

Tukwanirizza e Uganda

- Welcome to Uganda-



Short Travel Guide - by Africa Safari Trips

The best preparation for your safari...!

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AFRIKA SAFARI B.V. Prinsenland 26, 2675 EK Honselersdijk
TEL +1 518-559-1470 **E-MAIL** safari@africasafaritrips.com
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 84654058 **VAT** NL 8632 99672 B.01
INTERNATIONAL BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER NL84 RABO 0376 9475 27
SWIFT/BIC CODE RABONL2U



Introduction

You are about to embark on a wonderful safari to Uganda, known as the Pearl of Africa, a country with records to spare. It features the world's largest tropical lake —Lake Victoria— which is the origin of the longest river —the mighty Nile River. Besides, it features the strongest waterfall and the largest number of primates and mountain gorillas worldwide. This booklet gives you some tips and information that will help you prepare for your trip!

Background



Uganda can be found in East Africa, west of Kenya, south of South Sudan, east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and north of Rwanda and Tanzania. The country has a population of 48 million people, who belong to 56 different tribes and many times speak their own tribal language. The main tribes are [Baganda](#) (16,2%), [Iteso](#) (8.1%), [Banyankole](#) (8%), [Basoga](#) (7,7%) and [Bakiga](#) (7,1%). The Baganda is the most dominant tribe, with many influential people. But in general, a balance between the tribes is maintained.

The official national languages of Uganda are English and Swahili. Of the two, English is the most popular and most used, mainly because the country was a British protectorate until 1962. This means almost everyone in Uganda speaks English!

Swahili was only added as a national language in 2022, and since then it's compulsory in primary and secondary schools. Besides, people in Uganda speak several tribal languages due to the many different tribes. Luganda (of the Baganda tribe) is the most popular one. It's mainly spoken in the central part of the country, which is the business hub with the capital city Kampala and the second-largest city of Entebbe.

Cities

[Kampala](#) (picture) is the capital and the largest city in the country, with 1.6 million inhabitants. Another well-known city is Entebbe, in Central Uganda, which is located on Lake Victoria's peninsula, 36 kilometers southwest of Kampala. Even though the cities are usually busy and loud, they do make for an interesting visit and are good to get a feel for modern-day African life.



Putting some facts together

- Capital: Kampala
- Currency: Ugandan Shilling
- Population: 48 million
- Language: Kiswahili and English, and Luganda as the most popular tribal language
- Area: 241 038 km²
- Neighbouring countries: Kenya, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania.
- Highest point: 5,094 metres (Peak Alexandra, in the Rwenzori mountain range).
- Time difference: in summer, Uganda is two hours ahead of the UK, while in wintertime the difference is three hours. The time difference with the USA is 7–10 hours.
- Most popular places: Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Murchison Falls National Park, Kibale Forest National Park, Rwenzori Mountains, Lake Victoria.

Going on a safari in Uganda

In the Western world, *safari* usually means the observation of wild animals in their habitat. Originally, however, it's a Swahili word that refers to a trip or journey. The good thing is that with us, you go on a safari (trip) to see lots of wildlife!

The most popular safari animals in Uganda are the Big Five —lions, elephants, buffaloes, leopards and rhinos— but first and foremost the mountain gorillas and chimpanzees. And the best part is that you can see them all with Africa Safari Trips! Be aware when looking for the Big Five and other savannah animals, that they are most active at sunrise and sunset. Around that time, temperatures are pleasant and most of these animals go look for food. The chance to see the animals in action is best during that time. But also in the middle of the day, there is still plenty of wildlife to see. To spot mountain gorillas and chimpanzees you need to go on special trekkings, that mostly take place in the morning.

What to expect?



A trip to Uganda offers a distinct and dynamic experience. Here, it is common to leave your vehicle behind and venture into the lush rainforests of for example Bwindi Impenetrable National Park or Kibale National Park, tracking gorillas or chimpanzees. This is a captivating adventure, blending a walking safari with a challenging ascent, as you have to reach high altitudes to encounter these majestic creatures. Please be aware that a certain level of fitness is required for this activity, as some paths can be challenging, and hiking may be necessary.

But Uganda's allure extends far beyond these iconic wildlife encounters. One of Uganda's most enchanting features is the verdant and diverse landscapes, offering a plethora of activities. From heart-pounding mountain biking excursions to captivating night game drives, and energizing white water rafts on the River Nile, the longest river in the world that originates here.

For those seeking a more traditional safari experience, Uganda is equally accommodating. You can explore renowned parks like Queen Elizabeth National Park and Murchison Falls National Park by vehicle, guided by a professional who will help you seek out not only the iconic Big Five, but also any other specific wildlife species you desire to witness up close.

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AFRIKA SAFARI B.V. Prinsenland 26, 2675 EK Honselersdijk
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Visit local tribes



In Uganda, one of the most prominent tribes is the Baganda, who live primarily in the central region. They are famous for their rich cultural heritage, which showcases vibrant music and dance integral to the Buganda Kingdom's identity. They also have unique ceremonies, such as "Kwanjula" which marks the formal introduction of the bride to the groom's family and the start of the marriage process, and their traditional attire is a testament to their cultural pride.

The Banyankole people are another significant ethnic group in Uganda, known for their strong cattle-herding tradition and distinctive cultural practices. They are famous for their Ankole long-horned cattle, colourful attire, and the "Ekitaguriro" initiation ceremony that marks the transition to adulthood. Cattle hold great cultural and economic significance for the Banyankole, and their traditions continue to thrive in the modern age.

Lastly, the Batwa - or the so-called pygmies - are a famous tribe in Uganda, and worth a visit. Until recently this tribe lived in the jungle, with little interaction with modern-day society. During a visit, they show their survival skills and their fascinating way of life.

A day on safari - do's and don'ts

Many people are unsure what to expect on a day of safari and wonder what their transport will look like, what a guide does and if there are any rules and regulations. Below, we put together the most important information.



During the safari, you drive around in a 4x4 Land Cruiser or Jeep with a liftable roof. You are going on a private safari with a personal guide, which means you have a lot of freedom. You decide what time the game drives start and what time you want to be back in the lodge. You can decide this on the day itself, but it's good to discuss it with your guide. He can advise you on things to see or do.

In short, feel free to spend your day as you like - if that means relaxing at the lodge in the afternoon while enjoying a drink, by all means, do so. Because even at most camps you can spot the animals you would during a game drive. Just keep in mind park fees only allow you to enter the park once. So if you sleep outside the park, it's not advisable to go back to the lodge for lunch.

The role of your guide

Your guide is one of the most important people during your safari. It's his job to assist you to the best of his ability and make sure you are enjoying the trip. Please keep in mind that not all clients are the same and that he might misjudge your needs. This is why it's good for you to be open about your wishes and needs - it will allow him to do a better job. If you for example want more stories about the country, the people or the animals - be sure to tell him. If you want fewer stories, don't hesitate to let him know that as well.

Talking to other drivers

Guides tend to keep each other posted about special things they have seen. If a driver coming from the opposite direction saw something that might be of interest, he will surely want to let you know. This is why your guide will stop regularly if he sees a car coming from the opposite direction - he will talk to the other guide to make sure you get to see all the special animals.

Guests many times don't understand this, since the guides are speaking to each other in their local language and at first glance seem to just have a nice chat. While in fact, they are trying to give you the best experience possible...! It's good to keep this in mind if you notice your guide stopping to talk to other drivers.

Official safari rules

It's good to be aware of some of the national park's official rules when going on a safari.

1. The national parks are open from 7 am until 6:30 pm and game drives are allowed only within this period. Even when sleeping inside the park, you can only do game drives between these hours. This is to ensure animals can keep their natural rhythm. There are some exceptions; night game drives (allowed in only some parks) come with special permissions to enter the park after 6:30 pm, and balloon safari operators are allowed to be in the park from 5 am on.
2. Parks only issue 24-hour permits. When spending two nights in, for example, Lake Mburo National Park, you will have two permits that allow you to stay 48 hours in the park. If you reach the gate after your permit has expired, the guide will have to pay a fine, so it's good to listen to him when he advises leaving for the gate.
3. A permit allows you to enter the park only once. This means it's not possible to leave the park during the day and come back later. This is why we provide our clients with lunch boxes, which you can open at picnic places in the park or at a beautiful spot your guide will find for you.



Unofficial safari rules

Except for the official rules, there are a few unofficial rules that we ask our guests to adhere to during safari to make sure dangerous situations are avoided and things go smoothly. And of course out of respect for the country, its people, and your guide:

1. Always listen to the rules and advice your guide gives you.
2. Make sure you show up on time at the agreed-upon place.
3. Never leave the car without the permission of your guide.
4. No more than five cars (and sometimes less) are allowed to stop around one animal. This means your guide can decide to drive if there are too many cars.
5. Try to be as quiet as possible when getting close to animals. Avoid unexpected movements and whisper as much as possible. Don't move if someone is trying to make a picture. The guide will also switch off the engine to avoid movement if you are taking a picture. Might he forget, please remind him.
6. Don't litter, not even cigarette buds. Keep your trash separate inside the car, and throw it out once you are back in the lodge.
7. Give presents you might have taken for local people to your guide. He will make an effort to distribute them fairly.

Rules for gorilla and chimpanzee trekking

When embarking on a gorilla or chimpanzee trekking adventure, it is essential to adhere to a set of guidelines. Your guide will provide you with a comprehensive briefing on these rules at the trek's onset. For now, it's good to know that it's best to avoid bright colours in clothing (see also our chapter about [what to wear during a safari](#)), and to take some basics that make the trek more comfortable:

1. A lightweight, waterproof rain jacket or poncho to keep you dry during the sudden rain showers that are common in Uganda's forests.
2. Long-sleeved shirt (blouse) and trousers to protect your skin from thorny branches, insects, and sun exposure. Because of the heat, it's best to opt for lightweight, breathable fabrics.
3. Garden or hiking gloves to protect your hands from itching plants, thorns, and germs while gripping branches or clearing paths.
4. Long socks to tuck your trousers into and prevent ants and insects from crawling up your legs.

5. Waterproof, ankle-supporting, sturdy hiking boots; essential for navigating muddy, slippery, and uneven terrain. They protect against fire ants, thorns, and wet conditions.
6. A waterproof backpack, ideal for carrying your essentials, including snacks, water, and camera gear.
7. Insect repellent is essential to ward off mosquitoes, tsetse flies, and safari ants. Choose a repellent with DEET for maximum effectiveness.

Before you fly

Before you fly to Uganda, there are a few things you need to take care of. You need a visa for starters, you need to book your flight tickets, get your shots, and arrange your (travel) insurance. Read on for all practical information that can help you prepare.

International flight tickets

Book your tickets to and from Entebbe International Airport (EBB) as it serves as the primary international airport for the country. It is situated near the town of Entebbe, approximately 40 kilometers south of the capital city, Kampala. Please note that it is quite common to find flights with stopovers from the United States and Europe to Uganda.

Visa

To enter Uganda, you need a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond your expected return date, as well as a visa. The visa can be obtained online, on the [Ugandan visa website](#), for a fee of 51.50 USD.

East Africa Community Visa (EAC visa)

You might have heard about the EAC visa. This is a visa you can apply for if you travel to several East African countries in one holiday. The EAC visa is a so-called joint tourist visa for people travelling to Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya (but not Tanzania), and can be issued in Uganda or Rwanda if either is the first country you visit.

If you start your holiday in Kenya, you cannot apply for the EAC visa. Even though it's accepted as a valid visa when coming from Uganda or Rwanda, the Kenyan government gives no possibility to apply for it. If Kenya is the first destination of your trip, you have to apply for an eTA for Kenya first and apply for a visa per country or an EAC visa after.

The EAC visa allows single entry into the East African Community and multiple trips between the countries. The cost is USD 100.

Children travelling with one parent

If one of the parents travels with a child below the age of 18, he or she will need a parental consent form from the other parent. Make sure you download and fill out a parental permission form if this applies to you.

Embassy addresses

United Kingdom

Uganda High Commission
58 - 59 Trafalgar Sq, St. James's
London WC2N 5DX
+44 20 7839 5783
e-mail: admin@ugandahighcommission.co.uk
Website: <https://www.london.mofa.go.ug/>

United States

Embassy of the Republic of Uganda
5911 16th Street NW
Washington, DC 20011
+1(202) 726-1727
e-mail: washington@mofa.go.ug
info@ugandaembassyus.org
Website: <https://washington.mofa.go.ug/>

Healthcare and Insurance

Health care in Uganda is of varying quality. Cities like Kampala and Entebbe have some decent hospitals, but it's always better to prevent getting sick. Make sure you have proper health insurance when travelling to Uganda, and check if you want to take malaria medication or the recommended vaccinations. Except for health insurance, we also advise a few other insurances, like for example the Flying Doctors insurance (see below).



Vaccinations

Uganda is a tropical country and some vaccinations are recommended when visiting. We advise you to be on time by asking your physician or local health centre for up-to-date advice on vaccinations (at least two months before your trip, to be on the safe side). Some health insurance plans will cover the cost of various vaccinations, so it may be wise to check with your insurer.

Make sure all your vaccinations are recorded in your yellow vaccination certificate. If you don't already have one, get it while getting your first vaccination. Don't forget to take your vaccination certificate with you on your trip. The customs officer may ask you to show the vaccination certificate. It also contains important information a doctor might need in case of an emergency.

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We have collected information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) webpage to give you a summary of all their recommendations regarding vaccinations needed when travelling to Uganda. However, we are not doctors and we are not, in any way, encouraging or forcing you to follow these instructions. You can use these information pages to go to your family doctor and see what are his/her specific recommendations for your case.

Routine vaccines Chickenpox, tetanus, pertussis, flu, measles, polio, shingles, etc.	Recommended To be up-to-date on all of them
COVID-19	Travelers can enter without any restrictions.
Cholera There is no longer active cholera transmission in Uganda.	Not necessary
Hepatitis A	Recommended
Hepatitis B	Recommended
Malaria¹	No need for a vaccine, but malaria medication is recommended
Rabies	Recommended
Typhoid	Recommended
Yellow Fever²	Required

¹ Malaria

Malaria used to be a problem in Uganda but has been mostly eradicated in recent years. However, most visitors take malaria medication to be sure and protect themselves at night with mosquito repellent. Make sure to pack some long-sleeved tops and trousers in case you want to be outdoors at night. Most lodges are equipped with mosquito nets to avoid contact with mosquitos.

² Yellow Fever

Required for all arriving travelers who are one year old or older and recommended for babies who are older than 9 months old, also when traveling to or from Kenya or Tanzania over land.

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Useful insurances

Make sure to have good health and travel insurance when travelling to Uganda. On top of that, we advise having a few other insurances.

Travel Insurance

We advise our customers to get good travel insurance. Travel insurance usually covers medical costs, as well as damage to or loss of luggage. We gladly recommend [Chapka Insurance](#) (for EU citizens only). It covers any travel and can easily be subscribed to online. Please be aware that you need to take out the policy for Chapka Insurance within 48 hours of finalising your booking with us (when your travel dates are fixed). Also note that Chapka focuses on travel and/or cancellation insurance only, and does NOT facilitate swift evacuation from remote areas during medical emergencies. For this purpose, we recommend the below-mentioned Flying Doctors insurance.

Flying Doctors Insurance

The [AMREF Flying Doctors](#) have been conducting medical evacuation flights in Uganda, Tanzania, Zanzibar (including Mafia and Pemba), Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi since the 1950s. This Flying



Doctor Service is a flying ambulance service with its doctors and pilots on standby 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Flying Doctors insurance adds to your regular travel insurance and is not compulsory. In an emergency, however, they can immediately evacuate you from remote areas and fly you to a hospital in Nairobi / Kenya. Africa Safari Trip is a member of the Flying Doctors, which means we can arrange this for you.

The costs for Flying Doctors Insurance are 40 USD per person for 30 days.

Please note: The price covers your trip to one or more countries mentioned above. The service does not include hospital costs, medical treatments and medicines, so adequate travel health insurance is still needed next to the Flying Doctors Insurance. Also, mountain evacuations are not covered by the AMREF Flying Doctors.

Travel cancellation insurance

Travel cancellation insurance is also recommended in case you need to cancel your holiday before departure or during the trip. Be aware that some insurances only partly reimburse the amount in the event of a cancellation, so be sure to check this carefully!

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Luggage and travel essentials

Our vehicles have limited space for luggage during the safari. Therefore, we request you leave your hard-case suitcases at home, and travel with soft-case bags that are easy to stow away in our vehicles. Soft-case bags are also less likely to get damaged on the road.

Baggage during your flights

Please check with your airline to know the size, weight and number of pieces of baggage permitted on your international flight. Also, make sure you carry essential items in your hand luggage during the international flight, in case your suitcases are delayed or get lost during the flight.



Domestic and regional flights (for example to Masai Mara National Reserve or Kisumu) have a baggage limitation of up to 15kg per person (depending on the airline), **and allow soft case bags only!** If your luggage exceeds this limit, the flight company might charge between 3 and 5 USD for each extra kilo, which you can pay directly at the check-in desk. Please note that if you travel with hard-case suitcases, the domestic airline can block you from flying. As a guideline, standard checked luggage should not exceed 24 inches (60 cm) x 18 inches (45 cm) x 13 inches (33 cm) (height x length x width). The maximum dimensions for hand luggage are 12 inches (30 cm) x 21 inches (53 cm) x 9 inches (23 cm) (height x length x width).

Africa Safari Trips cannot be held liable in case your hard-case suitcases get damaged during the safari or if the airline blocks or charges you when the above luggage regulations are not followed.

To protect your luggage from dust and/or moisture, we recommend you bring suitcase- or laundry bags as additional covers. Most lodges and tented camps offer a laundry service for your (outer) clothing, but only for a minimum stay of two nights.

What to wear during your safari

It is common practice in Uganda to cover shoulders and wear skirts and pants that reach below the knees, both for men and women. Traditionally, women wear long dresses and the dress style in general is conservative, as it was influenced by both Islamic and Christian traditions. Nowadays, however, people from many different cultures are living in Uganda and as a consequence, many different clothing styles can be seen. It's still respectful to adhere to the more conservative customs, but don't feel obligated to do so. Especially in hotels and on safari, shorts or skirts are no problem.



Safari clothing

During the safari, it's best to wear casual clothing, preferably cotton clothing in safari colours (examples above). We advise against wearing dark or bright colours during the safari (black, blue, red) - these will attract flies and insects. Colours that don't stand out, like khaki or olive green, are best.

Keep in mind that the equator runs straight through Uganda, which means the sun can be very hot. It is therefore advisable to wear long sleeves, a hat, dark sunglasses and/or put on sunscreen. Too much sun can lead to dehydration, nausea, dizziness, or headaches. After sunset, it is advisable to wear long trousers (and possibly long sleeves) because of the mosquitoes. Bring a sweater or jacket for the early mornings and cooler evenings, since especially in the mountainous regions of Uganda it can get chilly. We also recommend comfortable sports and or hiking shoes.

Plastic bags

In 2019, the National Environment Management Act was created to ban the importation/manufacture of plastic bags of less than 30 microns. However, plastic or plastic packaging for medical products, industrial products, the construction industry, agriculture, food, sanitary- and waste management are not banned.



Please consider this prohibition when packing. Plastic carry bags used specifically for carrying toiletries are permitted, as long as they remain in your possession at all times and will not be disposed of in-country. Ziplock bags required by airlines for carrying liquids are also allowed, as long as you take them back home. Plastic bags for duty-free purchases may not be imported.

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First Aid Kit

It is advisable to bring your own First Aid kit. This should include plasters, (sterile) gauze, anti-blistering agents, iodine, and medicines for common ailments such as headaches and bowel problems. It is also good to bring sanitary towels and tampons since these can be difficult to obtain in some areas.

Medical equipment and special needs

If you use (electrical) medical equipment, it's important to inform us in advance. We in our turn will inform the lodges where you will be staying. The power supply is not consistent everywhere and voltages might fluctuate, so it's advisable to take extra chargers or batteries.

Be aware that for some medication or medical equipment you need a medical certificate from your doctor stipulating these are for your personal need only and that the amount is adequate for the duration of your stay. Furthermore, we advise you to **carry important medication in your hand luggage** and not in your check-in baggage. This way, you won't miss your medication if your baggage is late or gets lost.

If you have allergies or other special needs, please inform us in advance so we can let the lodges know.

Photography and video

If you are passionate about photography and intend to take some amazing shots of Ugandan animals and landscapes, we have some tips to help you prepare:

- Bring enough memory cards and extra batteries. It's possible to buy them in Uganda, but it's best to avoid the hassle of going into town and finding them.
- Bring lens caps, cleaning cloths, and a tight-fitting camera bag to protect the camera from dust.
- Bring a UV- or light filter for the highlands and to protect the lens.
- A zoom lens (e.g. 300 mm) is recommended for photographing wild animals.
- Note that many tented camps use solar power or a generator and offer limited power. Usually, it's a restricted number of hours per day and voltages (220 - 240V) may fluctuate. We advise taking a plug adapter (Uganda uses UK 3-pin sockets) and a voltage converter.
- When taking pictures of locals, always ask for permission. Nowadays, people are more used to cameras, but not everyone likes to have their picture taken. Especially in remote areas, it shows respect to ask for permission first.
- We do not recommend the use of drones anywhere in Uganda, as it can be seen as a threat. In theory, you can apply with the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) for authorization to use drones in the national parks, but that leads to a chaotic process that is best avoided.
- Professional photographers and videographers can book our special safari car. This is an open-windows, pop-up open-roof safari jeep that offers maximum shooting experience, with the flexibility to position your tripod and other equipment.



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Smart packing

- (Copy of your) passport
- Money belt for money and papers
- Vaccine passport
- Warm sweater and long trousers
- Memory card, spare batteries and charger for your camera
- Swimsuit
- Hiking shoes
- Headgear
- High-factor sunblock and lip balm
- Body lotion
- Wetties for hands and face
- Sanitizer
- Sunglasses and if needed spare glasses or contact lenses
- Mosquito repellent (preferable with DEET)
- First Aid kit
- (Phone with) flashlight and alarm clock
- Linen bags for laundry or as protection from dust and moist
- Binoculars
- Travel adapter

When in Uganda...

Africa for many people is still a very unfamiliar continent, and chances are this is your first time travelling to this fascinating continent. Uganda is a beautiful and modern African country, but things are different here. Food-wise, culture-wise, money-wise. We help you with the most important information about Uganda and explain how things are done here, so you know what to expect once you get off that plane.

Food & drinks

Food and drinks in the lodges, camps, and resorts in Uganda are mostly European style, but with a selection of local dishes. Think chapati and samosa (picture) for breakfast, and rice, beans, fresh veggies, curries, fresh fish, and roast meat for lunch and dinner. Make sure to also try the Rolex, a typical Ugandan snack made of an omelette and veggies rolled up in a chapati.



Hotels usually serve this together with a full English breakfast with eggs, bacon, tomatoes, cereal, and delicious tropical fruits served in the mornings. Lunch then often consists of hot meals and both lunch and dinner can be a three- or more-course meal. In smaller lodges and camps, meals are often served as a set menu, whereas in larger lodges they offer lunch and dinner in buffet form. During the safari, you can have a packed lunch, which you can enjoy at special picnic areas along the way.

Drinks

The most popular beers in Uganda include Tusker (Kenyan), Club Pilsner (Ugandan) and Nile Special (Ugandan and eight-time Gold Award winner at the Brussels-based Monde Seleccion International). Most hotels also offer a choice of wines. Tap water is not suitable for consumption in Uganda. During the safari, we provide you with plenty of bottled drinking water and there is always a bottle or jug of purified drinking water in the rooms. You can also buy bottled drinking water at each lodge and at small shops on the way. Make sure you drink enough water. The heat in Uganda can cause you to dry out before you know it.



Money

In Uganda, you pay with the local currency, US dollars, euros and/or credit cards. The local currency is the Ugandan shilling (UGX), which is available in 1000, 2000, 5000, 10 000, 20 000 and 50 000 Ugandan shilling banknotes, and in 1, 2, 5, 10, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1000 Ugandan shilling coins. One euro is approximately 4000 Ugandan shillings, whereas one dollar is approximately 3800 Ugandan shillings (Oct 2023).

The Ugandan shilling is not available outside the country, but it's good to have it on you for local purchases and tips. You can find ATMs at the international airports as well as in cities and villages near the national parks. We advise you to take money out of the ATM upon arrival and along the way, and only take a little cash (EUR/USD) from home as backup. Be aware that taking money out of the ATM costs a small fee and that your credit or debit card needs to be enabled to withdraw money worldwide.



Some places might not accept dollar notes printed before 2020. Please, bear this in mind when taking USD for your trip. Besides, euros are not accepted everywhere.

How much cash to take?

How much cash you should have in your pocket depends of course on your personal needs and wishes. It might be good to realize that the prices in the tourist areas are comparable to those in Europe. Then again, your accommodation, meals, and pre-selected activities are already paid for, and cash money will mostly be spent on additional activities, drinks in the hotels, souvenirs and tips (see below to know how much to tip). Make sure you have enough cash on you to last for a couple of days because ATMs are not always close-by.

Credit cards

Mastercard, Visa and American Express are usually accepted by ATMs, as well as in lodges and hotels. Some remote camps might have difficulty processing your credit cards, due to their remote location and poor connections.

Tipping

Tips are appreciated, but not mandatory in Uganda. We recommend tipping local staff if possible, knowing that wages are generally low. If you are satisfied with the service, please don't hesitate to show your appreciation by for example giving up to five dollars or 20,000 UGX to the person carrying your suitcase to the room. Many times it's also possible to leave a tip for the complete staff when checking out. Receptions usually have a box, especially for this purpose.

Tip your guide

We highly appreciate it if you also tip your personal guide at the end of the safari, as we trust you will be satisfied with his service. You are free to decide what amount to give him, but as a general guideline, we would say to give 10 USD per day per person in your group, for the duration of the safari. Our guides earn decent salaries, but these tips are often used as savings for the extended family (and can for example help a cousin finish school).

The weather

Uganda lies on the equator and has a tropical climate which is mitigated by altitude. Much of the country is occupied by a plateau, which has altitudes ranging from 1,000 to 1,400 meters (3,300 to 4,600 feet). Here, the climate is pleasant with average temperatures ranging between 20 °C and 25 °C (68 °F and 77 °F).

Temperatures vary little throughout the year, but in general, the wet seasons (September to November and March to May) are cooler and even cold during the night (depending on the altitude). The dry seasons are warmer and then it can even get hot during the day, especially in the lower areas. Safaris and trekking are possible year-round, especially when using a car. When there is too much rainfall, trekking can be cancelled or postponed.

Safety while travelling

Uganda is a safe country to visit, especially for people going on organised game drives with private guides, as you will do with us. There are, of course, some places to avoid in big cities like Kampala or Entebbe, but - as with all big cities - by taking some precautions, you will be fine. Also, during safaris, there are a few things to keep in mind:

- Never leave your passport, money or valuables in the room, unless there is a safe.
- Put your valuables in a safe or leave them in special lockers at the reception.
- Do not leave important items (such as money or your bag) unattended in the safari vehicle, even for a short time.
- Leave valuable jewellery at home. Wear a (simple) necklace, watch, or wedding ring, but avoid flashy jewellery (that also monkeys might steal).
- Be wary of pickpockets during the day.
- Avoid walking alone at night, especially in urban areas. Always take a taxi.
- If you need a taxi, only use registered taxi companies that you can order at the hotel reception.

Handing out gifts or money

Sometimes clients ask what they can bring for local people when booking a safari. We recommend donating to small local NGOs that have a real impact on people's lives. However, if you prefer to bring gifts, that can also be a great option.

Taxis and other forms of transport

You have your own safari jeep, so all transport is included in your journey. But if you need to hire a taxi, please ask your hotel to call a reliable company. In many places it's also possible to order a tuktuk - these are popular ways of transport and relatively cheap. They carry up to three people. In some cities, you can also order Ubers.



Local mini-buses (matatu) and motortaxi's (boda boda) are for adventurous people. In general, the matatu don't have the safest drivers and are cramped up. Boda boda's are not safe (e.g. drive like crazy).

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AFRIKA SAFARI B.V. Prinsenland 26, 2675 EK Honselersdijk
TEL +1 518-559-1470 **E-MAIL** safari@africasafaritrips.com
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 84654058 **VAT** NL 8632 99672 B.01
INTERNATIONAL BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER NL84 RABO 0376 9475 27
SWIFT/BIC CODE RABONL2U



Phone calls

Uganda's country code is +256 and usually there is no problem getting cell phone coverage. However, signals might not be very strong in the national parks, and some camps offer Wi-Fi in designated areas only. It's fairly easy to buy a local SIM card on the airport if you want to avoid roaming charges. For emergencies, lodges and camps in the national parks typically have a hand radio.

Electricity

Many camps in the national parks run on solar power and generators and don't offer power 24/7. Often power is available from 05:00 - 09:30 am and from 7:00 - 11:00 pm (when guests are using facilities at the camp). The voltage in Uganda is not the same as in Europe or the United States. Hotels in Uganda offer a voltage of 220-240V that fluctuates regularly. The sockets are three-pin (UK). It's advisable to bring an adapter for the sockets and a voltage converter for sensitive equipment.



Souvenirs

In Uganda, there are a multitude of beautiful, mostly handmade, souvenirs. In shopping malls and supermarkets, prices are fixed, but stalls along the road are used to bargaining. Typical souvenirs are jewelry with beads, carvings, paintings, shoulder bags made of natural materials and African fabrics, coffee and tea. Don't take anything made of skin, shells or coral – exporting these is not allowed.

National holidays

Ugandan public holidays are mainly Catholic, although Ramadan (which is held on different dates depending on the lunar cycle) is also celebrated. Here is the list of the most important days:

- **1st of January:** New Year's Day
- **26th January:** NRM Liberation Day
- **16th February:** Archbishop Janani Luwum Day
- **8th March:** Women's Day
- **March or April:** Good Friday
- **March or April:** Easter Monday
- **1st of May:** Labor Day
- **3rd June:** Uganda Martyr's Day
- **9th June:** National Heroes Day
- **9th October:** Independence Day
- **25th December:** Christmas Day
- **26th December:** Boxing Day



Preserve Uganda's nature with us!

Africa Safari Trips invests in, and lives from, the beautiful nature that Uganda offers. This is why we do everything in our power to preserve the environment to the best of our ability. We ask you, as our guest, not to leave waste in the cities or in the national parks. Instead, please keep it with you until you or your guide can dispose of it properly when arriving back in the hotel. It's just a small gesture, but it will help future generations to enjoy this beautiful country just as we do!



*We wish you olugendo olulungi (safe travels) and
warmly welcome you: tukwanirizza e Uganda!*