



## Bwindi Lodge

### Fact Sheet

Volcanoes Safaris is delighted to introduce its newly refurbished Bwindi Lodge in Uganda – home of the mountain gorilla and your home in the jungle.

Looking out onto the dense, misty jungle of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, Bwindi Lodge is the most stylish eco-lodge in the Northern Buhoma section of the park. Originally opened in 2000, the lodge was completely refurbished in 2011 and now offers unequalled comfort and tranquility.

Praveen Moman, the Founder of Volcanoes Safaris, said of Bwindi Lodge:

‘I’ve seen a number of forests in my life and the forests of the Albertine Rift are some of the most striking in the world. There are many different wildlife species and protected areas in Africa but the Mountain Gorilla is the single most important.’

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# SUMMARY



Volcanoes Safaris acquired its first piece of land in Bwindi in 1999 and first opened a tented camp there. Over the next decade it built up a fifty-acre site bordering the forest and the Munyanga River and returned it from cultivated land back to secondary forest. The camp became an eco-lodge, which received an extensive refurbishment in 2011.

We have also preserved several of the surrounding tea gardens and allow the previous owners to continue to grow and pick the leaves as before. The land around the lodge acts as a buffer zone between the expanding village and the forest. The lush, tropical grounds attract a wide range of birds and other wildlife and are a favourite haunt of the Rushegura gorilla group, who often sleep at the lodge! The rooms are named after some of Bwindi's gorillas, names given to

them by the rangers and trackers who watch over them.

As one guest put it, "This is deepest darkest Africa. So close to gorillas. Unforgettable."

Bwindi Lodge prides itself on being actively involved in the Buhoma community, supporting a variety of projects that promote gorilla conservation and sustainable development. Projects are themed around health, community development and education. Volcanoes Safaris also supports organisations that actively conserve the gorillas.

# LOCATION

Bwindi Lodge is the most stylish and comfortable eco-lodge in Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, home to the endangered mountain gorillas. The tranquil, 8-roomed lodge overlooks the misty, primeval jungle.



## The Lodge: getting there

The lodge is a scenic 8-hour drive from Kigali. Alternatively, it is about a 1-hour light aircraft flight from Entebbe, followed by a 2-hour drive from Kihikihi.

### Lodge Location:

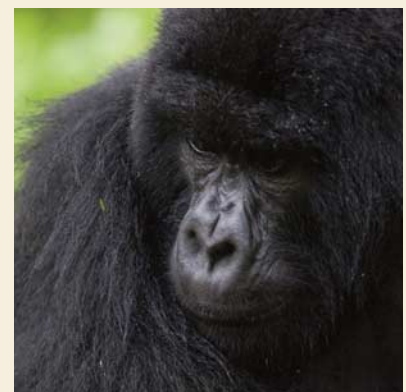
GPS Co-ordinates: S 00° 59.023' E 029° 37.051'

Altitude: 1475m

## Recommended programs:

*4-day safari Gorillas in Bwindi* program that offers gorilla tracking, incredible birding, a chance to explore the rainforest and visit the VSPT-supported local hospital.

*7-day safari Gorillas, Chimps and Wildlife* offers the chance to track gorillas in Uganda and track chimps in Kibale and Kyambura Gorge as well as search for lions and other game in Queen Elizabeth.





# BACKGROUND INFORMATION



## The Lodge: design

Originally opened in 1999 as a basic tented camp, the camp has now been transformed into a luxury eco-lodge set on the edge of the Impenetrable Forest. The remote location of this forest provides a truly authentic experience of the jungle and when designing the lodge Volcanoes aimed to embrace this 'primeval jungle feel'. Looking out into the misty canopy, each of the eight rooms enjoys its own private forest view, their thatched roofs nestling subtly into the lush vegetation.

Volcanoes Safaris believes that ecotourism in remote areas needs to respect the culture of local communities. Providing western standards of comfort needs to be balanced with the pressure local people face in obtaining food and clean water. We believe practical action must be taken on the ground to minimise the environmental impact and it is essential to constantly experiment on how best to achieve this in practice. In designing Bwindi Lodge, therefore, we remain dedicated to our ecological commitments using solar hot

water systems and powering the lodge using solar energy.

The lodge was conceived and built by Praveen Moman and a team of African builders led by James Ssemanda. With the help of Prabhat Poddar, an expert on Vasthu, it incorporates ancient Indian

concepts of harmonizing the energy of buildings with the earth, while Robin Pendleton, a designer from New York, and Ross Langdon & Campbell Drake, from sustainable architectural practice Regional Associates, helped to create locally inspired buildings and interiors.







## The Lodge: the main building

The main lodge's thatched building makes the most of the beautiful views of the forest canopy with both open and covered terraces providing optimum viewing platforms facing the forest. A cozy fireside bar and lounge area enables guests to enjoy a drink while swapping stories of their gorilla tracking experiences and to enjoy meals – the food, service and hospitality are first class and regularly complimented on by our guests.

The terrace outside offers guests the chance to not only sit and observe the changing nature of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest mere metres away but also gives the chance to have a pleasant outdoor meal or cup of coffee or juice. The

sensitive design of the space has created both indoor and outdoor observation areas that blend into the forest ambience thanks to the use of traditional designs and building materials.







## The Lodge: the bandas

The lodge was completely refurbished in 2011 and now offers unequalled comfort and style. Eight thatched, glass fronted bedrooms each lead out onto their own private balconies bringing light, the views and the sounds of the forest into the room.

The interiors feature locally crafted furniture and fixtures to create beautiful and interesting highlights. Spacious bedrooms, complete with large mosquito nets to cover the beds, were designed to be both comfortable and stylish while also

allowing guests to wake up to the sound of black and white colobus monkeys calling to each other.

Each ensuite stone bathroom consists of double sinks, hot running showers, flushing eco-toilets and the same unique, stylish décor that is a hallmark of Volcanoes lodges throughout Uganda and Rwanda.



## Accommodation

The lodge's eight bandas offer elegance and great comfort, with their 'stylish jungle design'.

- 8 stone and timber, glass-fronted guest bandas with thatch roofs (3 doubles and 5 twins).
- Recently refurbished en-suite bathrooms with flushing toilet, double vanity, showers with hot & cold running water (solar heated) and biodegradable hand & body wash.
- Rooms have walk-in mosquito nets, 240v lighting (with emergency solar lamp & torch provided), plus a private balcony offering spectacular views over the forest.
- There are no air conditioners, power sockets/charging facilities or fireplaces in the rooms.
- Bandas are individually named after Bwindi gorillas.
- No guide/tour leader room (nearby alternative accommodation can easily be arranged).



## Public Areas

The main building sits on the edge of the forest: a cosy refuge to enjoy meals, a drink or just relax.

- Uncomplicated, international cuisine with a Ugandan flair with tropical fruits, cooked breakfasts, hearty lunches, warming soups and generous dinners served.
- There is a tranquil massage room to enjoy a complimentary massage.
- The simple curio shop offers Volcanoes Safaris merchandise and clothing.
- Terrace overlooking the forest with scenic panoramic views.
- Mature, secondary forest and tea plantations attract a wide variety of birds and wildlife.
- Wi-Fi and internet access available in the main lodge building.







## Activities from Bwindi Lodge

Activities on offer in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest and from the Lodge include:

### Wildlife Activities

- Gorilla Tracking (must be booked in advance)
- Birding from the lodge or in the park
- Stroll through the lodge's forested grounds or enjoy the wildlife from your room or terrace

### Unique Community and Cultural Activities

- Watch the Bwindi Orphans dance performance
- Visit Bwindi Community Hospital
- Enjoy the Buhoma Village Walk
- Take part in the Batwa Cultural Experience
- Visit the AMAGARA Farmers Project
- Explore the Nkwenda Village's Craft Shops

### Relax at the Lodge

- Complimentary massage
- Selection of board games & library

### Hiking

- Munyanga River Trail
- Waterfall Walk
- Rushurra Hill/Border Trail
- Muzabajirro Loop Trail
- Ivi River Walk
- Mountain Bike through the park or local village





## Journey and Stay

A stay at Volcanoes Bwindi Lodge takes clients on a journey to the heart of Africa:

### The Lodge: getting there

- 1 hour light aircraft flight from Entebbe (followed by an hour's scenic drive from Kihikihi).
- 5 hour drive from Volcanoes Safaris Kyambura Gorge Lodge.
- 5 hour drive from Volcanoes Safaris Mount Gahinga Lodge.
- 6 hour drive from Volcanoes Safaris Virunga Lodge.
- 8 hour drive from Rwanda's capital city: Kigali.
- 8 to 10 hour drive from Uganda's capital city: Kampala.



### Seasons & Climate

Uganda enjoys a warm climate all year round, however rainfall patterns and altitude play a role in day-to-day temperatures; at night it can be chilly.

- Average daytime temperatures range from 15°C/59°F to 27°C/81°F
- Average night time temperatures range from 7°C/45°F to 17°C/63°F (duvets, blankets and hot water bottles are provided)
- Drier months – generally December to February and May to August
- Wetter months – generally March and April and September to November

### Contacts

Email: [salesug@volcanoessafaris.com](mailto:salesug@volcanoessafaris.com)

Web: <http://www.volcanoessafaris.com/safari-lodges/bwindi-lodge/>

Phone: +256 (0) 788172281

# USEFUL INFORMATION



## Complimentary Drinks

- The lodge offers a fully stocked bar with a selection of complimentary soft drinks, beers, wines and liquor. Bottled water or treated, filtered drinking water is also provided.

## Electricity

- Charging of electronic gadgets can be done in the main public area (110 to 240 volts).

## Payment

- Extras must be paid for in cash – we accept UG Shillings, US Dollars, GB Pounds or Euros.
- Gratuities are at the discretion of guests and greatly appreciated; they are best given in post 2006 US Dollar cash. For lodge staff we suggest \$5-15 per day per guest. For Volcanoes Safaris' guides we

suggest \$10 or more per day, for park guides \$10-20 and for trackers and porters \$20 per guest. Make sure you bring enough cash with you.

## Child Policy

- Children are welcome, though we do not have childcare facilities at the lodge.
- Children under 15 years of age are not allowed to visit the gorillas; families travelling with children aged 15 years and below will need to arrange alternative activities.

## Internet

- Limited Wi-Fi in the communal area only (the strength and connection can be very erratic).

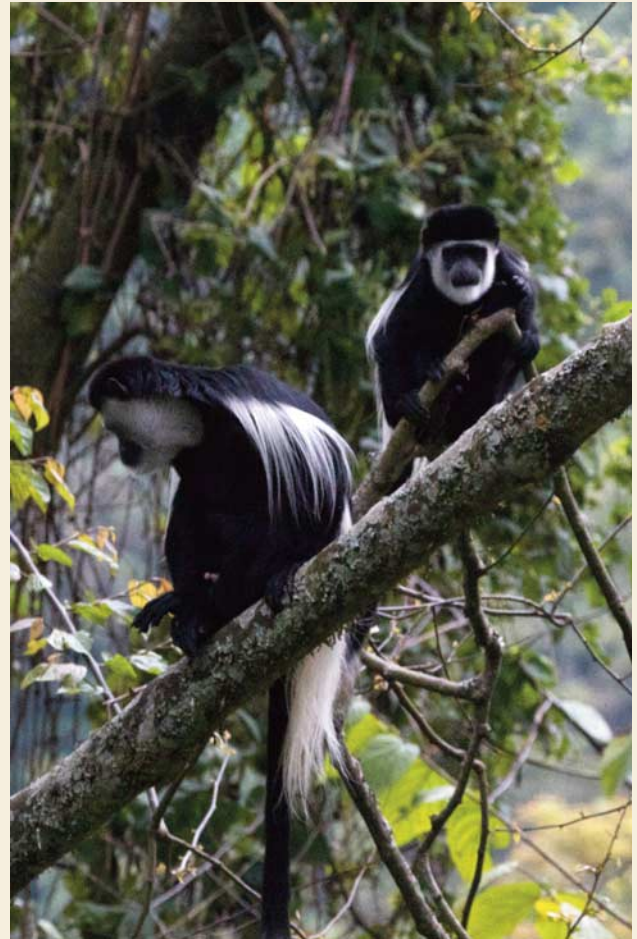
## Cell Phone Reception

- The lodge has cell phone network coverage (however this is not always reliable).

## Laundry

- A complimentary laundry and boot cleaning service is available (in the rainy season it may take up to 48 hours for the return of clothes).





## The wildlife and surrounding areas

### Discover Bwindi's spectacular biodiversity.

One of Africa's most bio-diverse rainforests and one of its richest ecosystems, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) is located in southwestern Uganda, situated along the Democratic Republic of Congo border on the edge of the Albertine Rift. Neighbouring the lodge, this primeval 25,000 year old forest comprises 331 km<sup>2</sup> of jungle and contains both montane and lowland forest; in 1994 the UNESCO designated it a World Heritage Site.

Bwindi is not only home to just under half of the world's mountain gorilla population but also nine other primate species including chimpanzees, black and white colobus and red-tailed monkeys. The forest is filled with a spectacular array of colourful butterflies with more than 300

different species having been recorded in the park. This lush, green forest also has over 1000 species of flowering plants and more than 200 species of tree - any one of the various nature walks and trails in the park will lead guests through glades of giant ferns and ancient primary rainforest.

Bwindi is also a prime destination for bird watching; its 350 birds species include 90% (23 species) of all Albertine Rift endemics and 14 species recorded nowhere else in Uganda - an experienced birder can easily identify up to 100 species in a day. Indeed, Travel Africa magazine recently ranked Bwindi the number 1 birding destination in Africa.

Any visitor to Bwindi is sure to be mesmerized by its exotic sounds, its

tranquil rivers, cascading waterfalls, playful primates and the colourful birds and butterflies. Bwindi really does offer a true jungle experience.





## Track the endangered Mountain Gorillas of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

Volcanoes Safaris are the No.1 Gorilla Safari Company, having been at the forefront of mountain gorilla tourism since 1997 and the only safari company to have signed the UN Kinshasa Declaration on Great Apes. A journey with Volcanoes Safaris takes our guests on an unforgettable voyage into the misty forests of Africa and gives them a privileged insight into the fascinating world of the great apes.

Tracking gorillas in the so-called 'impenetrable' forest is a magical experience. Nothing can prepare you for the impact of encountering a fully grown silverback gorilla, up to three times the size of an average man yet remarkably peaceable, playful and tolerant of human visitors. It is a privilege to spend an hour sitting with and watching these wild relatives. Only eight visitors are allowed per gorilla group each day. Typically, tracking takes 3 to 8 hours and requires some agility and fitness. Mountain gorillas live at high altitude and Bwindi's dense jungle and muddy terrain may cause difficulties to some visitors, but no one should feel deterred from missing this once in a lifetime experience.

There are two populations of mountain gorilla: one in Bwindi and the other in the Virunga Massif (Uganda, Rwanda & DRC). Mountain gorillas are a critically endangered

subspecies of the Eastern gorilla, with only about 880 left in the world. After chimpanzees, gorillas are our closest relatives and share about 97.7% of our DNA. First described in 1902, George Schaller later pioneered studies of mountain gorillas in the 1950s and 60s; in 1967, they were followed up in Rwanda by Dian Fossey. Research on the Bwindi gorillas lags behind that of the Virunga population but has

shown that the Bwindi gorillas' diet and habits differ from their Virunga relatives. Currently nine groups, or families, of habituated gorillas can be tracked by tourists - three can be tracked from near Buhoma/Bwindi Lodge. These are: Mubare, Habiyanja and Rushegura while Bitukura and Oruzogo groups are tracked from Ruhija, only an hour and a half's drive from the lodge through the forest.







## The Bwindi Ecotourism Partnership

### The work of the Volcanoes Safaris Partnership Trust

In 2009, the Volcanoes Safaris Partnership Trust (VSPT) was established by Volcanoes Safaris Ltd. VSPT is a non-profit organization that undertakes community and conservation activities in areas that neighbour all four Volcanoes Safaris lodges and great ape habitats. The VSPT aims to create long-term, self-sustaining projects that will enrich the livelihoods of local communities, promote the conservation of the great apes, restore natural habitats and work with communities and institutions to reduce human-wildlife conflicts in the areas neighbouring our lodges. The objectives of VSPT are achieved through regular donations from Volcanoes Safaris who contribute a voluntary donation of \$100

from every full cost safari purchased. As a member of the Bwindi community, Volcanoes feels that it is vital that the lodge supports local activities and projects that aim to conserve gorillas through improving the lives of those who are their neighbours. VSPT has carefully chosen to support a handful of projects that address some of the key needs of the community.

A 50-acre plot of land around Bwindi Lodge has been created to act as a buffer zone between the expanding village of Nkwenda and the forest. Tea has been planted here and is processed by local people in partnership with the VSPT, which gives them an additional source of work and income.

We also support organizations such as the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project, who carry out vital work on gorilla conservation by inviting them to give talks to guests at our lodges and channelling donations through them. The VSPT also works closely with the local wildlife authority in Uganda (UWA) to ensure that our guests and guides follow guidelines while visiting protected areas and that money generated by our guests' visits goes back into the conservation of the National Parks. We also help fund the protected spring that provides water for the whole community, with the cost of maintaining the supply shared by VS and other lodges in the area.



#### Bwindi Tea Processing Tour

The VSPT runs a Tea Processing exhibit at Bwindi Lodge in partnership with local communities. The tea tour demonstrates how tea is grown, picked and traditionally processed in Uganda. Tea has also proved to be a very effective buffer crop when planted between forest areas with protected wildlife and local human communities. Animals do not eat tea so feel no need to come out of the forest to 'crop raid', which is the source of much

human-wildlife conflict in areas around National Parks, particularly in Uganda and Rwanda.

#### Bwindi Community Hospital

The VSPT continues to support the Bwindi Community Hospital as it has since its foundation and makes regular donations as well as offering other forms of assistance. Volcanoes Safaris also helps facilitate funding through individual

donations from our guests. Current programs being carried out with VSPT funding include school outreach programs that aim to address water, sanitation and hygiene issues in the community and involve litter collection and education about the importance of hand washing to children.