



CHEESEMANS' ECOLOGY SAFARIS

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Mountain Gorillas *Virunga Mountains of Rwanda* August 16 to 22, 2021



Mountain Gorilla
© Debbie Thompson

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Trek the forests of the Virunga Mountains to encounter Rwanda's "gentle giant," the mountain gorilla. Their enormous size, extraordinary strength, and the deep, lush mountainous environment have contributed to their mystique. Only about 900 mountain gorillas remain in the wild today, giving you a special opportunity for this rare experience. These social apes and their large appetites may have you observing youngsters playing, the silverback eating by stripping leaves from huge branches, friendly grooming between pals, or tiny babies nursing from their mother. Bringing mountain gorillas to light, Dr. Dian Fossey dedicated her life to their future and was immortalized in the book-to-film adaptation "Gorillas in the Mist." You will walk away with unforgettable memories and amazing photographs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Come face-to-face with individual mountain gorillas as they interact within their family group.
- Trek through lush forest along the slopes of inactive volcanoes in Africa's oldest national park.
- Improve your photography skills with leader and professional photographer Tom Murphy.

LEADERS: Tom Murphy assisted by local guides.

DAYS: 7, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 7.

COST: \$9,740 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 4.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Aug 16	Travel to Kigali, Rwanda		
Aug 17	Arrive in Kigali, Rwanda from home or from our Botswana and Zambia trip.	Kigali Serena Hotel, Kigali	—
Aug 18	Drive to the Virunga Mountains and enjoy the luscious greenery as you traverse the beautiful mountainous landscapes.	Mountain Gorilla View Lodge	B, L, D
Aug 19	Gorilla trek.		
Aug 20	Gorilla trek and then return to Kigali.	Kigali Serena Hotel, Kigali	B, L
Aug 21	Kigali city tour and Genocide Memorial Centre visit before flying home.		
Aug 22	Arrive home.		

OPTIONS

- Begin your journey early on our Botswana and Zambia trip from July 31 to August 19, 2021. Experience the best wildlife regions that southern Africa has to offer and capture unforgettable moments with your leader and professional photographer Tom Murphy. See full itinerary at www.cheesemans.com/trips/botswana-jul2021.

LEADER

Tom Murphy

Tom has offered custom photographic tours and seminars for nearly 30 years, specializing in snowy environments such as Yellowstone National Park and Antarctica. He also holds great interest in African wildlife and leading African photo safaris. His passion and talent is photographing wildlife in their environment to tell a story. Much of his work centers on Yellowstone as highlighted in a popular PBS Nature series program, *Christmas in Yellowstone*, and several of his own books (www.tmurphywild.com).



DETAILED ITINERARY

Aug 16 ~ Travel to Kigali, Rwanda

Aug 17 ~ Arrive in Kigali, Rwanda

Arrive in Kigali, Rwanda from our Botswana and Zambia trip (www.cheesemans.com/trips/botswana-jul2021) or from home. At the Kigali Airport, one of our local guides will meet you and transfer you to the hotel.

Aug 18 ~ Drive to the Virunga Mountains

Set off on a 2.5-hr drive to the Virunga Mountains in a spacious Land Cruiser, arriving your lodge, located at the base of Volcanoes National Park.

Aug 19 ~ Gorilla trekking

After breakfast, drive to the Volcanoes National Park Headquarters where you'll meet your two park guides before driving to a trailhead and trekking to your gorilla group. You may hire an agile porter to help you carry your photo equipment and water. The trek to your gorilla group can take one to three hours of hiking each way, spending only one hour with the group. Your park guides will go over safety rules and body language required when visiting gorilla groups, but you'll soon realize that this is one of the most exhilarating and moving wildlife experiences you will ever have.

The trackers already know where each group is located. To reach the group, you may climb through several vegetation zones – farms, bamboo, luxuriant hagenia, and hypericum forest with twisted gnarled trees covered in soft emerald mosses, lichens, and epiphytes. Watch out for stinging nettles!

As you approach the group, the lead guide will grunt as he edges forward to announce your arrival to not startle the gorillas. The silverback is usually lazily lying in thick vegetation and watching while one or more females are often close by and unperturbed by your presence. We hope you'll have the wonderful opportunity to watch the young gorillas play fighting, climbing trees, and wrestling, making the hour pass by very quickly.



Mountain Gorilla Mother and Baby
© Tom Murphy

After gorilla trekking, depending on the time of day, you may go sightseeing before returning to the lodge.

Aug 20 ~ Gorilla trekking

You'll drive to the park headquarters to meet your park guides and trek to your gorilla group. After you spend your hour immersed with the gorillas, watching their behavior, you will return to Kigali.

Aug 21 ~ Explore Kigali and flights homeward

Take a city tour in Kigali and visit the Genocide Memorial Centre that explains Rwanda's promise for the future: "Such atrocities will never happen again." After your visit either go back to the hotel for a dayroom (not included) or transfer to the Kigali Airport for your flight homeward.

Aug 22 ~ Arrive home

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip cost, double occupancy	\$9,740
Single Supplement	Contact us

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will find a roommate for you, but if we cannot find you a roommate, we may charge you a single supplement. Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$1,500
Second	July 15, 2020	\$4,000
Final	March 1, 2021	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, payments are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$1,650 per person (\$1,500 per person is for the pre-purchased, **non-refundable** and **non-transferable** gorilla trekking permits); \$150 per person of the cancellation fee can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the cancelled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferrable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- All leaders, transport, park fees, and museum fees for all activities unless described as optional.
- Gorilla trekking permits of \$1,500 per person per trek (total of \$3,000); \$1,500 permit deposit is **non-refundable** and **non-transferable**.
- Accommodations for the nights of August 17 through August 20.
- Meals from breakfast on August 18 through lunch on August 21.
- Transfers from the Kigali Airport to Kigali Serena Hotel on August 17 and to the Kigali Airport on August 21.
- Bottled water in the vehicles and during treks.
- Walking sticks.
- Trip Materials – information about flights, packing, entry and departure requirements, airport transfers, gratuities, etc.
- Short Term AMREF Flying Doctor medical emergency evacuation insurance. This does not include hospital or treatment costs. For more information see www.cheesemans.com/travel-insurance.

Not included

- All airfare, airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees. Round-trip airfare is approximately \$1,200 to \$1,850 between the US and Rwanda, depending on origin. **If you are arriving from our Botswana and Zambia trip**, we will book your one-way flight from Lusaka to Kigali (approximately \$360).
- Passport and visa fees.
- We can arrange divergent airport transfers and extra hotel nights for an extra cost.
- Gratuities for guides and porters – tipping is always discretionary, and we will give you detailed information with your Trip Materials.
- Additional emergency medical insurance. For more information see www.cheesemans.com/travel-insurance.
- Trip cancellation insurance. For more information see www.cheesemans.com/travel-insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Reservation Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Reservation Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

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OTHER DETAILS

Climate

August falls in the dry season, but showers are possible. The temperatures range around 70°F (21°C) during the day and 60°F (16°C) at night. The altitudinal range creates climatic variations, so expect rain and mist in the upland forests and sun at the base of Volcano National Park.

Fitness Level

Gorilla tracking can be arduous and at high elevation, so be prepared and equipped accordingly. Expect a one to three hour hike each way to see gorillas in dry or muddy conditions over coarse terrain. Walking sticks are provided, and porters are available for hire. The base of the park sits at 7,500ft (2,500m) above sea level and rises to 13,500ft (4,500m).

Flights

Airfare is not included in trip costs. Detailed logistical information and the contact information for our recommended flight-ticketing agent are included in the Trip Materials we will send you. Please let us know if you are arriving earlier or staying later as we are happy to assist you with any extra overnights that you might want to arrange.

Flights you (or a travel agent) book: Arrive at Kigali, Rwanda (KGL) around midday on August 17. **If you are arriving from our Botswana and Zambia trip**, see the *Flights* section in its itinerary for arrival information (www.cheesemans.com/trips/botswana-jul2021). Depart Kigali, Rwanda (KGL) in the evening on August 21.

Flights we book for you: **If you are joining from our Botswana and Zambia trip**, the one-way flight from Lusaka to Kigali; we'll add the flight cost to your final trip balance.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current Terms and Conditions at <https://cheesemans.com/terms-and-conditions>.

Conservation

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris is passionate about conserving the precious regions that we travel to and supports many conservation efforts. By visiting these areas, we contribute to sustainable conservation of these valuable wildlife habitats. We urge you to support conservation organizations that protect and restore natural habitats and write letters to tourism and government agencies to promote work in preserving wildlife.

We aim to make all our trips carbon neutral by splitting the cost of carbon offsetting with our participants. For your convenience, the optional donation amount for your half of the carbon offset will be indicated on your invoice. We source high quality offsets through CarbonTree Conservation Fund, a non-profit we helped found, supporting pioneering forest conservation in the Rio Bravo Reserve in Belize, a Nature Conservancy project (www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/latin-america/belize/rio-bravo-conservation-area/).