

PRIVATE Clubs

Shave Safari Costs in Uganda

BY PAUL RUBIO — *Summer 2018*



Local Batwa artisans. PHOTO BY ROBIN FRANCOIS.



Mount Gahinga Lodge. PHOTO BY ROBIN FRANCOIS.



Cottage lounge at Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge

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hile Rwanda fills a niche for the highest of high-end gorilla tourism, Uganda has positioned itself as a less-costly alternative. Gorilla trekking there costs \$600 per day in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (Uganda's portion of the Virunga Massif) or farther north in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The country's accommodations and overall infrastructure aren't at the same level as Rwanda's, but lower prices reflect this.

Only one habituated gorilla troop resides in Mgahinga, the Nyakagezi group, but the animals are so approachable and charismatic that you'll likely know all 10 by name and their idiosyncrasies by trek's end. To meet the Nyakagezi family, stay at **Mount Gahinga Lodge**, a simple-yet-charming and authentic six-banda retreat by Uganda's leading lodge company, Volcanoes Safaris, that lies in walking distance to the national park. Guests can participate in its many community projects, including the new Batwa Vocational Centre & Resettlement project, a major endeavor to relocate and provide jobs for Uganda's marginalized Batwa people. From \$275 per person per night, sharing.volcanoesafaris.com

In the Rushaga and Nkuringo areas of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, you can now opt for a gorilla habituation experience (though the standard gorilla trek is still an option). Each day under this program (now being marketed to the U.S.), which costs \$1,500 per person per day, two groups of four shadow primatologists and rangers habituating wild gorilla troops. Expect four hours of face time with the gorillas (not the standard one hour), but don't necessarily expect the same caliber of photography because unhabituated individuals tend to be more skittish. For this experience, stay in the Nkuringo area of Bwindi. A good choice: **Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge**, the closest lodge to the trailhead used to reach the gorilla troops. From \$414 per person per night, sharing.wildplacesafrica.com

More info: ugandawildlife.org