



Nature & Cultural Safari Specialists

Exceptional Natural History and Cultural experience of Uganda

Preliminary

This outstanding natural history and culturally-oriented safari was designed to provide a grand overview of the wonders of Uganda, offering travelers a chance to experience the full spectrum of its fascinating diversity. Experience one of Uganda's most important and renowned destinations on this exciting tour - the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, a foremost natural history destination offering visitors the chance to watch and photograph unique species of wildlife like the endangered mountain gorillas and albertine rift endemic species of birds; observe gorilla behaviours not normally seen including courtship rituals, nest building and the nursing of the young...

Uganda Natural & Cultural History Overview

The incomparable mix of attractions ranging from natural and cultural, to social lifestyle, makes Uganda a country of superlatives. The second longest river in the world begins in Uganda's Lake Victoria; the world's most endangered primates, the mountain Gorillas are found in the southwestern mountain forests of the country; and the most diverse conservation area in terms of habitat and species in Africa, i.e. Queen Elizabeth National Park, is found in Uganda. In addition, this country, which is approximately the size of the state of Oregon, contains over 10% of the bird species in the whole world, as well as some of the oldest and most sophisticated cultures of the African continent represented by over 50 tribes each with a different language, traditions and beliefs.

Ugandan landscapes were partly a result of extensive volcanic activity 12 million years ago that uplifted the land by around 1300m and formed the great mountain peaks. Further developments of the rift valley have been marked by violent tectonic activity. The icy peaks of Mount Rwenzori are remnants of once extensive glaciations during the ice ages.

The people of Uganda are classified into; the Nilotic speakers who entered Uganda from the north in Ethiopia and parts of western Kenya. They occupy most the northern, eastern including Karamoja and Teso regions. The Bantu speaking, who are believed to have migrated from the south in Tanzania, occupy most of the central Uganda, and southwestern part of the country. The Nilohamites occupy the north western corner of the country; popularly known as the West Nile. They are believed to have migrated from Sudan. These migrations occurred at the end of the first century up to the beginning of C.E. 1000

The Tour

You will start with Entebbe International Airport – Uganda’s only gateway that ushers you along the Papyrus fringed Lake Victoria.

Historically, on day of 4th July 1976 during President Idi Amin reign in Uganda, Israeli commandos rescued 100 hostages, mostly Israelis or Jews, who were held by pro-Palestinian hijackers at Entebbe Airport in Uganda. Ugandan soldiers and the hijackers were taken completely by surprise when three Hercules transport planes landed after a 2,500-mile trip from Israel. About 200 elite troops ran out and stormed this airport building.

From the airport, our first tour will be at the Kigungu fishing village on the shores of Lake Victoria, a point where the first Christian missionaries entered Uganda in 1879. Continue to a point where these missionaries camped and left there a peg that grew into a tree that is still standing up to today.

While in the central, we will rake through historical sites of Uganda’s capital city - Kampala including the Independence Monument; Fort Lugar; the East Africa’s oldest museum; Baha’i Temple - a spiritual home to the continent’s Baha’i adherents to a rather obscure faith founded by the Persian mystic Baha’u’llah in the 1850s, the only place of worship of its kind in the entire Africa. We shall also take a tour to Kasubi Royal Tombs – UNESCO’s World Heritage Site and the Uganda Martyrs Shrine, Namugongo.

Leaving the central, we shall drive up to Fort Portal area (town discovered by Sir Gerald Portal) - an area of volcanic significance. Here we shall start by touring the stalactites and stalagmites and then the Royal Palace of the king of Toro Kingdom, the youngest ever crowned king in the whole world. We shall do chimp tracking in Kibale forest as we enjoy an array of other primate and bird species in this forest.

After here, a short drive brings us to Africa's most diverse national conservation area – the Queen Elizabeth NP where we shall tour one of the salt mining lakes, take a Launch Cruise along the famous Kazinga channel as we watch the abundant wildlife in the park.

Our adventure becomes more fascinating when we later transfer to the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park for the world's endangered mountain gorillas, where you will be in for a treat of a 'once in a life time' activity, gorilla tracking. It is rather beyond human imagination to stare into the eyes of these apes at the closest distance possible as they wary a glance at our surprise visit in their natural habitat. We shall too be introduced to the lifestyle and culture of the Batwa pygmies as we visit their homesteads around Buhoma. Next, we shall transfer to Kisoro town and meet with Bafumbira crafts women in the market town, and explore the archaeology site (Garama Cave) of the Batwa in Mugahinga National Park. We shall have one day to explore and contemplate on the life of the Batwa in that cave.

From Kisoro we return to Kampala and later head to Murchison Falls National Park; famous for the Murchison falls where the Nile River is forced into a 6.7 m gap to form the most powerful water flow on earth. We will spend 3 days exploring other treasures of this park and later take a tour to the untapped and Uganda's best kept secret, the Karamoja region. This area hosts the most scenic park in Africa, the Kidepo Valley National Park. As we enjoy its captivating scenery and unique wildlife, we will also tour the homesteads of the formally known hostile tribe in the entire sub-Saharan African, the Manyattas.

Our adventure concludes with an entertainment night of the splendid Ndere troupe back in Kampala, showcasing the dances of over 40 traditional tribes in Uganda and other parts of Africa.

Accommodation facilities in this trip are selected according to clients' requirements. A few that have been indicated can be substituted.

Detailed day-by-day Itinerary

Day 1 Travelers will arrive this day and be assisted by our representative to check-in at the hotel located near the Entebbe terminal.

Day 2 We leave our hotel this morning at 8:00am and drive to the lake shore on Kigungu Landing Site. Although this was later turned into a fishing village, located in Entebbe at the shores of Lake Victoria, it was the first point where the first Catholic missionaries landed on February 17th 1879. Every year on February 17, Catholic faithful from all over the country and beyond make a pilgrimage to Kigungu to commemorate the arrival of the two French missionaries, Father Siméon

Lourdel and Brother Amans Delmas. Little did they know that years later, the movement they started would still be stronger and the biggest religious denomination in Uganda.

The place is well maintained, has big, nice looking and lovely grounds where we shall relax and get entertained. It is protected as the original centre for research on the Catholic religion. There is a lot of fishing and water transportation activities. Here we shall experience how a local Ugandan survives entirely on the fishing activities. The shoreline is equally good for waterfowls like the white-winged black tern; the grey-headed, black-headed and lesser black-backed gulls; the long-tailed and great cormorants; the common, marsh, curlew, and green sandpipers; the green shank, the ruff etc.

We will spend a couple of hours here and later drive back heading to Kisubi, to a point where these missionaries camped for a night before being arrested by the King of Buganda by then. Where they set up the tents, they left a peg that grew into a big tree which is still standing up to today. With this regard, the area has been developed by building a school and a church to commemorate that incident. We will finish here at about time for lunch and then head straight to Kampala for lunch.

After lunch we will embark on a Kampala city tour taking you to places like the Uganda crafts village, the Uganda national theater, the independence monument and the Nakasero green market that has a variety of locally grown fresh foods. Alternatively, we tour the Baha'i Temple (depending on the clients' interests).

We will retire late this evening and spend our night in Kampala.

Day 3 Today, we shall start early after our breakfast at 7:00am, drive 12km east of Kampala and tour the Namugongo Martyrs Shrine – a well established place of execution in pre-colonial Buganda is remembered today for the massacre that took place on 3rd June 1886 on the orders of Kabaka (King) Mwanga after he got information that some of his subjects were baptized by the unknown adopted faith. They were imprisoned here for several days while a large pyre was prepared. They were bound in reed mats, thrown onto the fire and roasted alive! We will spend a couple of hours passing through the traces of that mystery.

Later, we return to Kampala and tour the UNESCO's World Heritage Site - Kasubi Royal Tombs. Originally the palace of Buganda King Mutesa I, Kasubi tombs was constructed in 1882. It contains fascinating collection of royal artifacts, ranging from traditional musical instruments, weapons,

shields and fetishes to exotic gifts donated by Queen Victoria. While here, we shall be engaged in learning about the ancient traditional norms of the Baganda tribe and their history.

From Kasubi, we will drive a very short distance to Fort Lugard in Old Kampala. This is a point where Frederic Lugard, a British Commissioner by then, inverted the first flag of the IBEACO (Imperial British East African Company) in 1890. The area is dotted by the old colonial era buildings of Asian design, and houses the biggest Muslim mosque in the entire East Africa, which was formally the Uganda museum site before it was transferred to its present location.

We shall wind up our day later this evening by taking a tour at the Uganda Museum. This is the oldest and the best museum in East Africa rooted in the ethnographic collection first exhibited in 1905 in a small Greek temple near Lugard's fort. Formally established in 1908 and relocated to Kamwokya in 1954. The museum was initially known to Baganda as Nyumba ya Mayembe (house of fetishes) and its exhibits were believed to bestow supernatural powers on the colonial administration. Most aspects of Uganda history are displayed here.

Overnight in Kampala

Day 4 After breakfast at 8:00am, we shall start our journey driving to the west towards Fort Portal area for about 4 hours arriving in time for lunch. After lunch we shall start our exploration with the Nyakasura Hills where we shall have a short excursion to the Stalactites and Stalagmites.

According to the present Batoro (tribes men of the region), It is believed that these were formerly breasts (Amabere in the local language) of the ancient princess (the beautiful girl called Nyamwiru daughter of Bukuku the Chwezi King by then) of the Chwezi kingdom who was punished by cutting off her breasts after she misbehaved; hence the name Amabere ga Nyinamwiru. According to this legend, after cutting off the breasts, they grew into bigger scenic rocks dripping with a milky substance, forming the Nyakasura historical caves.

If we have time, after driving back to Fort Portal Town, we will take a trip to the most beautiful and strategically located king's palace in the entire sub-Saharan Africa. This is the home of the current King (Omukama) of the Batoro, *Rukirabasajja Oyo Nyimba Kabamba Iguru Rukidi the IV*. The king was crowned at the age of three and a half years after the mysterious death of his father, the late King Kaboyo in 1995. In April 2010 he was officially recognized to take over the responsibilities of the kingdom after turning 18. At the palace, we will be guided by one of the servants and shown the ancient artifacts and numerous materials used by the former kings of the kingdom.

Depending on the time we have, we may decide to sleep in town, or drive towards Kibale National Park and spend a night at our lodge nearby to prepare for the next day's activity, chimpanzee Tracking.

Day 5 Chimpanzee Tracking in Kibale Forest National Park.

Kibale's major attraction is the opportunity to track habituated Chimpanzees. These delightful apes are more closely related to humans than to any other living creature, and they are tremendously entertaining to watch as they squabble and play in fruiting trees.

We assemble in the morning after our breakfast, for briefing as you prepare for chimp tracking. The movement of the chimps depends upon the availability of food and hopefully they won't be too far away! This park is also famous for hosting the highest number primates in Uganda (13 primate species) including the Beautiful I' Hoest Monkey, black and white colobus monkey, blue monkey etc. As we track the chimps, we are likely to meet some of these and many other forest inhabitants. For example, the Great Blue Turaco, Papyrus and Black-headed Gonoleks are some of the stunning birds in the park.

If we are successful with the chimpanzee trek early enough, we shall take a walk to the Bigodi wetland sanctuary in the afternoon. The communities here have established a 4km trail along the edge of the forest in the wetland where visitors are treated with an array of forest and wetland species of birds and other primates.

Day 6 From Kibale, we drive further southwest, about 120 km to Queen Elizabeth National Park.

Queen Elizabeth National park is one of nature's last frontiers, a richly endowed wilderness covering 1978sqkm covering part of the western arm of the Great Rift Valley in western Uganda. It is a patchwork of ecological niches — explosion craters of volcanic activity that happened about 5000 years ago, fresh water rivers and lakes, dense tropical rain forests, open savannahs with acacia woodland pockets — containing the earth's greatest concentration of tropical fauna including more than 611 species of birds, 260 species of fish, 80 species of mammals and 1,700 species of plants, and over 300 butterfly species.

As we travel towards the park, we will stop over at the Queen's pavilion where we shall have an excellent panoramic view of some of the parks explosion craters, some filled with lovely lakes, and the Rwenzori Mountain Ranges across the rift valley flow. The Queen's Pavilion stands nearby at the northern entrance to the Crater Lake drive. Historically this temporary shelter at this site hosted H.M. Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh.

We shall proceed to the Mweya Peninsula and check in at the superb Mweya Safari Lodge where we shall have our lunch and later go for a Launch Cruise along the Kazinga Channel.

This 40km-long channel is a natural, narrow neck of water that connects Lakes George and Edward. It provides the park's prime wildlife spectacle. Its shoreline attracts large numbers of water birds, mammals and reptiles year round. Among the wildlife you are likely to encounter here are large congregations of Hippo, waterbuck, crocodiles, elephant, buffalo, giant forest hog etc. birds include African Skimmer, Striated Heron, African Spoonbill, African Crake, Water Thick-knee, Three-banded Plover, Marsh, Green, Wood, and Common Sandpipers, Gray-headed Gull, Plain Martin, Lesser Swamp Warbler, Collared Pratincole, Yellow-billed Ox-pecker etc.

Day 7 We have another full day in the park. We shall start early after breakfast and carry packed lunch. From the peninsula, we follow the Kasenyi trail while looking for game like lion, leopard, birds etc. Depending on the group's interests, after our game drive we may return to Lake Katwe traditional salt works and also tour briefly the vandalized old Ugandan salt factory (on the shores of L. Edward) built by the Germans.

Salt mining at Katwe is one of the African's oldest industries. From the 16th century salt has been one of the most important items that attracted the attention of very many people in Africa.

Later in the afternoon we shall continue our game drive up to Kyambura gorge, a very scenic area containing a riverine forest that shows the early earth movements that happened at the time of the formation of the Great Rift Valley. We shall retire late in the evening and spend our night in the excellent *Jacana Safari Eco-lodge*.

Day 8 Today, we will check out Jacana Lodge and embark on a rather long and teeth-jarring journey to the famous Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park, a UNESCO's world heritage site and home the world's endangered mountain gorillas. We shall pass through the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth National park where we may have a chance to spot the tree climbing lions. We will check in our lodge for dinner and overnight stay.

Day 9 We shall wake up, have our breakfast early and gather at the park headquarters for briefing before we head for the most thrilling activity, Gorilla tracking.

Brought to the world's attention by Diane Fossey famous 1975 visit, and declared a World Heritage Site in 1994, Bwindi Impenetrable is Uganda's prime national park. The undulating mountains of the virungas feed the water Catchment Rivers in the primeval highland forest, resulting in a unique environment which provides the perfect setting for birds, plants, butterflies which are not found anywhere else on earth! This is one of the few destinations where travelers can share the fascination of approachable World's only remaining mountain Gorillas, and enjoy great weather and easy-paced activities.

Depending on the movements of these giants, this activity may not last too long. If we are successful early enough, we will go for a village walk in Buhoma community where we shall interact with the Batwa (Pygmies), witness local brewing activities and meet the renowned traditional healer in the area.

Day 10 Transfer to Kisoro.

We may have a chance to walk around the market if we time our schedule to coincide with the monthly market day; locally known as “Ekikomera”. Here, we get to meet the local inhabitants selling mostly agricultural products, and crafts produced in the area. We shall learn how they use the local material to weave different house hold utilities like baskets, mats etc. Most importantly, such gatherings in the typical Ugandan villages are regarded as meeting places for the youth where they find potential future partners. We will be staying at Traveler Inn – the first home of Diane Fossey.

Day 11 Today we start very early and head for a hike through the forest to the Garama Cave. Here we shall spend the whole day on the Batwa trail that runs across the lower slopes of the Muhavura and Gahinga volcanoes in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park contemplating on the life of the local Pygmy - Batwa culture.

Batwa Trail is far from being a conventional nature walk; with the help of Batwa guides, you will see the forest as a larder, pharmacy, builder’s yard, tool kit and above all, a home. Along the trail, one can harvest plants for medicine and food, check hives for wild honey or listen to the legends and learn about Batwa traditions!

The Pygmy-Batwa people are a traditionally hunter-gatherer group, who lived within the forests and survived on small mammals and plants. When Mgahinga National Park was gazetted in 1991, the Batwa were forced to leave the forest and were no longer able to enter the park to gather food. Given their traditional way of life and their dependency on the forest for food, this resulted in various socio-economic problems and the Batwa communities remain largely marginalized and are one of the poorest communities in Uganda. This activity gives the Batwa people an opportunity to re-enter the forest in coordination with the park authorities while creating awareness about their culture among the travelers that participate in the hike.

Day 12 We travel to Kampala, stopover at Mbarara for lunch.

Day 13 We transfer to Murchison Falls. We shall wake-up very early and head northeast of Kampala, crossing the Nile to Murchison falls National Park.

Murchison Falls National Park is Uganda's largest national reserve containing massive portions of archetypal wilderness of African savannah traversed by the great River Nile. The park got its name from the overwhelming falls on the Nile, where the river explodes violently through a narrow gap of about 6.7m falling into a pool 43m below. We should arrive here in time for lunch at the lodge we shall be staying in and do an afternoon game drive towards the delta as we look for big game like lions, elephant, leopard, buffalo, giraffe, Kongoni, etc. We return late in the evening to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 14 Today we shall explore the Nile by taking a boat on the calmer stretches up to the bottom of the falls. This is a cruise where we shall have a spectacular view of big congregations of hippos bathing in the river, Nile crocodiles will also be encountered sunbathing from the shorelines, and so many water birds like Senegal Thicknee, squacco heron, common, wood, green, and marsh sandpipers, ruff, green shank, etc. After lunch, we will cross the Nile and head for a game drive to the top of the fall.

Dinner and overnight at Nile Safari Camp

Our first part of the safari ends on day 15 with a transfer to Kampala/Entebbe. Those intending to stay longer will continue on day 15 to Kidepo Valley National Park.

Day 15 *Optional Extension to Karamoja Region*

Today, we shall continue our journey to Karamoja. The way to Karamoja takes us through a patchwork of relatively flat roads alongside flooded plains of wetlands, past bicycles carrying everything from pots to live chickens, baskets of food passing through the streams of people. The voyage ultimately takes us deep into the world's greatest wilderness through an ever-changing vista of arid savannah; we are in Kidepo Valley National Park. We shall have a free afternoon today, move around your lodge and see sights and natural features.

Dinner and overnight at the gorgeous Apoka Safari Lodge.

Karamoja region, popularly known as Uganda land of warrior namads and agro-pastrolists, is an arid expanse of savannah and bush forming the northeast edge of Uganda where it borders Kenya and the Sudan, with Ethiopia not far off. The area is inhabited by the Karamojong, a group of people largely distinct geographically and culturally from the rest of Uganda. Most importantly, Karamoja hosts Uganda's most remote and spectacular nature reserve, Kidepo valley national park – a park of stunning beauty and pristine wilderness. Any traveller who makes an expedition to the park must be captivated by the unique beauty of the landscape and significantly impressed with

the abundance and diversity of local wildlife. This park contains wildlife that is not found in any other Ugandan national park. These included among others, bat-eared fox, striped hyena, aardwolf, caracal and cheetah, black-backed jackal, greater and lesser kudu, Chandlers Mountain reedbuck, klipspringer and Guenther's dik dik, Bohor reedbuck etc. Five species of primates are found in the park including the endemic Kiviro bush baby.

Day 16 We shall do a whole day game drive in the park.

Day 17 Tour the nearby communities, as we explore the Manyattas – the ancient homesteads of the Karamajong. We shall enjoy the unique Naleyo dance performed by the Karimajongs where women line up and men strike their breasts using fingers as they dance. Here in Karamoja, "human beings are expressions of their landscape."

Day 18 Travel back to Kampala and spend the evening at the famous Ndere Centre

In efforts to save and conserve African heritage, Ndere Troupe performs a repertoire of all authentic Ugandan and the entire African traditional dances and songs accompanied by various indigenous percussive, stringed and wind instruments. The troupe fuses traditional dance, music, and drama with modern arts by blending traditional instruments with modern ones to produce exhilarating sounds. We shall be ushered this evening to the only true African amphi- theatre or the joy Arena, built on the African philosophy of Storytelling around a bon fire in a circular kraal setting, and gaze at these talented Africans wiggle their waists for the rest of our Evening. We shall have our dinner here and sleep at the nearby Metropole Hotel in Kampala.

Day 20 Departure and end of our adventure safari

Notes

On the Itinerary

Although we do our best to adhere to the above schedule, this itinerary is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control including flight schedule changes, group interests, weather, road, lake or trail conditions. In addition & depending on logistics and group interests, on day 12 we may decide to connect to Murchison falls by air in order to save one day travelling and overnight in Kampala. We encourage our eco-travellers to advise us the choice of accommodation and the preferred number of days they would want to stay on certain sites. This program is suitable for relatively healthy, fit participants aged 5 and up, and some activities may include families with children, with exception of gorilla tracking which is limited to only those above 15 years.

Pricing

Uganda Eco Tours will quote a price depending on the choice of accommodation and variations in room sharing, the number of travelers on the trip, choice of activity etc. The price will include your accommodation, and all meals. Inclusive also are Gorilla tracking permits, boat hire fees and ferry, park and other sites entrance fees and services of all the guides and leaders. **Not included are:** Flight charges to and from your country of origin; travel and health Insurance; telephone calls; alcoholic drinks; tips to drivers, guides and hotel staff; laundry and other items of a personal nature.

A non-refundable deposit of 30% of the total trip price will confirm a commitment to travel with us on our safaris. The balance of the fee is due 60 days prior to departure. We quote our fares in US dollars, and must be paid in US dollars.

Optional trip extensions

For those who would like to stay longer and may still require our services, need to notify us in advance so that we can make the necessary arrangements for accommodation, transport and the activities they will engage in.

Trip cancellation

When the traveler notifies us more than 45 days prior to the first day of any of our safaris, 75% of the final payments will be refunded. With 30-45 days notice, one receives a 50% refund of the final payments of the tour. No refund can be made with less than 30 days notice. No partial refund can be given once a tour begins. We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect your investment.

Accommodation

Accommodations on most of our trips are among the best in the region, clean and comfortable with private facilities and with a good reputation for a bid by eco principles. However, at some campsites, we may share facilities like the latrines and bathrooms. All of the hotels and lodges serve both local and international cuisines, have well stocked bars and recreation facilities to help you relax after long journeys and long hours in the field. Most of them are strategically located in areas where you will only be separated from the wild life by the wall; you will have an opportunity to hear buzzes of insects, birds and while you are outside your rooms, occasional visitors will mostly amaze you!

Roads and Transport

Most of our roads connecting to the attractions are long and sometimes bumpy and dusty / muddy taking us through typical Ugandan scenic fertile farmlands, open savannah and arid plains, numerous papyrus swamps and isolated pockets of woodlands and tropical dense forests. As we travel on road, we shall be having necessary stops to stretch legs.

We use 4WD comfortable vehicles with open roof hatches for most of our tours. Every guest is guaranteed a window seat in each vehicle, thus providing equal opportunities for viewing and photographing the wildlife.

Travel insurance

We strongly recommend that you consider a plan to help protect your trip investment. Travel insurance helps to cover; unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates, weather events or local strikes causing interruption or changes to your itinerary, missed connections, delayed arrival, lost/delayed baggage and medical or evacuation coverage.

Weather

Much of your trip will take place in places where the weather can change suddenly. There are variations in weather due to the typically equatorial climate of Uganda. Generally Uganda's climate from September – December and April – May is wet and cool. The dry spell is experienced between Jan – Early March and June – Mid August and the days are generally warm or hot and sunny. Mean annual temperatures range from about 16° C in the southwestern highlands to 25° C in the northwest; but in the northeast, temperatures exceed 30° C about 254 days per year. Daytime temperatures average about eight to ten degrees warmer than nighttime temperatures in the Lake Victoria region, and temperatures are generally about fourteen degrees lower in the southwest. However, overcast conditions are frequent, particularly in the forest and mountain areas. Nights can be mild to warm, cooler at higher altitudes.

Clothing

Recommended for the field is light-weight, neutral-colored clothing that can be easily rinsed out and quickly dries - cottons or cotton blends. Long-sleeved shirts and long pants will help protect you from insects, thorny plants, and sunburn. Shorts will be appropriate for some occasions; long pants that convert into shorts by unzipping the legs are generally very useful and popular. A sweater or jacket is useful for cooler nights and early mornings. Bring a bathing suit, as there will be opportunities to swim at some of the lodges, as well as a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen. You should also bring raingear, including a small umbrella. Strong-soled shoes or hiking boots are essential, as we will spend a good amount of time on our feet. Dress is casual throughout. Laundry service will be available regularly during the tour, which should help you in deciding what to pack. Making use of laundry service means you won't need to bring as many items of clothing as you would otherwise. Alternatively, to lighten your load, you may consider bringing some clothes you have planned to discard. These can be worn on tour and left behind; they will be well received by local people we shall interact with on the tour.

Currency

Uganda currency is the Shilling; at time of writing the exchange rate is approximately 2000UgShs for US\$1. Credit cards can only be used in a few hotels where we shall be staying and in a few shopping centres in the capital Kampala. ATM machines too are available in some towns. Travelers' cheques can be changed for local currency at the airport upon arrival. Thereafter only cash can be changed once on safari. Larger bills (\$50 and \$100) attract a significantly better rate of exchange than smaller bills or Traveler's cheques. Any local currency can be changed back to US Dollars at the airport on departure. US Dollars cash notes

MUST be dated 2001 or newer and must be in good condition.

Documents

A passport with a tourist visa valid for at least six months after your departure is required for United States and Canadian citizens to enter Uganda as well as a yellow fever vaccinations certificate. You may not be required to obtain the tourist visa for Uganda prior to your departure, as it can be obtained upon arrival in Entebbe (cost at time of writing is \$30.). Citizens of other countries should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

It is very important that your passport and traveler's checks be on your body at all times. We caution against carrying these items in your backpack or purse as petty crime is inevitable.

Equipment

As a prerequisite for any adventurer, you are encouraged to carry your own equipment if you are to get the best memories of your tour. Amongst the equipment you may need are; a good pair of binocular, sporting scope, an alarm clock, a water flask or canteen, a flashlight, camera with film and batteries for your camera, small backpack for carrying essentials on day activities, insect repellent and sunscreen. You should also bring a supply of indigestion and diarrhoea medicines in case they are needed.

Health

It is important to note that modern medical facilities and prescription drugs are not common in Uganda; apart from a few recommended hospitals of international standards like Nairobi and International hospital Kampala; so you should be in reasonable health to consider this tour. Although food hygiene and quality is excellent and we rarely experience any serious stomach problems, you may want to bring the remedy you prefer or are prescribed for an upset stomach. Moist toiletries are useful for keeping refreshed and clean during travelling and before packed lunches.

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

Malaria is present, including the chloroquine-resistant strain; most areas are at risk. There have been some recent changes in recommendations for malaria prophylaxis. Mefloquine (Lariam) is now the drug of choice in areas where chloroquine-resistant malaria is found. A single dose should be taken one week before the start of the tour, continued throughout the tour, and for four weeks after its conclusion. Mefloquine is available by prescription only, and may not be suitable for those using cardio-vascular medication; consult your physician.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

All water should be regarded as being potentially contaminated. Water used for drinking, brushing teeth or making ice should have first been boiled or otherwise sterilized. It is recommended that you only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Pork, salad, and mayonnaise may carry increased risk.

Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

Other

Departure Tax - none

Electricity - 220-240 volt AC, with British type 13-amp 3-prong plugs.

Language - English is the official language and widely spoken.

Time – Uganda is 8 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

Safety

Uganda is considered safe and politically stable. Petty crime is minimal. The Bwindi killings in 1999, the Kony Rebels massacre in Murchison falls National park gave Uganda a bad reputation; however a strong military presence in all Ugandan National parks has ensured that no further incidents will reoccur. All the parks we will be travelling to are well protected by the Ugandan army. We are constantly monitoring the security situation and will alter the itinerary should any area be considered to pose a risk in any way.

Ugandan people are incredibly welcoming, polite and friendly.

Recommended Readings

Kefa M. Otiso, Culture and Customs of Uganda (Culture and Customs of Africa) 2006. (Book Available at Amazon Sales).

Philip Briggs with Andrew Roberts (6th Edition). Uganda, the Bradt Travel Guide 2010. A good guide to travelling in Uganda.

Finlay, Hugh, M. Fitzpatrick, M. Fletcher and N. Ray (5th Edition). East Africa Lonely Planet Publications. 2000. An excellent general reference work to travelling in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania.

Stevenson, Terry and John Fanshawe. A Field Guide to the Birds of East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Academic Press, 2001

Kingdon, Jonathan. The Kingdon Fieldguide to African Mammals Academic Press, 1999. This excellent book covers all of Africa's mammals. Larger mammals (squirrel size and larger) are covered to species level and smaller mammals to genus level. This is the recommended mammal book.

Spawls, Stephen, Kim Howell, Robert C. Drewes and James Ashe. A Field Guide to the Reptiles of East Africa Academic Press, 2001. A superb and comprehensive but rather bulky guide to all the species of reptiles occurring in Uganda

Dharani N. Field Guide to the Common Trees and Shrubs of East Africa Struik, 2002. A newly published guide to the more common trees and shrubs found in East Africa