

Mgahinga Gorilla National Park



Further Links

- Stunning mountain scenery
- Gorilla trekking
- Village and community walks
- Golden Monkeys

Situation

Western Uganda on border with DRC.

Activities

Gorilla trekking, golden monkey walks, forest walks, village visits.

Mgahinga is set in the most stunning landscape which provides an incredible backdrop for a gorilla safari. There are nine freestanding volcanoes here, three of which dominate the horizon. One is Mt Gahinga and the others are Mt Muhavura and Mt Sabinyo. They form the Ugandan section of the Virunga Mountains. You approach through a verdant patchwork of small fields which hug the contours of the hills and valleys, getting closer and closer to the magnificent backdrop of these towering volcanic cones. The borders of Uganda, Rwanda and the Congo converge in these mountains. Each of these countries protects its own sector of the Virungas, with the Parc National des Volcans in Rwanda and the Virunga national park in DRC. The three parks together form the 434 sq.km. Virunga Conservation Area or VCA. Mgahinga is 33.7 sq.km, just 8% of the VCA.

Walks through the park can be strenuous if the gorillas are not close, but the vegetation is quite different from that at Bwindi. There is certainly forest here, but the lower slopes consist of high altitude savannah woodland with lots of moss and lichens, this emerges into montane forests interspersed with wide expanses of bamboo which is the gorillas' favourite food. If you get the chance to see them here, they may be in open sunlight rather than under the shade of a forest canopy. There is only one habituated group of gorillas at Mgahinga and they do occasionally leave the park and cross the border to DRC making it impossible to follow. The rangers usually know when this has happened and they won't purposefully send you out on a trek if the gorillas aren't there!

The other big attraction at Mgahinga is the opportunity to see the endangered golden monkeys, which can usually be found on a forest walk.

Birding is good here too, as you can see Rwenzori turaco, fiscal shrike, scarlet tufted malachite sunbird, white-tailed blue fly catcher, crowned hornbill, black kite, augur buzzards, crowned crane and many many more.

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