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AFRICA | ASIA | SOUTH AMERICA | PACIFIC

TOURING

BWINDI



CLASSIC BWINDI IMPENETRABLE — FOREST TOURS —

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ABOUT BWINDI IMPENETRABLE FOREST

There is no denying that the primary purpose for visiting Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is to visit its gorilla population.

A marvelous, once-in-a-lifetime experience, the renown of gorilla trekking is more than justified. Yet to visit Uganda's southwestern border for this alone is an opportunity missed.

The verdant jungle cascades from the mountainside and into the valleys, offering numerous less challenging walks and an abundance of flora and fauna to observe.

Here too, you can find the fascinating Batwa people; an indigenous pigmy tribe often referred to as 'the keepers of the forest'. Living in harmony with the surrounding ecosystem, their ways have changed little over the centuries, and they still subsist on a diet of gathered plants and small game hunted with traditional handcrafted bows and arrows.

The Batwa aren't the only residents of this lush and fertile region, and village visits will uncover arts and crafts, traditional cuisine and an endearingly harmonious way of life in the shadow of the mountains.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- In 1992, the Batwa were evicted during Bwindi's annexation for conservation, threatening their existence
- A decade later, US missionaries saw their plight, purchased land & re-established the tribe
- In addition to its famous gorillas, Bwindi contains several primate species including chimpanzees, forest elephants, antelope & a spectrum of birdlife
- Beyond the Batwa, Bwindi life is a combination of tradition & contemporary, but crafts & ceremonies have been upheld for centuries

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CLASSIC BATWA CULTURAL — EXPERIENCE —

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DISCOVER THE BATWA PYGMIES OF BWINDI

In 2001, U.S. missionaries Scott and Carol Kellermann gave the Batwa people hope on the brink of extinction. Purchasing land and establishing a school, hospital and housing, the Kellermanns preserved this ancient culture for generations to come.

This full-day excursion will allow you a glimpse of their traditional ways.

Begin with a walk through the forested lowlands, your guide informing you of how the Batwa have sustained themselves in this region. You will have the opportunity to see how they hunt using handcrafted weapons and enjoy an archery lesson.

From the forest, your guide will accompany you to a traditional Batwa homestead where the women of the tribe will exhibit how food is prepared and cooked. You will discover the ingredients and methods used and even be able to sample some authentic dishes.

Lastly, the village's medicine man will share with you the secrets of the 'forest pharmacy', illuminating the medicinal properties of the local flora. Your trip will conclude with tribe members regaling you with ancient legends and traditional songs.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- See how the Batwa were saved from extinction
- Explore the forests with a Batwa guide
- Sample delicious traditional dishes prepared before you by the women of the tribe
- Learn how regional plants have been used for centuries to cure common illnesses & more exotic ailments
- Try your hand at shooting a handmade bow & arrow
- Listen to ancient spiritual tales & vibrant songs

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CLASSIC BWINDI WALKING TOURS

MUNYAGA RIVER TRAIL

The Munyaga River trail lies outside the national park. It takes roughly 30 minutes, starting from the Buhoma road, following the Bezenga River to its confluence with Munyaga, before returning to Buhoma road. Birding is optimal in the early morning and late afternoon.

THE WATERFALL TRAIL

This is the best walk for spotting primate species. Lasting three hours, the trail traces an abandoned road before crossing the MUYAGA River several times on the ascent to a 110-foot (33m) waterfall. Bathing is permitted and often pleasant after the relatively tough hike, so be sure to pack swim wear and a towel.

MUZABAJIRO LOOP TRAIL & RUSHARA HILL TRAIL

Both walks are about three hours in duration, offering stunning views across to the Virunga Mountains emerging from the mists and low-lying clouds.

IVY RIVER WALK

This is the longest of the walks available, with a duration of eight hours. The walk leads to the Ivy River on the southern boundary of the park, providing opportunities to see monkeys, duikers and a variety of birds.

**All walks are accompanied by an expert and informative guide.*

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Take a short birdwatching stroll along the Munyaga River
- View native primate species, including baboons, Colobus & L'Hoest's monkeys
- Take a dip beneath the cool waters of a towering waterfall
- Take in stunning views of the Virunga mountain range
- Spot antelope species, monkeys & a plethora of birdlife
- Enjoy the tales & knowledge imparted by your expert guide

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CLASSIC COMMUNITY TOURS

VILLAGE COMMUNITY WALK

This is a wonderful opportunity to immerse yourself in the Ugandan lifestyle. You will meet with locals of many generations and see the way of life in this developing country. A highlight of this cultural excursion is a visit to a traditional medicine man from the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo. He will show you how bananas are used to make children's drinks, beer and also utilized in local spirits. You will have the chance to interact with the local Batwa community who will show you how they incorporate dance into daily activities.

BWINDI COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Bwindi Community Health Center, or as it is affectionately known, Dr Scott's Clinic, was started by Scott and Carol Kellermann in 2003. BCHC provides different levels of health care for people from the nearby parishes. BCHC has a reputation for high quality, and sometimes people travel for many days by foot to reach the health center. Altogether, BCHC is relied upon by more than 40,000 people in the region. Visitors to BCHC can talk to doctors and patients and observe the excellent, life-saving work undertaken here.

CRAFT SHOPPING

Just a short walk away from your property, Buhoma village has many craft shops and stalls that you can visit. Numerous handcrafted items can be purchased, from timber carvings to textiles and jewelry. Please expect to haggle as it is somewhat customary in Uganda and can be a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Explore the local community on foot with your guide
- Experience village life & enjoy cultural performances
- See the amazing work performed by healthcare workers
- Talk to locals about the positive impact of the project
- View the skilled handicrafts of local villagers
- Haggle for a bargain to take home with you

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