

Topdeck

GORILLA ENCOUNTER



TRIP CODE:
ZOKCGN-8



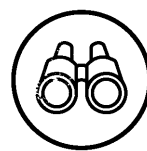
TOPDECKER, meet Non-Commissionable

Go all 'George of the Jungle' on this spectacular Gorilla Encounter expedition, packed with more action than you can poke a banana leaf at. This superb short African safari starts and ends in Nairobi, Kenya, with an optional jungle trek in neighbouring Uganda. Get up close and personal with a family of wild mountain gorillas, help a local charity in Jinja, track chimpanzees in Kyambura Gorge and marvel at the fabulous flamingos at Lake Nakuru. With so many memorable animal encounters, you'll be giving David Attenborough a run for his money.

WORTH NOTING...

Due to the endangered status of Mountain Gorillas a trekking permit is required for this trip at an additional cost to the trip price. This permit must be paid in full at the time of booking in order for us to

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Explorer



Nights



Download app



Meals

secure it for your trip. It also covers the cost of Chimpanzee trekking.

Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?
The countdown's on...

ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

IMPORTANT: please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Great Rift Valley
- Lake Naru National Park game drive
- Queen Elizabeth National Park Chimpanzee trekking on either day 4 or day 5
- Gorilla trekking on either day 7 or day 8

YOUR ITINERARY



DAY 1 | NAIROBI, KENYA TO LAKE NAKURU NATIONAL PARK

Combat your jet lag by arriving a day before our epic adventure, and then rise early to depart Nairobi for the 'Great Rift Valley', an enormous cleft in the Earth's surface stretching from the Red Sea to Madagascar (but with particularly marked escarpments here in Kenya). Have your camera at the ready - these views are something to write home about. Later, we stop at our camp near Lake Nakuru National Park, a relatively small park (by African standards) but with an abundant of wildlife thanks to its location on the Great Rift Valley floor. This afternoon will provide a delightful introduction to East Africa's wildlife diversity thanks to an afternoon game drive making use of local guides and smaller safari vehicles for a more intimate experience.



MEALS:

- Lunch
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Great Rift Valley
- Lake Naru National Park game drive

DAY 2 | LAKE NAKURU NATIONAL PARK TO ELDORET PARK

From Nakuru we continue northwest and climb in altitude towards the town of Eldoret en route to the Ugandan frontier. Brush up on your geology knowledge by learning about the significance of the Equator as we cross it today from the Southern Hemisphere to the Northern. Read also: unique photo opportunities. Finally, we reach Eldoret; it's name based on the Maasai word Eldore meaning stony river, due to the stony bed of the nearby Sosiani River. The town is the fifth largest in Kenya and is the fastest growing with a population of nearly 200,000. Once we reach our fabulous campsite, sip on a sun downer around the warmth of an open log fire and marvel at the idyllic setting of waterfalls, streams and wooden bridges.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 3 | ELDORET TO KAMPALA, UGANDA

Described by Winston Churchill as the 'Pearl of Africa', Uganda is a country with beautiful natural scenery and a rich mosaic of tribes and cultures. Travelling through Uganda, you'll be captivated by its sheer beauty and the friendliness of the local people. Tonight we camp in the capital, Kampala, which is an attractive hilly city bustling with roadside traders, markets and busy matatu (minibus taxi) stands.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 4 | KAMPALA TO QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

From Kampala, we travel west towards Queen Elizabeth National Park, once more over the Equator and through fertile, green-terraced hillsides, lush banana plantations and tangled forests. Keep your eyes peeled for the herds of Ankole cattle, with their incredible long, curved horns, roaming the roads and paddocks. Setting up camp just a short distance from the Queen Elizabeth National Park, you'll have the chance to kick back and unwind, take a walk in the surrounding areas and mingle with the community, local style.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Queen Elizabeth National Park Chimpanzee trekking on either day 4 or day 5

DAY 5 | QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

This morning we enter the Queen Elizabeth National Park and take in the magnificent views of the mountains that separate Uganda from central Africa, as well as Lakes Edwards and George. Queen Elizabeth National park has over 500 species of bird and 100 species of mammals, making it one of the most bio-diverse national parks in the world. Nearby, we visit the Kyambura Gorge for an exciting trek to see the chimpanzees. On departing the National Park, we make our way to the stunning Lake Bunyonyi - the perfect place to unwind, relax and explore (on the days that we don't trek to see the mountain gorillas, of course).



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 6 | QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK TO LAKE BUNYONYI PARK

Over the next three days, you and your adventure buddies will be split into two groups. On the first day, one group will trek to witness the amazing mountain gorillas up close, while the others have a free day of chilling out on the lake. Then the next day, the groups swap. On the day of our trek, we gather in the early morning to meet our local guide and tracker. The area that we explore is home to the world's remaining 700 mountain gorillas, many of which inhabit the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (please note that occasionally we may need to travel into neighbouring Rwanda to see the gorillas). The trek into the thick rainforest can be demanding at times, with uneven terrain and hilly rainforest, but the privilege of spending time with a family of these gentle primates makes the effort more than well worthwhile. Please note: Depending on the availability of the chimpanzee and gorilla permits, the tour itinerary may vary from the brochure itinerary. From time to time, we may have to trek on different days. If at any time our gorilla trek should be in another neighbouring country, i.e Rwanda (instead of Uganda) this may entail extra visa fees, although we shall endeavour to advise you before departure of any significant changes to the tour itinerary. Please take the above itinerary as a guideline only.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Island boat trips
- Village walk
- Traditional dance
- Bird watching
- Canoe hire

DAY 7 | LAKE BUNYONYI

If you're not on today's trek, take advantage of your free time by the seven kilometer-wide lake with an abundance of boredom-killer activities. Hire canoes and swing by some of the islands, wander the local tribes and villages, visit the local orphanage, and channel your inner explorer with a nature walk. Alternatively, kick your feet up at camp and catch up on the diary or postcards back home.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Gorilla trekking on either day 7 or day 8



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Island boat trips
- Village walk
- Traditional dance
- Bird watching
- Canoe hire

DAY 8 | LAKE BUNYONYI

For those with a free day, spend your time swanning around the campsite, canoe the lake's peaceful waters or discover why the stunning area is known as the 'place of many birds' with a spot of bird-watching. Today's on your watch, so spend it as you see fit.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Island boat trips
- Village walk
- Traditional dance
- Bird watching
- Canoe hire

DAY 9 | LAKE BUNYONYI TO KAMPALA

Leaving Lake Bunyonyi, we make our way back across the Equator, through lush pasture lands and the northern reaches of Africa's largest lake, Lake Victoria, to Kampala. A hotspot for great food and entertainment, Kampala is the perfect place for our overnight stay. Take the night to enjoy the hospitality of the local Ugandans, before resting your head and getting in some much-needed zzz's.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 10 | KAMPALA TO JINJA

After we farewell the capital, we venture a short distance to Jinja where our camp on the grassy banks of the River Nile awaits. It was in 1862 that the British explorer John Hanning Speke recognised Lake Victoria as the 'source of the Nile', settling a long running dispute about Africa's (and the world's) longest river. From this modest monument, the Nile begins its 6,610km journey through Uganda, Sudan and eventually Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 11 | JINJA

Since our camp in Jinja overlooks a dramatic set of rapids (known as Bujagali Falls), it's no surprise the region is somewhat of an adrenaline playground. Thrill seekers will revel in the chance to try optional white water rafting, but if you lack that daredevil streak, mountain biking, quad biking and village walks are also on offer.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Bungee jumping
- Quad biking
- White water rafting
- Community school project
- Nile Cruise
- Nile stand up paddleboarding
- Kayaking
- Fishing trips
- Mountain biking

DAY 12 | JINJA

When you've had your fill of heart-racing activities, roll up your sleeves and take the opportunity to make a difference for children at a local school project. 'Softpower' is a locally-run volunteer programme aimed at building and improving schools in the Jinja area. Your contribution of a few hours of painting or plastering is always most welcome (and serves as a great mood booster, too).



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Bungee jumping
- Quad biking
- White water rafting
- Community school project
- Nile cruise
- Nile Stand Up Paddleboarding
- Kayaking
- Fishing trips
- Mountain biking

DAY 13 | JINJA TO ELDORET, KENYA

After our excitement-filled break in Jinja, we retrace our steps across the border of Kenya and on towards Eldoret, where we will set up camp for the evening. Tonight, share a few laughs with your new travel pals and reminisce on your gorilla encounter stories around the campfire.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

DAY 14 | ELDORET TO NAIROBI

This morning we cross the equator and make our way back to the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. Hold back the tears as you say farewell to the week that was and share hugs with your newfound safari sidekicks. Keen for more adventures? Chat to your guide about arranging an onwards journey.



MEALS:

- Breakfast

MEALS

Your included meals are detailed in the 'Included Essentials' section of this document.

While on the road, you will be provided with three meals a day (unless otherwise stated). African Overland trips are participation based, which means you will be expected to do your bit for the team by helping with cooking and cleaning up duties. In some places, we will be able to go out for a meal.

If you have any dietary requirements, we'll make every effort to cater to your needs – as long as you advise your travel agent or Customer Service Consultant when you book. You can also make a note of dietary requirements in the Topdeck app when you check-in.

PLEASE NOTE: Although we'll do everything in our power to cater to your needs, we cannot guarantee this will be possible in every restaurant we visit. We also cannot cater for tastes or dislikes, as most of our included evening meals feature a set menu.

OTHER INFORMATION

TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



YOUR SAFETY

NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

REMEMBER: if you are found in possession of drugs, not only do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!

- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and- tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

RESPECT ON THE ROAD

RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates . The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

TIPPING

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it! (As long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is.)

- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes
- 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- 4 shirts/T-shirts
- 2 sweaters/jumpers
- Smart casual evening wear
- 1 rainproof jacket
- 1 warm jacket
- Underwear and socks

- Swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Insect repellent
- Conversion plug
- Padlock
- Reusable water bottle
- Sleeping bag (for all camping and Sun & Safari passengers)



THAT'S IT!