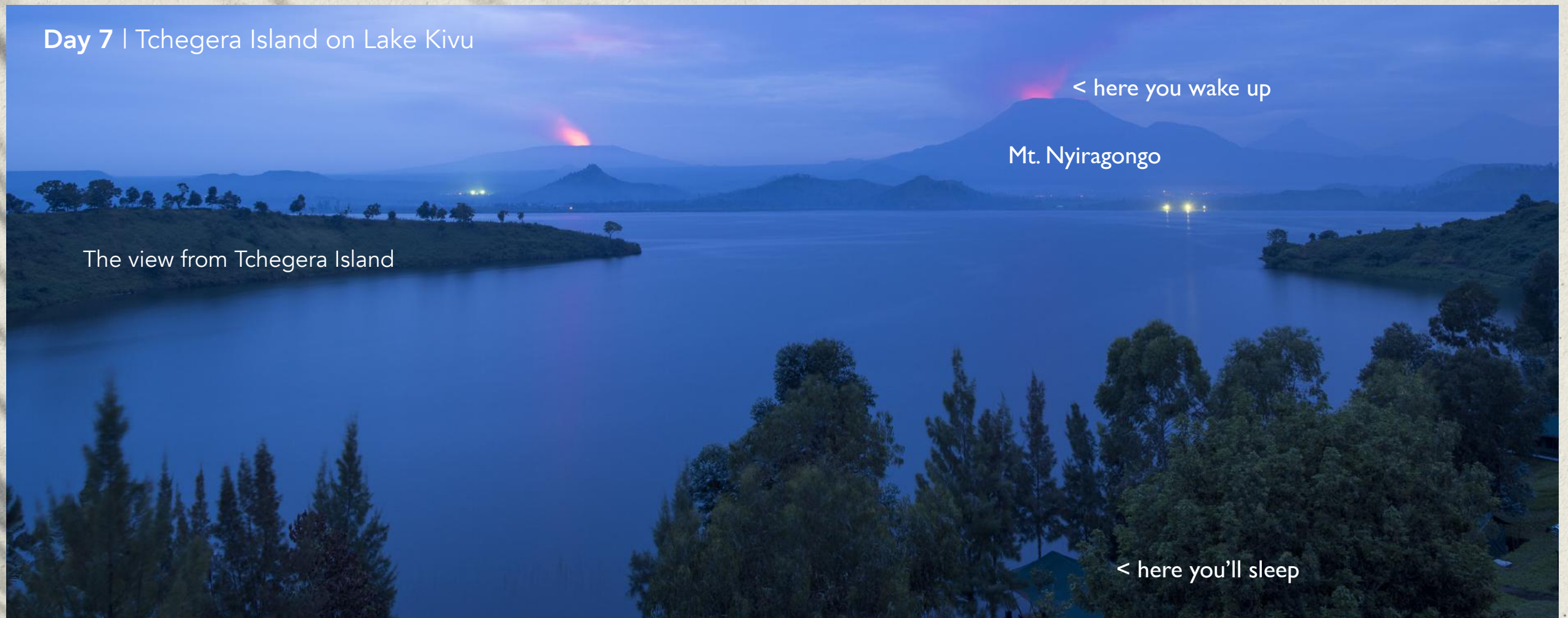
The island is also the place-to-be for **bird spotters**, it's the home for African eagles, cormorants, herons and gulls. If you still feel like being active, you can paddle around the entire island in one of the **kayaks**, or take a stroll on the clearly indicated **walkways** that circle the island. If you think you've been active enough during your Congo Safari, feel free to just sit back, relax and enjoy your ice-cold drink on the beach.



Wake up on top of Nyiragongo, catch the sunrise!!



Day 7 | Tchegeera Island on Lake Kivu



< here you wake up

Mt. Nyiragongo

The view from Tchegeera Island

< here you'll sleep



< Tchegeera only has 6 tents



Day 8 | Bukavu & Lwiro Project

From Tchegeza Island you'll go further down the Kivu Lake to Bukavu with your own private speedboat.

Here you'll visit the Lwiro Chimpanzee Sanctuary and tomorrow you'll go out to the Kahuzi National Park to visit the Lowland Gorilla's. We'll pack a Lunch-pack from Tchegeza so we don't lose time and you can visit the Lwiro Project still today.

Lwiro Chimpanzee Sanctuary, is now the most important primate Sanctuary habitat in Congo, that without its existence, there wouldn't be any confiscation of captive animals. It is because of this reason, that the Sanctuary is regarded "a center of law enforcement".

Currently, the chimpanzees have without a doubt become ambassadors for their wild cousins. Not only does Lwiro Chimpanzee Sanctuary enclose primates but involves other also in rescue and rehabilitation, and planned reintroduction of confiscated wildlife.

You will overnight in the Bukavu Orchid Safari Club - B&B incl.

Dinner is A La Carte.



Day 9 | Kahuzi-Biega National Park

The Kahuzi-Biega National Park is a protected area near Bukavu town in eastern DRC. It is situated near the western bank of Lake Kivu and the Rwandan border. Established in **1970 by the Belgian photographer and conservationist Adrien Deschryver**, the park is named after two dormant volcanoes, Mount Kahuzi and Mount Biega, which are within its limits.

With an area of 6,000 square kilometres Kahuzi-Biega is one of the biggest national parks in the country. Set in both mountainous and lowland terrain, it is one of the last refuges of the rare species of Eastern lowland gorilla (Grauer's Gorilla), an endangered category under the IUCN Red List. The park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, inscribed in 1980 for its unique biodiversity of rainforest habitat and its **eastern lowland gorillas**.

The eastern lowland gorilla—also known as Grauer's gorilla—is the largest of the four gorilla subspecies. It is distinguished from other gorillas by its stocky body, large hands and short muzzle.

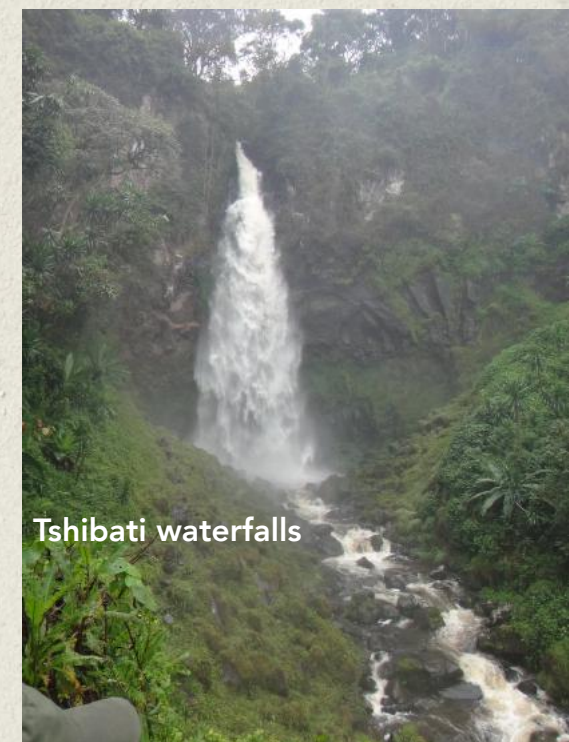
After the Gorilla Trek you'll go for a picnic at the **Tshibati waterfalls >>**

To end the day you'll go back onto Lac Kivu and we'll take you by boat to Idjwi Island. Here you'll spend the last two nights of your trip in Congo.

Overnight at Hopeland Guesthouse on Idjwi island on B&B - dinner is A la carte -



Eastern Lowland Gorilla
The largest of all Gorilla subspecies



Tshibati waterfalls



Hopeland Guesthouse - Idjwi Island



Sunset over Lac Kivu



Day 11 | Exploring Idjwi Island

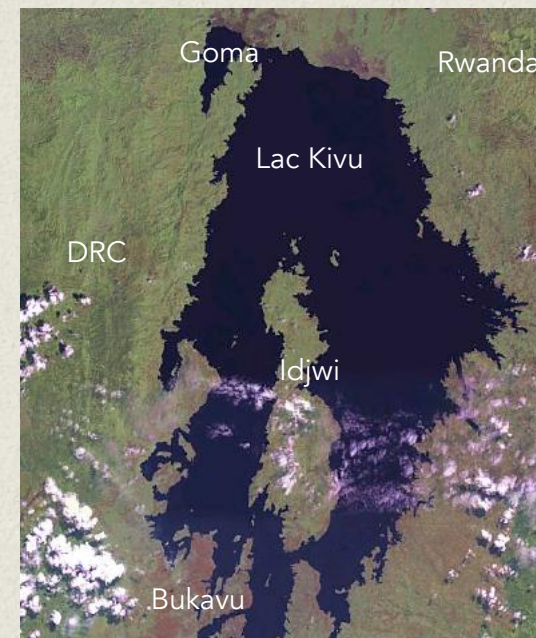
Idjwi, or Ijwi, is an island in Lake Kivu belonging to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in the Sud-Kivu province. At 70 km in length and with an area of 340 km², it is the second largest lake island in Africa, and the tenth largest in the world

Together with your guide you'll visit the locale King, the fisheries, the pineapple plantation and the **The Bambuti**, one of several Pygmy groups in Congo.

They among central Africa's oldest indigenous peoples. For millennia, they have lived as hunter-gatherers, surviving off the forest's bounty of plants, birds and monkeys.

But Idjwi is a place you need to "experience" more than "visit" there aren't any specific visiting points or must-sees, but your guide will help you explore this stunning island where you can roam safely between the small settlements and villages.

Overnight at Hopeland Guesthouse on Idjwi island on B&B - dinner is A la carte -



Day 12 | The End.

Sadly all good things come to an end.
Today you will leave Idjwi island by boat, after breakfast.

**You will be back in Goma in time to fly out
from Goma in the afternoon with Ethiopian Airlines.**

Ethiopian Airlines flies @ 15h30 direct to Addis Ababa.

*Keep in mind, this trip can also be booked with flights
to & from Kigali in Rwanda. It is only ± 170 km or
 $\pm 3,5$ hours drive to Kigali from Goma.*

We look forward to welcome you in Congo!

Timothy & Michele Denys

For more information & inspiration

Follow us in Facebook & Instagram
or visit our website www.congo-safari.com



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We are covered by MS Amlin
insurance fund.





FAQ about our Congo Safaris :

Why should I travel with Congo Safaris?

We take a very personal and specialised approach to your itinerary. We know our way around, are in daily contact with the Virunga National Park Team, and work at the best possible prices. We've also personally experienced all the trips, accommodation and activities, and can thus vouch for all details of the experience. If you're not convinced by our word alone, we have a system by which we can put potential new guests in touch with those who have already travelled with us for personal testimonials and assurances.

What's the food like in Congo?

The food in Congo is great! The soil in central Africa is so rich that every single fruit and vegetable tastes exactly as it should. As the temperature is always right and the ground is so rich, harvests take place multiple times a year, and there is always a significant supply of fresh produce. Add to this the fact that there's great fish and meat in the area and the local chefs are French-trained, and you've got a surprisingly impressive culinary destination.

How is the accommodation at Virunga?

All Virunga accommodation is clean, neat and just recently built/erected. It's offered in the form of well-maintained, bug-free safari tents or lodges with clean linen and very comfortable beds.

Do I need to take special medication to travel to Congo?

The only mandatory preventative measure is a yellow fever vaccination. This needs to be done no earlier than six months and no later than ten days before your arrival in Congo. The fact that Virunga National Park is between 1600 and 2200 m above sea level means that there are few mosquitos in the area, and the chances of you contracting malaria are thus slim.

Do I need to be physically fit to go on a gorilla track?

Yes, you need to be in good health and able to walk for at least three hours if you want to see the gorillas, and five hours if you want to access the top of the volcanoes. Although getting to the top of the volcanoes doesn't necessitate a climb per se, it's still more of a hike than a stroll.



FAQ about our Congo Safaris :

When is the best time to visit Virunga National Park?

As Virunga is located on the equator, the temperature remains roughly the same (hot and humid) throughout the year. The notable difference is between the rainy and non-rainy seasons. Ironically enough, the best time to enjoy clear blue skies (particularly for photography purposes) is during the rainy months (April, May, October and November), as it can get quite foggy during the dry season. The good news is that it rarely rains for a full day, and the periodic spatters actually make way for beautifully clear viewing conditions.



Is it safe to travel to the Congo?

All Congo Safaris tours are fully guided from the moment you step over the border to your departure back home. Almost all our tours start and end in Kigali (the capital of Rwanda), and we ensure that our guests are assisted across the border without any hassle. Members of our team will collect you as soon as you land in Kigali, and will remain with you until you enter Congo – at which point the Virunga National Park team will take over. As the Park is responsible for the livelihood and infrastructure of the four million people who live around it, its officials, rangers and visitors are highly respected by the locals.

You'll be transported in official park vehicles, and will be made to feel safe and warmly welcomed by all whom you encounter. Virunga National Park has brought electricity, power stations, roads, schools, security and jobs to the area, and the locals are well aware of the fact that the tourism income generated by your presence is largely to thank for all of this.

Why should I visit Congo to see the gorillas? What about Rwanda and Uganda?

It's true that you can also see mountain gorillas in Rwanda and Uganda. However, doing so in Rwanda will cost you more than triple the price per permit than in Congo. Moreover, we have personally been gorilla tracking in both Rwanda and Uganda, and can vouch for the fact that the experience itself is so much more memorable in Congo.

The fact that tourism in Virunga is still comparatively low means that you will more than likely be able to go tracking in a small group. What's more, the density of the jungle will allow you to enjoy a very close and personal experience with a gorilla family. You are guaranteed to see them, unless you tire of the walking! As it's so much cheaper than in Rwanda, we also suggest going on more than one track so that you can visit two or more different families. This way, there will be a good chance of you spotting the impressive silver backs and adorable babies.