

Natural history specialties of Uganda

Experience a small-group guided tour in Uganda with expert English-speaking guidance, German translation services, and a trilingual birding leader.

„Shoebills, Gorillas & Chimpanzees“

6 PAGES - 17 DAYS

“Investment in travel is an investment in yourself”
- Matthew Karsten

Overview

This itinerary covers Uganda's most beautiful habitats, from lush rainforests to wild savannahs, wetlands, and swamps. It has been carefully curated in collaboration with renowned local Uganda experts and extensively tested by us. The accommodations are in the good middle-class Uganda standard category, selected with a strong focus on value for money, and we can confidently recommend all of them.

The journey starts and ends in Entebbe, Uganda's only international airport, located on the shores of Lake Victoria. The western part of the country is dedicated to observing the richest variety of bird species, intense birding, butterfly watching, and, of course, observing Africa's typical mammals. The west is home to many endemics of the northern Albertine Rift and some species from the Congo rainforest. Therefore, we will see coastal forest and savanna birds, as well as highly interesting sightings like tree-climbing lions, Nubian giraffes, the Defassa waterbuck, topi, and many other species.

A walk through the Botanical Gardens of Entebbe alone will captivate you. The namesake of this trip, the shoebill, an evolutionary marvel belonging to the pelican family, will be our first target in the Mabamba Swamps at the beginning of the journey. In the Bwindi rainforest, we will participate in the world-famous gorilla trekking, where we will also observe numerous other fascinating primates; here, permits are guaranteed, by the way! The Queen Elizabeth National Park is home to forest elephants and giant forest hogs. Chimpanzees and other primates can be observed through tracking in Kibale.

The experience with rare mammals, numerous colourful butterflies, fascinating reptiles, and beautiful bird species will also delight you at Murchison Falls/Kabalega Falls, where the Nile river carves out stunning landscapes between Lake Albert and Lake Victoria! In the Budongo Forest, we'll add more species to our bird list, particularly those from the Ituri Region in the Congo, a destination once enjoyed by royal families who marvelled at this wealth of species.



Accommodation pre-checked:

All lodges have been tested and provide you with the necessary comfort of standard middle-class accommodations with en-suite bathrooms. All accommodations are strategically located to optimise excellent observations and ensure proper route logistics for travel and sightseeing throughout Uganda.

Days 1 & 2

* 2 overnight stays @ [Airport Guest House](#)

inclusive:

- * All Meals
- * Boat / Canoe Trip in the Mabamba Swamps



Days 3 & 4

* 2 overnight stays @ [Rwakobo Rock Lodge](#)

inclusive:

- * All Meals
- * Boatcruise on Lake Mbuo
- * Game Drive in the National Park in search of topis, eland antelopes, Nubian giraffes, anubis baboons, dwarf mongooses, and other mammals

Arrival, Bird Watching at the Entebbe Botanical Gardens, and First Shoebill Expedition

The Entebbe Botanical Garden is located on the northern shore of Lake Victoria, practically on the equator, covering an area of 40.7 hectares. This habitat is home to a variety of dragonflies, butterflies, and a multitude of birds (over 206 species).

Mantled guerezas, green and red-tailed monkeys, can be spotted in the trees and are very tame. Of course, observing intelligent grey parrots, superb sunbirds, the impressive great blue turaco, and brightly coloured birds like double-toothed barbets and black-headed gonoleks is inspiring. We also take pleasure in the vibrant agamas and, hopefully, fruit bats.

On the shores of Lake Victoria lies a wetland area protected by the local community, known as the Mabamba-Kamengo Wetland. Using a relatively large canoe, we glide through the papyrus swamp landscape to observe and photograph the extraordinary shoebill.

Shoebill in the Mabamba Wetlands and many Species in Lake Mbuo National Park

The shoebill is an extremely impressive and quite large bird from the pelican family, undoubtedly one of the most coveted sightings for many naturalists.

Lake Mbuo National Park covers an area of 260 km² and boasts a distinct fauna compared to other reserves. It is the only national park that encompasses an entire lake. The park is nestled in gentle hills and open grassy valleys, with four other smaller lakes within its boundaries.

Interestingly, it is home to the Bohm's zebra, a steppe zebra with contrasting stripes.

In this area, we encounter an abundance of unique bird species, but we are particularly excited to spot the namesake of our company, the "Yellow-throated Leaflove," as well as the papyrus gonolek and the African finfoot, among others.

Days 5 & 6

* 2 overnight stays @ Broadbill Forest Camp

inclusive:

- * All Meals
- * Gorillatrekking **inclusive Permit**



Gorillas in „Bwindi Impenetrable Forest“

The Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is located in southwestern Uganda, stretching across the flanks of the Albert Rift, the northernmost part of the East African Rift Valley. It generally lies at a high altitude and is consequently cooler, with temperatures that can drop to 9 degrees Celsius. We are excited to encounter the Jackson's chameleon, along with numerous beautiful butterflies, frogs, and bats. Perhaps we will even find the Handsome Spurfowl, which is worth seeing just for its name alone.

The African Bird Club ranks forest bird watching in Bwindi as the number one experience in Africa! Early on, we embark on a challenging trek into the jungle. Finally, we come face to face with the forest gorillas, an experience of a lifetime! It's a wonderful experience to gaze into the eyes of these gentle giants, observing them in awe as they play and go about their daily activities.

Days 7 & 8

* 2 overnight stays @ Buhoma Community Haven Lodge

inclusive:

- * All Meals



Buhoma Main Trail

The forest walks in Bwindi are filled with diverse life, and you find yourself in an exhausting, non-stop mode of observation amidst this incredibly fertile forest landscape. The local guides have hundreds of sights in mind, and time and again, you focus on a new bird species, a type of monkey, delicate plants, massively impressive trees, magnificent ferns, and butterflies.

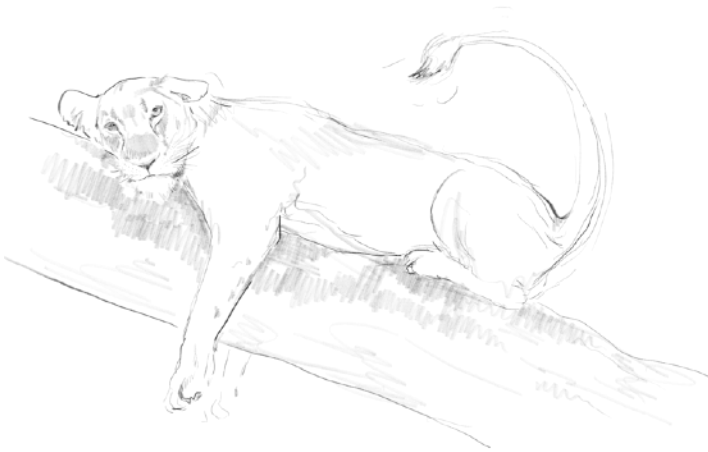
The hope of spotting the Angola pitta, red-eyed wattle-eye, black-crowned waxbill, common bristlebill, and the elusive Kivu ground thrush should inspire us to explore the forest thoroughly.

Days 9 & 10

* 2 overnight stays @ Queen Elisabeth Bush Lodge

inclusive:

- * All Meals
- * Game Drives in the National Park
- * Boat Cruise in the National Park on the Kazinga Channel



Days 11 & 12

* 2 overnight stays @ Kibale Forest Camp

inclusive:

- * All Meals
- * Chimpanzee - trekking, **inclusive of Permit**



Queen Elizabeth National Park

Queen Elizabeth National Park, the second-largest national park in Uganda, is one of the most sought-after destinations in Uganda due to its diversity, boasting over 100 mammal species, 620 bird species, and a daily observation record of 296 bird species.

Among the numerous bird species, we will specifically search for the famous tree-climbing lions in the Ishasha Sector, which is truly sensational as these lions have developed this unique behaviour.

Of course, the forest elephants (*Loxodonta cyclotis* - you have seen *L. africana* with us in Namibia), giant forest hogs, Uganda kob, and the elusive side-striped jackal are equally fascinating and worth observing.

With the massive backdrop of the Ruwenzori Mountains, the photo opportunities are simply perfect. And, of course, we won't miss the boat ride on the Kazinga Channel, a wide, 32-kilometer natural channel in Uganda that connects Lake George and the larger Lake Edward.

Chimpanzees in Kibale Forest National Park

The Bigodi Wetland is a community-based conservation initiative by the local population of Uganda. Here, we will go on an intensive bird and butterfly watching walk.

Interestingly, Sitatungas (water kudus) inhabit this area, otters can be spotted in the waters, and even the otherwise elusive bushpig can be found here.

In Kibale, there are 13 different primate species! Besides chimpanzees, the L'Hoest's monkeys and black-and-white colobus monkeys are particularly interesting.

We will visit the chimpanzees through an active "Chimpanzee Trekking."

The bird photographer hopes to capture images of the Green-breasted Pitta, Black Bee-eater, Yellow-spotted Nicator, Abyssinian Ground-Thrush, not to mention various raptors.

Day 13

* 1 overnight stay @ [Masindi Hotel](#)

inclusive:

* All Meals

Those who haven't yet discovered the world of butterflies will quickly develop an enthusiasm for "flying flowers" here! You won't want to move on from this place, as the remarkable butterfly experience will keep your cameras locked onto your eyes.

Days 14, 15 & 16

* 3 overnight stays @ [Fort Murchison](#)

inclusive:

- * All Meals
- * Game Drives in the National Park
- * Boat Trip to the Bottom of Murchison Falls
- * Boat Trip on the Victoria Nile to Lake Albert



„Royal Mile“ in Budongo Forest

The Budongo Forest is a wildlife reserve adjacent to Murchison Falls National Park in northwestern Uganda, known for its incredible biodiversity. Even the royal family appreciated its value, which is why this exposed stretch of the forest is called the Royal Mile.

You are already familiar with rock hyraxes from Namibia; now, you will see rainforest tree hyraxes. Among various monkey species, we look forward to encountering diademed monkeys.

Of course, there are hundreds of bird species to see here as well, including the Red-tailed Bristlebill, White-thighed Hornbill, Black-and-White-casqued Hornbill, Yellow-billed Barbet, and African Dwarf Kingfisher, which are sure to convert even those who are not dedicated birdwatchers.

African Mammals, Palms, and Bird Watching in Murchison Falls National Park

As we journey through Uganda's largest and oldest national park, we will actively seek out rare bird species such as the Mocking cliff chat and various cliff-dwelling birds. The Butiaba Escarpment is both scenically captivating and full of ornithological surprises.

While in the park, we will target smaller animals and birds for observation, but amid the beautiful Borassus palm savannahs, we will undoubtedly see many savanna elephants, buffalo, Rothschild's giraffes, lions, and, of course, a variety of antelope species like Jackson's hartebeest and Uganda kob. Among the almost overwhelming new sightings, we particularly hope to observe the Abyssinian Ground Hornbill and, above all, the Pel's Fishing Owl.

An evening game drive is on the agenda. The atmosphere on these drives is unique (weather-dependent, as always on the equator), and we'll enjoy sightings of the tiny fat mouse, white-tailed mongoose, Bunyoro bushbaby, and perhaps even a leopard or spotted hyenas. You can hear the calls of the nine different nightjars everywhere, and we will track them down and illuminate them for photography.

Day 17

* Day room @ [Airport Guest House](#)

Note:

Since most flights to Europe depart in the late afternoon with various layovers, we have not included an overnight stay here to avoid extended waiting times.

Inclusions:

- * Transportation in safari-friendly 4x4 Toyota Landcruiser (owned by the local provider)
- * Transfers as indicated in the itinerary
- * Window seat / Single seat for each participant
- * Accommodations and meals as indicated in the itinerary
- * Activities as indicated in the itinerary
- * Entrance fees to national parks and attractions in the itinerary, including local fees and ranger fees
- * Trilingual guidance by Albert Voigts
- * Excellent and well-known local nature guide (English)
- * Drinking water
- * Gorilla permit and entrance (US\$ 700)
- * Chimpanzee permit and entrance (US\$ 200)

Exclusions:

- * Personal expenses (laundry, etc.)
- * Night game drives
- * Drinks and tips
- * International flights
- * Visa (US\$ 50, obtained online)
- * Travel insurance

Murchison Falls Drive to Entebbe and Departure

Today, we will visit the Murchison Falls on the upper side and then continue our leisurely journey to Entebbe.

Caution regarding flight booking:

The departure flight should be scheduled no earlier than 4:00 PM, as we will only arrive in Murchison at 1:00 PM. Otherwise, we would be happy to book another overnight stay for you in Entebbe!



2024 / 2025 Price per Person:

- * 2 Persons: \$ 12.837,-
- * 3 Persons: \$ 10.100,-
- * 4 Persons: \$ 8.632,-
- * 5 Persons: \$ 7.881,-
- * 6 Persons: \$ 7.323,-

- * Single room supplement: \$ 650,-

Contact

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