



UGANDA & CONGO

6 DAYS BY HELICOPTER

Helicopter ITINERARY

Day 1: Your safari starts in Fort Portal in western Uganda. Overnight at the beautiful Ndali Lodge.

Day 2: Early morning scenic over the Rwenzori mountains. Fly on to Kisoro and Goma to clear customs into Congo. Arrive in the Virunga's. Afternoon visit to the Senkwekwe gorilla orphanage.
Mikeno Lodge

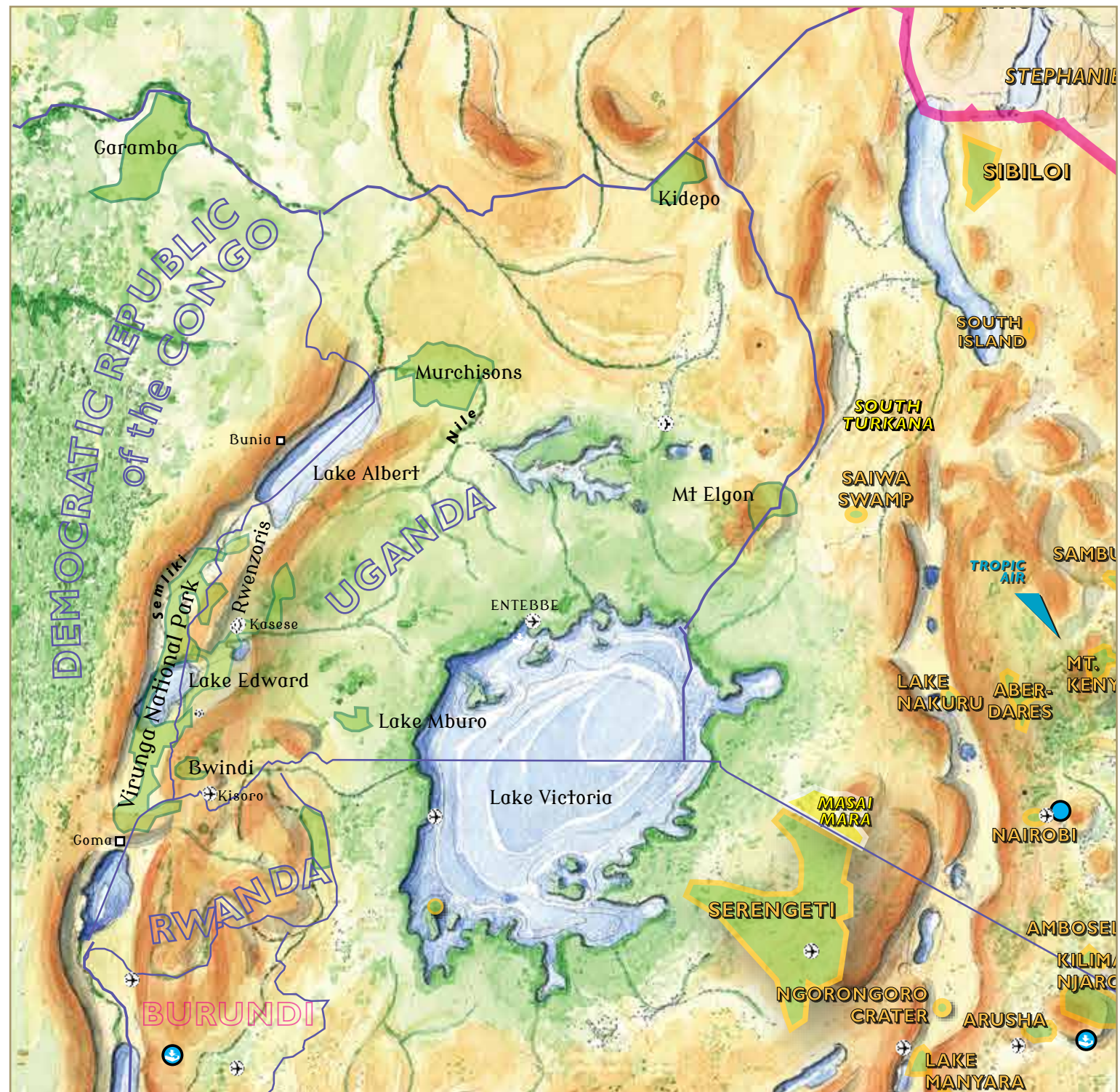
Day 3: Morning trek in search of the Mountain Gorilla. Scenic flight over the Virunga's, the fresh water springs, Semliki River and Mount Nyamuragira.
Mikeno Lodge

Day 4: Early trek in Kahuzi Biéga, with Grauer gorilla. Afternoon scenic flight to Mount Nyiragongo, followed by a walk to the rim and overnight in the volcano's shelters.

Day 5: Return to Mikeno for breakfast. Continue on to Lake Kivu, arriving at Tchegeza Island for lunch. Afternoon enjoying the water activities at Tchegeza Island.

Day 6: Visit the Lwiro Research Centre. Final night at Tchegeza Island.

Day 7: Safari Ends



Uganda HIGHLIGHTS

- wildlife & landscapes -

Ndali - Fort Portal, western Uganda

Scenic over the snowy peaks of the
Rwenzoris - 'Mountains of the
Moon'



WESTERN UGANDA

- Fort Portal -

Over 85% of Ugandans live in rural areas, and depend on subsistence agriculture - the rich soils and favourable climate mean that small scale farms are very productive.



NDALI LODGE

- Fort Portal -

Ndali Lodge near Fort Portal in western Uganda is the perfect base to explore the beautiful snow-covered mountain peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains. The Lodge is perched on the rim of an extinct volcano, in which lies the breath-taking Lake Nyinambuga. Ndali is a family run business, with 8 ensuite cottages.

From Ndali one can trek in Kibale forest in search of chimpanzees. There are also many lovely walks around Ndali estate, and the neighbouring vanilla plantation.



NDALI VANILLA

- Western Uganda -

The volcanic soils in the west of Uganda are ideal for growing vanilla. 'Ndali Vanilla' is a fairtrade company that has partnered with local farmers in growing some of the world's best Vanilla beans, sustainably.

Vanilla beans are cured, made into extract and powder, and packaged for export to high profile companies such as Lush Cosmetics, Ben & Jerry's and Waitrose.



RWENZORI MOUNTAINS

- Uganda Congo border -

Known as the 'Mountains of the Moon' - not only are the Rwenzori's permanently snow capped, but the largest glaciers in Africa are found here.



Congo HIGHLIGHTS

- forests, mountain gorilla & volcanoes -

Virunga National Park
Mountain & Lowland Gorilla

Scenic flight over the **Virunga National Park**

Senkwekwe gorilla orphanage

The active volcanoes & lava lakes of
Nyamuragira and **Nyiragongo**

Kahuzi Biéga - Grauer gorilla trek

Island Tchegera & Lake Kiva

Lwiro Primate Institute



Mount Nyiragongo
© Tom Parker

VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK

- Eastern Congo -

Virunga National Park is Africa's oldest park, established in 1925 by King Albert the 1st of Belgium.

An outstanding diversity of habitats, ranging from swamps and steppes to dense primeval forests, and from lava plains to the savannahs on the slopes of volcanoes. This is a pristine habitat rich in biodiversity, and unique in that it has both lowland and montane forest, with diverse species of trees, ferns, butterflies and birds. Protected groups of Lowland and Mountain gorilla inhabit this region.



© Tom Parker



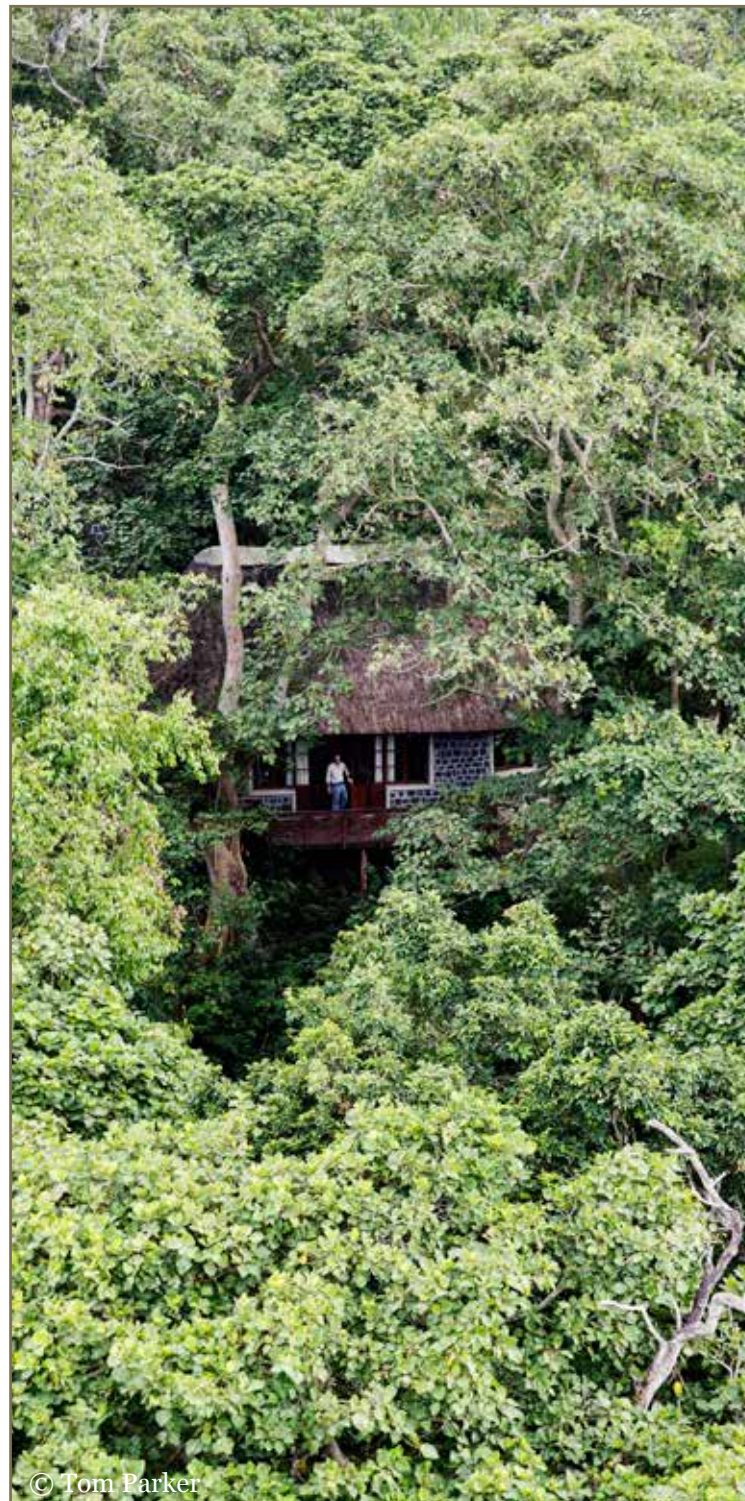
© Tom Parker

MIKENO LODGE

- Virunga National Park -

Located in the depth of the Virunga forest is Mikeno Lodge, with accommodation for 24 people in 12 thatched cottages.

This is Virunga National Park's first lodge, and not only is it luxury but it is built with maximum consideration to its natural surroundings. Mikeno has easy access to the Park's most treasured assets - the Mountain Gorilla, Chimpanzee and Mount Nyiragongo. Just a few minutes walk away is the Senkwekwe Centre for orphan gorilla.



SENKWEKWE

- Center for orphan gorilla -

Built in 2008, the Senkwekwe Center is a gorilla orphanage that provides accommodation for both the gorillas and their dedicated carers. The centre raises money from donations for the conservation of the Mountain Gorilla by improving park infrastructure, as well as supporting the development of local primary schools. The centre provides a chance to learn about the challenges that this species faces in the wild.



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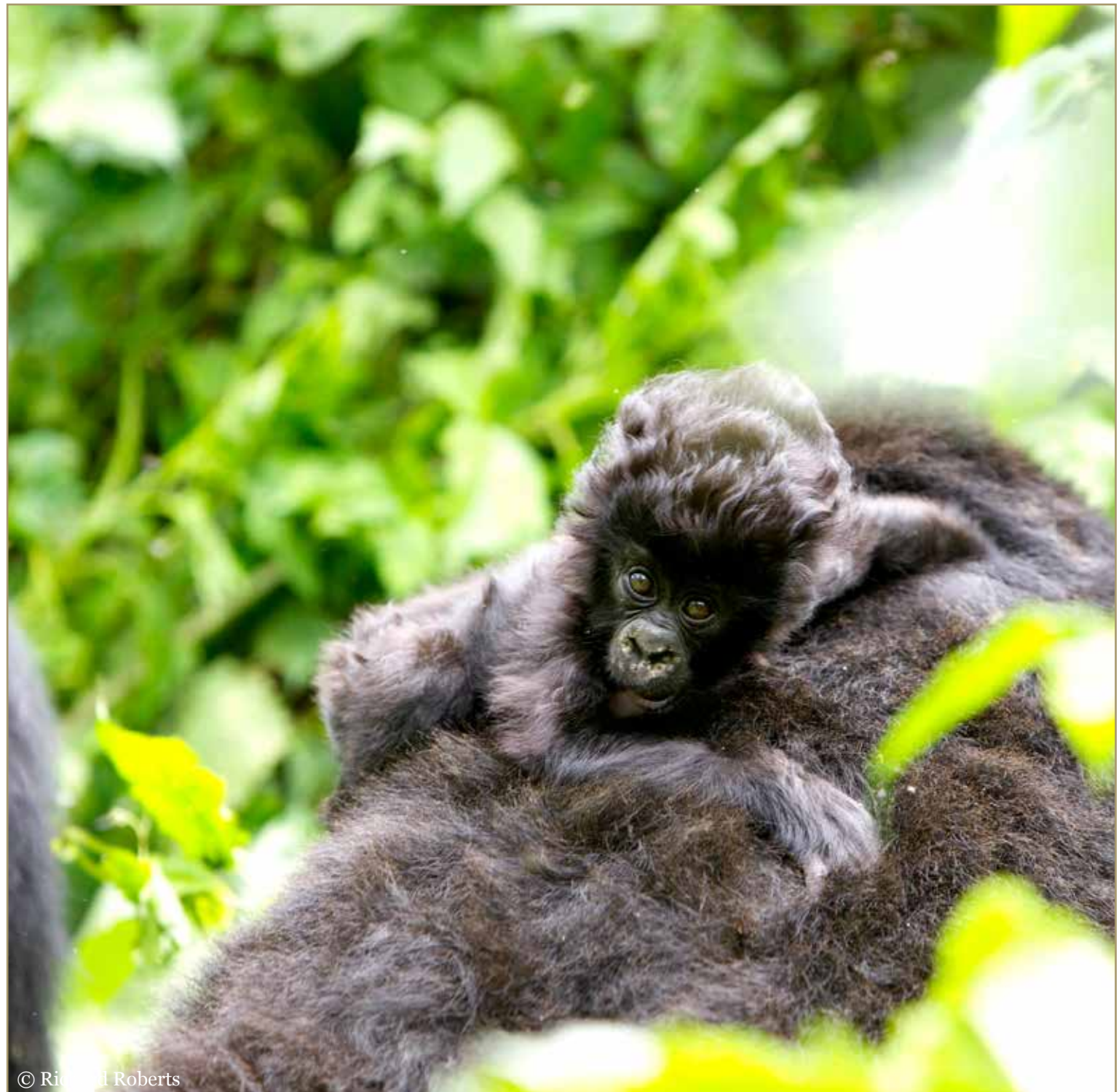
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MOUNTAIN GORILLA

- Virunga National Park -

Coming face to face with a Mountain Gorilla is one of Africa's most exciting wildlife experiences! Gaining an insight into the behaviour and family dynamics of one of the world's rarest primates is nothing short of captivating.

The last remaining habitat of the Mountain Gorilla is within the Virunga Mountains. This highly endangered charismatic animal is the flagship species that has enthused the conservation of the entire array of wildlife and habitat that make up this unique part of our planet.



© Richard Roberts

CHIMPANZEES

- *Virunga National Park* -

The forests, mountains and valleys of Virunga National Park are home to a highly protected population of Chimps. Visitors are welcome to trek in search of a habituated group, accompanied by rangers. Red tailed monkeys, colobus monkeys and olive baboons also thrive here, and the bird life is prolific.



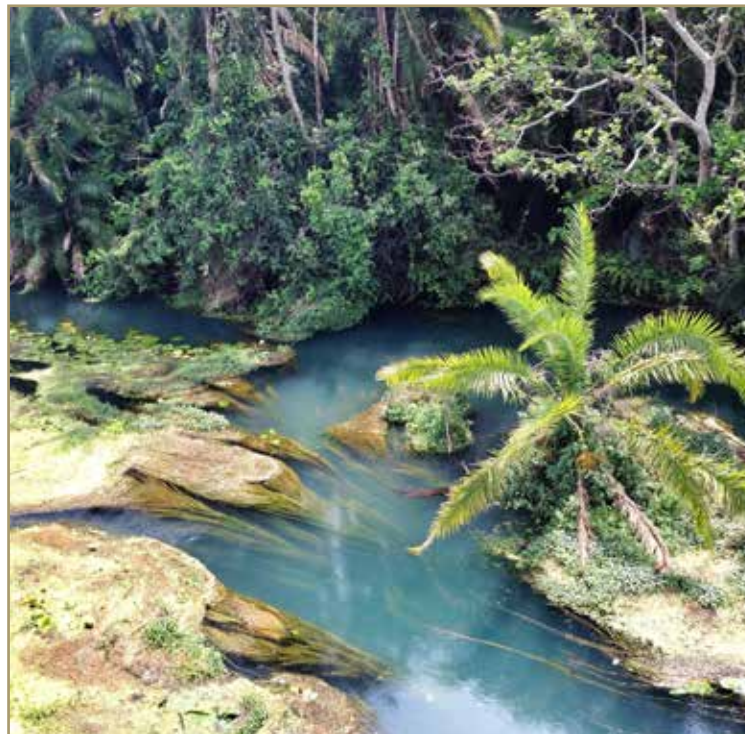
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FRESH WATER SPRINGS-

Virunga National Park -

Crystal clear swamps near Mount Tsiabeimu are filtered by layers of volcanic rock and sediment. The result is pristine turquoise waters and incredible palm forest - an idyllic habitat for wildlife and an array of bird life.



SEMLIKI RIVER

- Virunga National Park -

A vast 230km waterway connecting Lakes Edward and Albert, in Central Africa.

It follows the western foot of the Rwenzori Mountains, and the latter part of its course forms part of the border between Congo and Uganda. Within the Virunga National Park, a vast floodplain has evolved, attracting a variety of large and small mammals, including the rarely seen Okapi.



- Mountain Chain of -
VIRUNGA

The Virunga Mountains are a chain of 8 volcanoes running along the borders of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, 7 of which are found in the Virunga National Park and only two are active – Mount Nyamuragira and Mount Nyiragongo.



MOUNT NYIRAGONGO

- Virunga National Park -

Mount Nyiragongo standing at 3,462 metres is Africa's most active volcano. It has been erupting almost continuously for the last century, and its main crater contains a magnificent lava lake.



NYIRAGONGO SHELTERS

- A night on the Volcano -

On the edge of the Nyiragongo crater within sight of the sweltering lava lake, stand eight simple cabins, coloured black to blend in perfectly with the lava rock surroundings.

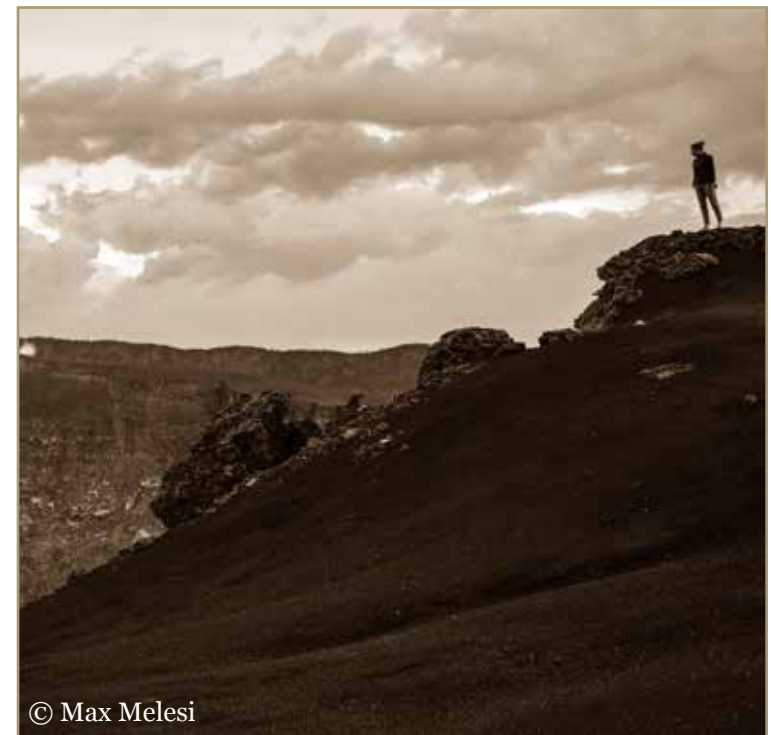
It's thrilling experience to watch the glowing molten lava throughout the evening!



NYAMURAGIRA VOLCANO

- Virunga National Park -

Mount Nyamuragira has erupted over 40 times since 1885. It has a lava lake that simmers deep within the crater, and although very small and often disappears, scientists believe that in time this lava lake will become permanent.



KAHUZI-BIÉGA

- Eastern Congo -

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Kahuzi-Biéga National Park is home to one of the last remaining populations of the critically endangered Eastern Lowland gorillas, also known as the Grauer gorilla. The vast forested park located in Eastern Congo, to the west of Lake Kivu and the Rwandan border, is dominated by dense montane and bamboo forests, and two spectacular volcanoes, both extinct - Mount Kahuzi and Mount Biéga.

The Grauer Gorilla is the largest of the four subspecies, distinguished from others by its stocky body, large hands and short muzzle. With so many threats to their existence, their numbers have dropped dramatically over the last 20 years.



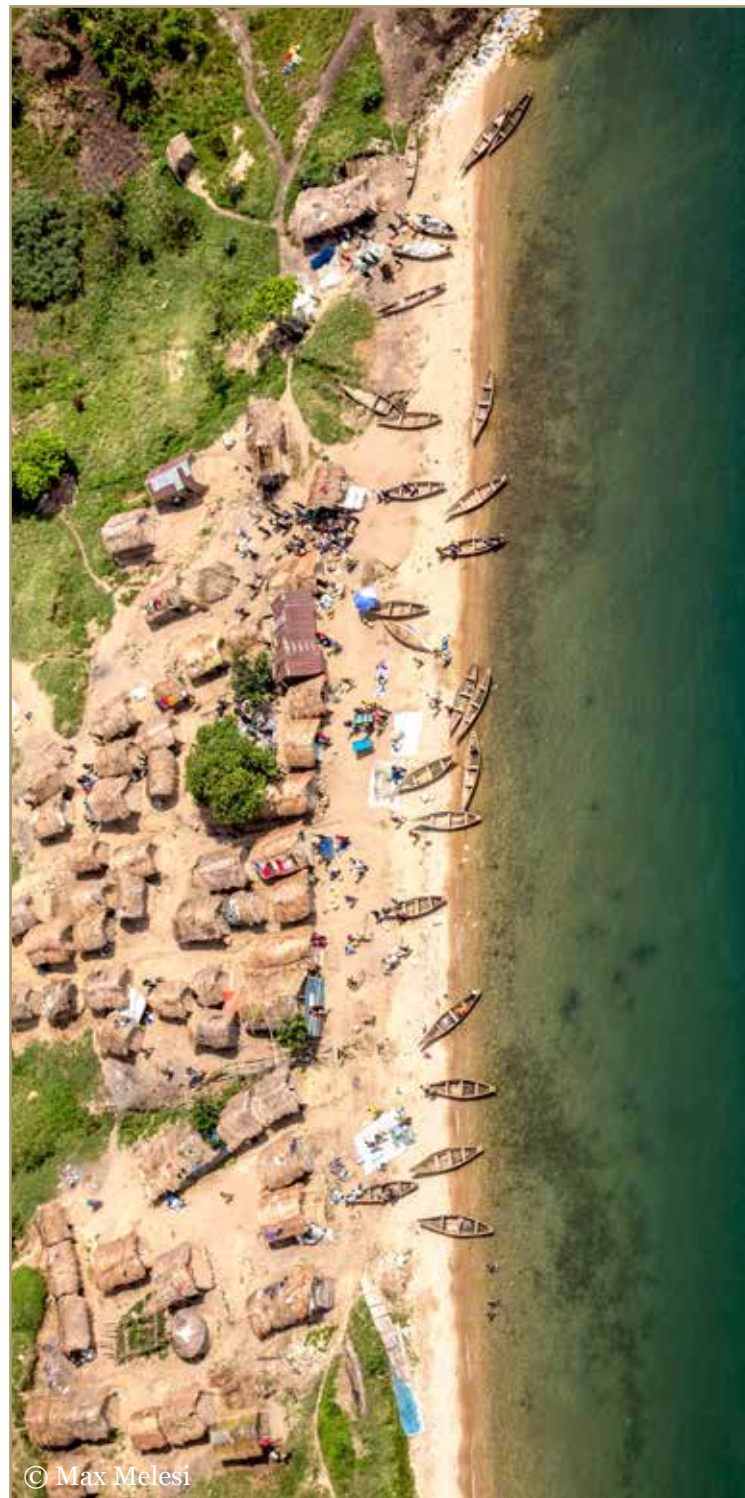
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LAKE KIVU

- One of the African Great Lakes -

On border between Congo and Rwanda lies the diamond clear waters and sandy beaches of Lake Kivu.

The is the sixth largest lake in Africa, surrounded by landscape of extraordinary beauty, with the towering Virunga volcanoes and green slopes rich with tea, coffee and banana plantations.



TCHEGERA ISLAND

- Lake Kivu -

The tiny horse-shoe shaped island of Tchequera is situated off the northern shores of Lake Kivu, with a tented camp that offers views over the lake and 4 of the volcanoes in the Virunga range. A location more unique and tranquil than most!

A perfect place for kayaking, paddle boarding, birdwatching and relaxing.

Simple and comfortable safari-style

Meru tents lie on the black sandy shores, with small verandas under canvas, and each with its own hot-water bathrooms. Meals are served in the mess tent - a light and airy canvas room, surrounded by wooden decking.



LWIRO PRIMATE CENTER

- South Kivu -

Founded in 2003, at the height of genocide (Great War of Africa, 1998 – 2004) when poaching increased drastically, resulting in orphan chimpanzees that desperately needed care. Lwiro Sanctuary, also known as the Centre for Rehabilitation of Primates is located in Congo's South Kivu province.

Today Lwiro looks after 66 chimps and 80 monkeys from 11 species, all victims of the illegal pet and bush meat trades. Lwiro works closely with the Congolese government, local community and international conservation organisations.



Heli Safari Ends



© Max Melesi

- Clothing recommendation -

WHAT TO WEAR

Safaris are informal and comfort should be considered above all else.

Durable, loose fitting, lightweight cotton clothes are recommended in neutral colours, so as not to alarm wildlife whilst in the bush. Something warm is essential for early morning and evening activities. Footwear should not be heavy. A pair of comfortable walking shoes, trainers or desert boots is best.

The following is a guideline for the maximum clothing you need to bring. Due to the limited space in the helicopters personal luggage is limited to a maximum of 15kgs per person that must be packed in a soft duffel bag (No rigid bags or bags with wheels). Guests should also carry a small daypack for carrying personal items.



Nyiragongo
© Max Melesi

- Packing guide -
WHAT TO BRING

The following is a guideline for the maximum clothing you need to bring. There will be limited laundry services available.

Good quality sunglasses

Sun Hat

Comfortable walking shoes

Sandals or flip flops

4 cotton shirts, 2 long sleeved

2 pairs long trousers / jeans

3 pairs of shorts / skirts

Underwear and socks

Swimsuit

Sweater / Fleece

Zip lock bags are useful for anything that might leak while travelling – Sun

Cream, shampoo, creams etc.

Good quality torch

Tissues / wet wipes

Any prescribed medication

Insect repellent

Binoculars not essential but useful

Camera

Emmanuel de Merode

Anthropologist, conservationist, pilot &

Director of the Virunga National Park since 2008.



Virungas
© Tom Parker

Tropic Private helicopter and pilot / guides are provided by a leading air charter company based in East Africa, specialising in heli-safaris and adventures, with more than 14 years of experience in this field.

The Eurocopter AS 350 B3's are perfectly adapted to fly in East Africa's hot and high environments.

Aircraft are fitted with satellite tracking software, pilots are trained in 'first person on scene' first aid, and all precautions are carried out to ensure maximum safety and comfort.



Nyiragongo
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