12-Day Rwanda Birding and Gorilla Trekking Safari

Rwanda



DURATION	COUNTRY	STARTING FROM
12 days, 11 nights	**Rwanda**	**USD 6,900 per person**

TOUR SUMMARY

This 12-day safari combines birding in Rwanda with gorilla trekking in Volcanoes National Park.

Rwanda has three Important Birding Areas according to BirdLife International: Volcanoes, Akagera and Nyungwe National Parks, with over 700 bird species in total. You bird in and around Akagera National Park on days 2 to 4, then in Nyungwe Forest, for Albertine Rift endemics and at Lake Kivu, before moving to Volcanoes National Park for the final days.

ITINERARY

Day 1

Arrival for Birding Rwanda and Gorilla trekking safari

Today you arrive in Rwanda “the land of a thousand hills.” A representative of Namib Safaris will be at the airport to pick you and transfer you to hotel. Depending on time of arrival you have an opportunity for a short Kigali city tour.

Drive time – 20 minutes

Day 2

Birding to Akagera National Park

After breakfast at your hotel, we set off for Akagera National Park in eastern Rwanda bordering with Tanzania. We will bird the marshy areas for species like cattle Egret, Hamerkop, Sacred and Hadada Ibis, Augur Buzzard, Long-crested Eagle, and Pied Crow, Village, Black-headed, and Veillots Black Weavers.

We arrive at our lodge later that evening and check in for the night.

Drive time – 2 hours 30 minutes

B, L & D

Days 3 – 4

Birding in Akagera National Park

We will spend the next two days birding Akagera national park home to about 500 bird species. In the morning we bird the Savannah and woodland areas for species such as Pearl spotted owlet, brown snake eagle, red faced barbet and shouldered robin chat etc.

The afternoon we take a boat trip on Lake Ihema for African fish eagles, Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters, Rufous-bellied Heron, Greater Swamp Warblers, Slender-billed Weavers, and Swamp Flycatcher. More species include Goliath, Black-headed, and Squacco Herons, Little Bittern, Grey Crowned Crane, African Open bill, African Darter, Black tern, African Wattled Plover, Long-toed and Senegal Lapwings, Water Thick-knee, and Giant, Pied and Malachite Kingfisher etc.

While birding Akagera national park, we may encounter herds of buffaloes, Impala, Zebras, water-bucks and Elephants.

B, L & D

Day 5

Birding Nyungwe forest

Today we drive to Nyungwe forest national park from Akagera national park with several short stopovers of birding. In the swampy marshes and Papyrus we search for White-winged Warbler, Papyrus Canary, Papyrus Gonolek and Grauer's Swamp Warbler before reaching our lodge.

Drive time – 7 hours Or Helicopter (Robinson) – 35 minutes

B, L & D

Days 6 – 7

Albertine Rift Endemics

Nyungwe forest national park is part of the remaining large montane forests on the African continent and rich in birds especially the Albertine Rift endemics.

We have two days of birding Nyungwe forest and some of the species we search for include the Handsome Francolin, Great Blue and Rwenzori Turacos, White-headed Wood-hoopoe, Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo, Chestnut Owlet, Olive and Elliot's Woodpeckers. Stripe-breasted Tit, Red-collared Babbler, Archer's Robin Chat, White-bellied Robin Chat, Doherty's Bush-Shrike, Mountain Masked, Black-faced, and Collared Apalises, Rwenzori Batis, Neumann's Short-tailed Warbler, White-tailed Blue-flycatcher, and Purple-breasted and Regal Sunbirds, etc.

Optional: Chimpanzee trekking, Colobus monkey trekking and canopy walk

B, L & D

Day 8 – 9

Birding to Lake Kivu

Today after breakfast, we start our journey northwards to lake Kivu with several stopovers for birding in the marshes, forested areas and agricultural areas. This journey can take the whole day depending on how active the birding en route. Lake Kivu will provide the much needed rest and opportunities for birding along the shores on arrival that evening.

Drive time – 3 hours

B, L & D

Day 10

Transfer to Volcanoes national park

The Virunga volcanoes region shared between Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda represent one of the richest biological areas of the world. It was here that Dian Fossey began her research into Mountain Gorillas in the late 1960's. The drive to Musanze/Kinigi from Lake Kivu in Gisenyi is about an hour but with birding along the way it can be several hours. We will have a short stop at a patch of forest for possible sightings of Narina's Trogon after which we proceed to our lodge for overnight before gorilla trekking.

Drive time – 3 hour

B, L & D

Day 11

Volcanoes national park

Today you explore the jungles of volcanoes national park in anticipation of meeting a group of mountain gorillas. We start with a briefing at the visitor's center and later you are divided into different groups and allocated a ranger guide who will clarify in case of any questions and how to behave. The trek can last from a few minutes to several hours depending on where the gorillas nested the previous night – you need to be relatively fit to enjoy this experience. Once located, you spend one hour with these magnificent animals.

How you spend the rest of the day depends on what time you get back from the gorilla trek. You can choose to spend the rest of the afternoon 'taking it easy' in the lodge grounds which holds a variety of birds.

B, L & D

Day 12

End of the Rwanda Birding and gorilla safari

After birding near the lodge area, you start on the return trip to Kigali birding along the way. On arrival in Kigali, you proceed to the airport for your return flight home. Thank you for birding Rwanda with us.

Drive time – 7 hours Or Helicopter (Robinson) – 35 minutes

B & L

WHAT IS INCLUDED

Cost includes

- Ground transport
- Park entrances
- Birding fees
- Boat trips
- Bottled water in the safari vehicle
- Full board accommodation for two nights
- Service of an English-speaking driver guide
- All mentioned activities except for the optional ones

Cost excludes

- Extras at the accommodation i.e. drinks, telephone, laundry etc.
- Tips to porters and driver/ guide
- Insurance

GOOD TO KNOW

- Packing for Safari? Keep it simple!

- Bring comfortable, lightweight clothes in natural colors like khaki, olive, sand, and earth tones. Pack layers too: mornings can be surprisingly chilly, while the middle of the day gets hot. You don't need a fresh outfit for every day, since most lodges and camps can arrange laundry service.
- Don't forget your sun protection: a good hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Comfortable shoes are enough for most safaris. Heavy hiking boots are only needed if you're doing a walking safari, primate tracking, or mountain climbing.
- A good pair of binoculars is a must. A camera is great, but binoculars will transform the way you experience wildlife, especially birds and animals that are far away.
- For luggage, we recommend a soft-sided bag over a hard suitcase. It fits much more easily into safari vehicles and small aircraft, where space is tight and weight is often limited to 15 kg.
- Most importantly, don't overpack. Travel light and enjoy the adventure!

Ready to book this safari?

Request a quote and we will tailor it to your dates and group: **gorillatreking.com/safari/12-day-rwanda-birding-and-gorilla-trekking-safari/**

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Email: **bookings@gorillatreking.com**

Starting prices are per person and depend on season, group size and availability; request a quote for exact pricing. Itineraries can be adjusted to suit your plans.