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The Daily Traveler: How to Pack to Climb a Volcano in the Congo

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How to Pack to Climb a Volcano in the Congo

I'm so excited to be traveling with some Kenyan friends to the Democratic Republic of Congo to climb two active volcanoes. We'll be sleeping on the rim of the 11,380-foot Nyiragongo volcano; to get there means a five-hour hike that starts in lush forest 12 miles outside of the town of Goma, continues in a steady rise over lava fields with a steep incline at the top of the caldera, from where we'll have an awesome view of the world's largest lava lake, which glows so brightly that it can be seen from neighboring Rwanda at night. We're also going to hike the lower slope of Nyamulagira, a volcano that has been erupting from a side fissure since last November. Some of the gear I'm bringing:

A new Osprey men's Stratos 24-liter capacity daypack, frame size small. A friend who climbed Kilimanjaro recommended this pack to me because of its sweat-free back netting and overall well-balanced construction; it's big enough for cameras, a change of dry clothes, water, snacks, and rain gear. I would have bought the women's version, but it only came in blue and purple—colors you can't take to countries where there are tsetse flies, because those awful biting bloodsucking creatures are attached to those hues. (Osprey: please think of your African clients!) I'm not using a bigger backpack because there will be porters carrying our tents and cooking equipment.

