



Kyambura Gorge Lodge

Fact Sheet

Volcanoes Safaris is delighted to present the newest addition to the Volcanoes portfolio of eco-luxury lodges: Kyambura Gorge Lodge.

Situated in western Uganda on the edge of the Kyambura Gorge and Queen Elizabeth National Park, one of Africa’s finest national parks, the lodge has stunning views over the Gorge and the lush savannah of the park, with the peaks of the mystical Rwenzori Mountains in the distance.

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

‘The Volcanoes Kyambura Gorge Lodge is a celebration of contemporary Africa. It connects guests to the conservation of wildlife and chimpanzees and to the communities nearby. This allows guests to experience an integrated view of the challenges of ecotourism in Africa today.’

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SUMMARY



Kyambura Gorge Lodge is already considered to be one of the pre-eminent lodges in Queen Elizabeth National Park, and is one of the most luxurious and innovative lodges in the region.

"The opening of the Lodge symbolizes the long journey Volcanoes has embarked on in this area, not only in building a fantastic contemporary eco-luxury lodge but through the creation of a series of major long-term practical ecotourism initiatives on the ground, linking the lodge with conservation and the communities," says Moman.

Kyambura Gorge Lodge prides itself on being actively involved in a variety of community projects that educate local people.

Projects are themed around preserving wildlife to increase tourism income for communities; setting up football, netball and fitness classes for local schoolchildren; working with a women's group to produce organic coffee; creating a vegetable garden; restoring a wetland that was used as an illegal brickworks; and creating a buffer zone along the gorge to give further protection and space to the twenty endangered chimpanzees in the gorge.

"These practical initiatives are what sets this lodge apart and makes sure it plays a central role in the life of the community today. This connection between tourism, communities and conservation is central to the great ape eco-tourism vision that Volcanoes Safaris has developed."

LOCATION

One of the pre-eminent safari lodges in Queen Elizabeth National Park and one of the most luxurious and innovative eco-lodges in Uganda. The 8-room, contemporary lodge offers stunning views over the Kyambura Gorge and the lush savannah of the park, with the peaks of the Rwenzoris in the distance.



The Lodge: getting there

The lodge is 45 minutes from Kampala by private plane, landing either at Kasese or Mweya. Alternatively it is about 8 hours' drive from Kampala, via Mbarara or Fort Portal.

Lodge Location:

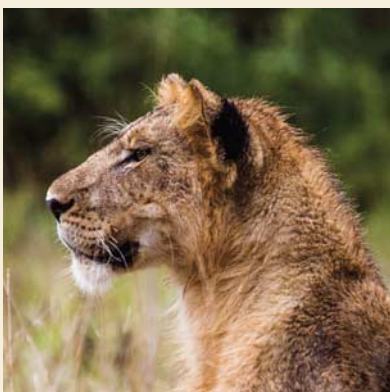
GPS Co-ordinates: S 00° 12.416' E 030° 06.226'

Altitude: 1060m

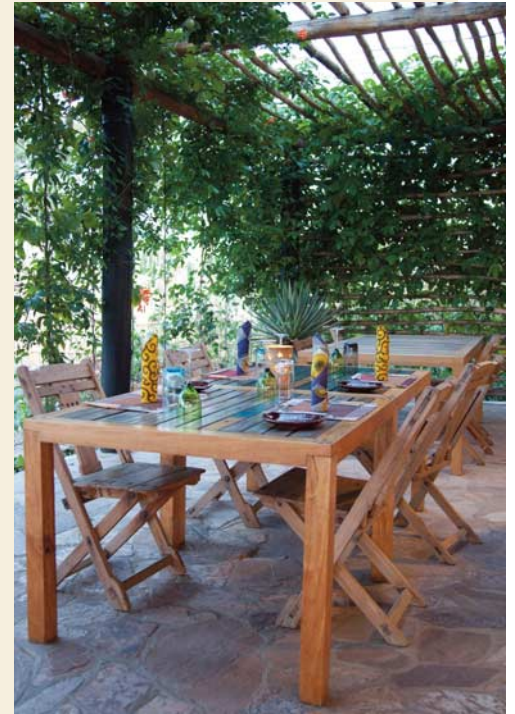
Recommended programs:

7-day safari that combines chimpanzees in Kibale, wildlife and birds in Queen Elizabeth and chimps again in Kyambura and Kalinzu, as well as gorillas in Bwindi.

12-day safari Classic Uganda and Rwanda program that combines wildlife and birds in Queen Elizabeth and chimps in Kyambura and Kalinzu, as well as gorillas in Bwindi and PNV in Rwanda and hiking and culture in Mgahinga.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The Lodge: design

Under Praveen Moman and James Ssemanda, with their long-term vision for the development of eco-luxury lodges in the region, and Regional Associates, a dynamic architectural studio led by the late Ross Langdon, the unique and contemporary design of the lodge has been achieved.

The lodge celebrates contemporary Africa in its whole approach to design and build. The materials used reflect contemporary interpretations of traditional design and construction techniques. The décor reflects the context of the original buildings and African creativity.

This approach is underscored by a collection of 'Junk Art' sculptures including birds made from petrol filters, butterflies with tattered wings of rusty iron, a toy airplane made from biscuit tins and a wall piece of spliced jerry cans stitched into a contemporary composition. Such works sit comfortably next to the ingenuity of

commonplace African items, such as a timber 'Congo bike' complete with wooden wheels and suspension, kerosene lanterns from sardine tins and timber milk jugs with seams of stitched metal. The result is a collection of interesting and

beautiful highlights, which ensure each space offers guests a rich and thought-provoking experience.





The Lodge: the main building

The main lodge building was originally a coffee store and processing plant, surrounded by coffee plantations. The original structure has been sensitively restored to create a generous living space, creating a series of distinct inspiring spaces for guests.

In keeping with other Volcanoes lodges, it seeks to create a quiet harmony between the buildings and the landscape, using the ancient Indian technique of Vasthu.

The airy and spacious living and dining area features a long covered veranda facing the savannah. A covered extension protrudes from the veranda and faces the beautiful Kyambura Gorge. This is the centerpiece of the complex with its dramatic sombrero-shaped straw roof, contrasting

with the recycled tin roofs of the main building. A creeper-covered breakfast terrace takes in the morning sun.

The rooves of the lodge and the bandas have been sourced from the communities as part of our Rusty Roof Exchange

program, where we donate new roofing to the villagers, taking their old sheeting to use in the Lodge, giving it an enhanced connection to the local communities.





The Lodge: the bandas

Local Ugandan mud huts are often coated in pastel-coloured paints or mud washes mixed with natural ochre. Internally they are left bare, free from ornament; a utilitarian space for sleeping. The bandas at Kyambura Lodge invert this pattern. Eight beautiful, spacious bandas have been built so far, carefully nestled into the hillside. Each banda is different and consists of a covered entrance deck, breezeway, bedroom, balcony and its own luxury bathroom.

The design is determined by local views, existing vegetation, prevailing weather and privacy. Drawing on local village design, different building and roofing materials are used to break up and minimize the visual bulk of the bandas, ensuring a sympathetic integration with the surrounding landscape.

Each banda is uniquely appointed, adopting a different color theme. They are elevated off the ground allowing for ventilation and better viewing as each room has a different aspect of the panoramic views across the gorge, savannah and mythical Rwenzoris.



Accommodation

The lodge's bandas offer elegance and great comfort with their 'contemporary, up-cycled' design.

- 8 unique brick or timber guest rooms with iron-sheet or thatch roofs (3 doubles and 5 twins).
- Stylish en-suite bathrooms with flushing toilet, double vanity, showers with hot & cold running water (solar heated) and biodegradable hand & body wash.
- Rooms have mosquito nets, 240v lighting (with torch provided) plus a private balcony offering spectacular views over the gorge or savannah.
- There are NO air conditioners or power sockets/charging facilities in the rooms.
- Bandas are individually named after the Kyambura chimps.
- 1 guide/tour leader room (with shared shower room & toilet).



Public Areas

The main building, once a coffee store and processing plant, has been sensitively restored to create a generous living space in which to enjoy meals, a drink or just relax.

- International cuisine with a Ugandan flair with tropical fruits, cooked breakfasts, light lunches, warming soups and generous alfresco dinners served.
- Tranquil massage room to enjoy a complimentary massage.
- Inviting salt water swimming pool, with expansive view.
- The simple curio shop offers Volcanoes Safaris merchandise and clothing.
- Terraces for outdoor dining overlooking the savannah with scenic panoramic views.
- Contemporary, ornamental gardens attract a wide variety of birds and other wildlife.
- Wi-Fi and internet access available in the main lodge building.





Activities from Kyambura Lodge

A stay at Volcanoes Kyambura Gorge Lodge offers a diverse variety of activities for clients over several days:

Wildlife Activities

- Clients go for game drives in the early morning and late afternoon.
- The Mweya peninsula usually has a variety of animals among its unusual euphorbia vegetation.
- The Kasenyi track near Lake George on the northern side of the park is famed for its lions.
- The explosion crater area does not have many animals but has a variety of craters created by volcanic activity which creates an eerie landscape.
- An idyllic cruise along the Kazinga channel offers the chance to see a wide variety of animals and birds.
- An overnight extension to see the rare tree-climbing lions in Ishasha in southern Queen Elizabeth can be arranged.
- The Kyambura Gorge is not only wonderful for seeing chimpanzees but also for the beautiful landscape, birds and other mammals. Chimpanzees can also be seen in the Kalinzu Forest nearby. A two-day extension to see the chimpanzees in Kibale can also be arranged.

Birding

- The number and variety of bird species – 600 species in all – is fantastic and the highest in any one area of Africa.
- The crater lakes have a variety of birds that make their home there, most notably large flocks of noisy pink flamingoes.

Unique Community and Cultural Activities

- The Katwe salt lake is a unique place where visitors can see salt being extracted in this desert-like setting as it has been done for centuries.
- The fishing villages show how humans co-exist with wildlife.
- The Queen's Pavilion offers a fascinating interpretation of the whole ecosystem of the area.
- The Ruwenzori Sculpture Foundation, near Kasese, supported by the Tate Gallery and Royal Academy in the UK as well as major artists like Damien Hirst, is an amazing arts centre and foundry casting unique sculptures.
- The VSPT community projects offer a practical way of experiencing the Volcanoes projects that work to enhance the life of the community.

Hiking

- A day's walk into the foothills of the Rwenzoris is a fantastic introduction to these mountains – the Alps of Africa. The hardy can go for a week-long ascent of the peaks.
- The Kyambura Reserve area has exceptionally beautiful savannah plains with the Rwenzoris in the distance.
- Walking through local homesteads with a Volcanoes Guide is a charming way of experiencing the local of life.
- Walking in the wetland and buffer zone that the VSPT has created.



Journey and Stay

A stay at Volcanoes Kyambura Gorge Lodge takes you 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 Kasese).
- 4 hour drive from Volcanoes Safaris Bwindi Lodge.
- 6 hour drive from Volcanoes Safaris Mount Gahinga Lodge.
- 10 hour drive from Rwanda's Uganda's capital city: Kigali.
- 7 hour drive from Volcanoes Safaris Virunga Lodge.
- 8 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 cool.

- Average daytime temperatures range from 15°C/59°F to 35°C/95°F
- Average night-time temperatures range from 10°C/50°F to 25°C/77°F (duvets and blankets are provided)
- Drier months – generally December to February and May to August
- Wetter months – generally March and April and September to November

Contacts

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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 12 years of age are not allowed to visit the chimps; families travelling with children aged 11 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 the wildlife, birds and chimpanzees in the magnificent Queen Elizabeth Protected Area

The lodge is on the edge of the Queen Elizabeth (QE) Protected Area. The area has a stunning and varied number of activities for guests, in one of the most beautiful parks in the African continent.

The QE area, in the centre of the Great Western Rift valley, the Albertine Rift in western Uganda, has some of the greatest biodiversity in Africa. The intricately connected streams, rivers and lakes, including the Kyambura River, connect the heart of Africa to the Nile in Egypt.

The park has a rich diversity of wildlife, including nine species of primates: two nocturnal species, six monkey species; the clever and curious olive baboon and gorgeous black and white colobus monkey as well as one of Uganda's two great ape species and our closest relative, the endangered chimpanzee.

Considered to be one of the most varied and beautiful, the park also offers two of Africa's big cats, the majestic lion and elusive leopard. Guests go on a variety of game drives on the plains of Queen Elizabeth, usually at dawn and dusk when viewing is best to spot wildlife or view some of the park's 600+ bird species, the highest in any park in Africa! Other mammalian predators such as hyenas and small carnivorous cats and mongooses also

find their home in QE. Large herbivores such as elephants, hippos and water buffalos as well as a multitude of ungulates also thrive in the savannah habitat and along the lake and river shores.

The Kazinga Channel linking Lakes Edward and George is especially rich in wildlife and a great place to see a diverse range of mammals, birds, and reptiles, including the African crocodile. Boat trips on the Kazinga Channel provide a wonderful opportunity to photograph the many birds and mammals, which come to forage or cool off at the waters' edge. This is one of the highlights of any visit to QE.



Track the endangered chimpanzee population in Kyambura Gorge

The dramatically beautiful Kyambura Gorge, a hidden valley in the rolling plains of the Queen Elizabeth Park is home to a highly endangered community of chimpanzees.

Field research between 2006 and 2009, supported by Volcanoes, revealed that the population has recently become cut off from neighbouring forest regions and that today only 20 chimpanzees remain in the gorge - a 30% decline from just 15 years ago.

Kyambura is considered to be one of the best places to see chimps in Uganda and tracking is available all year round. Tracking in the gorge is fun, but challenging. The chimp population are quite mobile as they easily cross the river by scampering through the trees connecting them to the other side. Visitors on the other hand must cross the river using natural bridges in order to keep up with them. So although the walk usually lasts only 2-3 hours, going down the steep gorge and crossing the log bridges requires some agility and fitness!

The walk is enchanting as you will be surrounded by the sounds of hippos, fish eagles, other primates and a diversity of other wildlife that lives in the gorge. Chimpanzee tracking is also available in nearby Kalinzu, a forest reserve 30 minutes

away where there is a community of about 40 habituated chimpanzees, and also in the forest of Kibale, two hours away.





The Kyambura Gorge Ecotourism Partnership

The work of the Volcanoes Safaris Partnership Trust

There is also a host of community activities created by the Volcanoes Safaris Partnership Trust (VSPT), under the management of Nicole Simmons, for guests to experience. In the evenings, guests can enjoy the rhythmic and colourful performance of the Omumashaka Drama Group set up by the VSPT.

The Kyambura Gorge Lodge is the centrepiece of the Volcanoes Safaris Ecotourism Partnership. The Volcanoes Safaris Partnership Trust links the lodge to the neighbouring communities through a range of projects. It also promotes the conservation of chimpanzees and other wildlife through the creation of a buffer

zone along the gorge and reclamation of a 40-acre wetland that was previously used as an illegal brickworks. In total, VSPT has created a 150-acre mini-wildlife reserve, which is helping reduce human wildlife conflict in this highly populated and threatened area.

Volcanoes guides take visitors on a guided walk around the Lodge grounds, where they have the opportunity to spot a diversity of bird species as well as some of the six primates which inhabit the gorge and which are often seen foraging within its tall canopy.

There are also options to take a guided

community tour to the Volcanoes Safaris Partnership Trust sponsored coffee processing station or the wetland restoration project, where guests will spot a diversity of aquatic birds and the beauty of nature's resilience!

The Coffee Co-Operative gives local women an important source of income, paying them to pick and process coffee as a buffer crop, producing what has been called 'the best cup of coffee in Uganda'!

Over 200 bird species have been identified in this area alone in the last rainy season, many of which are stork species that use the wetland as a nesting ground.



Nicole Simmons, originally from the USA, the VSPT Coordinator for the Kyambura area, has set up a number of activities:

- **A women's coffee cooperative and coffee processing station.** The project enables women from the neighbouring community to increase the livelihoods by allowing them to harvest and process coffee locally. This rich and aromatic 100% organic coffee is served and sold in the Kyambura Gorge Lodge and a number of other lodges in the area.
- **A playground and playing field.** The field has been built for the local community and the Kyenzaza Primary School children, where football and netball matches as well as fitness classes take place.
- **The Omumashaka Drama Group.** The group puts on performances of educational plays, songs, and dances for the community at the playground. The drama group, which is sponsored by the VSPT, also performs a lively programme for guests at the Kyambura Gorge Lodge.
- **Training community members as guides in wildlife and conservation.** These knowledgeable guides escort guests through the local communities as well as through the newly restored VSPT Omumashaka Wetland where about 200 species have recently returned.
- **A demonstration garden.** Built to show different crops in the area and to test what natural pesticides and organic fertilizers work best. Many of the garden's vegetables can also be enjoyed at Volcanoes Kyambura Gorge Lodge.

The VSPT is planning to build a regional Conservation and Community Centre to expand its wildlife education and conservation base and to create income from tourism-related activities, projects and programs. Plans can be consulted at the VSPT office.