



Singita | Volcanoes National Park



Gorilla, Golden Monkey & Chimpanzee Treks

GUIDELINES

LAST UPDATED JULY 2026

Gorilla trekking



In the remote northwest of Rwanda, jagged volcanic peaks rise above a thick blanket of tropical rainforest, shrouded in mist and dripping with humidity. Amongst the trees, along the slopes, and in the farmland surrounding these Virunga Mountains, life abounds.

This region is home to more than a third of the world's remaining mountain gorillas, along with countless other species. Situated along the border of Volcanoes National Park, **Kwitonda** and **Kataza House** offer the rare opportunity to come face to face with these gentle giants in their natural habitat, for a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience.

PERMITS

- Gorilla trekking permits cost USD 1,500 per person per trek and are non-refundable.
- A limited number of permits are issued by Volcanoes National Park each day. For this reason, we recommend booking your trek in advance.
- Funds raised from these permits are used to help protect the region's mountain gorillas and landscapes, as well as to support community, livelihood, and infrastructure development projects across the region as part of a revenue-sharing scheme.



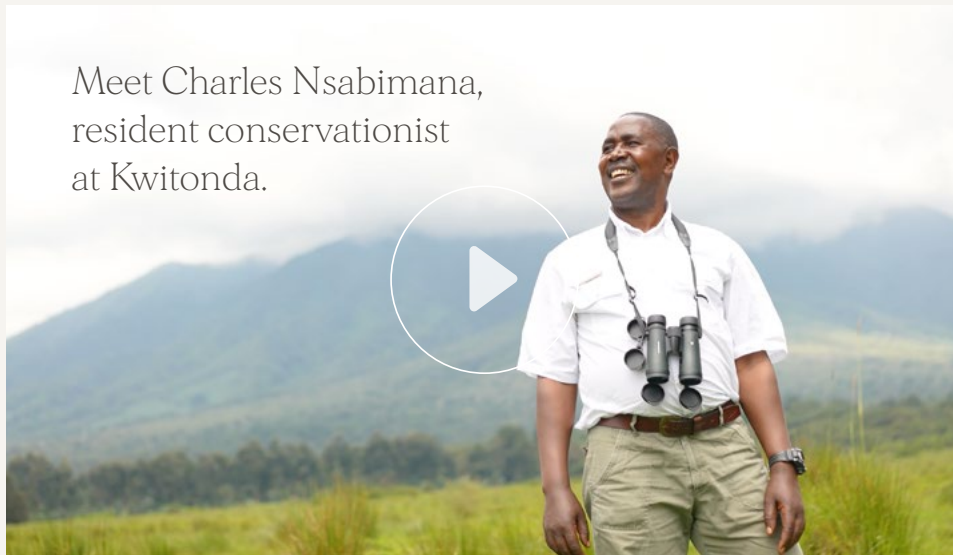
PREPARATION

The day before your trek, you'll join a comprehensive briefing session hosted by one of our conservationists in Kwitonda's Conservation Lounge. During this session, you'll:

- Find out what to expect on and leading up to your trek.
- Learn more about the region's history and the gorilla families it's home to.
- Receive an important safety and conduct briefing.

After the briefing, you'll head to the Gear Room to be fitted with hiking boots, water-resistant pants, jackets, gloves, and a mask for when you're with the gorillas. Your trekking gear will be delivered to your suite while you enjoy dinner.

Meet Charles Nsabimana,
resident conservationist
at Kwitonda.



GEARING UP

On the day of your trek, you'll be fitted with gaiters and given a walking stick to help you along the way. You'll also receive a backpack with snacks, a packed lunch, a water bottle, and a comfort kit containing sunblock, a sweat towel, hand sanitiser, tissues, a buff, and sanitary/toilet eco-bags.



PLEASE NOTE:

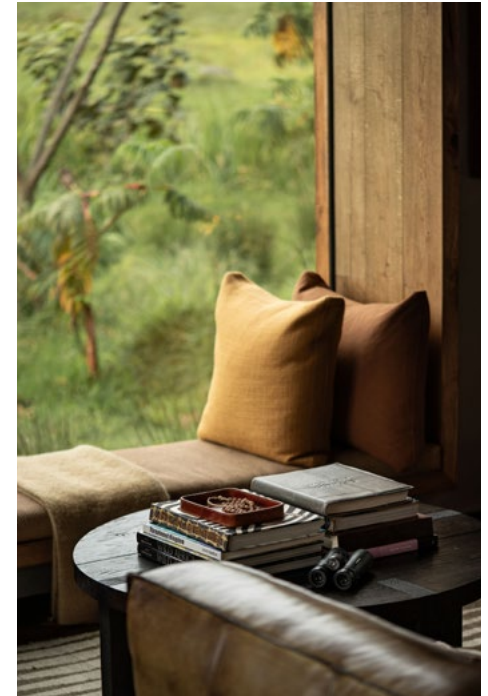
While we do have boots available for you to wear, sizes are limited. We recommend that you bring your own, ensuring they have a good enough grip to withstand the muddy, often slippery terrain.

On the morning of your trek, you'll be woken up around 5:30 am to make your way to the main lodge area at Kwitonda, where you'll have a light continental breakfast and coffee to keep you going. Our people will be on standby should you need any help with your gear.

- At 6:45 am, you'll depart for the headquarters of Volcanoes National Park, a 10-minute drive away.
- On arrival, you'll have the option to order a complimentary coffee while your driver guide secures your spot for the trek. You'll be allocated a specific gorilla family and join the rest of your group for a detailed briefing given by your Volcanoes National Park guide.
- At 8 am, you'll depart for the starting point of your trek. This drive may take between 15 minutes and 1.5 hours, depending on which family your group is allocated.
- At the start of the trail, you'll have the option to hire a porter. We strongly recommend this, as their knowledge of the area and routes is invaluable, and they can assist you through slippery and tricky sections of your trek, making the experience more comfortable. They can also help carry belongings and retrieve items from your bag when needed.

Please note that a minimum of USD 25 in cash is required to hire a porter.

- It can take anywhere from 30 minutes to eight hours to reach your gorilla family, depending on where they are and if they're moving. Treks can reach altitudes of between 2,500 and 4,000 metres above sea level.
- Gorilla trekking terrain varies from farmland to thick rainforest closer to the park's boundary. Sometimes, treks require you to navigate through dense vegetation, which can often be slippery. There are also stinging nettles in these forests, which is why we recommend wearing gloves and gaiters.
- Volcanoes National Park's Trackers hike up the mountains every morning to locate gorilla families ahead of the day's treks. They'll be on hand when you find your family to help guide the interaction and keep you safe.
- Once you reach your gorilla family, you'll spend one hour with them. After that, you'll make your way back down to the starting point of your trek to meet your driver guide, enjoy some snacks and refreshments, and take a moment to reflect before making your way back home.



When you arrive back at Kwitonda or Kataza House, there will be refreshments waiting for you, and a hot bath to soak in, should you request one. Spend the rest of the day relaxing in your suite or heated plunge pool, or enjoy a soothing wellness treatment in the comfort of your own space. When you're ready, you can either enjoy a warm, nourishing dinner in your suite or the main dining area on property.

TREKKING RULES & NOTES

- Travellers are only permitted to visit certain gorilla families living in Volcanoes National Park. To limit the amount of contact these gentle giants have with humans, groups are limited to eight people and can spend a maximum of one hour with them.
- For safety reasons and to limit potential disease transmission, the minimum age for gorilla trekking is 15 years.
- To safeguard the gorillas, visitors who display cold, flu, or other respiratory tract symptoms won't be permitted to participate in treks. Volcanoes National Park officers have the authority to deny anyone access.
- Gorilla treks can be strenuous. Therefore, we recommend that you consult a doctor before travelling should you be afflicted with conditions that may be triggered by high altitudes or vigorous exercise.
- Stretchers are available for travellers with limited mobility at USD 200 per trek.
- Smoking and spitting are strictly prohibited in Volcanoes National Park.
- While gorilla sightings and encounters are highly likely, there are never guarantees in nature. Treks will take place regardless of prevailing weather conditions, but viewing may depend on them.



GORILLA ETIQUETTE

- Visitors should not consume any food or drinks while in the presence of gorillas.
- Only cameras are allowed while viewing gorillas. VNP trackers will keep the rest of your belongings away from the gorilla family for the hour you're with them.
- Visitors should keep their voices low and refrain from making any rapid movements when they're close to the gorillas.
- Masks are compulsory to protect the gorillas from infection. Should you need to cough or sneeze, we ask that you please cover your mouth and nose and turn away from the gorillas.
- To minimise the possible transmission of human diseases, visitors are requested to maintain a distance of 10 metres (33 feet) from the gorillas.
- If a gorilla should charge or vocalise, don't panic. Instead, stand still, look away from the gorilla, and follow your guide's instructions.
- No flashes are permitted when taking photographs of the gorillas.

GORILLA TREKKING EXPERIENCES

EXCLUSIVE

- Exclusive treks are available at a premium rate of USD 15,000.
- Exclusive trek groups can select the gorilla family they wish to visit, the Volcanoes National Park guide they'd like to lead them, and a departure time between 8 am and 10 am.
- These groups are guaranteed to be together.
- These groups aren't required to meet at the Volcanoes National Park Headquarters and instead can depart directly from Kwitonda or Kataza House, either on foot or by vehicle depending on which gorilla family they are visiting.
- The group's guide will come to the property to give a pre-trek briefing.
- Full payment is required to secure an exclusive trek. Once confirmed, it's non-refundable.
- Names and passport details must be confirmed at least 60 days before the trek. The Rwanda Development Board requires this information as soon as possible after booking.

SHARED

- Shared trekking groups must report to the Volcanoes National Park Headquarters by 7 am for a pre-trek briefing.
- Volcanoes National Park allocates trekkers to different groups and gorilla families according to operations on the day and/or fitness levels.
- As a result, groups who arrive together may not trek together.



PACKING FOR THE PERFECT TREK

WE RECOMMEND THAT GUESTS COME PREPARED

Although our Gear Room offers high-quality outdoor hiking and wet weather equipment for you to borrow during your stay, we cannot guarantee availability or correct sizes. For this reason, we encourage you to bring your own trekking equipment, including:

- Waterproof hiking boots with a good grip and ankle support. They'll need to withstand the terrain, which is often slippery and muddy.
- A waterproof jacket or raincoat.
- A long-sleeved top.
- Hiking trousers.
- Gloves.
- Thick socks.



AVAILABLE ON PROPERTY

- Hiking chaps/gaiters.
- Water-resistant hiking trousers.
- Hiking shoes (limited sizes).
- Backpacks.
- Rain covers.
- Trekking poles. Standard aluminium poles are available on property. You can also opt to use locally made, hand-carved poles, which are provided by Volcanoes National Park and available at the starting point of your trek.

PROVIDED BY SINGITA

- Comfort kits containing sunblock, a sweat towel, hand sanitiser, tissues, a buff, and sanitary/toilet eco-bags.
- Backpacks containing a lunchbox, snacks, gloves, and a water bottle.

Golden monkey trekking

- Exclusive golden monkey treks are available at USD 1,600 per group. Individual permits cost USD 100.
- Only 32 permits are issued each day.
- A maximum of 16 guests is permitted in each trekking group.
- Guests are required to drive to Volcanoes National Park's Headquarters at 7 am, as per standard trekking procedures.



TREKKING GUIDELINES

Golden monkeys are endemic to the Albertine Rift. Found in the bamboo forests at the base of Mount Sabyinyo and Karisimbi, these playful primates are amongst the most endangered in Africa.

- You can visit one of four groups of golden monkeys.
- They're found between 2,800 and 3,000 metres above sea level.
- You'll meet for breakfast at 6 am, before departing at 6:45 am for the Volcanoes National Park Headquarters.
- At 7 am, your driver guide will register you for your trek, and you'll depart on the 15-20-minute drive to the starting point.
- It typically takes about 30 minutes to reach the golden monkeys, but this may vary depending on whether or not they're on the move.
- You can spend one hour with them before heading back to Kwitonda or Kataza House.



Chimpanzee trekking

- In Rwanda, chimpanzees can only be found in Nyungwe Forest National Park, roughly a five-hour drive from Singita Volcanoes National Park.
- A maximum of eight guests is permitted in each trekking group.
- Individual permits cost USD 150, and there's an additional park entry fee of USD 100 per person.
- Exclusive chimpanzee treks are also available for USD 2,000. This includes the park entry fee.
- You'll meet at 4:30 am to depart for the starting point of your trek at 5 am.
- Chimpanzee treks begin at one of three reception centres: Uwina, Kitabi, or Gisakura. Here, you'll meet your guide.
- To facilitate the early start, you'll be required to stay at One&Only Nyungwe House the night before your trek. The earliest helicopter flight from Kigali International Airport only departs at 6 am.



Giving guidelines

Tipping cultures differ from country to country. While our people do not expect or rely on gratuities from guests, you may wish to leave a discretionary token of your appreciation — either cash or a nominated amount added to your bill. Tips from the general staff gratuity pool are divided equally amongst chefs, housekeepers, porters, front-of-house, and back-of-house staff. Should you wish to allocate a gratuity to a particular staff member, we ask that you please specify this.

There are three or four Volcanoes National Park Trackers per trekking group, who stay with the family after you return to the Park Headquarters. We recommend you give one of them your gratuity to share with the others.

** Please note that gratuity for Volcanoes National Park trekking guides, porters, and trackers should be paid independently and in cash.*

SUGGESTED GRATUITY BREAKDOWN:

POSITION	AMOUNT*
VNP tracker	From USD 40 per couple per trek
VNP trekking guide	From USD 55 per couple per trek
VNP porter	From USD 25 per person per trek
Driver guide	From USD 40 per couple per day
Waiter	From USD 45 per couple per day
General staff gratuity pool	From USD 55 per couple per day