



Gorilla Highlands Silverchef 2018

Invitation to Network & Compete

(La version française de ce document est disponible sur www.gorillahighlands.com/silverchef)

Gorilla Highlands

Background

The Gorilla Highlands (GH) initiative is a project to globally brand and promote the transboundary region shared by Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Instead of a short stop-over to see mountain gorillas, we want to position it as a region that has a lot to offer and should be a destination by itself. GH uses innovative solutions to tell the world a positive story about this part of Africa and bring about economic development specifically targeting the poor.

The main approach of GH is to bring the private sector of the three countries together, create business linkages and personal networks. The central annual event of the initiative is the Gorilla Highlands Silverchef cooking competition (www.gorillahighlands.com/silverchef), an opportunity for all GH partners to meet their colleagues from the tourism, media and development fraternities while sampling excellent food.

To chefs, GH Silverchef means an event to both challenge them creatively and instil confidence. They learn how to benchmark and adapt to different situations and environments. We give them unprecedented attention by providing a platform to present their skills and familiarisation trips that take them out of their kitchens. They respond with cooperation and camaraderie that makes the event less of a competition and more of a learning experience for every chef involved.

For the Gorilla Highlands region, this is a chance to showcase the quality and variety of her rich food, unearthing culinary excellence that may well surprise its visitors.

GH Silverchef has been taking place since 2015, inviting chefs from an ever widening geographical area. We started in Kisoro (2015) with competitors from southwestern Uganda, in Kabale (2016) we added Rwanda's districts of Burera and Musanze, and at Lake Bunyonyi (2017) everyone from Gisenyi to Queen Elizabeth National Park was invited.

The organisers of the event are MYL Holdings (a PR company from Kigali, Rwanda) and Edirisa (a social enterprise focused on cultural tourism from Lake Bunyonyi, Uganda).



Spot gorilla's buiten de gebaande paden in Oeganda | 12

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ゴリラが稼ぐ 貴重な外貨
 最貴国・ルワンダの自然保護の今
 (Japanese text describing gorilla tourism and conservation in Rwanda)

Gorilla Highlands featured in a Dutch and a Japanese magazine

Lake Bunyonyi: The heartbeat of gorilla highlands

Tourists cruise Lake Bunyonyi. PHOTOS BY ERIC NTALO.

EXPLORE. Seeping in Kiga culture and the Lake Bunyonyi wonders is refreshing, writes **ERIC NTALO.**

The view out of the window was picturesque as the bus climbed, inclined pleasant valleys and lush terraced highlands. I held my breath in awe. We drew nearer to Kabale town, about 420 kms from Kampala. Approximately a seven-hour drive. My ultimate destination was Lake Bunyonyi, eight kilometres off the main road in Kabale. Lake Bunyonyi boasts 29 scenic islands surrounded by a protective ring of highlands in South-west Uganda. It stands at 2,952ft, hence the second deepest lake in Africa after Lake Tanganyika. It was christened Bunyonyi, a local word to mean numerous little birds which justifies the 200 plus bird species recorded there. The birds such as pelicans, sunbirds, fly-catchers, grey crowned crane, and Pied Kingfisher. Lake Bunyonyi is one of the attractions in the Southwestern region that an initiative of tourism and media stakeholders has turned into

a must-visit beyond the famous endangered Mountain Gorillas. It explores the cultural experiences surrounding the the custodians of the great apes such as the Bakiga, Bafumbira and Batwa "pygmies" living on a hill overlooking Echuya forest, who are indigenous to the area. Southwest Uganda, Northern Rwanda and Eastern DR Congo have been branded as the Gorilla Highlands. Amidst the security threats in Congo, this informal association of people is willing to

Did you know?
 Gorilla Highlands markets and promotes hotel businesses in the Bunyonyi area. "It is not about an individual business, but as a region and we all derive a fair share of tourists", says Charles Kalyango, manager Bird Nest lodge. "The initiative has diversified the tourism products.



Bushera is a Kigezi traditional drink made out of fermented sorghum.

tell the African story and unlock the tourism potentials of DR Congo. "We want Gorilla Highlands to be a bucket list destination," says Mihar Logar, team leader of the initiative. Logar hosted a boot camp at the Edirisa. Edirisa is a social enterprise that organises canoe treks on the hippo and crocodile-free Lake Bunyonyi with an interest in culturally sensitive economic development of remote communities that have few other opportunities. "Just like a window, we want the world to see Africa and breathe Africa. This region has two shutters, one outside, one inside; we hope that the people see it from all sides," he says. Every dugout canoe made from eucalyptus wood had at least three tourists equipped with paddles and life jackets; none of us could risk life on the deepest lake. In less than an hour, our next stop was Bushara Island, a paradise of botany, which was once home to doctors working at Bwama leprosy colony. Andrew Tusingwire, the tour guide, introduced us to a garden of

special and rare plants. "We use eucalyptus tree for electric poles, paddles and the leaves while boiled to cure cough," he said. He further showed us the black wattle used to control soil erosion, ferns used by the Batwa as blankets and other herbs that relieve high blood pressure. The climatic conditions in the gorilla highlands are unpredictable, but always turn cooler overnight. During day, the weather is unsettled, cloudy with abrupt rainfall.

Sipping from Kigezi
 After an early morning hike to Kyabahainga Village, the hospitable Bakiga welcomed us with *obushera*, a local drink made of fermented sorghum. Traditionally, men are served the drink in half calabashes unlike in the changing times where it is served in mugs. Twenty minutes away is a homestead with a mud-wattle house roofed with corrugated iron sheets. In the compound, are sheep and goats tethered

Gorilla Highlands initiative presented in Uganda's Sunday Monitor



Gorilla Highlands Silverchef, 4th Edition

Hosted in Rwanda: After three Ugandan hosts, the Marriott in Kigali will be the GH Silverchef venue for 2018.

Date: 28-29 April 2018

National Catchment Area: The Marriott's many kitchens will allow us to expand the number of competitors to 16, and with that our coverage. Chefs from any restaurant or accommodation provider in Rwanda, Uganda and the DRC are invited, the only condition being that they are nationals of the East African Community or the DRC.

Tougher Challenge: After three years of supplying competitors with lists of available ingredients — allowing advance preparation for the event — we are moving to the next level. At GH Silverchef 2018 ingredients will be secret and force chefs to think fast and show their creativity.

Program: The invitation-only competition day will take place on Saturday 28 April in two shifts. Each GH Silverchef competitor will be allocated to one of the shifts and will have to prepare a two-course meal for five people. Saturday tasting will be joined by especially invited tourism and media professionals from all the three countries, who will also enjoy an internal GH networking event.

On Sunday 29 April 2018, following familiarisation trips for GH Silverchef competitors and guests, the public part of the event will take place at 1pm. A silver hat for the winner, quality cooking/successful participation certificates and prizes will be given out, a video of the competition will be presented and the special edition of the Gorilla Highlands Pocket Guide booklet will be unveiled.



How to Attend GH Silverchef 2018

Chefs: The competition is open to both representatives of hotels/restaurants and chefs wishing to compete independently. Candidates have to apply on www.gorillahighlands.com/silverchef by 9 March 2018; if the number exceeds available slots, the organisers will make the selection by 1 April. Competition fees of USD 200 (includes two nights at the Kigali Marriott, meals, cooking ingredients and the Sunday fam trip) have to be cleared by 14 April.

Owners/senior managers from tourism/media/development/government sectors: If you would like to attend the networking and tasting event on Saturday 28 April and get an in-depth look into the Gorilla Highlands initiative, write to mylbrands@gmail.com for an invite. There are no fees involved and we will do our best to get you accommodation and other discounts.

Everybody else: The Sunday Gorilla Highlands buffet (29 April at 1pm) is meant for the general public. If you are interested in sampling the food and getting to know the Gorilla Highlands initiative, standard Marriott brunch charges apply (RWF 25,000; includes soft drinks, live music, swimming pool access, kids' sports and bouncing castle activities).

More information: mylbrands@gmail.com, +250 781 462 284, +256 776 558 123



SILVER CHEF COMPETITION

Posted on 2nd December 2015 by volcanoessafaris



Gorilla Highlands hosted a Silver Chef Competition at the Travellers Rest Hotel in Kisoro. The cook out had chefs from Bahoma Community Haven Lodge, Bunyonyi Overland Resort, Cephas Inn, Chameleon Hill Lodge, Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge, the Coffee Pot, Gorilla

Valley Lodge, Mount Gahinga Lodge, Mahogany Springs, and the host venue Travellers Rest competing against each other to win a Silver Hat Trophy.



The chefs were allowed to bring their own spices and wine. All basic ingredients were given to them on arrival in the kitchen for them to prepare starter, a main course and dessert.

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SILVERCHEF COMPETITION 2016 RAISES CULINARY STANDARDS

GH Silverchef 2015, 2016 and 2017 in Rwandan, Kenyan and global media