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meaning of travel

Tour Notes

Primates, Birds and Game of Uganda

Tour Duration – 12 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●●○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●○ | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●○ | Wildlife ●●●●●

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Visit the source of the Nile
- ✓ Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary – home of the only wild rhinos in Uganda
- ✓ Excellent game viewing at Murchison Falls National Park
- ✓ Exciting Chimpanzee tracking in Kibale Forest
- ✓ Marvel at the tree climbing lions at Queen Elizabeth National Park
- ✓ Wildlife cruise on the Kazinga Channel in Queen Elizabeth National Park
- ✓ Track Mountain Gorillas in unforgettable Bwindi Impenetrable Forest





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Tour Map



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of simple but comfortable hotels and lodges
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum 12
Start Point: Entebbe – you can arrive any time on day 1
End Point: Entebbe – you can depart any time on day 12
Transport: 4WD safari type vehicles
Country Visited: Uganda



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Primates of Uganda

Uganda is known as one of the most stunning countries in Africa, and with good reason. On this tour we visit some of its most beautiful areas in search of incredible wildlife, much of which has long since disappeared from the rest of the continent. From Entebbe, we see the source of the Nile and then head north via Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary to Murchison Falls National Park to search for elephant, lion and buffalo on game drives, then search for chimpanzees in the Kibale Forest. From there we head to the spectacular Queen Elizabeth National Park, with its plains, forest, swamps and lakes – a wide diversity of landscapes means that wildlife viewing here is varied. But the highlight of this trip is perhaps one of the highlights of all of Africa – tracking a family of gorillas in their natural habitat through the forests of Bwindi National Park. Make no mistake; this is a truly astonishing wildlife experience that will leave you lost for words.

Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Entebbe Arrival

Upon arrival in Entebbe, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Overnight Admas Hotel Entebbe or similar. No meals or excursions included today.

Day 2 – Ziwa Rhino Tracking - Murchison Falls

The day begins with a drive to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary. The sanctuary is home to around 41 southern white rhinos which were reintroduced after their extinction in the 1970s through poaching. A local ranger guide will lead you on foot to an up-close encounter with the rhinos and it may take about 1 and half hours. After lunch at the sanctuary continue to Murchison Falls National Park arriving at your lodge late afternoon. Overnight: Murchison River Lodge or similar (BLD)

Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary

Located north of Kampala in the Nakasongola district of Uganda, The Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary is the only place in the country with wild rhinos. Currently home to twenty two southern white rhinos, the sanctuary offers rhino trekking, shoebill trekking, canoeing, bird watching, and night walks. Visitors may also spot a range of other species including Uganda kobs, oribis, bush bucks, and water bucks. The prehistoric-looking shoebill stork is one of the most sought after birds in Uganda, and the sanctuary is one of the only places where they can almost always be seen. Visitors can see over 300 bird species along bird trails through the woodlands, swamp and savannah.



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Murchison Falls National Park

Uganda's largest protected area and dissected by the Victoria Nile, Murchison Falls is named after its magnificent waterfall, caused by the Nile forcing its way through a narrow gap in the rocks, which in turn was named after Sir Roderick Murchison, president of the Royal Geographical Society at the time that they were 'discovered'. Wildlife here suffered greatly during Uganda's succession of bloody conflicts in the 1970's and 1980's, with various armies slaughtering game to either eat or sell, and during this time many animals, including rhino, became extinct. Today numbers are recovering and Murchison Falls has good numbers of elephant, lion and buffalo, among other species. Other animals to be found here are giraffe, various species of antelope including waterbuck and bushbuck, leopard, hyena and chimpanzees in the Rabongo Forest. The birdlife here is even greater, with approximately 460 species being recorded in the park, including the shoebill stork.

Day 3 - Murchison Falls National Park – Game drive and the falls

An early start for a game drive on the northern bank of the River Nile in your open-roof vehicle which will give you an excellent opportunity to view and photograph the diverse wildlife. Species may include elephant, lion, cape buffalo, Roth child's giraffe, hartebeest, waterbuck, oribi, bushbuck, bohor reed buck, hyena and if you are lucky, the leopard. After lunch, cruise upstream the calm Victoria Nile to the base of the falls stopping just few of meters from the 'Devil's Cauldron', marvel at the schools of hippos, crocodiles and over the 17km stretch you may see elephant, waterbuck and Uganda Kob. This is also an area with prolific birdlife, species such as goliath heron, Egyptian goose, pelican bee-eater, kingfisher, hornbill, cormorant and the rare shoebill stork. Continue to the top of the falls, and admire the amazing views where the Nile -world's longest river explodes violently through a narrow cleft in the Rift Valley escarpment to plunge into a frothing pool 43m below. Later, return to your lodge. Overnight at Murchison River Lodge or similar (BLD)

Day 4 - Murchison Falls - Kibale National Park (approx. 6 hours' drive)

Drive south to Fort Portal, past big tea plantations and arrive in Fort Portal town in time for lunch (own expense). The fort may be gone, but this town is definitely a portal to places that offer sublime scenery, abundant nature and genuine adventure. Fort Portal is the heartland of a verdant tea-growing area and an important commercial centre. Upon arrival, visit the Toro King's palace to learn about the culture of the Batooro and also visit the burial grounds of their kings to understand more on the traditional leadership in Uganda. Learn how they name petty names, and probably get one yourself. Toro Kingdom is one of the few surviving kingdoms in Uganda with the youngest king. Overnight: Chimpundu Lodge or similar (BD)

Day 5 - Chimpanzee Tracking - Queen Elizabeth National Park (approx. driving 2-3 hours)

After breakfast enjoy one of the highlights of the trip, the Chimpanzee tracking experience in Kibale Forest National Park which is reputed to have the greatest variety and highest concentration of primates in East Africa. With an expert guide, walk in the tropical rainforest in search of the wild chimpanzees, red-tailed monkeys, black and white colobus monkeys and many others. Although chimp sightings are not guaranteed, visitors stand a very good chance of hearing and seeing our distant cousins as they groom and bond with one another, a sight never to be forgotten. After spending the morning searching for these beautiful animals, head back to the lodge for lunch. This afternoon we take a scenic drive to Queen Elizabeth National Park. Overnight Buffalo Safari Lodge or similar (BLD)

Please note that long sleeves and trousers and robust walking shoes/boots are recommended in Kibale Forest.

Kibale Forest and Chimp Tracking

Bordering Queen Elizabeth National Park, Kibale Forest is one of the best places in all of Africa to see chimpanzees in the wild. In addition to chimps it is also home to another twelve primate species, with around sixty mammal species in total, including leopard, buffalo, elephant and the giant forest hog although these tend to be difficult to see. The chimpanzees here are habituated to the presence of humans, and although



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sightings are not guaranteed, the chances of encountering them are good. Closely related to humans, chimpanzees live in large communities headed up by an alpha male. Although they eat mainly fruit, there have been cases of them hunting monkeys in groups as well as using tools to catch termites. Once widely spread throughout Africa, their habitat has been reduced by deforestation and the encroachment of human settlements, and chimpanzees can now be found in twenty-one countries.

Day 6 - Queen Elizabeth NP and Lake Katwe Community Visit

After breakfast, drive through looking for game with the impressive Rwenzori Mountains as a spectacular backdrop. After lunch at the lodge, cruise on the Kazinga Channel, to view buffalo, hippo and other animals at the edge of the channel as they cool off. European migratory birds, including flocks of terns and gulls can also be seen in the area. We visit Lake Katwe community before heading back to the lodge for the evening. Overnight Buffalo Safari Lodge or similar (BLD)

Queen Elizabeth National Park

Queen Elizabeth National Park is almost two thousand square kilometres in size, pressed up against the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mostly made up of savannah grassland, it also contains forest, swamp and lakes. Almost 100 mammal species and a remarkable 606 bird species makes this superb safari territory, with elephant, a profusion of hippos, the elusive giant forest hog and handsome Ugandan Kob all regularly sighted around the Mweya Peninsula. This boasts a marvellous waterfront setting in the shadow of the Rwenzori Mountains. Like Murchison Falls, the park's wildlife declined dramatically in the 1970's and 80's but is now on the increase once more.

Day 7 - Queen Elizabeth National Park - Chimpanzee Tracking – Kyambura Gorge

After breakfast, transfer to Kyambura Gorge a few minutes' drive away from the lodge for a briefing before starting your Chimpanzee trek. Afterwards return to the lodge for lunch afternoon at leisure or you may wish to take an afternoon game drive. Overnight Buffalo Safari Lodge or similar (BLD)

Day 8 - Ishasha Game Drive (Climbing Lions) - Bwindi National Park

After breakfast, have a scenic short drive (approx. 2 hours) to the southern part of Queen Elizabeth National Park famous for the tree climbing lions. Upon arrival, enjoy a game drive where you may have a chance at seeing these infamous animals that this area is known for. The lions climb up the Candelabra trees running away from the hot ground during dry seasons and the small ants that bite them. On the tree branches as they hang, they also get to rest from their hunt and spy for more prey. Whilst driving through the savannah plains you will spot other wildlife like elephants and a good number of birds. This region offers a feeling that you are on that safari just by yourself, enjoying this pristine African Ugandan nature. Afterwards travel onwards to Bwindi (approx. 4-5 hours' drive). Overnight Lake Mulehe Gorilla Lodge or similar (BLD)

Day 9 - Bwindi National Park - Gorilla Trekking

Today, tick off gorilla tracking from your bucket list! With gorilla permits included in your package, along with a guide and porters who will carry your shoulder pack, set off to the thick forest in search of gorillas. The terrain can be difficult, with steep slopes covered in dense vegetation that gives the park its name. In addition, the altitude of up to 1600m means participants do need to be reasonably fit. The time taken to track the gorillas will vary enormously, from as little as half an hour to as much as 8-9 hours before returning to camp but coming face to face with these amazing primates will reward you. For those not wishing to participate, you are welcome to relax at the lodge and enjoy the day at leisure. Overnight Lake Mulehe Gorilla Lodge or similar (BLD)

Please note that long sleeves and trousers and robust walking boots are recommended in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.



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Gorilla Tracking

Deep in the heart of central Africa, the volcanic mountains that straddle the border of Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo are home to the last surviving mountain gorillas in the wild. Numbering roughly 650 in total, the population has dwindled due to pressure of a shrinking habitat, poaching, and the effects of war in the Congo and Rwanda. Today numbers appear to be stabilising, but the gorillas are still seriously endangered. Actually tracking the gorillas is an adventure in itself and can take all day. Please ensure you have the right hiking boots and clothing, are reasonably fit and able to walk in challenging terrain. Sightings are not guaranteed, although chances are good. Sitting high in the dripping forests just a few yards away from a family of mountain gorillas is a truly remarkable experience. Watching them feed is to feel an extraordinary bond with these hugely powerful creatures – the fact that they will calmly tolerate a group of humans nearby is a testament to their placid nature, and it engenders an extraordinary feeling of trust. At times it is easy to see how closely related we are, but you are always aware that you are in the presence of a group of completely wild animals; a knowledge that fills you with awe.

Day 10 – Mbarara – Lake Mburo National Park

After breakfast we head to Lake Mburo National Park. En route we stop at Mbarara City or 'land of the milk' where we have lunch. Continue to Mburo National Park for an evening boat cruise on the famous Lake Mburo, known for rewarding wildlife such as crocodiles, antelopes, different bird species especially the famous African fin foot, which is quite often spotted here! Overnight Kigarama Wilderness Lodge or similar (BLD)

Lake Mburo National Park

Situated in the southwestern region of Uganda, Lake Mburo National Park is an easily accessible, compact little gem. Renowned for its impressive biodiversity, Lake Mburo National Park shelters almost seventy mammal species and over 300 avian species in its forests, swamps and grasslands. This spectacular landscape features open plains of savanna interrupted by rocky ridges, forested gorges and lush dense woodland. Crocodiles, hippos and a myriad of water birds are found in and around the five lakes, of which Lake Mburo is the largest. Other commonly spotted wildlife include: impala, oribi, eland, zebra, buffalo, Defassa waterbuck, leopard, hyena, hippo and reedbuck.

Day 11 – Lake Mburo National Park – Entebbe

After breakfast take a spectacular morning game drive in Lake Mburo National Park. After lunch back at the lodge, we head back to Entebbe, with a stop at the equator. Overnight Admas Hotel Entebbe or similar (BL)

Day 12 – Entebbe Departure

Transfer to the airport in time for your departure flight. End of services (B)

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

- Airport transfers
- All accommodation as per itinerary or similar
- All transportation throughout the tour
- Services of English-speaking driver guide
- Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
- Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary
- 1 Gorilla permit per person
- 2 Chimpanzee permit per person
- Bottled water



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Excluded:

- International flights
- Items of a personal nature
- Supplements for Chimpanzee and/or Gorilla habituation experiences
- Any airport taxes
- Travel Insurance
- Visas if applicable
- Drinks
- Tips (discretionary)

Important Information

Foreign Travel Advice Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At the time of writing the FCDO advise against all but essential travel to Queen Elizabeth National Park, which we visit on this tour. Please refer to the FCDO website - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/uganda>. It is likely travel warnings will remain in place for some time to come, and we are only able to accept a booking on the basis that you are aware this is the case and confirm that you are still happy to travel irrespective of the current FCDO advice.

Safety of our travellers is our main priority and we want to ensure that this tour is absolutely safe to operate. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or if would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most lodges allow check-in from 11am. Hotels can be as late as 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

On this tour you can expect to stay in simple but comfortable accommodation, all with private bathrooms. Mosquito nets will be present where necessary. In general you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.



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We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch £5-10

Dinner £10-15

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of water £0.50

Bottle of Beer (local) £1.00

Tippling – Guide and Drivers

Tippling is common practice in Africa. If your local guide and driver have been helpful then a reasonable amount to tip would be between \$5-10 a day for the guide and around \$5 a day for the driver.

It is not essential to tip the guides/rangers when tracking the gorillas or chimpanzees but if you feel that the experience merits a tip then it will be greatly appreciated.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: ATM machines can be unreliable

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are widely accepted in hotels, lodges and restaurants

Local Currency: Ugandan shilling (Ush)

Recommended Currency for Exchange: The easiest currency to exchange is the US dollar, but notes smaller than US\$50 attract worse rates of exchange

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you



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Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive an airport transfer, both on arrival and departure include in the tour price. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities.

Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals require a visa for a tourist visit to Uganda. For further details please visit the applicable website shown below.

British Nationals - www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

US Nationals - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Australian Nationals - www.smartraveller.gov.au/

Other nationals should check the latest requirements with the authorities in their home country, or with the destination's nearest embassy or consulate.

Should you require any documentation to support a visa application, such as a letter of invitation, upon request this will be provided by Undiscovered Destinations after receipt of your balance payment.

As it is the travellers' responsibility to ensure that they meet all entry requirements it is essential that you check the rules and any other conditions at the time of booking and again when making your balance payment. In addition, we would strongly advise that you make a final check around two weeks before your arrival. This is important as requirements can change at short notice. Undiscovered Destinations, when possible, will provide guidance about entry rules, but in the first instance please contact the relevant authorities, including the applicable embassy or consulate for assistance.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of leaving Uganda.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.



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For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Africa, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. Anti-malaria medication is also required and the use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended. A yellow fever certificate must be shown to enter Uganda and make sure your yellow fever vaccination is up to date.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on best practice when travelling with medicines. For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

The wet seasons in Uganda are generally speaking from March to May, and mid-September to November. However it is possible to travel in the rainy season although journeys can sometimes be more difficult but in general you will see fewer tourists. The weather is actually very difficult to predict in Uganda and even in the so-called dry seasons you should expect rain showers. Being on the equator temperatures by day remains warm all year round in the dry season. The high is usually around 30 degrees in Kampala outside of the rainy season. At higher altitudes of course in locations such as Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, nights in particular can be quite cool.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy. Long sleeves and long trousers are recommended for chimpanzee and gorilla trekking. It is advisable to tuck socks into your trousers when trekking in the forest and swamps to avoid ant bites which whilst not dangerous can be uncomfortable. Some people like to wear robust gloves on the chimpanzee and gorilla treks as it is common that you will need to hold on to trees/branches to maintain balance and this helps to avoid cuts and scratches.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray is essential for the tropical forests and swamps. A porter can be hired at the start of the gorilla trekking to carry your essentials. People find this useful as the terrain can be difficult. Walking poles will be useful if you have them, although in Bwindi a walking stick can be provided by the porters.



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Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking boots are recommended for the walks in Kibale Forest, Bigodi Swamp, and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. Outside of these places lightweight shoes and sandals for travelling will be suitable.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Generally electrical supply is 240V/50 Hz. British three-pin plugs are mainly used.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These notes were prepared 18 October 2023.

