



# UGANDA & CONGO BY HELICOPTER

10 DAYS, PRIMEVAL FORESTS, MOUNTAIN GORILLA & ERUPTING VOLCANOES

HELICOPTER SAFARI  
**10 DAYS**  
*through Uganda  
& Congo*

**UGANDA: DAY 1 & 2**  
Kidepo Valley National Park  
*Apoka Lodge*

**DAY 3**  
Murchison Falls  
*Chobe Safari Lodge*

**DAY 4 & 5**  
Kibale Forest & Kazinga Channel  
*Ndali Lodge*

**CONGO: DAY 6**  
Rwenzori scenic & to Congo  
*Mikeno Lodge*

**DAY 7**  
Mountain gorilla & Nyiragongo  
*Nyiragongo Lodge*

**DAY 8 & 9**  
Lowland Gorilla & Chimpanzee  
*Mikeno Lodge*

**DAY 10**  
*End*



# HELICOPTER SAFARI ITINERARY

*at a glance*

## UGANDA: DAY 1: KIDEPO

On arrival in Entebbe, a private Cessna Caravan will fly you to Kidepo, where your helicopter adventure begins. Uganda's remotest wilderness, the Kidepo National Park is located in the far north eastern corner - its rolling grasslands are home to an abundant variety of mammals and birds. Accommodation is at Apoka - a small lodge with 10 semi-tented rooms, set against a rocky kopje with endless views across the savannah.

***Apoka Lodge***

## DAY 2: KIDEPO

Today we will explore Kidepo, enjoying the rich wildlife and the varied habitats including the Borassus palm forest and the Kanangorok Hot Springs. We will visit the 'Tk' people, who live in the hills making a modest living off the land.

***Apoka Lodge***

## DAY 3: MURCHISON FALLS

Our destination today is the Murchison Falls in western Uganda, a flight that takes us over savannah plains and amazing granite inselbergs. Murchison Falls National Park is Uganda's largest and oldest conservation area, hosting 76 species of mammals and 451 birds. Accommodation will be at Chobe Safari Lodge situated on the banks of the Nile.

***Chobe Safari Lodge***



## DAY 4: FORT FORTAL

This morning we embark on a morning boat trip up the Nile, enjoying the hippo, crocodiles and enormous variety of water birds, ending at the Falls where the heli will meet us. We continue our adventure, flying south west via the shores of Lake Albert, lined by fishing villages and hundreds of fishing boats. Our destination is Ndali Lodge, located near Fort Portal in western Uganda - an area of fertile farmland.

*Ndali Lodge*

## DAY 5: KIBALE CHIMPANZEE

An active morning is planned with a trek in Kibale National Park, known for its chimpanzee - over 1,450 individuals are protected here. After lunch at Ndali lodge, guests can enjoy an afternoon walk to the vanilla factory.

*Ndali Lodge*

## CONGO: DAY 6: VIRUNGA

The day starts with a morning private boat ride on the Kazinga Channel - a great way to see the varied bird life and swimming elephant.

We head to the Congo, flying over the snowy peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains, via Kasese and Bunia to clear customs. Our destination is Mikeno Lodge set within the Virunga National Park, in the east of Congo. After a late lunch we will visit the orphaned baby gorillas at the nearby Senkwekwe Centre.

*Mikeno Lodge*

## DAY 7: MOUNTAIN GORILLA & NYIRAGONGO

At dawn, the heli takes us to the starting point of our trek in search of the Mountain Gorilla.



The trek can take up to 5 hours, and we will have a private viewing with a group.

After lunch back at Mikeno Lodge, we fly to Nyiragongo volcano and hike a short distance to our accommodation located on the rim, overlooking the lava lake. The rooms at Nyiragongo consist of simple but perfectly adequate cabins, where we can spend hours watching the changing shapes and colours of the florescent lava lake.

### *Nyiragongo Lodge*

## DAY 8: LOWLAND GORILLA

At dawn we embark on an early morning flight to Mount Tsiabeimu - a remote part of Virunga National Park, where a group of 20 Lowland Gorilla are protected through an inspiring community-based project.

Lowland Gorillas (Grauer's Gorilla) are only found in Eastern DRC. They are larger than all other sub-species of gorilla, with a peaceful nature. Time permitting, there is an option to visit GRACE (Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education) initiated by The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, for orphan gorillas.

### *Mikeno Lodge*

## DAY 9: CHIMPANZEE TREKKING

A short flight takes us to the village of Tongo where we begin our Chimpanzee trek in search of a resident group of 33 individuals.

Our return flight takes us over hippo pools and crystal clear springs - so pure because they are filtered by the layers of lava rock.

### *Mikeno Lodge*

## DAY 10: HELI SAFARI ENDS

Before leaving this morning, we will enjoy a guided tour of the park headquarters.



## KIDEPO VALLEY

Situated in the far north east, Kidepo is Uganda's most remote national park. The pristine wilderness with rolling savannah grassland and rugged spectacular mountain landscape has a constant source of ground water.

An astounding 475 bird species are found here - including some of the rarest and most sought after birds such as Black-breasted Barbet and Karamoja Apallis. Kidepo has 80 mammal species, 28 of which are found in no other park in Uganda.



## KIDEPO VALLEY

*A remote and magnificent wilderness, populated with elephant, buffalo, lion, cheetah .. the constant presence of ground water makes Kidepo an oasis in the semi-desert.*



## APOKA LODGE

Located in the heart of Kidepo Valley, Apoka is a small lodge, with 10 semi-tented rooms, surrounding a rocky kopje with endless views across the golden savannah. The rooms offer comfort beyond expectations, with private verandas, looking out over the vast plains, dotted with wildlife. The lodge has a beautiful rock swimming pool.

Guests can walk with experienced guides along the sandy river bed, as well as enjoy exciting game drives, and visit the Karamajong cultural village.





## KARAMAJONG

Related to the Turkana people of Northern Kenya, the people of Karamoja – the Karamojong – are spiritual, proud, and at times, fierce. They are isolated geographically, economically and politically.

Cattle are the most valued assets of the Karamojong. Herds are divided so that some animals are kept around permanent homesteads for milking, while most are sent off to distant pastures.



## IK

Also known as 'Mountain People', the 'Ik' are an endangered tribe of only a few thousand. They live in the hills in north eastern Uganda, although their original territory was the Kidepo Valley where they were hunter-gatherers before the region was declared a park.

Today, the 'Ik' are subsistence farmers who grind grain and live a materially impoverished life, with individual survival being their only motive.



*Scenic flight from Kidepo to  
Murchisons*

## **GIANT GRANITE INSELBERGS**



## MURCHISON FALLS

Our destination today is Chobe Safari Lodge situated on the Nile, near the Murchison Falls.

The Murchison Falls National Park is Uganda's largest conservation area, through which flows the River Nile from its source at Lake Victoria to Lake Albert.

The incredible Murchison Falls are in the heart of the Park - where the Nile is channeled through a narrow gorge, creating one of the world's most powerful flows of natural water.



## CHOBE SAFARI LODGE

Set on the banks of the River Nile, close to the magnificent Murchison Falls, the Chobe Safari Lodge is an ideal base to explore the Murchison Falls National Park. The combination of savannah grasslands and riverine habitats makes this region one of Uganda's most thrilling wildlife areas.

Chobe Safari Lodge is a traditional lodge, with good facilities and modern comforts. Melodic sound of birds and other creatures call out from the surrounding dense vegetation, blending with the sounds of river rapids.



# RIVER NILE

*boat trip*



## LAKE ALBERT

The shimmering blue waters of Lake Albert, a fresh water lake lying between two parallel escarpments, supports thousands of people that depend on commercial fishing activities. Small fishing boats dock for the night, and nets are untangled, repaired and laid out for the morning.



## WESTERN UGANDA

*intensive agriculture*

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. These photos were taken around Fort Portal in Western Uganda.





## NDALI LODGE

Ndali Lodge near Fort Portal is the perfect base to explore the beautiful snow-covered mountain peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains.

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.

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 ensuite 8 cottages.



## KIBALE FOREST

*National Park*

With lush tropical rainforest and a fascinating diversity of animals, Kibale National Park is one of the most beautiful and stunning forests in Uganda, with Africa's highest diversity and density of primates.



## CHIMPANZEES

The forests, hills and valleys of Kibale National Park are home to a highly protected population of Chimps (over 1,450 individuals).

In the company of Ranges, visitors can trek in search of the *Kanyanchu* group, a community of chimpanzees that have been habituated since 1991. With 12 other primate species found in Kibale, a morning here is always rewarding.



## NDALI VANILLA

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.

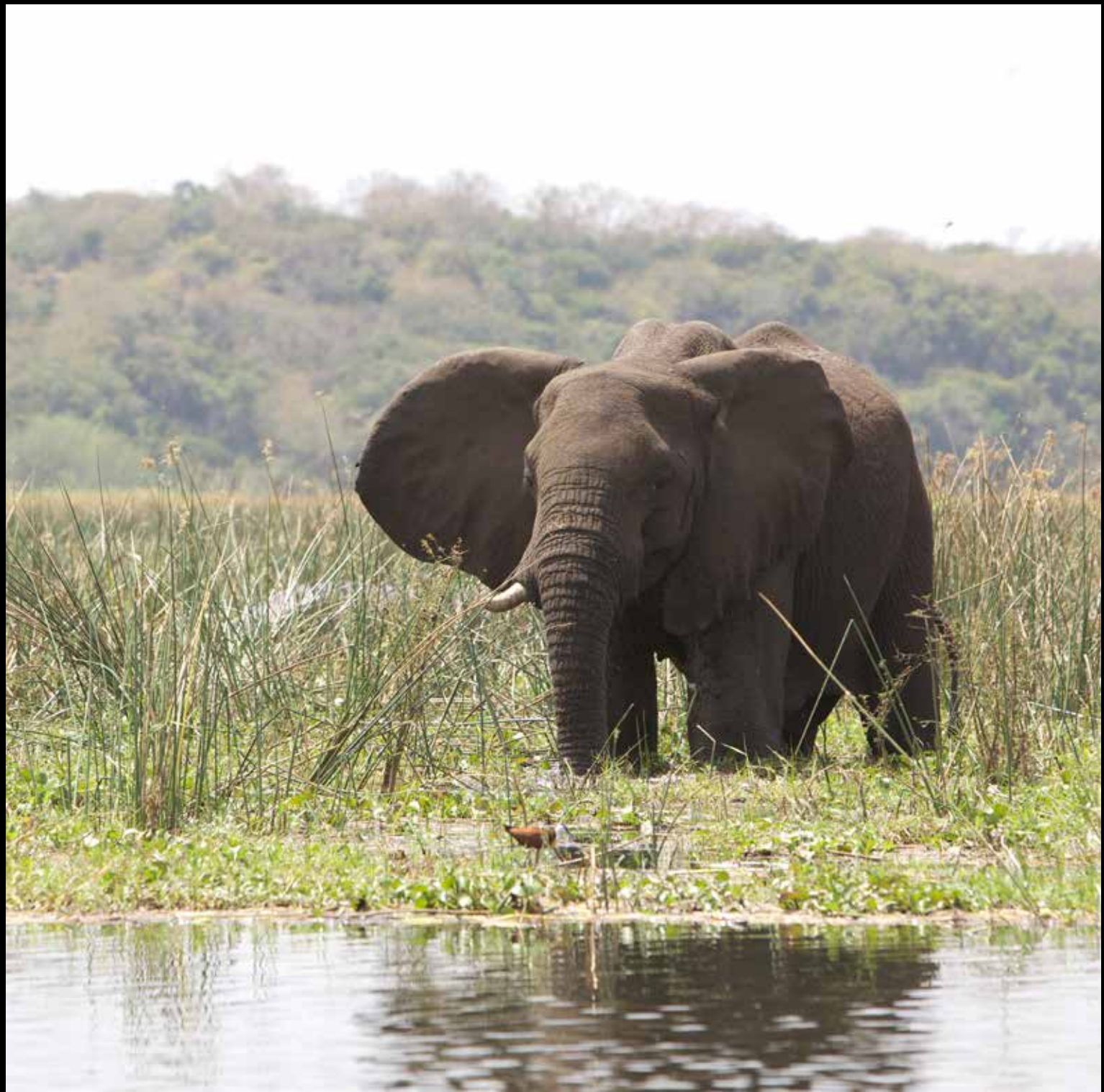
Vanilla beans are cured, made into extract and powder, and packaged for export to high profile companies such as Lush Cosmetics, Ben & Jerry's and Waitrose.



## KAZINGA CHANNEL

The 32km Kazinga Channel, that links Lake Edward and Lake George, is one of Queen Elizabeth National Park's greatest attractions. It is a magnet for wildlife - elephant, buffalo, Nile crocodile, and one of the world's largest concentration of hippos.

Birdlife is thrilling, and particularly unique are the shoebill stork, African Skimmer, Papyrus Gonolek and Black bee-eater.



# RWENZORI

## *Mountains*

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

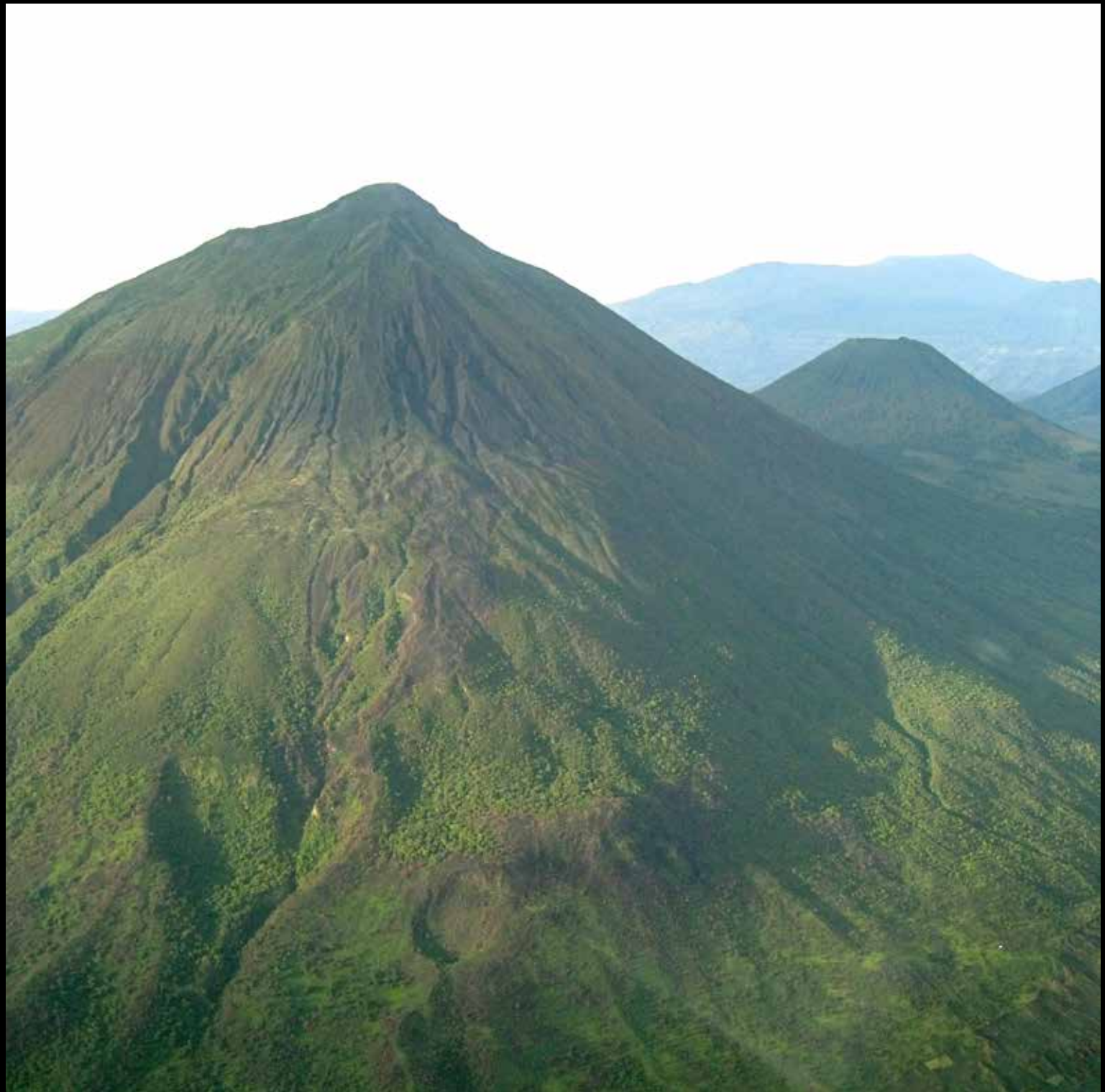


# VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK

## EASTERN CONGO

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

The Virunga National Park,  
recognised as a World Heritage  
site by UNESCO, is dedicated to  
the conservation of the Mountain  
Gorilla, along with chimpanzees,  
forest elephants, giraffe and okapi.



# VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK

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.





## MIKENO LODGE

*Located in the depth of the Virunga forest is the newly established 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 Parks most treasured assets - the Mountain Gorilla, Chimpanzee and Mount Nyiragongo. Just a few minutes walk away is the Senkwekwe Centre for orphan gorilla.



MIKENO LODGE  
VIRUNGA NATIONAL  
PARK



## 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 center 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. It is a touching experience to learn about the challenges that this species faces in the wild.



## MOUNT NYIRAGONGO

The Virunga Mountains are a chain of 8 volcanoes running along the borders of DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. 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.



RAIN FORESTS  
OF THE VIRUNGA



# 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 the planet.



## NYIRAGONGO LODGE

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 a thrilling experience to watch the glowing molten lava throughout the evening!



*"the man who kills the animals today is the man who kills the people who get in his way tomorrow".*

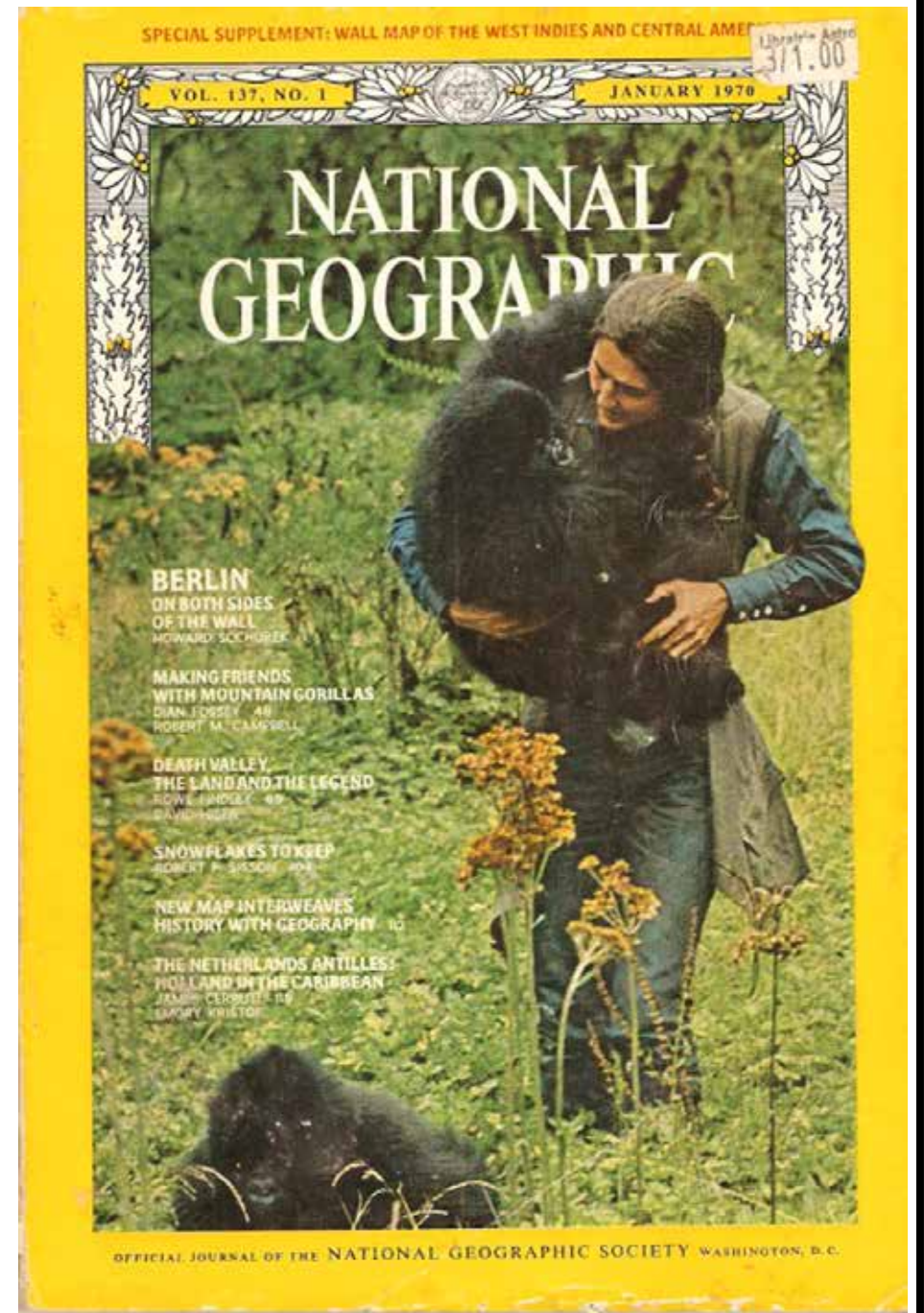
## DIAN FOSSEY

— ZOOLOGIST AND CONSERVATIONIST WHO DEDICATED HER LIFE TO PROTECTING GORILLA IN CERNTAL AFRICA —

## ‘GRACE’

GRACE (Gorilla Rehabilitation and Conservation Education) is the first rescue and rehabilitation center of its kind in East Central Africa, currently caring for 15 orphan Grauer’s gorillas in a purpose built facility with access to 350 acres of natural habitat. Founded by The Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, GRACE is located adjacent to the Tayna Nature Reserve, which is owned and managed by local communities.

In July 2011, 6 Grauer’s who had been cared for in Rwanda for many years by the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund and the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project (MGVP), were successfully transferred back to Congo, where they had originally been confiscated from poachers.

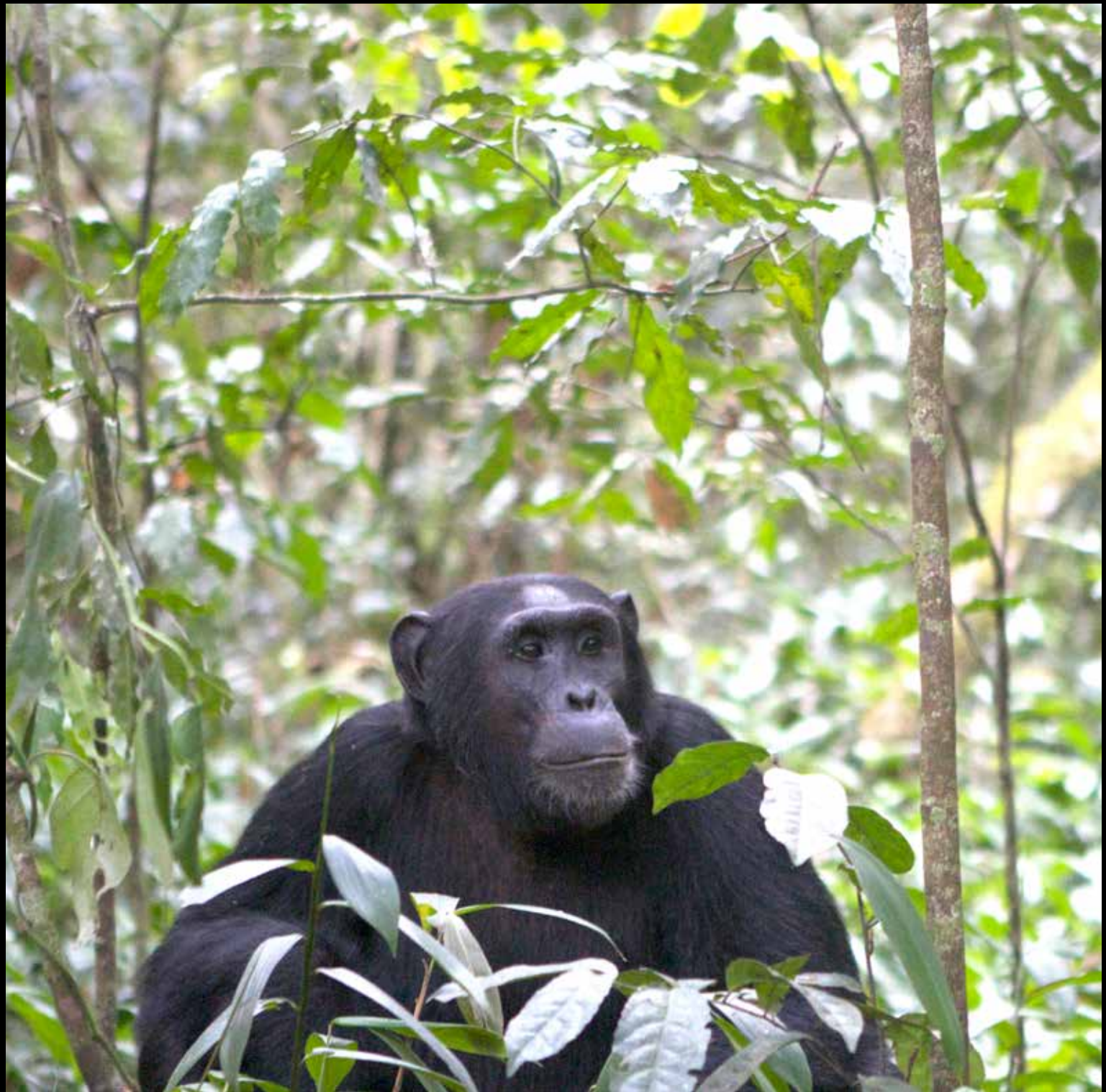




## CHIMPANZEE

The forests, mountains and valleys of Virunga National Park are home to a highly protected population of Chimps.

From Tongo village, visitors are welcome to trek in search of a habituated group of 33, accompanied by rangers. Red tailed monkeys, colobus monkeys and olive baboons also thrive here, and the bird life is prolific.



## FRESH WATER SPRINGS

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



HELI SAFARI  
ENDS



## WHAT TO WEAR

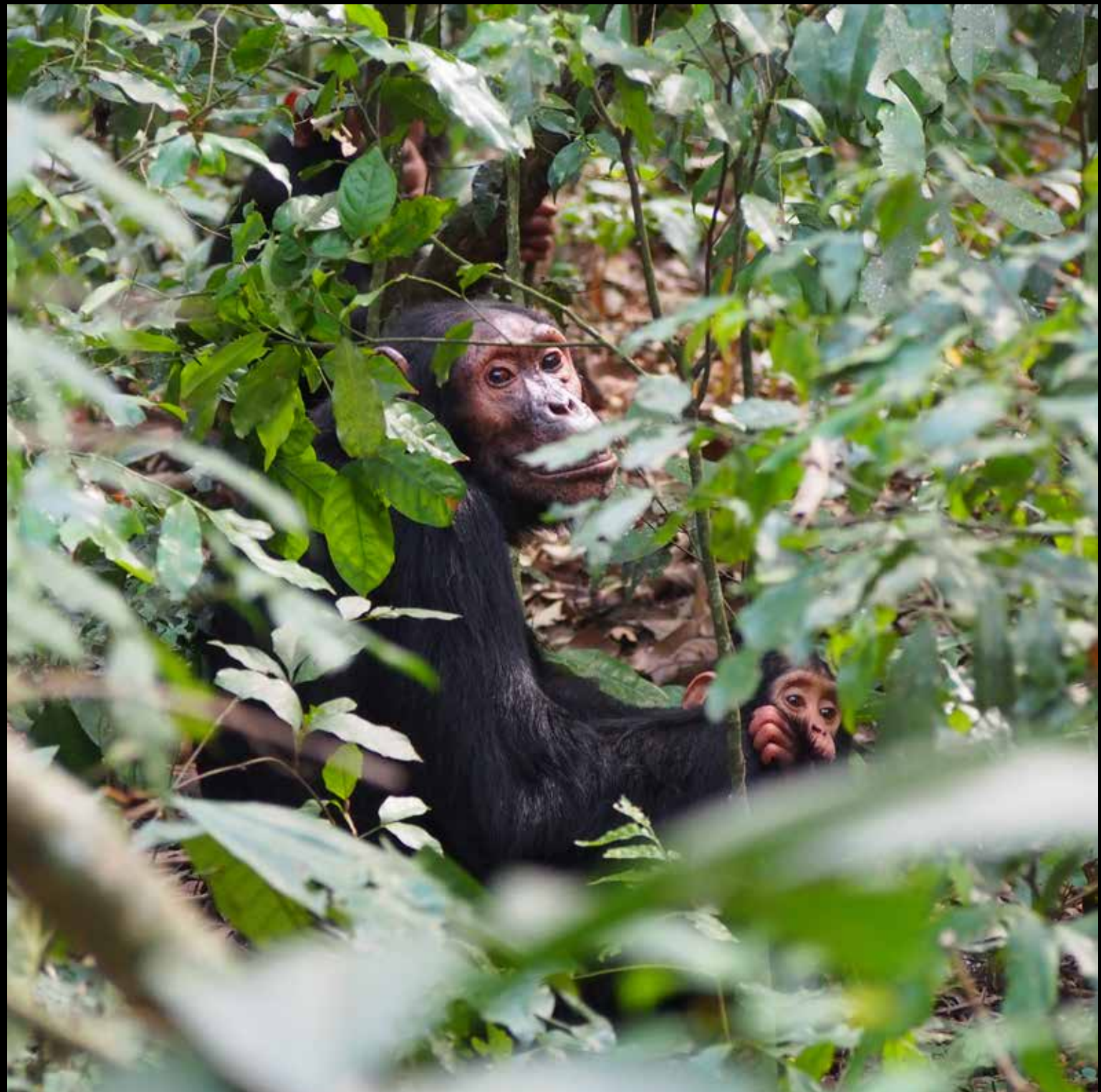
### *Clothing recommendation*

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.



## 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

*Ben Simpson & Jamie Roberts  
founders of Tropic Air Helicopters  
adventures & safaris throughout sub-Saharan Africa*



*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 10 years of experience in this field.*

*The Eurocopter AS 350 B3's are perfectly adapted to fly in 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.*

***Tropic Air***

*Nanyuki, Kenya*

