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# FOREWORD III BILLE YEAR - A GREAT ONE FOR UGANDAN TOURISM

# **BY UGANDA TOURISM BOARD**

he year 2012 has been a great one for Uganda. Our country received several accolades including Best Destination for 2012 by the leading travel publiction Lonely Planet. In the same year, Bwindi and Murchison Falls National Parks were voted among Africa's top 10 destinations for birdwatchers, with Bwindi in first place and Murchison ranked ninth.

In addition, the Virunga Massif was voted one of the world's 'must visit places in a lifetime' and the Rwenzori Mountains were voted among the top hiking places in Africa. In March 2012 Uganda won 3rd Best Exhibitor Award at the ITB Berlin tourism and travel exhibition; and in October 2012 Uganda celebrated 50 years of independence.

It is with the utmost delight and gratitude that we wish to introduce the second edition

of Destination Uganda in this remarkable year for our country. In 2011 Uganda received more tourist arrivals - with a total of 1,151,356 visitors recorded while tourist expenditure was put at US\$ 805 million.

As we seek to further boost international arrivals, we pledge to continue working closely with all tourism stake-



holders to improve service delivery, facilities and awareness about Uganda's known and unknown attractions.

As we celebrate all these huge attributes of our unique country, we call on every Ugandan to visit our national parks, trek the mountains, embrace our uniquely diversified culture and promote our most adored gift, hospitality.



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Crystal Safaris is an inbound safari company offering unforgettable adventure holidays in a range of African destinations that includes Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi and Zanzibar.

Our tailor-made safaris are built around the individual needs and interests of our clients, offering them a rare opportunity to appreciate the beauty and diversity of the Pearl of Africa in extraordinary comfort and style.

We also operate our own luxury property, Gorilla Safari Lodge, in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

We offer our services to individuals, groups, families and business executives, and our activities include:

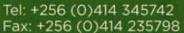
- Mountain gorilla trekking in Uganda and Rwanda
- Chimpanzee tracking and habituation
- Educational trips and ecotourism
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With its tucked-away location on the very edge of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest – home of these wonderful but endangered animals – our safari lodge is only a few metres away from the starting point for gorilla trekking.

We offer luxury accommodation in 13 spacious en-suite units. All our bathrooms have hot and cold running water and flush toilets, and each unit has an individual veranda to provide guests with splendid views of the pristine tropical rainforest.

Facilities at Gorilla Safari Lodge include a main lodge with a restaurant, bar and lounge as well as a campfire and a spa overlooking the rainforest.

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is home to some 330 gorillas - half of the world's population - as well as many bird species including 23 that are endemic to the Albertine Rift. Now a Unesco Heritage Site, the park is a prime destination for gorilla trekking and birdwatching.

Combine your trek with a touch of luxury

# EXPERIENCE UGANDA @ 50

# DEARL OF AFRICA'S HINES AGAIN AS AFRICA'S TOP

Uganda. On 9 October we celebrated
50 years since the Union Jack was
lowered and the independent Republic of
Uganda was born. Those of us involved in the
country's tourism sector were justly proud of
what has been achieved since our independence from Great Britain; perhaps all the more
so, since our youth was characterised by some
sharp growing pains.

Our favourite 50th birthday present came from Lonely Planet publications, which placed Uganda top of its 'Best in Travel for 2012' list. We interpret this accolade twofold. Firstly, in recognition of the progress since the end of our turbulent first quarter century. When stability was restored to Uganda in 1986. tourism activity was limited to the occasional wary backpacker. We take pride that the sector now provides our main source of foreign exchange. A second message - of more significance to the potential visitor - is that Uganda remains a fresh and unspoilt destination to visit, unblighted by mass tourism. Encounters with wildlife and interactions with local people retain a refreshing degree of exclusivity. The suggestion is that the time to visit is now.

### **RENAISSANCE**

Those who choose to do so will find themselves well informed by the Bradt Travel Guide to Uganda, a book that further illustrates our tourism renaissance. Back in 1993, writer Philip Briggs struggled to complete 182 pages for this book's first edition. Today, as co-writer Andrew Roberts tackles a seventh edition, he expects to fill 544 pages (of rather smaller print, too).



Not everything of significance in Ugandan tourism indicates change or expansion: our most successful marketing slogan remains as appropriate today as in 1907 when Winston Churchill famously described Uganda as the 'Pearl of Africa'. It does not take long for visitors to appreciate why the great man, who traversed Kenya, Sudan and Egypt and served in South Africa, was captivated by Uganda in particular. For now - as it did then - this compact, landlocked East African country contains an astonishing diversity of wildlife, vegetation, landscapes and cultures. Here, western and eastern Africa merge; rainforests bristling with Central African birds and primates adjoin savannas roamed by big game favourites. The appeal is enhanced by a remarkable number and variety of wildlife species. Though no larger than the United Kingdom, Uganda boasts Africa's longest bird list (with 1,040 species recorded to date) and more species of primate than any other African country: 18, including chimpanzee and mountain gorilla.

Uganda's 240,000 sq km area is also home to members of traditional kingdoms and tribes, each with its own history and culture. Add the fact that these people have long been considered Africa's most friendly and hospitable hosts,



# **EXPERIENCE UGANDA @ 50**

**GAME VIEWING** 

Coming full circle, large mammal populations

in the grassland parks are once again worth

watching - happily so, for there is more

to game viewing in Uganda than game

drives. In the 1960s, launch trips on the

Nile below Murchison Falls and on the

National Park were highlights of a visit to

these parks. Today, refurbished launches

once again expose visitors to memorable

Kazinga Channel in Queen Elizabeth

concentrations of waterside wildlife.

and we can justly claim to be the continent's most welcoming and varied safari destination.

# **MAGNIFICENT LANDSCAPES**

These impressive lists of species are due to Uganda's location between east and central Africa at the lacustrine headwaters of the River Nile. The result is a wide range of habitats forest, woodland, wetland, moorland, savannas. rivers and lakes - spread across some genuinely magnificent landscapes. To traverse Uganda is to witness the floor of the Western Rift Valley.

the vast plains of Kidepo, the slopes

of the world's largest freestanding volcano and the continent's highest mountain range. These flank the island-studded expanse of the world's secondlargest freshwater headwaters of its longest river. Despite its landlocked location.

lake and the turbulent

a full fifth of Uganda is covered by water. In addition to Lake Victoria and the River Nile. Uganda is dotted with hundreds of other lakes. Some fill extinct volcanic craters, flood river valleys dammed by lava or simply inundate large tracts of the rift valley's huge trough.

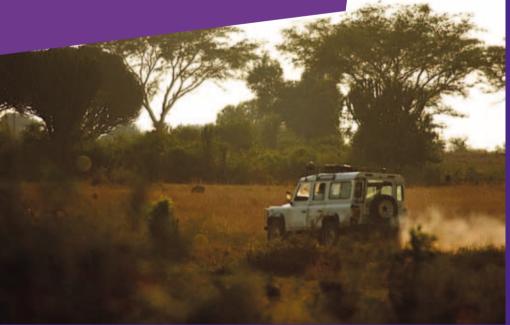
This theme of variety extends to the climate. In Kidepo Valley, in the arid extreme north-east, daytime temperatures regularly exceed 30°C (85°F) while at night on the high Rwenzori, just miles from the equator, they fall below freezing. In general, however, the effect of altitude bestows a singularly pleasant tropical climate with temperatures averaging 21-25°C (70-77°F).

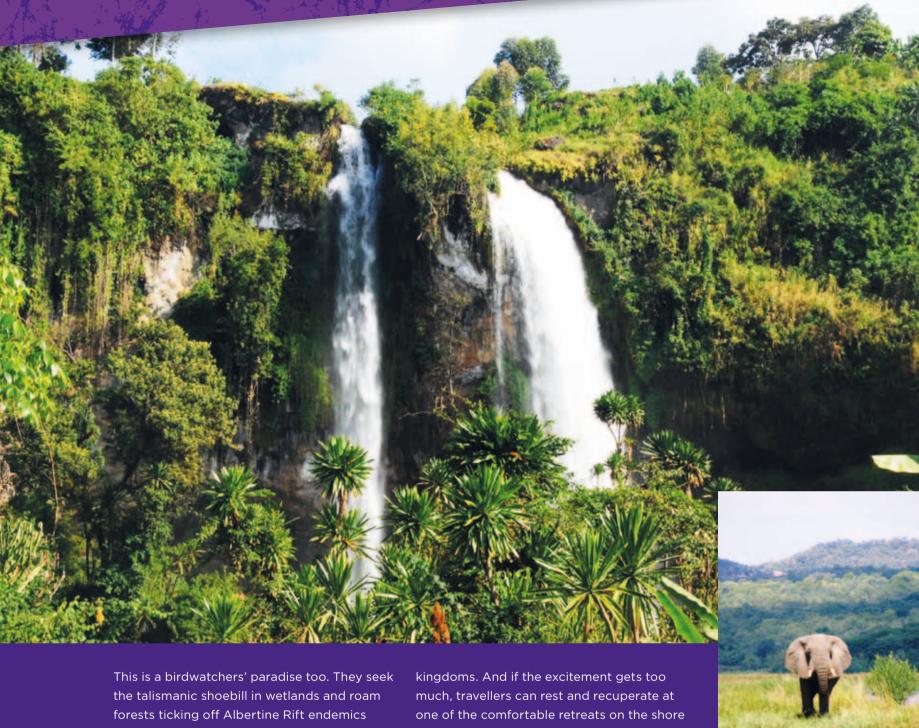
## **NATURAL ATTRACTIONS**

It has always been easy to describe Uganda's natural attractions, but attracting visitors has not always been so simple. What had been Africa's foremost safari destination in the 1960s dropped off the tourist map during the difficult years in the 1970s and 1980s. By the time stability was restored in 1986, Africa's pearl was tarnished; big game had been heavily poached, while hotel infrastructure was run down or ruined.

Uganda's response was to draw on a remarkable variety of alternative natural attractions. While big game populations recovered, new activities were developed. Visitors can track the endangered mountain gorilla in the forests of Bwindi and Mgahinga - the equally rare golden monkey can also be reliably found in the latter - and chimpanzee in the forests of Kibale, Kaniyo Pabidi and Kyambura Gorge. The potential for adventure has also been exploited: trekkers climb to the giant caldera of Mount Elgon and the glacial peaks of Mount Rwenzori, the legendary snowy source of the Nile. At the more conventional source of the Nile, rafters and kayakers negotiate Africa's finest white water rapids below the river's exit from Lake Victoria.







and rare Congo-Guinea biome species. Prime birdwatching destinations include Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and The 'Royal Mile' near Murchison Falls National Park, ranked number one and nine respectively by Travel African Magazine in its list of the top 10 birdwatching sites in Africa. Other major birding sites include Queen Elizabeth National Park, home to 604 bird species, and Semliki Forest, which contains 46 Central African birds found nowhere else in East Africa.

Cultural tourism sites and events celebrate the diversity of some 40 ethnic groups and the rich history of the traditional

of Lake Bunyonyi, beside the white beaches of the Ssese Islands, or overlooking the crater lakes of Fort Portal.

### **STANDARDS**

Indeed, the standard of accommodation has improved nationwide. Older, historical hotels have been refurbished and new ones built. The 2007 Commonwealth Summit in Kampala was preceded by a dramatic increase in quality hotels in the capital, while luxury lodges and tented camps serve all the major protected areas.





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and families.

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# TOURISM COMMUNITIES LECAL COMMUNITIES COMMUNITIES

ver wondered where that dollar, pound or euro goes when you visit a destination? Used wisely, the money you spend during your trip can have a huge impact on local communities and the future of the country's natural heritage.

For communities in and around Uganda's protected areas, well planned tourism can create employment and improve livelihoods, providing local people with an incentive to defend and protect important ecosystems on which they and tourism activities depend.

Working towards this goal is not an easy task. There are many factors at play, including conflicts between communities and parks leading to poaching and other illegal activities.

### **EXPERIENCE**

Communities need to benefit from the parks that border them. By hiring local guides, buying locally made crafts or participating in a community tourism experience, you contribute directly to the well-being of that community and encourage its support of conservation.



- Take a Batwa forest walk in Mgahinga
   Gorilla National Park and support 24 Batwa households
- Enter one of Uganda's national parks and 20 per cent of your entrance fee goes to communities bordering the park.
- Learn how to weave a basket with the Kikorongo Women's Group neighbouring Queen Elizabeth National Park. With just five visitors, the community makes enough money to sustain the average household for two months.





# Our Mission is to Spear Head the Tourism industry and to ensure that our visitors enjoy a safe and comfortable environment.

Imagine an untamed place blessed with abundance of wildlife, breathtaking views, abundance of flora and fauna, where in ultimate spoiling, magical sunrises and sunsets all come together in an adventure filled with pure natural luxury, delivered with smiles and kindness.

Enjoy our tented homes amongst the natives, an experience of a unique Uganda's cultural way of life.

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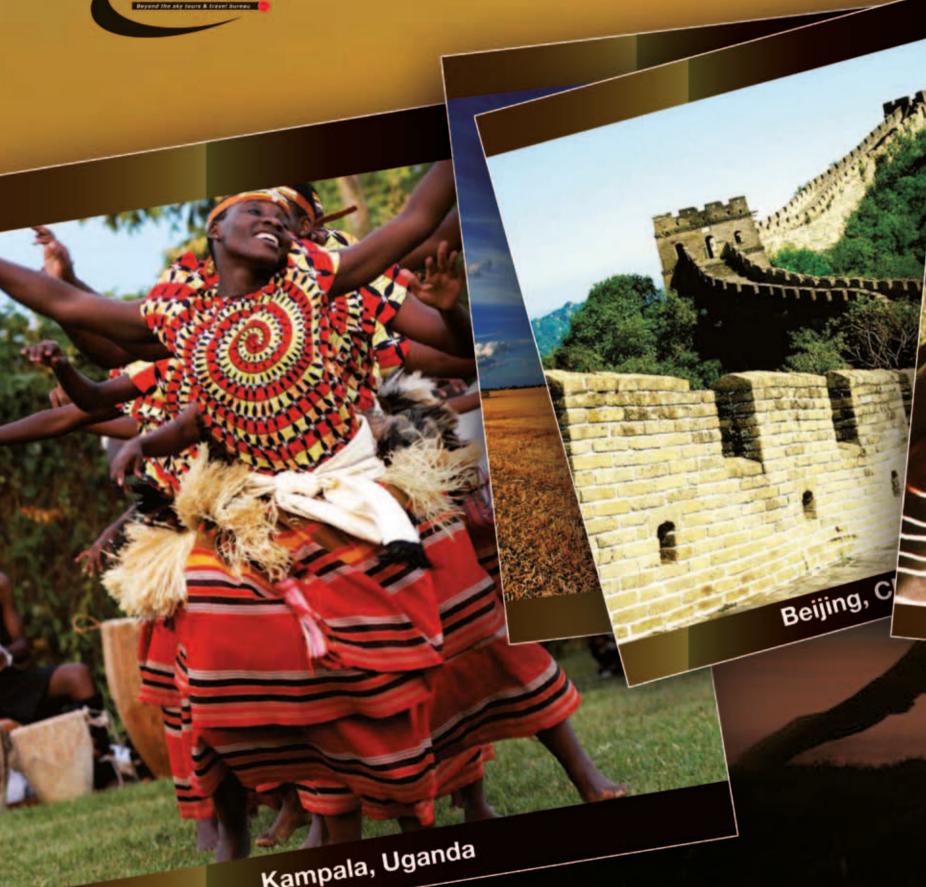








# Beyond the Sky



Traveling and touring should be an important part of our lives. A picture may fascinate you, but seeing the wonders of the world through your own eyes will leave you spellbound. No amount of education can prepare you for what you will see when you travel, for seeing is believing.

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Our services range from: Air ticketing: where we represent and electronically issue tickets for the major international airlines. As an accredited IATA agent, we can handle large volumes of ticket sales, process refunds, and re-issue tickets at all our outlets in addition to providing airport transfers, pick-up and drop-off services.

Our tour department will tailor domestic and international tours to your satisfaction. The domestic tours include: mountain gorilla trekking, mountain climbing, wild life animal immigration safaris, experiential cultural tourism, bird watching, water tourism at the great source of the river

Nile and night life adventure in the surrounding towns. We handle large customised and unique international tours

from the Pyramids in Egypt, the Okapi in Democratic Republic of Congo, the Great Wall of China and the rest of the world.

We also offer other special services like, visa application, mobile money, credit/VISA card, four guides, car rental, hotel reservations, plane charters and assistance in loss baggage tracking. Our after sales follow-up program will update you in regard to frequent filer programs like mileage up-dates.

With a dedicated and reliable team, Beyond the Sky Tours and Travel Bureau is here to keep you spellbound whenever you travel. We ensure that we meet our clients' needs beyond their expectations. We pride ourselves in providing an intimate and personalized service to you, our esteemed client. Our service is tailored to your individual taste, budget and time because our vision is to be "the preferred travel agency in East Africa and beyond."

While preparing for your travel, you don't want to be misinformed or miss out on the best the world has to offer. That's why we have a wide network of tour operators, hoteliers and guides. Apart from our head office in the Kampala city centre, we have also opened offices in Beijing, China and Bunia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Please look out for our new branches in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo and California, USA early next year.

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# FLYING UGANDA LET MOUR SPIRIT SOAR MARKET SAFARE



ganda is a relatively small country, no larger than the United Kingdom, and most visitors tour the country by road. Good sealed highways radiate out from Kampala to regional towns, beyond which dirt roads lead onwards to the national parks. Road travel across Uganda is also enlivened by regular changes in landscape and land use.

But if the scenery impresses at ground level, it is simply spectacular from the air. Aerial views of Uganda are more accessible and affordable than ever before with Fly Uganda's new scheduled flights to selected tourism destinations.



Fly over the lakes, cliffs and waterfalls of the Western Rift Valley; burst through the spray of Murchison Falls; count territorial pods of hippo along the Kazinga Channel; glimpse the glacial valleys of the Rwenzori (without a seven-day trek); marvel at the primeval plains and mountain ranges of Karamoja; and watch your aeroplane's shadow cross vast wetlands of emerald papyrus wetlands.

Whether you choose a scheduled flight or a private charter, an overflight of Uganda is a safari in itself. As Ernest Hemingway (who made good use of aeroplanes to explore Africa) observed: "It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end."



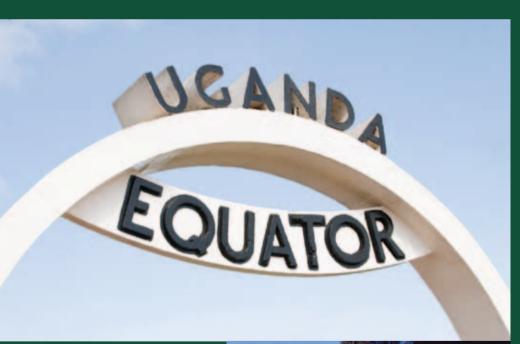
With such spectacles beneath and with the reassurance of international safety standards, there is every reason to choose 90-minute flights to destinations such as Bwindi and Kidepo Valley instead of a road journey of 500 km or more. You will arrive fresher too, ready to savour, close up, the sights, sound and smells of settings previewed from above.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

It is also reassuring to know that your environmental footprint may be lighter in the air than on the ground: Fly Uganda is Africa's first and only 100 per cent carbon neutral aviation company.

# CENTRAL UGANDA

# MODERN AMENITIES, RELAXING RETREATS, HISTORIC SITES



ganda's primary gateway for international tional tourists is Entebbe International Airport, close to Entebbe town, the old colonial capital, 35 km south of Kampala, the busy modern capital city.

For tourists with fixed itineraries, these towns are primarily staging points before and after a safari to western Uganda. However, visitors with more time will find a multitude of diversions to occupy them in Central Uganda.

### **RELAX**

Kampala offers all the amenities of a modern capital, while Entebbe and Jinja provide relaxing retreats beside Lake Victoria and the Source of the Nile respectively. Although the national parks lie several hours' drive from Kampala, the capital is surrounded by tracts of tropical forest, wetland and lake shores where birds and primates can be found.

Climate: Tropical, tempered by altitude (1,200 metres above sea level). Temperatures rarely rise above 30°C (85°F) or fall below 18°C (65°F). January is the hottest month.



Landscape: The scenery of Central Uganda is dominated by low, flat-topped hills between which broad wetland valleys drain into lakes Victoria and Kyoga.

## **MAJOR ATTRACTIONS**

Kampala: Uganda's bustling capital: With a population exceeding a million, Kampala is by far Uganda's largest urban centre. The fast-growing city has a distinctive setting, spread across a series of prominent hills close to Lake Victoria. Although Kampala has long outgrown its historical title of the City of Seven Hills, the original seven summits remain important

focal points, topped by distinctive landmarks of cultural, religious and colonial significance.

Kampala is an extremely safe city to explore and visitors should be sure to experience the striking contrasts within the city centre on the slopes of Nakasero Hill. Above Kampala Road, the main thoroughfare, leafy avenues are lined by restored colonial buildings – many occupied by quality restaurants and hotels – and brand-new office buildings while, downhill, congested streets



numerous people. The Baganda are

and history and traditions that date

back to the 16th century.

intensely proud of their Kabaka (king)

# CENTRAL UGANDA

descend to colourful markets, chaotic bus parks and a permanent gridlock of vehicles, boda bodas (moped taxis) and pedestrians.

Kampala offers a wide choice of accommodation including several five-star hotels – this sector was greatly expanded prior to the Kampala Commonwealth Summit in 2007 – decent mid-range hotels

> and popular backpacker hostels.

CULTURAL AND
HISTORICAL SITES

A number of historical sites in and around Kampala relate to a time of dramatic change in the late 19th century when the Baganda encountered Islamic traders and British colonialists and missionaries. Several stand on the city's original seven hills, notably, the Protestant Cathedral on Namirembe Hill, the Catholic Cathedral on Rubaga, Fort Lugard in Old Kampala and the Kabaka's Palace at Lubiri. Further afield are the Kasubi and Wamala Tombs, Katereke Prison Ditch, Naggalabi Coronation Site and the Namugongo Martyrs' Shrine. Contemporary culture comes to life at Kampala's Ndere Centre, where a regular programme of events presents colourful displays of music and dance from around the country.

Entebbe: Offering tranquillity on the shores of Lake Victoria, Entebbe is a small, quiet town with a diminutive centre laid out between the hilltop State House, the official residence of the President of Uganda, and the lakeshore golf course. A



Attractions: Entebbe's lake-shore Botanical Gardens are home to tropical trees, birds and monkeys, while the nearby Wildlife Education Centre provides a sanctuary for rescued wildlife.

Entebbe is also the launching point for trips to Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary, resorts on the Ssese archipelago and for sport fishermen seeking the mammoth Nile perch.

The Mabira and Mpigi Forest Reserves, an hour's drive from Kampala, are conveniently located to allow visitors to experience a tropical forest.



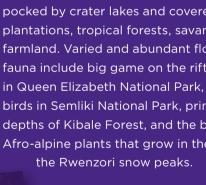


# **WESTERN UGANDA**

oreign visitors have been entranced by the Mount Rwenzori area of Western **Uganda since Henry Stanley and Emin** Pasha passed through in 1889.

For this is, arguably, Uganda's most dramatic and scenic region. Between Lake Albert in the north and Lake George in the south, the terrain rises above the plains of the Semliki Valley for over 4,000 metres to the snowcapped summits of the Rwenzori.

Between these extremes, the landscape is pocked by crater lakes and covered with tea plantations, tropical forests, savanna and farmland. Varied and abundant flora and fauna include big game on the rift valley floor in Queen Elizabeth National Park, rare forest birds in Semliki National Park, primates in the depths of Kibale Forest, and the bizarre, giant Afro-alpine plants that grow in the shadow of





This distinctive region is dominated by the 5,100 metre Rwenzori mountain, the western and southern slopes of which drop into the drier plains of the Western - or Albertine - Rift Valley (620 to 900 metres above sea level). The green and hilly Fort Portal plateau to the east is dotted with volcanic craters.

Opportunities for exploring without a vehicle include trekking on the Rwenzori, chimpanzee tracking in Kibale forest and scenic walks among the Ndali crater lakes.



Climate: Altitude affords the Rwenzori region a pleasantly cool climate. Conditions are hotter - with a mean maximum of 28°C (80°F) - and drier on the low-lying rift valley floor.

Culture and people: The Rwenzori is home to the Bakonzo mountain people, while the Semliki valley is inhabited by the Bwamba tribe and a community of Batwa Pygmies. The countryside east of the mountain lies in the Kingdom of Toro, home of the Batoro.

## **MAJOR ATTRACTIONS**

Explosion crater fields: The scenic Ndali crater field, 20 km south of Fort Portal, is the largest of Western Uganda's several clusters of extinct volcanic craters.

# WESTERN UGANDA

Dozens of craters, including 30 lakes, await discovery by vehicle or bicycle or on foot.

A smaller sprinkling of craters north of Fort Portal town is notable for the cliff-lined Lake Kyaninga, arguably Uganda's loveliest lake.

Kibale National Park: This mainly forested park, 795 sq km in area, is best known for its primate populations. Thirteen species, nine of them diurnal, are present including chimpanzee, L'Hoest's monkey and red colobus. Chimpanzee tracking is the main activity, while birdwatchers are drawn to the park and the community-run Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary by a bird list of 335 species.

Rwenzori Mountains National Park: Africa's highest mountain range, the 5,100 metre Rwenzori or Mountains of the Moon is the snowy source of the Nile referred to by early geographers, 17 centuries before European explorers marked it on their maps. The high Rwenzori is a wonderland of glacier-carved valleys filled with fantastically coloured mosse.

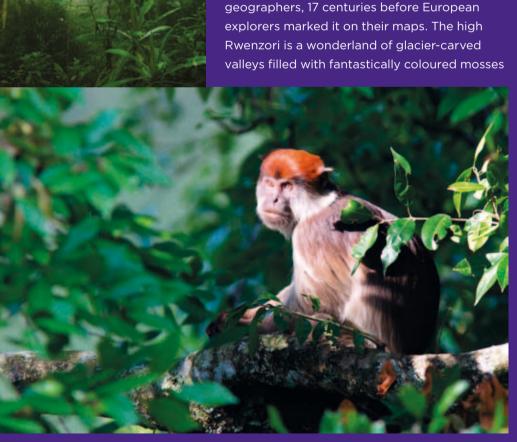
and gigantic forms of lobelias, heathers and groundsels. Expeditions use a chain of basic huts and campsites to ascend the mountain. Global warming seems set to melt East Africa's equatorial snows within 25 years, so the time to climb the Rwenzori is now.

Semliki National Park: The easternmost tract of the Congo's great Ituri Forest, Semliki is an exciting destination for primate and bird watchers. Fifteen primate species – more even than Kibale – live within 6 km of the primeval hot springs at Sempaya, while the 441 recorded bird species include 216 forest birds and 80 Central African species found in few, if any, other East African forests. Black dwarf hornbill, shining blue kingfisher, Nkulengu rail and yellow-throated nicator are just a few random highlights cited by the park's experienced guides. Although birdwatchers stay overnight in basic UWA bandas, most travellers visit Semliki as a day trip from Fort Portal.

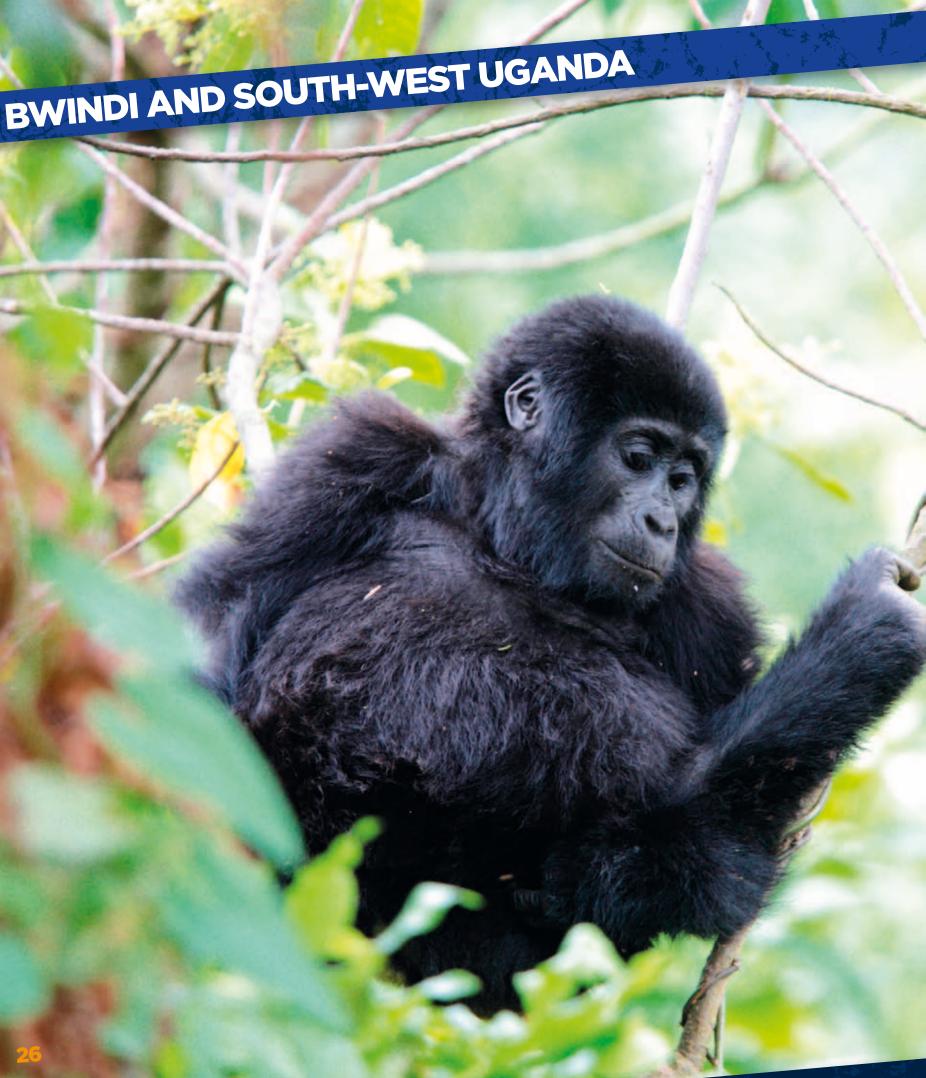
Fort Portal: Generally held to be Uganda's most attractive town, Fort Portal is surrounded by tea plantations and enjoys a scenic Rwenzori backdrop and a pleasant climate. A selection of good hotels makes it an ideal base for exploring the region.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Kibale Forest and the Ndali Crater Field is served by a wide range of lodgings, from the upmarket Primate Lodge at the chimp tracking trailhead and the engagingly eccentric Ndali Lodge, through a range of mid market cottages and tented units, to budget rooms and campsites. Fort Portal's accommodation menu is dignified by the historic Mountains of the Moon Hotel, while the monumental, craterrim edifice of the log-built Kyaninga Lodge is one of the sights of Uganda.









# - A CLOSE ENCOUNTER YOU WON'T REGRET

ganda's foremost tourist attraction and, indeed, one of the world's most remarkable wildlife encounters is tracking the rare mountain gorilla in the remote forests of south-western Uganda. These magnificent animals, found only in the forests of Bwindi Impenetrable and the Virunga volcanoes, number less than 800, over half of them in Uganda.

### **PRIVILEGE**

Mountain gorilla tracking is one of the world's most exclusive and remarkable wildlife encounters. To minimise disturbance to these endangered great apes, only eight people may track each of the habituated gorilla group each day, while viewing time is strictly limited to one hour. As wildlife viewing goes, it is difficult to conceive how or where on earth 60

minutes could be more

rewardingly spent.
Gorilla tracking
offers the privilege
of encountering
one of the world's
rarest animals in
its natural habitat
and, by doing so,
helping to fund its
continued survival.
Although gorillas

are undeniably intelligent and impressive creatures to watch – a silverback can weigh over 200 kg (450 lb) – the greatest rewards are less tangible. The gorilla is one of our closest relatives and few observers emerge from the magic hour without feeling an unfathomable and often profoundly moving connection.

DESTINATION

Climate: The driest months are January and February and June to September, although heavy rain can fall at any time of year. Evening temperatures are cool.

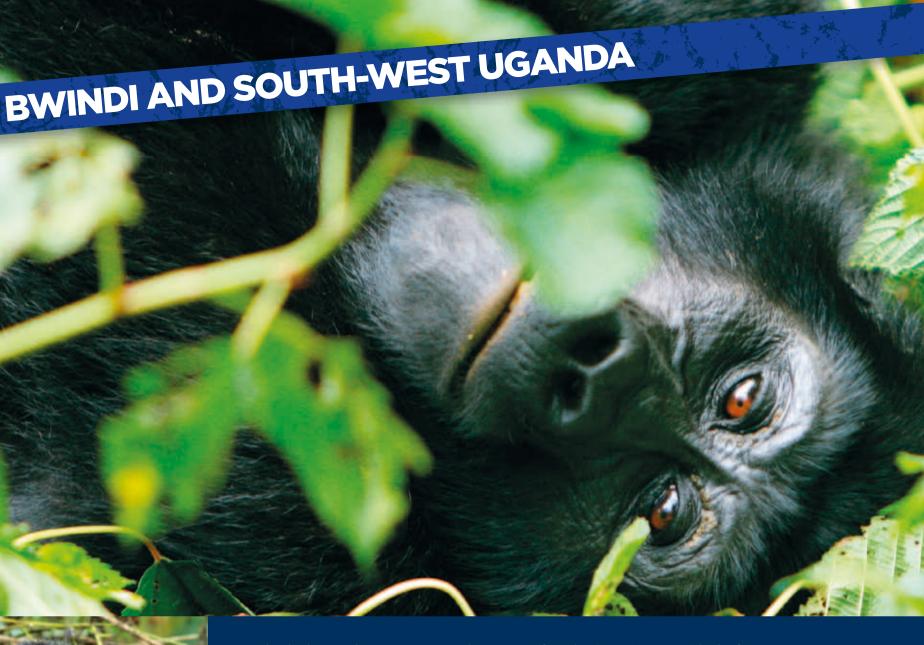
Landscape: Bwindi Forest constitutes an island of remnant forest in a densely cultivated region of hills and deep valleys adjoining the Albertine Rift Valley and the Virunga volcanoes.

## **ATTRACTIONS**

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest: A unique wildlife experience. Biologically, the Bwindi Impenetrable is one of Africa's richest forests, owing to its great age (over 25,000 years) and an altitudinal range spanning 1,400 metres. The impressive list of species includes 350 birds, 310 butterflies, 200 trees, 51 reptiles, 88 moths and 120 mammals including several primates, among them chimpanzees, black-and-white colobus, blue monkeys,

# **CULTURE AND PEOPLE**

The Bwindi hills are inhabited by the Bakiga, hard-working farmers who have shaped the region's distinctive landscape of steep, terraced hills. Batwa Pygmies inhabit the margins of Bwindi and Mgahinga forests. Fascinating forest walks provide insights into their traditional lifestyle.



grey-cheeked mangabey, L'Hoest's monkey and our star attraction, the mountain gorilla. Bwindi has 10 habituated gorilla groups, which are tracked from four trailheads. Eight permits are available for each group, giving a daily maximum of 80 permits. Tracking the mountain gorilla takes two to eight hours depending on the location of the group. The adventure requires a reasonable level of fitness, as the Impenetrable Forest is well named – the gorilla's homeland comprises dense, tangled vegetation on a mountainous landscape of deep valleys and steep ridges.

## INSIGHT

Bwindi is also one of Uganda's top birdwatching destinations, with 350 types of bird including many localised Albertine Rift endemic species. Outside the forest, Community Walks provide an insight into the lives of the Bakiga people living beside the forest. A walk through nearby Buniga Forest with a Batwa Pygmy guide demonstrates the traditional hunter-gatherer existence of Uganda's oldest extant tribal group.

Mgahinga Gorilla National Park: This small park, covering just 38 sq km, has a magnificent setting on the northern slopes of the Virunga volcanoes. Two rare primates, mountain gorillas and golden monkeys, can be tracked, although the gorillas frequently roam 'out of bounds' into neighbouring Rwanda and Congo. The park's three dormant volcanoes can be climbed; and on the summit of Mount Sabinyo, you can stand simultaneously in Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic



where underground acoustics add resonance to a memorable musical finale.

Lake Mburo National Park: Our smallest

savanna park (370 sq km)provides a welcome break on the long drive between Kampala and the gorilla parks of south-western Uganda. Mihingo Lodge, perched atop an ancient

granite kopje, provides a perfect base to explore a mosaic of habitats including open water, wetland, grassland, woodland and forest patches. Wildlife species such as impala, zebra, eland and topi that are rare or absent from other Ugandan parks can be viewed on game drives, a boat cruise and on horseback.

Lake Bunyonyi: Dotted with islands and enclosed by steep, terraced hills, Africa's second-deepest lake is unforgettably scenic. Island lodges and camps provide perfect settings to recuperate after the exertion of tracking gorillas.

Accommodation: Lake Mburo and the Bwindi and Mgahinga trailheads are all provided with upmarket and mid-range option lodges. Comfortable mid-range lodges and hotels are also available at Lake Bunyonyi and the regional towns of Kabale and Kisoro.

The Bwindi trailheads are eight to 10 hours' drive from Kampala. Tarmac extends to the towns of Kabale, Kisoro and Rukungiri, beyond which dirt roads wind into the hills. The journey is best covered over two days, stopping overnight in Lake Mburo. Daily flights from Kampala to Kihihi (40 km from Buhoma) take just 90 minutes.

TRAVEL



# QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

# HIGE VARIETY OF WILDLIFE IN A STUNNING

LOCATON

ganda's most scenic and diverse park has a fabulous location on the floor of the Albertine Rift Valley, 914 metres above sea level, at the foot of the 5,100 metre Rwenzori Mountains.

Varied habitats such as lakes, rivers, open savanna, acacia woodland, tropical forest and vast wetlands support an impressive 95 mammal species and over 600 species of bird – a remarkable total for a park covering less than 2,000 sq km and one that is surpassed in Africa only by the neighbouring and larger Virunga National Park in Congo.

### **SPECTACULAR**

With boat trips on the 40 km Kazinga Channel, a meandering drive among spectacular volcanic craters, lion viewing on the Kasenyi

# LANDSCAPE

The national park lies on the floor of the Albertine Rift Valley where it is enclosed by the valley's bounding escarpments, the Rwenzori Mountains and lakes Edward and George.





Plains, chimpanzee tracking in the depths of Kyambura Gorge, walks into the dark depths of Maramagambo Forest and game drives beneath the vast skies of the remote wilderness of Ishasha, Queen Elizabeth National Park has plenty to interest any visitor.

Climate: The park experiences two rainy seasons during March-May and August-November. Its location on the low-lying rift valley floor is hotter and drier than most parts of Uganda with a mean maximum temperature of 28°C (80°F).

People: The plains beneath the Rwenzori Mountains to the north are inhabited by Basangora pastoralists while Bakiga, Banyaraguru and Ankole people live south of the Kazinga Channel.

### **ATTRACTIONS**

Channel cruise: The park's most enduring activity is the two-hour return launch trip from Mweya Peninsula along the Kazinga Channel to Lake Edward. The shoreline is home to crocodiles, hundreds of hippo and a variety of waterbirds, while herds of elephant, buffalo, leopard, waterbuck and Uganda kob are regular visitors from the plains beyond.





# QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

Game viewing: East of Mweya, the Kasenyi grasslands are known for the lion prides that prey on large herds of Uganda kob. Lion encounters are guaranteed by accompanying the park's Predator Research Project as its members monitor radio-tagged prides. In the far south of Queen Elizabeth National Park lie the remote grasslands of Ishasha. These

are home to elephant, topi, buffalo and the

TRAVEL

Two roughly equidistant routes, both on good tarmac, lead from Kampala to Mweya in the heart of the park. A northern approach runs via Fort Portal and the Rwenzori (410 km) and a southern route passes Lake Mburo (420 km). Ishasha, in the southern part of the park, is just 63 km from Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Daily flights from Kampala to airstrips near Mweya and Ishasha take 90 minutes.

park's most famous residents, the treeclimbing lions of Ishasha.

### **Volcanic craters:**

A 24 km Crater Drive winds through a scenic cluster of extinct volcanic craters filled, variously, with lakes, forest and savanna. Flamingos regularly visit additional craters at Kyambura and Katwe. At Katwe Salt

Lake, just outside the national park, visitors can see salt being produced, using a centuries-old method, from evaporation pans.

Forest walks: In the shady Maramagambo Forest birdwatchers can add forest species to their water and grassland sightings. Chimpanzees and other primates are found in the depths of the nearby Kyambura Gorge.



**Accommodation:** Hotels and lodges exist for all budgets. Options include upmarket lodges and tented camps as well as basic hostels, cottages and campsites. Mid-range and budget options are found outside the park boundary.









also the Central Reservations Office for:

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sustaining large numbers of resident hippo. crocodile and waterbirds as well as other regularly visiting animals. After dropping into the national park at Karuma Falls, the river races down 80 km of rapids before crashing 40 metres (130 ft) onto the rift valley floor over the thunderous Murchison Falls. River launches ply the broad, tranquil stream below the falls to provide a novel, reliable and ACCOMMODATION comfortable means of

game viewing.

Traditional game drives are available as well as forest walks in search of birds and primates. Outside the

park, the rich history of the ancient Bunyoro Kingdom can be explored at a number of cultural sites.

**Climate:** The Nile corridor below Murchison Falls is the lowest part of Uganda and temperatures are hot, with a mean high of 29°C (80°F). Wet seasons occur during mid March-June and August-September.

Landscape: Culture and people: The Murchison Nile separates two distinct ethnic groups, the Bantu-speaking Bunyoro and the Nilotic peoples of northern Uganda. South of the river, the Bunyoro Kingdom was once one of Africa's greatest empires. More recently, thousands of Acholi and Langi people living north of the Nile were displaced during a prolonged rebellion. Although the region has been at peace since 2006, these societies are struggling to return to normal.

### **MAJOR ATTRACTIONS**

The park contains three virtually mandatory visitor activities. First is the morning game drive across the beautiful Buligi grasslands to the shores of the Albert Nile. Game drives are. of course, a standard component of any East African safari. Game cruises. DESTINATIO





Murchison Falls National Park contains two

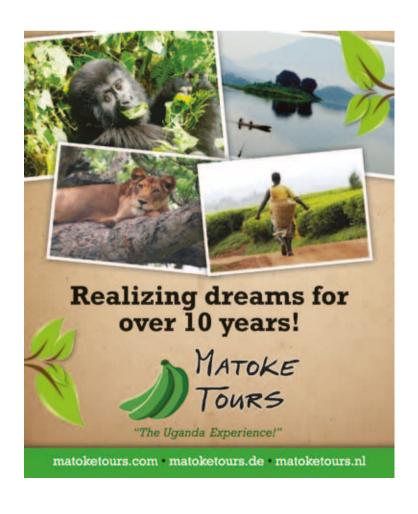
upmarket hotels and a tented camp and a

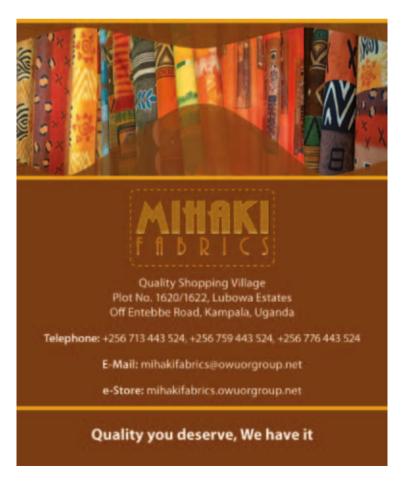
choice of mid-market and budget options.

# Viva Safaris Uganda



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# MURCHISON FALLS

on the other hand, are considerably rarer, while those who travel between wildlife-rich river banks to the base of the highest waterfall on the Nile can be counted on a single finger. The Murchison launch trip is as unique as the sight of the falls is unforgettable. Even so, the prospect must certainly be supplemented by a visit to the Top of the Falls to see, hear and feel the waters of the mighty Nile exploding through a 6 metre gorge.

### **POPULAR**

Murchison is a popular birdwatching destination, with 450 species recorded. Additional craft cruise downriver towards Lake Albert to seek waterbirds, most notably the shoebill, while 59 'restricted range' species, including Albertine rift endemics and rare Central African species, await in the Budongo and Kaniyo Pabidi forests. Primates, including chimpanzee, can also be tracked in Kaniyo Pabidi forest.





Paraa, the park's main tourism hub, is 310 km from Kampala. A surfaced road extends as far as Masindi town, 85 km before Paraa. Daily flights from Kampala to Murchison take one hour.

Cultural sites: Hoima town, south of the park, contains cultural attractions related to the Bunyoro Kingdom: Mparo Tombs, Hoima Palace and Katasiha Fort. At Kibero Salt Gardens beside Lake Albert, salt has been produced since the 13th century.

Bringing rhinos home: Guided walks in the 70 sq km Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary provide the only opportunity to encounter rhinos in the wild in Uganda. Heavy poaching during the 1980s had left Uganda without rhinos, until animals from Kenya and the United States were brought to Ziwa in 2004-5. The sanctuary's first baby was born in 2009 from a Kenyan father and American mother. His name?

# EASTERN & NORTHERN UGANDA

# FARAWAY LAND OF MOUNTAINS, FORESTS AND WATERFALLS

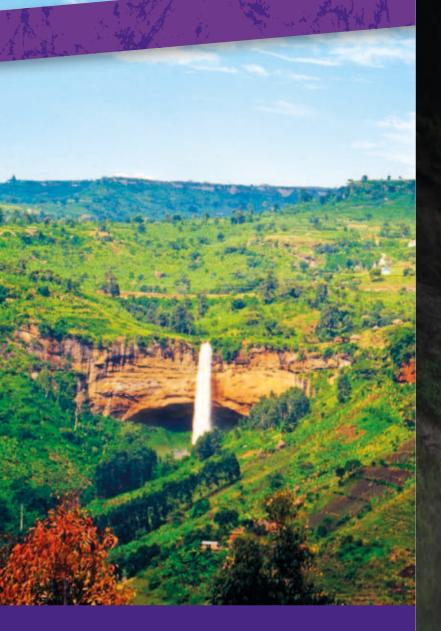


hile the beaten tourist track runs south-west from Kampala, those heading in the opposite direction can discover some equally beautiful but far from crowded destinations.

Eastern Uganda's most distinctive geographical feature is the 4,321 metre high Mount Elgon, the world's largest free-standing volcanic mountain. On its slopes, walkers will find waterfalls, montane panoramas and vast forests. Far to the north, on the border with South Sudan, an exciting diversity of wildlife is found in Kidepo Valley National Park, one of Africa's last great wildernesses.

Climate: Mount Elgon experiences dry seasons from June to August and December to March. Night-time temperatures are cold at high altitude. Kidepo Valley is hotter and drier, with a single, prolonged dry season between October and March.

Culture and people: The Bagisu people on the southern slopes of Mount Elgon are known for their biannual imbalu ceremony in which boys are initiated into manhood through circumcision. The Karamojong, who live between



Mount Elgon and Kidepo Valley, are pastoralists who continue to resist change in favour of their traditional, semi-nomadic lifestyle.

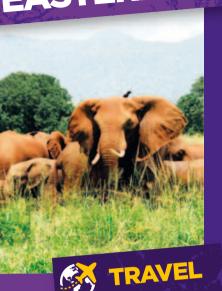
### **MAJOR ATTRACTIONS**

Mount Elgon: Mount Elgon National Park is an ideal setting for both short and extended hikes. The park's Forest Exploration Centre at Kapkwai offers guided walks through montane forest and bamboo to reach caves and waterfalls. Longer treks, several days in duration, ascend to the 4,321 metre summit of the mountain. The main peaks form the fractured rim of the world's largest caldera, 8 km in diameter, containing glacial lakes and hot springs.

Marvellous opportunities for walking also exist outside the park, notably at Sipi village, where

## LANDSCAPE

Uganda's eastern frontier is covered by extensive plains dotted with extinct volcanoes and isolated mountain ranges. The highest and most extensive of these is the 4,000 sq km Mount Elgon. Moving north through the remote region of Karamoja towards Kidepo Valley, the landscape becomes progressively drier. EASTERN & NORTHERN UGANDA



the Sipi River plunges in quick succession over three lofty waterfalls. If rambling seems rather too pedestrian, longer distances and greater heights can be achieved by mountain biking and tandem paragliding.

Accommodation: Mount Elgon National
Park offers basic cottages at Kapkwai, while
mid-range lodges, backpacker cottages and
campsites surround Sipi village. At the foot of
the mountain, below the towering Wanale

Cliffs, Mbale town contains several good hotels and is an ideal base for exploring the region.

Travel: Mbale is 230 km (four hours' drive) from Kampala on good tarmac roads and Sipi another 50 km (one hour's drive).

Many visitors travel between Kampala and Kidepo by plane, preferring the 1 hour 45 minute flight to a 590 km drive. However, growing numbers are travelling overland, stopping overnight in Murchison Falls National Park or the

towns of Gulu or Kitgum.

Kidepo Valley National Park: Located on the Sudan border in the farthest corner of wild Karamoja district, Kidepo is one of Africa's most magnificent wildernesses. Big game





favourites - elephant, giraffe, zebra, eland, hartebeest, lion, hyena and cheetah, and perhaps Africa's largest single herd of buffalo - roam extensive grasslands surrounded by distant mountain ranges. Wildlife includes species that are rare or absent from other Ugandan-protected areas such as aardwolf, bat-eared fox, cheetah, striped hyena and ostrich. Its isolation means that Kidepo is little visited and visitors can expect a high degree of solitude.

**Accommodation:** Includes two lodges (one upmarket and one mid range), basic cottages and wilderness campsites.

**Other attractions:** Nyero Rock paintings near Kumi.



# JINJA AND THE NILE

of adventure still persists and the turbulent headwaters of this iconic river can also be experienced with kayaks, rafts, jet boats, quad bikes and - this may not be for everyone - with a bungee rope strapped around one's ankles.

Climate: The Nile corridor enjoys good weather all year round.

Culture and people: The Nile at Jinja divides two tribes; the Baganda live on the west bank and the Basoga on the eastern or Jinja side. The Nile is of great cultural importance to both groups and rituals are performed at shrines at Bujagali Falls and Kalagala Falls.

### **MAJOR ATTRACTIONS**

Jinja: With a combination of high-octane activities and relaxing excursions, decent hotels and restaurants, pleasant scenery and an enduring historical significance, the Jinja Nile is one of Uganda's main tourism destinations, offering relaxation, history and adventure.

The main attraction in the quiet, riverside town of Jinia is a visit to Speke's Source of the Nile. Seven kilometres to the north, the pace of life

is very different at Bujagali, now firmly established as East Africa's adventure tourism hub. Each year, thousands of tourists, backpackers and overland truckers flock to the river to raft a sequence of high-grade rapids on what is considered one of the world's finest tracts of white water.

### **ACTIVITIES**

Rafting is no longer the only high point, however. Other activities to keep the adrenalin flowing include kayaking, quad biking, jet boating, and a 44-metre bungee jump over the river. The full menu caters for mild as well as wild tastes. The creation of Lake Bujagali behind a new hydro-power dam in 2012 has opened the way for gentler excursions such as family boat trips, fishing excursions, sundowner cruises and paddle boarding. On shore, horse riding and mountain biking provide alternative means of exploration.











# UGANDA HOTEL OWNERS ASSOCIATION

he Uganda Hotel Owners' Association (UHOA) has been in operation for over 12 years and has more than 200 members.

The association was founded in order to provide a common thread for Uganda's hotel owners by promoting and protecting accommodation services nationwide.. The constant aim has been to provide up-to-date information about the standards of accommodation and hospitality being offered to both domestic and international tourists.

### **VISION**

Year by year, the tourism and hotel sector in Uganda has continued to grow, with a notable increase in both the number of new properties and the room capacity of existing hotels.

The expansion of tourism activities, such as gorilla and chimpanzee trekking, birdwatching, bungee jumping, fishing and rafting, has helped support the standards and demand for new hotels. The association constantly monitors all improvements in the hotel industry, from infrastructure to staff training and the quality of hospitality.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership is open to all hotels, inns, motels, camps and lodges that are formally registered and actively work in the hotelkeeping industry. Approved membership runs for a year and there is an annual subscription fee.



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KAMPALA SERENA HOTEL PO Box 7814, Kintu Road, Kampala Tel: +256 (0)414 309 000 Fax: +256 (0)414 259 130 Email: info@serena.co.ug www.serenahotels.com

## **KASANGATI RESORT CENTER** 8km, Kampala-Gayaza Road

PO Box 9957, Kampala Tel: +256 (0)777 912 659; (0)772 466 840; (0)777 912 650 Email: info@kasangatiresort.com www.kasangatiresort.com

**LAKE HEIGHTS HOTEL**Plot 13, Church Road, Entebbe

## **LE PETIT VILLAGE HOTEL** Plot 1273, Ggaba Road

PO Box 12721, Kampala Tel: +256 (0)312 265 530/4 Cell: +256 (0)772 500 501 Fax: +256 (0)414 510 465 Email: emily@lepetitvillage.net www.lepetitvillage.net

## LINDSAY COTTAGES Plot 30, Lubowa Estate

PO Box 33566, Kampala Tel: +256 (0)414 200 587 Cell: +256 (0)782 535 696 Fax: +256 (0)414 200 475 Email: lbaliddawa@yahoo.com www.lindsaycottages.co.ug

**LUMAS INN** Plot 36, Old Kampala Road PO Box 16248, Kampala Tel: +256 (0)414 345 267 Cell: +256 (0)772 440 037 Email: nasmainn@yahoo.com

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## NAMIREMBE GUEST HOUSE Plot 1085, Willis Road

PO Box 14127, Kampala Tel: +256 (0)414 273 778 Fax: +256 (0)414 273 904 Email: ngh@utonline.co.ug www.namirembe-guesthouse.com

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NEW GLORIA HOTEL Plot 90, William Street PO Box 9006, Kampala Tel: +256 (0)41 257 797; 257 790 Fax: +256 (0)41 234 265 Email: interantionalfarms@yahoo.com

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**SPEKE RESORT MUNYONYO** Munyonyo, PO Box 7036, Kampala Tel: +256 (0)414 227 111; (0)414 227 434 Fax: +256 (0)31 222 7110 Email: spekeresort@spekeresort.com www.spekeresort.com

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## CENTRAL UGANDA - JINJA

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## **DESERT BREEZE HOTEL**Plot 20, Odaa Close

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### **WESTERN UGANDA**

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## BIRDNEST@BUNYONYI RESORT

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## **BUDANGO ECO LODGE** c/o Uganda Lodges

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## **BUNYONYI SAFARIS RESORT** c/o Bunyonyi Safaris Ltd

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## FORT MOTEL Plot 2, Lugard Road

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### **GORILLLA SAFARI LODGE**

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### REEN HILLS HOTEL

Kabale

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# UGANDA FACT FILE



**Administrative divisions:** 111 districts across four administrative regions

**Area:** 93,065 sq km (land: 76,101 sq km, water 16,965 sq km)

**Borders:** 2,698 km (Democratic Republic of Congo 765 km, Kenya 933 km, Rwanda 169 km, South Sudan 435 km, Tanzania 396 km).

**Banking hours:** Mon to Fri 8.30 am to 6.00 pm; Sat 9.00 am to 4.00 pm.

Business hours: Mon to Fri 8.30 am to 5.30 pm.

Capital: Kampala.

Climate: Tropical. Rainy seasons, March to May, and September to November; dry seasons, December to February and mid June to mid August. Mean annual temperatures range from about 16°C (61°F) in the southwestern highlands to 25°C (77°F) in the northwest; but in the northeast, temperatures exceed 30°C (86°F) about 254 days per year.

**Currency:** The Uganda Shilling (UGX).

**Elevations:** Highest point: Margherita Peak on Mount Stanley at 5,110 metres.

**Ethnic groups:** Buganda, Iteso, Basoga, Banyankore, Banyarwanda, Bakiga, Lango, Acholi, Lugbara, Banyoro, Batoro, Karamojong and European. **Electricity:** 240 volts AC 50 Hz. Square-pin plugs mostly used.

Exchange rate: UGX 2,350 per US dollar (2011)

**History:** Uganda gained independence from Britain in 1962, maintaining its Commonwealth membership.

**Industries:** Cotton, coffee, tea, sugar, tobacco and textiles.

**Geography:** Uganda is landlocked. The south of the country includes a substantial portion of Lake Victoria. The centre is dominated by Lake Kyoga.

**Languages:** The official language is English, although many other languages are spoken in Uganda.

Public holidays: 1 January, 26 January (Liberation Day), 8 March (International Women's Day), Good Friday, Easter Monday, 1 May (Labour Day), 3 June (Martyrs' Day), 9 June (National Heroes' Day), 30 August (Eid al-Fitr/End of Ramadan), 9 October (Independence Day), 6 November (Eid al-Adha/Feast of the Sacrifice) 25 December (Christmas Day), 26 December (Boxing Day).

Population: 34.5 million (2011 estimate)

International dialling code: +256

Time: GMT +3.

Religions: Christian 84 per cent, Muslim 12 per cent, other 1 per cent, none 0.7 per cent (2002 census).

Topography: The greater part of Uganda consists of a plateau. Along the western border are the Rwenzori Mountains. The eastern frontier is dominated by Mount Elgon, while the Western Rift Valley runs from north to south through the western half of the country.



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