



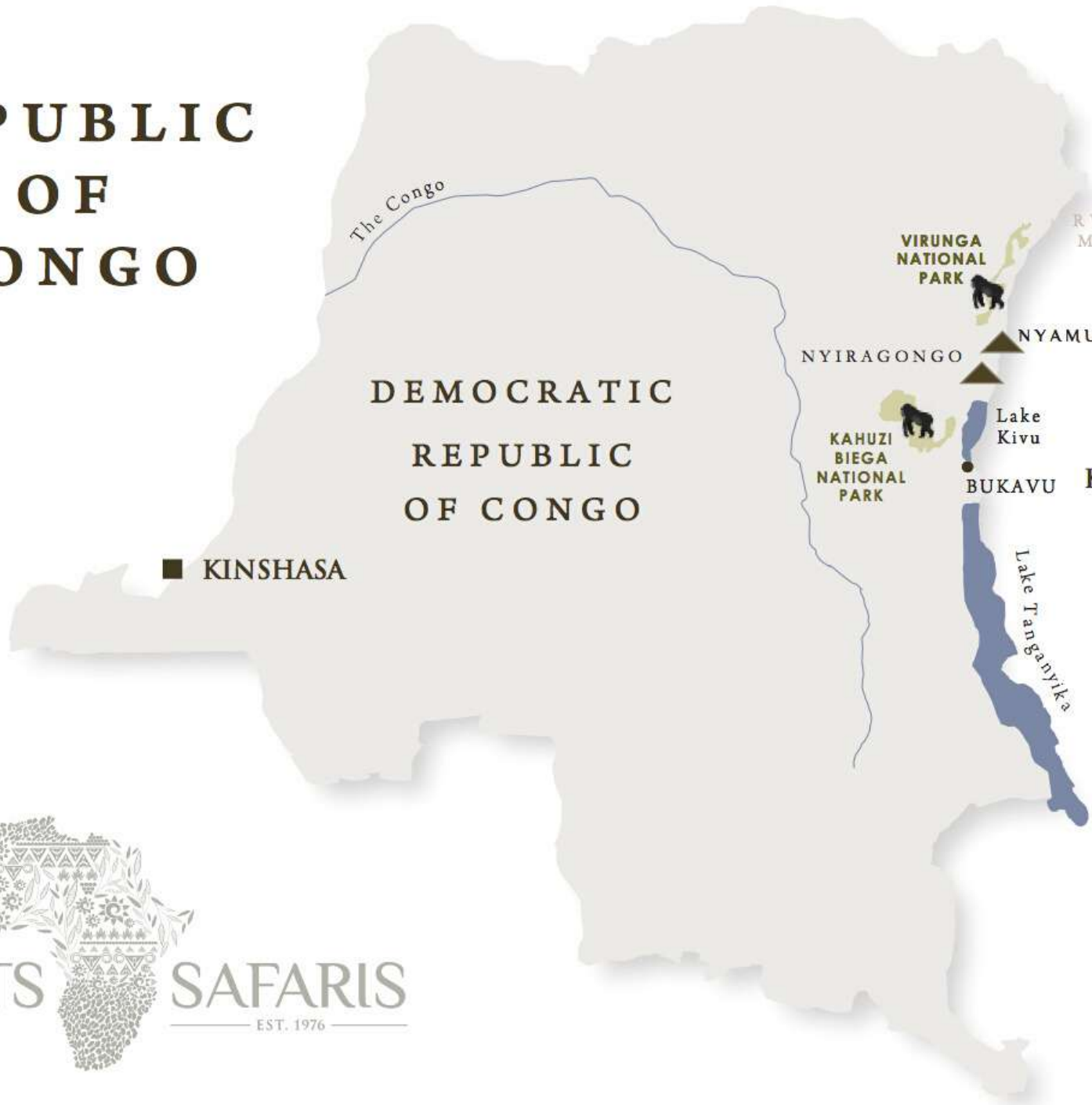
ROBERTS

SAFARIS

EST. 1976

EXPERIENCE VIRUNGA

REPUBLIC OF CONGO



The Congo

DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC
OF CONGO

■ KINSHASA

VIRUNGA
NATIONAL
PARK

RWENZORIS
MOUNTAIN
RANGE

NYIRAGONGO

NYAMURAGIRA

RWANDA

KAHUZI
BIEGA
NATIONAL
PARK

Lake
Kivu

■ KIGALI

BUKAVU

Lake Tanganyika



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INSPIRATION

The Democratic Republic of Congo is home to Virunga National Park, an incredible destination that very few tourists have seen. It's really the only place in the DRC that we recommend visiting at this time, but we highly recommend it!

Virunga is inspiring – it is Africa's oldest national park, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site and the continent's most biologically diverse protected area. It is also home to a quarter of the world's approximately 900 remaining mountain gorillas. Two other Great Ape species can also be found in Virunga, the eastern lowland Grauer's gorillas and chimpanzees.

The 3,000 square mile park boasts volcanoes, forests, savannahs, lava plains, swamps, erosion valleys and the glaciated peaks of the Rwenzori mountains. Other distinctive animal inhabitants of the park include the Okapi, an endangered species that resembles a zebra but is more closely related to the giraffe. Large colonies of hippopotami, forest and savanna elephants, lions, and numerous rare bird species can also be found in the park. The southern section of the Virunga National Park is open to adventurous travelers. But again, due to safety concerns, Virunga is currently the only area within the Democratic Republic of Congo to which Roberts Safaris offers trips at this moment in time.

Virunga can be a year round destination. Rain is possible throughout the year and given the high altitude it can get quite cool, particularly at night. Temperatures at Rumangabo where Mikeno Lodge, is located ranges from 55 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. It is cooler at Bukima where most gorilla treks begin and temperatures on the Nyiragongo volcano can fall below freezing. July, August and September are the driest months of year. This can mean that the gorillas move to higher altitudes resulting in longer treks. November is the heavy rainy season but the views can be spectacular!



ITINERARY CONGO

DAY 1: Kigali

Arriving at Kigali Airport you will be met by representatives from Roberts Safaris and assisted through the airport to your private transfer to either the Grande Barrier, the border crossing at Goma to DRC or overnight in Kigali for a morning departure the following day - guests must be at the Grand Barrier in the morning to allow for a transfer to their first property in Virunga so an overnight is usually advised.

DAY 2: MIKENO LODGE, Virunga

Breakfast in Kigali before departing for a private transfer through Rwanda to the border with DRC. You will need to arrive at the Grande Barriere border crossing by 11:30am and ensure check-in with Virunga tourism office by 13:00h. The tourism office is conveniently located in the Grande Barriere border post building, opposite passport control. Tourism staff will provide guests with gorilla and volcano trek permits at check-in. These permits must be presented before the start of each trek. Once check-in is complete, guests will be transported to Mikeno Lodge at the Park headquarters in Rumangabo. On arrival to Mikeno Lodge, a late lunch will be served and the afternoon can be enjoyed at leisure, including exploring Rumangabo's several nature trails, bird watching or paying a visit to Virunga's Congohounds - Please note this activity is not always available.

DAY 3: MIKENO LODGE, Virunga

After an early breakfast at Mikeno Lodge, guests will set off for the first gorilla trek at Bukima Ranger Post. On arrival to Bukima, trekkers will meet their Ranger guides and local pisteursto, receive a briefing before starting the gorilla trek. Treks usually require 1-2.5 hours of hiking each way, depending on location of the group being trekked and the difficulty of the terrain. After spending the allotted hour with the gorillas, trekkers will return to Bukima camp where a late lunch will be served.

Guests will have the rest of the afternoon off to explore Bukima, including bird watching and visiting the Park's bamboo project.

DAY 4: MIKENO LODGE, Virunga

At 8:30am, guest will start their second gorilla trek. Upon return, a quick lunch will be served at Bukima and when all gorilla trekkers have returned, guests will be transported back to Mikeno Lodge. On arrival to Mikeno, guests have the afternoon at leisure, free to explore the Park HQ or cosy up with a nice book by the fire.

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ITINERARY CONGO

DAY 5: BUKIMA TENTED CAMP, Virunga

Bukima Tented Camp is a simple tented camp at the border of the park and one of the main starting points for gorilla treks in Virunga. The camp was originally built for researchers, but is now used primarily by trekkers. You cannot get a more convenient starting point for a gorilla trek anywhere in East Africa! The ranger and trackers come right to the mess tent in the morning and do their pre-trek briefing as you finish your coffee. You hike straight out of the camp into the forest to find the gorillas. Even guests who stay at Mikeno will pass through Bukima camp, often stopping for a post-trek lunch or snack before driving back to Mikeno.

DAY 6: NYIRAGONGO SUMMIT SHELTERS, Virunga

After breakfast at Mikeno Lodge, guests will be transported to the Kibati Ranger Post, departure point for the Nyiragongo volcano trek. On arrival to Kibati, climbers will receive a briefing and have the opportunity to hire porters. The climb up the volcano takes around four to six hours and trekkers will overnight on the summit.

Set within Virunga National Park, Nyiragongo consists of 12 basic summit shelters set close to a beautiful stratovolcano and the world's largest lava lake.

OVERVIEW Basic accommodation at Nyiragongo is twinned with a stunning setting, with wooden shelters set close to the volcano rim where trekkers can see down into a lava lake and see and hear hot gases exploding through the lava.

DAYS 7 & 8: TCHEGERA, Lake Kivu

Descending from the Summit for 2 nights of R&R on the beautiful shores of Lake Kivu at Tchepera. Each tent has views over Lake Kivu and across to four volcanoes with a clear sky, and days can be spent simply relaxing. The main shared area is a simple mess tent and includes a lounge, space to eat communally and a bar. There are eight safari-style tented rooms at Tchepera Island Camp, which can be set up as either single, double or twin, that sit on the black sandy shore of the island. The tents are simple but comfortable, with flushing loos, bucket showers and power from a generator. Each has a small veranda for sitting outside and watching the sun go down over the lake.

Activities can include walks on the island and kayaking on Lake Kivu walking and hiking and good birding.

DAYS 9: DEPARTUE - Transfer to the Grand Barrier and onwards to Kigali

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VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK



MIKENO LODGE

MIKENO LODGE

VIRUNGA - CONGO



Mikeno Lodge is a luxurious lodge tucked into a forested hillside at Virunga National Park Headquarters and the perfect base for visiting mountain gorillas or climbing a volcano. The lodge is perfectly situated between three major attractions in Virunga National Park and is only one and a half hours from Goma. The lodge and restaurant are located within a forest and offer beautiful views of the rift valley and Nyiragongo and Mikeno volcanoes.

Nature walks and visits to local places of interest can be arranged. There is an abundance of bird life, as well as resident blue monkeys, colobus monkeys and baboons. Chimpanzees are also frequent visitors to the area. Whether your stay is the starting point for gorilla, volcano and chimp adventures, or purely for a relaxing time-out in a peaceful location, Mikeno Lodge provides an exceptional experience among the wildlife and beauty of Virunga National Park.

BUKIMA TENTED CAMP





BUKIMA TENTED CAMP

BUKIMA TENTED CAMP

VIRUNGA - CONGO



Just outside the Virunga National Park boundary lays the Bukima tented camp, which is the main starting point Virunga mountain gorilla treks. The camp was originally built for researchers, but is now used primarily by trekkers. As the name suggests, overnight guests at Bukima sleep in platform tents, but by camping standards they are quite plush. Each tent features an adjoining bathroom with running water and a nicely appointed bed and dresser for clothes. The views from the tent sites – or anywhere in camp for that matter – are spectacular. To the south, the view is dominated by Mt. Mikeno, whose 4437m (14,560') summit towers over the gorilla sector. Across the valley is Nyiragongo volcano, whose lava lake colours the night sky with a red glow. Every few years, Nyamulagira volcano erupts and steals the night-time show by spewing hot lava hundreds of feet into the air. Occasionally, the mountain gorillas themselves wander into the Bukima tented camp. Although this is highly frowned upon by park staff, it never ceases to impress the guests.

Prices for the camp include breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Alcoholic beverages are available for an additional charge. Of the six tents, four feature double beds and two are outfitted with twin beds.

NYIRAGONGO, VIRUNGA MOUNTAINS



SUMMIT SHELTERS



SUMMIT SHELTERS

NYIRAGONGO - CONGO



Nyiragongo is just one of the reasons that Virunga is an active travelers dream. Imagine hiking up and then overnight next to the world's largest lava lake. The volcano's forested lower slopes are home to a variety of animals including chimpanzees, monkeys and bushbuck. From the rim, visitors can peer down into a churning lava lake and see and hear hot gases exploding up through a mosaic of molten lava. Nyiragongo's eruptions are predictable making it safe for tourists and a once in a lifetime opportunity for active travelers.

Treks to the summit of Nyiragongo volcano begin at the Kibati patrol post, less than one hour from Mikeno Lodge. It is possible for fitter people to climb up and descend in one day, but most groups choose to overnight in basic accommodation available at the top. The shelters are essentially two-person tents inside small wooden structures, this is not a luxury overnight!



TCHÉGERA ISLAND

TCHGERA ISLAND CAMP



TCHEGERA ISLAND CAMP

LAKE KIVU - CONGO



There are not many outdoor pleasures greater in Congo than sitting around a campfire on a clear evening with the silence broken only by the sounds of the waves breaking on the shores of Lake Kivu. Tchegeera Island Camp is the perfect way to escape the hustle and bustle of Goma or to relax after climbing Nyiragongo volcano. Situated off the northern shore of Lake Kivu, Tchegeera camp offers spectacular views of the lake and four volcanoes.

On clear nights, Nyiragongo and Nyamulagira volcanoes add to the drama by turning the night sky red with their glowing lava. There is also an abundance of birdlife on the island including African eagles, cormorants, heron and gulls. Whether one chooses to relax on the beach or explore other parts of the island in a sea kayak or by paddle board, Tchegeera is the perfect place for rest and relaxation. Accommodation reservations include breakfast, lunch and dinner.





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