



GORILLA TRACKING ADVENTURES IN UGANDA

Gorilla Tracking Rules

In Uganda, often described as the [Pearl of Africa](#), one can discover natural wonders not found anywhere else on the planet. Intek Travel offers you the opportunity to experience one of these wonders first hand: a unique and unforgettable visit to the endangered [Mountain Gorillas](#) in their natural habitat.

In the [Mgahinga Gorilla](#) and [Bwindi Impenetrable National Parks](#), the discerning traveller has the opportunity to venture on an exhilarating climb to the mountain gorilla's natural habitat of shady bamboo thickets and relish sensational views of lush green rainforests, alive with the cacophonous calls of tropical birds. Nothing however can prepare one for the impact of encountering a gorilla close up, twice the size of an average man, yet remarkably gentle and generally tolerant of human visitors.

To protect the gorilla population of Uganda from stress and exposure to human diseases, the [Uganda Wildlife Authority](#) allows only eight tourists to visit each of the habituated gorilla groups for no more than one hour per day. The following rules apply in addition:

- **Do not litter. All litter must be carried out of the park and disposed of properly.**
- **Avoid unnecessary damage to plant life and do not remove plants or wildlife from the park.**
- **Follow the instructions of your ranger guides and do not enter the park without them.**
- **Do not spit on vegetation or soil while in the park.**
- **No persons under the age of 15 are allowed to visit the mountain gorillas.**
- **You are allowed a maximum of 1 hour of observation after you approached the gorillas.**
- **Respect the peaceful environment of the gorilla habitat.**
- **Do not make loud noises or sudden moves in their presence.**
- **Turn away from the gorillas if you have to sneeze or cough and cover your nose and mouth.**
- **Do not eat or smoke within a distance of 200 meters from the gorillas.**
- **Do not use flash lights for gorilla video / photography.**
- **Do not get closer than 7 meters (23 feet) to the gorillas.**
 - **If the gorillas approach you, move back slowly to keep the distance.**
- **Although non-aggressive, gorillas are wild animals and may sometimes charge.**
 - **If this happens, crouch down, don't look them in the eyes and wait for them to pass.**
- **Stay together in a tight group while visiting the gorillas, you are not allowed to surround them.**
- **No one with communicable diseases (Flu, cough, diarrhoea) is allowed to enter the park.**
 - **These diseases can be transferred to the gorillas and may be fatal to them.**

Gorilla Permit Booking Procedures

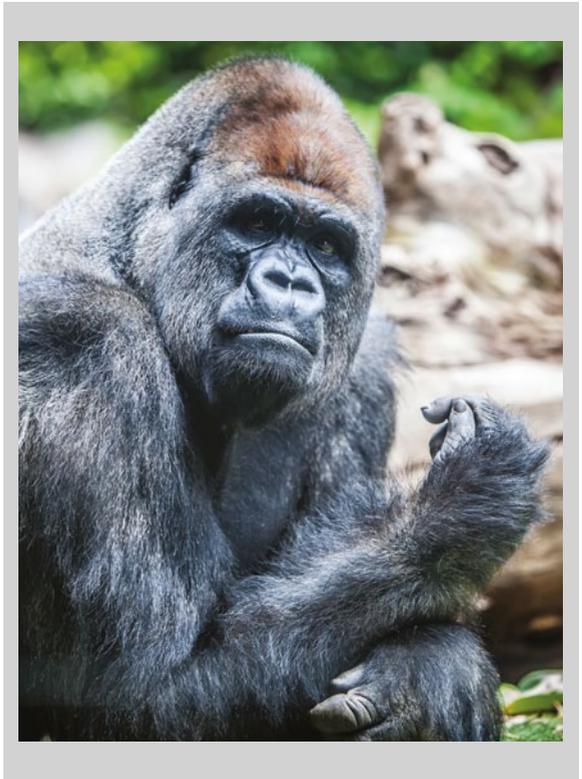
A visit to the mountain gorillas of Uganda requires an official permit, which are sold on a first come-first-gets basis. It is therefore advisable to plan your gorilla tracking experience 3 to 6 months in advance of your visit and also pay for your permit at the time of booking as only a paid permit guarantees your gorilla tracking adventure.

Also, gorilla tracking permits tend to sell out fast and well in advance of the main season of June, July, August, September, December and January. A permit allows you to view gorillas for only 1 hour but the tracking effort itself may take anywhere between 2 to 8 hours as you will be searching for the gorillas in the forest. Also observe that gorilla family allocation occurs on the day of the actual tracking as tourists are grouped depending on their physical abilities and interests.

The permit to track gorillas in [Bwindi Impenetrable National Park](#) or [Mgahinga Gorilla National Park](#) costs US \$ 600 per day / person and can be booked and paid for at the offices of the [Uganda Wildlife Authority](#) (UWA) in Kampala. Intek Travel will also be able to source and pay for your gorilla permit if requested.

Tropical Forest Trekking Tips

Gorilla tracking occurs on average in altitudes of 2.000 meters above sea level in dense and often rain soaked tropical forest, utilizing trails established by the game rangers of the [Uganda Wildlife Authority](#) (UWA). Reporting time for the gorilla tracking briefing / registration of visitors is at the park gate at 8.00 am.



Visitors should be prepared for 2 to 8 hours of hiking / trekking and should be physically prepared and generally fit for the gorilla tracking adventure. However, all those who believe they might need a bit of help during the visit can hire a 'porter' at the park gate / briefing point against a small extra fee. The 'porter' will help carry your equipment / rucksack as may be required.

What to Bring / Wear for your Gorilla Tracking Adventure

It is advisable to wear waterproof hiking / trekking boots suitable to trek through tropical mountain / rain forest. Clothing should be suitable for wildlife observation with long-sleeve shirts and jackets / sweaters for cool mornings. In addition, sun protection, a hat,

sunglasses, insect repellent and rain gear should be part of your wardrobe. And for all those taking photos, a camera with a longer lens and additional batteries will be useful and if you have binoculars, you might want to bring those as well.



General Visa & Health Requirements

Visiting Uganda is comparatively easy as tourist visa applications can be obtained online and approval for these is usually granted within a few days. In case you are coming from a country that requires specific procedures, please consult a Ugandan Embassy or High Commission for the required procedures and as stated on the visa application platform listed below.

At this time, visitors from most European countries can also still obtain a tourist visa on arrival, however as this will be phased out eventually, we strongly suggest to utilize the new Online Visa Application Platform in order to avoid any surprises: <https://visas.immigration.go.ug/> Of the options listed there, the tourists visiting Uganda should apply for **Visa / Permit Type** and thereafter one of the following categories:

Visa - Uganda / Ordinary Tourist Visa: Allows for a single entry into Uganda, is valid for a period of 3 months and costs US \$ 50, payable on arrival and once the online visa application process has been completed and approved. Please ensure to print the online visa approval plus all required documentation before travelling to Uganda.

Visa - East Africa Tourist Visa: This is a multiple entry East African tourist visa that also allows entry into the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda in addition to entering the Republic of Uganda for tourism purposes. This visa type is also valid for a period of 3 months and costs US \$ 100, payable on arrival and once the online visa application process has been completed and approved. Please ensure to print the online visa approval plus all required documentation before travelling to Uganda.

Yellow Fever Vaccination: It is important to also note that as of now, a valid **Yellow Fever Vaccination** is an obligatory prerequisite for entering Uganda and persons arriving without such a valid international certificate - **Yellow Card** - will be vaccinated at the airport against a fee of US \$ 20.

Additional Resources

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NATIONAL PARKS OF UGANDA



- 1. Mount Elgon National Park**
Area: 1,145 km² Habitat: Montane
- 2. Kidepo Valley National Park**
Area: 1,442 km² Habitat: Savannah
- 3. Murchison Falls National Park**
Area: 3,900 km² Habitat: Savannah
- 4. Semuliki National Park**
Area: 220 km² Habitat: Forest
- 5. Rwenzori Mountains National Park**
Area: 996 km² Habitat: Montane
- 6. Kibale Forest National Park**
Area: 766 km² Habitat: Forest
- 7. Queen Elizabeth National Park**
Area: 1,978 km² Habitat: Savannah
- 8. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park**
Area: 310 km² Habitat: Forest
- 9. Mgahinga Gorilla National Park**
Area: 33 km² Habitat: Montane
- 10. Lake Mburo National Park**
Area: 256 km² Habitat: Savannah

