



SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTURES APRIL TO NOVEMBER 2016

16 DAYS FROM **£1,999**PP
*18 DAYS FROM **£3,499**PP

A tour taking you into the very heart of South Africa, exploring its unique history, amazing wildlife, truly breath-taking scenery and vibrant cities, all complemented by its excellent cuisine and wines.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Return flights from London Heathrow
- Staying in excellent quality three and four-star hotels with breakfast, two lunches and three dinners
- Full day guided safari in the Kruger National Park
- Tour of the legendary Zulu War battlefields of Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift
- Internal flight to the stunning 'Garden Route'
- Visit Hermanus, for the world's finest on-shore whale watching (dependant on season)
- Enjoy a scenic drive through the beautiful small country of Swaziland
- Stay in the heart of the beautiful Western Cape's Winelands, experiencing a cellar tour and tasting at a 300-year old wine estate
- Visits to the Cape of Good Hope and the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens
- Visit to Johannesburg's Apartheid Museum
- Stay three nights in cosmopolitan Cape Town – dominated by the instantly recognisable Table Mountain
- Option to spend a night in a tented safari camp, experiencing a bushwalk with an experienced ranger
- Escorted by our experienced tour manager

* On selected dates experience one of the world's most luxurious train journeys on Rovos Rail's three-day trip from Cape Town to Pretoria

FOR A BROCHURE, CALL **01224 338004**
quote **SP444** or email brochures@sundayposttravel.com
TO BOOK, CALL **01283 742300**
quote **Sunday Post**
OR VISIT
www.sundayposttravel.com

Organised by Riviera Travel ABTA V4744 / ATOL 3430 Protected. Subject to availability. Single room supplements apply. Per person based on two people sharing a twin room. Additional entrance costs may apply. Image used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. Aberdeen Journals and the DC Thomson group of companies would like to contact you about new offers and services we think may be of interest to you. By providing your contact details and email address we assume that we can contact you by post and email.



in10

Up close and fun in Uganda with the gorillas

Sundy Post columnist Lorraine take a trip to the African rainforest



NOTHING prepares you for your first close encounter with a mountain gorilla. I was at the head of our group trekking through the wonderfully named "Bwindi Impenetrable Forest" in Uganda and we had stopped for a breather when a young male gorilla just sauntered along the rough track in front of me. It was so astonishing I was rooted to the spot, couldn't speak and was too busy actually enjoying the moment to take a photograph. He swept past me and casually sat down and began eating leaves while ignoring our enchanted group of eight hot, sweaty and deliriously-happy trekkers. This was really a trip of a lifetime. Like most people I have always admired these majestic creatures and was enthralled by the story of wildlife pioneer Diane Fossey whose story was told in the movie *Gorillas In The Mist*. Half of all the 880 mountain gorillas left in the world are found in Uganda. The others are in neighbouring Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Civil wars and poaching devastated their number, but in Bwindi the incredible Rangers, guides and conservationists are doing a remarkable job of keeping them safe. Local people realise that tourists like us bring much-needed revenue to the country and are right behind their efforts. There are now around 400 mountain gorillas in Bwindi Forest, made up of 12 families and the number has been increasing every year. There are strict limitations on visitors and no more than eight people are allowed in each group, which means it's all very civilised and there's no jostling for the best photo. These mountain gorillas do not survive in captivity. The gorillas you see in zoos are from the lowlands but none of these creatures should be behind bars and seeing them in the wild is humbling and magical. You can't go too close, and if they come to you then you need to slowly back away – not because of any danger from these vegetarian gentle giants but human beings are full of bugs, germs and diseases that could prove fatal to them. No one with a cough or a cold is allowed on

the trek as the wellbeing of the animals is of the utmost importance. You need to be reasonably fit to go trekking and be happy roughing it a bit. You might very lucky and encounter a family after less than an hour's walking, but you have to be prepared to hike in tough terrain for a lot longer. Mountain gorilla families make "nests" every night and then move to a fresh part of the forest every day. Make sure you hire a "porter". Not just to carry water and your packed lunch, but to take your hand and expertly help you through the rainforest when it gets steep and slippery. It's the best 15 quid you will ever spend, and as all the porters are local you are helping them to make a living and feed their families. Gorillas have a distinctive smell – a bit like spicy, musky, balsamic vinegar and as long as you are quiet, respectful and don't make any sudden movements they will tolerate your presence. They do, understandably, have limited reserves of patience and get a bit fed up with us staring at them and taking endless photos and selfies, so after an hour you need to leave them in peace. Our accommodation "Mahogany Springs" on the edge of the forest

was luxurious enough to be extremely comfortable, but retain enough rough edges to ensure you have that wilderness spirit of adventure experience. That's not an easy thing to achieve but British owner Barrie Gotch, who came to this part of the world on holiday and fell in love with it, has managed with aplomb. The staff couldn't be more helpful and after a tough day's trekking I can heartily recommend a massage on your private balcony. After two amazing days we headed back to Entebbe airport in a tiny plane which gave us a chance to see some of the wonderful scenery. You can understand why Winston Churchill called Uganda the "Pearl of Africa". We had a fascinating three hour jeep journey to "Wildwaters Lodge" on an island near the town of Jinja at the source of the Nile. Our own private tented accommodation looked over the thunderous rapids and was the height of luxury. There was even a bath on the terrace where I wallowed while sipping cold fizz and drinking in the views and the incredible bird life, feeling like a spoiled princess.



10 TIPS FOR Gorilla trekking

- 1 When you pack – take half your stuff out and leave it at home. You just need casual clothes and they can be washed at camp (apart from knickers). Dress for comfort.
- 2 Take stout walking shoes. It's tough slippery terrain and you need to have the right footwear. Wear them on the plane to avoid taking up room in your small soft bag which ideally should be taken on as hand luggage.
- 3 A hat. When the sun comes out it's fierce. Remember you are on the equator and need protection from those rays.
- 4 A small camera. Your phone will do. No point in carrying anything too technical as you will miss the moment. Small binoculars are also useful. Do NOT use a flash when taking photos. The gorillas hate that.
- 5 Your common sense. Don't shout, yell or stomp around. Be calm and considerate for fellow trekkers as well as the gorillas.
- 6 I'd recommend thick socks and gaiters to avoid biting ants and gloves are useful when holding on to rocks, roots and branches.
- 7 A light rainproof jacket (it's not called a rainforest for nothing).
- 8 Good solid walking sticks to help you negotiate the terrain are essential but provided by the lodge. Make sure you take one and DO hire a porter.
- 9 Have a basic medical kit with aspirins, anti-histamines, blister plasters, antiseptic cream, insect repellent, etc.
- 10 Drink plenty of water. You need to keep hydrated in the humid heat.

FACT BOX

Fly with KLM from **£500**.
Cost of this trip gorillasafarcompany.com
TEL **01327 437 050**
Travelling in high season 2016: from **£2,555**.
UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY website: <http://www.ugandawildlife.org/>
Gorilla permits should be purchased through a tour operator.
They cost: \$450 in low season (April, May & November)
\$600 in high season (all other months)

