



Virunga National Park
Package Update

Package Update

This year we are going to be doing things a little differently - offering a set of packages which give visitors the opportunity to experience the Park's most popular offerings, including Nyiragongo and mountain gorilla treks.

In addition to the change in booking options, transport to, from, and inside the Park will be carried out exclusively by Virunga National Park and is included in package rates. Visitors will be required to meet at the tourism office at the Grande Barriere prior to departure to the Park. The meeting and departure times are detailed in the below document. Please be aware that if these times are missed, visitors may lose out on their bookings.

Travel Requirements

Requirements Checklist

Before traveling to Virunga National Park it is important to first confirm that all requirements to enter into the DRC, Uganda, and Rwanda have been secured. It is also important to make sure that you have all immunizations are up-to-date and all applicable visas have been processed and printed.

Immunizations—A Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required to enter the DRC, Uganda, and Rwanda. After receiving the vaccine, you will receive a signed and stamped Yellow Fever Card, which must be brought with you on your trip.

The certificate should show your full name, date of birth, and sex as written in your passport. Please note that you must receive this vaccine at least 10 days before departing for your trip.

Applying for a Visa—The Institute Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN), the Congolese wildlife authority, has an agreement with Direction Générale de Migration (DGM), the Congolese immigration service, to facilitate obtaining 2-week, single entry tourist visas for people visiting Virunga National Park. The cost of the visa is USD \$105.

To qualify for a tourist visa, you must first purchase a package. Tourist visas purchased through Virunga National Park are non-refundable.

As Congolese visas can take some time to process, it is advisable to apply as soon as you make your package booking. Tourists visas obtained through the Park will be sent electronically two weeks prior to travel date via the e-mail address you provide at the time of your booking

Finally, please make sure to secure any other visas that they will need as they make their way to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Countries such as Rwanda and Uganda allow some nationalities to obtain visas upon arrival to their main airports, however, it is up to the individual traveler to verify visa requirements in advance of arrival.

Important Visa Notes

Virunga National Park only acts as a facilitator in the visa process. Full authority rests with the DRC's Department of Migration (DGM) in Kinshasa. For tourist visas obtained through the Park, DGM will issue an electronic visa that will be sent to your e-mail that you must ensure you print out and present at the border (Grande Barriere) along with a print-out of package confirmation details. Virunga's tourism team will verify that all paid-in-full applicants are on the list of approved visas at the border in Goma. Virunga's tourism office is conveniently located in the Grande Barriere building and have staff on hand in the event that you require assistance at passport control.

People flying Ethiopian Airlines directly into Goma must notify the tourism team two weeks before their schedule departure. Please email Vianney Harakandi (vianney@virunga.org) with visa@virunga.org in copy with the name of their departure airport to ensure their visa information has been communicated to Ethiopian Airlines. Failure to do so may result in you not being able to board your flight.

Tourist Visa in Review

01. Only available online through visitvirunga.org or via a trusted tour operator
02. Only valid in combination with a paid-in-full Park package
03. Requires a minimum of two weeks to process and fees are non-refundable
04. Single entry and valid for 14 days from day of entry
05. Please ensure that your tourists bring with them, printed copies of their package confirmation and DGM issued electronic visa details
06. Please email a scanned copy of your passport to visa@virunga.org upon completion of your visa application.
07. Proof of Yellow Fever vaccination is required for access into the country
08. The Department of Migration (DGM) reserves the right to reject a visa application
09. Please cross into Goma at the "Grand Barrière" NOT at the "Petite Barrière"

Transportation

If you are arriving to DRC by car, the entry point for visitors travelling to Virunga National Park is through the city of Goma at the Grand Barrière border crossing. The best way to reach Goma by road is through neighboring Rwanda. Goma is three hours by car from Kigali International Airport. Package booked via a tourist operator, the tour operator is free to organize your own transport within Goma, however, it is mandatory that travel to, from and within the Park be with official Virunga transport as well bring the tourists to point of departure in a timely manner. Please note for all packages, tourists will start and end at the Goma Tourism Office.

Arrival Times for Packages—On arrival in DRC, you must go to the tourism office and check in with their tourism team. On the day of the start of their package the tourists must check in for their package at the tourism office (the tourism office is now located in the DRC building of Grande Barrier). All transport to the park will depart from the office; there will be no other departure points.

- **Nyiragongo** – arrive Grande Barrier at 7:00am and must check into the tourism office at the latest 8:00am
- **Mikeno Mist, Le Petit Virunga Bukima, Le Petit Virunga Mikeno, Great Ape and Virunga Classic** – arrive Grande Barrier at 11:45 and must check into the tourism office at the latest 13:00.
- **Tchegera** – the boat will leave the dock at 12:30 and return at 13:30

Please note, failure to arrive at the require times will mean that your tourist will not be able to travel on their package that day and could result in the loss of the full booking with no refund.

Getting to Virunga

International Travel

Visitors to Virunga National Park usually fly into Kigali International Airport and take the 3+ hour taxi ride to the border crossing at Gisenyi, Rwanda/Goma, DRC. Take note of the details of your tourists travel arrangements and plan accordingly as international flights often arrive in the late afternoon or evening.

Alternatively, guests can fly into Goma airport. Ethiopian Airlines and many domestic DRC airlines fly into Goma. It is advised to book accommodation in Goma on the day of your arrival since flights are regularly delayed.

Taxi Service

Taxis typically charge \$100 from Kigali to the DRC border. Hotels can arrange a taxi for you. Virunga National Park staff and many visitors use DieudonnéNkongori's taxi service (\$100). Reservations can be made by emailing him at dnkongori@yahoo.com or by phoning him at +243 995670967 or +250 788500933.

***Disclaimer:** Virunga National Park is not affiliated with, and receives no financial or other benefit from, any taxi or other transportation service. Virunga National Park therefore is not liable or responsible for any act or omission of any taxi operator, taxi business or other transportation service, whether or not recommended by Virunga National Park.*

Indemnities

All tourists will be required to fill in a Virunga Indemnity form prior to arrival in DRC. These forms are to be sent to Vianney – vianney@Virunga.org; two weeks before arrival. The indemnity form will be send through to you two weeks before your arrival.

Safety in Virunga

A Message from Management

The management of Virunga National Park is dedicated to ensuring the highest safety and security of all its visitors. Virunga Rangers are trained at international standards for visitor protection, including close protection, communication, first aid and evacuation procedures. In addition, Park management oversees the security environment by maintaining close ties with local authorities, community leaders, embassies, UN agencies and NGOs.

We ask all visitors to adopt the appropriate level of sensitivity to the local cultural and political environment as an essential element of your personal security and of those accompanying you throughout your visit.

Lastly, Park management emphasizes the importance of all visitors making themselves aware of the current security situation at the time of their visit. When organizing a trip to Virunga, we advise that visitors check with their government's office of foreign affairs about any travel alerts.



CONTACT

For general questions about the park:

info@virunga.org

For enquiries related to press or media:

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