

Four alternatives to gorilla trekking in Rwanda

By [Mareike Pietzsch](#)

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May 2017 spelled bad news for tourists intending to travel to Rwanda to see the gorillas. Rwanda has doubled the cost of its gorilla permits from \$750 to a \$1,500 - that's about R 19,300. While this is all in the name of conservation, some travellers to East Africa might find this price a little too steep.



Rwanda targets wealthy tourists with new gorilla permit fees

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Yet there are still alternatives for travellers who want to see gorillas in the wild - and tick this amazing experience off their bucket list.

1. Uganda gorillas



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The most popular alternative is going gorilla trekking in neighbouring Uganda. "In Uganda, the gorilla permits are \$600 per person and during certain months they're only \$450 per person. Just remember that this price is per hike or per day, which doesn't guarantee – much like Rwanda – that you see any gorillas, although the chances of seeing these incredible creatures is extremely likely," says Erika Costa, product manager at Giltedge.

2. Gorilla viewing at Odzala, Congo



©Odzala Discovery Camps

Western Lowland gorillas are the lesser-known relatives of the mountain gorillas in Rwanda and Uganda. “They are similar to their mountain cousins but more active and like climbing trees,” says Suzanne Bayly-Coupe, owner of Classic Portfolio.

Of the three habituated groups, two groups are easy to reach within a short 8km walk from the lodge through the lowlands. This means that there is no vehicle, no entrance gate, and there are no mountains to climb. This is perfect for travellers who are not super fit or avid hikers.

Odzala Ngaga Camp is a leading eco-lodge, and home to the research team who interact with the guests and give guided walks. “With 25 years in the field, without which the gorilla conservation would be in peril, the research team is fanatic about gorilla survival and their passion is inspiring,” says Bayly-Coupe.

3. Monkey trekking at Nyungwe Forest Lodge, Rwanda



©Giltedge/Nyungwe Forest Lodge

[Nyungwe Forest Lodge](#) in Rwanda has different kinds of monkey trekking as an activity on offer. Guests are able to choose from trekking different species such as chimpanzee, grey-cheeked mangabey, black and white colobus monkeys, blue monkeys and golden monkeys. The lodge, part of the five-star One & Only portfolio, is nestled in the largest mountain rainforest in Africa, which is home to over 13 different primate species.

4. Chimpanzee trekking at Greystoke Mahale, Tanzania



©Giltedge/Nomad Tanzania

Greystoke Mahale, set on Lake Tanganyikan in western Tanzania, is a great place for up-close encounters with chimpanzees. There are about 1,700 chimps living in the remote Mahale Mountains National Park, but visitors will only get to see the 60-strong Mimikere group, who are well habituated to humans.

Run by Nomad Tanzania, the lodge offers chimpanzee trekking in the mountain forests. “We watch through our guests’ eyes as they see these primates for the first time. After tracking them, for an hour or two, or more, we find them. We sit quietly on the forest floor and watch them in their natural environment,” says Amanda Corse from Nomad.

ABOUT MAREIKE PIETZSCH

I am part of the fantastic marketing team at Giltedge Africa - a brand that is defining luxury travel for Africa, continuously on the lookout to improve its product offering for international travellers. I write content about the tourism offerings in Southern Africa, East Africa and the Indian Ocean islands, new travel trends, sustainable tourism and multi-generational travel.
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