



Journeys of a lifetime

FOREST AND SAVANNA GORILLA TREKKING SAFARI (11 Day Version)



Introduction

We start our Journey in Uganda at Kibale Forest National Park, an extensive National Park, protecting a large block of rainforest that offers some excellent forest for bird watching. Kibale also harbours the greatest variety and concentration of primates found anywhere in East Africa. The big attraction here is tracking one of the groups of Chimpanzees that make their home in the forest, these wild chimpanzees have been habituated to human presence and it is fascinating to get close to a family group and watch them going about their daily routine.

The second leg of our journey takes us to the “Pearl of Africa” as Queen Elizabeth National park is known. This is Uganda’s finest Park and home to a wide variety of game. The park is stunningly beautiful with huge biodiversity and home to over 600 bird species including the strange and rare Whale Headed Stork and also 100 mammal species.

The park includes Lake Edward and Lake George which are joined by the Kazinga Channel and which are located in prime wildlife viewing areas.

We move on to the South of the park and the Ishahsa area, this area contrasts with the rest of the park and sees far fewer visitors, the game viewing is varied and the main highlight are tree climbing lions which can often be found hanging from the branches of giant fig trees.

The highlight of our trip comes next, with our visit to the Bwindi impenetrable forest. Bwindi Forest Park is home to more than 300 mountain gorillas living in an estimated 6 families headed by the silver back males. Gorilla trekking is a wildlife experience not to be missed, spending

time with these very intelligent and close relatives of mankind is a very moving experience, only a small number of permits are issued to track gorillas on each day making this an exclusive experience.

You then have a choice of returning to Entebbe by air or extending your safari by a further two days and returning to Entebbe by road via the lovely Lake Mburu National Park, home to a great variety of Plains Game and birdlife.

Day 1

You will be met off your early morning flight and transferred to the Boma Guesthouse for one night on a full board basis.

You will be able to take a rest in the morning to recover from your long Journey. Later you will transfer to the Jetty for your boat transfer at 1245 hrs for an interesting half day trip to the Chimpanzee Sanctuary located on Ngamba Island in Lake Victoria. (Lunch on the Island payable locally)

<http://ngambaisland.com/home.html>

<http://www.boma.co.ug/>

Day 2

You will be collected by your private 4x4 safari vehicle and personal safari driver/guide and driven to Kibale Forest National Park where you will be staying at Primate Lodge in a luxury tent.

Nature trails into the forest have been created, and quite apart from the chimps, the walks are wonderful. You may have an opportunity to see other animals such as Red, black- and- white Colobus monkeys, baboons, vervet, red-tailed; L'Hoest's and blue monkeys, grey-cheeked mangabey and sometimes the big mammals including elephants, buffaloes, warthog, bushpig, and giant forest hog.

In the afternoon you will have a Bigodi Swamp Walk. This is a community initiative and is a great chance to see some of the primate species that inhabit the area as well great bird watching, butterflies and a wide variety of reptiles.

Day 3

After breakfast, you will have a Chimpanzee Trekking excursion.

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Primate Lodge is located in the heart of Kibale Forest National Park. It is a comfortable tented camp offering a great base from which to view the range of wildlife in the forest and park. The tents are all set on raised wooden platforms and each has a private veranda offering views over the forest. All tents have ensuite bathrooms with showers. There is a treehouse high in the canopy for those with a sense of adventure!

The restaurant serves both local and international cuisine and the adjacent bar and lounge areas are excellent places to relax after a day's game viewing. the most popular activity here is chimp trekking but there are also opportunities for guided nature walks and nocturnal walks (subject to availability). The visitor centre is very close to the lodge.

View at <http://www.ugandalodges.com/primate/index.php>

Day 4

Today you will drive to the Queen Elizabeth National Park where you will be staying for the next two nights on a full board basis at Katara Lodge. You will arrive in time for lunch after which you will have an afternoon game drive in the park.

Queen Elizabeth National Park, almost 2,000 sq. km, is bordered to the North by the Rwenzori mountains and to the West by Lake Edward, and is divided into a Northern and Southern sector. This beautiful park is very varied with sprawling cacti, savannah, forests, rivers and lakes. A highlight of the park are the hippos and the birds on the Kazinga Channel, which links Lake Edward and Lake George. From the launch trip on the Channel, one can watch hundreds of Hippos at close range, spreading their mouths wide and rushing to the water. The birdlife is spectacular and includes pelicans, fish eagles, kingfishers, cormorants and saddle bill storks. Buffalos and waterbucks come to the water to cool off, and you may see elephant, lion and crocodile.

The park's northern section is particularly scenic. When the weather permits, there are tremendous views of the Rwenzori peaks from its plains, which are decorated with giant candelabra euphorbia trees.

Kyambura Gorge, where visitors can take a walking safari along a river through tropical forest is a popular visitors spot, here Black and White Colobus, Redtail Monkeys and Chimpanzees can often be seen. Kyambura also has resident populations of lion and leopard.

The Southern sector around Ishasha is renowned for its "tree climbing" lions, whose habit of lounging in the upper branches of old fig trees is not usually found in other lion populations. You can also see hippo, herds of buffalo, Uganda kob, topi, and many elephant.

Day 5

Morning game drive in the park followed by lunch and an afternoon boat safari on the Kazinga Channel.

Katara Lodge is situated on the Great Rift Valley escarpment with uninterrupted views of the savannah, Lake Edward and the Virunga and Rwenzori mountain ranges beyond, Katara Lodge is a 20 minute drive away from the main entrance of the Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda's premier safari destination and one of the most biodiverse reserves in the world.

The park's varied habitats, which include open savannah, dense papyrus swamps, crater lakes, the extensive Maramagambo Forest and the forested Kyambura Gorge, are home to almost 100 mammal species and over 600 bird species.

Katara Lodge is the ideal base from which to explore the park and the many activities it offers, including game drives, bird watching, the famous launch cruise along the Kazinga Channel, chimpanzee tracking in the Kyambura Gorge, and forest walks in the Kalinzu or Maramagambo forests, all of which provide truly memorable wildlife experiences and incredible opportunities for nature photography.

<http://www.kataralodge.com/>

Day 6

Game drive transfer through the park on route to the Southern Ishasha Area where you will be staying tonight at Ishasha Wilderness Camp.

Ishasha Wilderness Camp is situated inside the southern Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth National Park on the Ntungwe river, and is an idyllic retreat for people who truly enjoy the wilderness. This exclusive tented camp offers quality accommodation and services in this unspoilt remote southern sector of Queen Elizabeth National Park famous for its tree climbing lions that can sometimes be spotted resting in the branches of the large fig trees in the area. Each of the ten spacious East African style Meru tents, situated in the wooded area beside the river, is comfortably furnished and with its own private en suite bathroom and dressing area providing hot water 'bush' showers and an eco friendly toilet. A central lounge / dining area, under a cool thatched roof, provides a comfortable environment for meals and relaxing during the day. A shaded area beside the river offers al fresco dining and an evening 'fireplace' for guests to relax with sundowners and share their day's experience. Meals are freshly prepared with many local ingredients, offering a balance of international and locally flavoured cuisine with most meals being of several courses.

<http://www.ugandaexclusivecamps.com/ishasha.htm>

Day 7

Morning Game drive in the park followed by lunch. In the afternoon you will drive to Bwindi where you will be staying for the next three nights at the new Mahogany Springs Lodge on a full board basis. This is the newest and most comfortable lodge in the Buhoma area and the best place to stay for gorilla trekking in Bwindi.

<http://www.mahoganysprings.com/>

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is best known for its superb gorilla tracking and is the natural habitat for just over half the world's last surviving population of mountain gorillas. It also provides refuge to elephant, chimpanzee, monkeys and various small antelope and over 350 different bird species.

The main reason for a safari in Bwindi is to track and spend time with the Mountain Gorillas. The

gorillas you will track will belong one of the 'habituated' family groups, Only six permits per gorilla group are issued per day and you may spend anywhere between half and eight hours in search of these animals.

Once the gorillas are located, you will be allowed a maximum of one hour with them observing their behaviour and interaction with each other.

Clients wishing to track mountain gorillas should be of a reasonable fitness as it is a strenuous exercise and if you are in good health you will benefit far more from the entire experience. Bwindi Impenetrable forest contains a number of other species which are sometimes encountered in the thick cover.

Day 8

Today you will take your first Gorilla Trekking Experience.

The weather may be quite variable during your trip. For the most part it should be warm and dry during the day, but it can be rainy and wet underfoot when trekking for the gorillas and chimps. It is therefore advisable to take a light raincoat.

The best colours to wear on a safari are khaki colours, greens and browns, basically colours that blend into the bush so that the animals don't see you, avoid bright colours or whites. For the day time, shorts/light cotton trousers and t-shirts are the norm, with long trousers and long sleeves advisable to cover up from insects in the evening. Clothing is generally casual, but practical. Even in the evening, clothing remains fairly casual. A fleece is always a good idea for early mornings and evenings.

The terrain in Bwindi is rough and forested and it commonly rains so sturdy shoes, long trousers and long sleeved shirts are recommended. It is advisable to wear layers so that you can take your long sleeves off if you get too warm during the trek. Whilst not essential some people do take gardening / hardy gloves for the gorilla trek. This can be helpful if you need to grip plants or undergrowth. A "walking stick" is provided by the guides and for \$10 you can take a porter with you, who will carry your rucksack and push and pull you as required on the trek! It is advisable to carry as little as possible and you shouldn't need long camera lenses as you should be close enough, especially to the gorillas, not to need one. The chimps can be up in the trees, but if you are lucky they will come down onto the ground.

Day 9

A second day of Gorilla Trekking.

Day 10

Transfer to the airstrip for your return light aircraft charter flight to Entebbe. You will be staying tonight at The Boma on a half board basis

<http://www.boma.co.ug/>

Day 11 5 th September 2012

Transfer to the airport for your outbound flight with BA at 0915 hrs

TOTAL PRICE PER PERSON ON AN ENTEBBE TO ENTEBBE BASIS US\$4932 (£3288)

Option 2 FOREST AND SAVANNA GORILLA TREKKING (13 Day Version)

Itinerary as per option 1 but return is by road stopping for two nights at Lake Mburo National Park.

Day 10

Transfer by road to lake Mburo National park. You will enjoy a game drive on route to Mihingo Lodge where you will be staying for the next two nights on a full board basis.

Lake Mburo National Park is situated between the towns of Masaka and Mbarara. It is the only National Park to contain an entire lake.

Lake Mburo has leopard and Hyena but no lions or cheetah, the attractive acacia-dotted savannah is home to huge herds of impala, as well as less common topi, eland, klipspringer and other antelope. There are also large herds of Buffalo and Zebra.

At the lake there are hippo and crocodile and a wonderful diversity of birds due mainly to the varying habitats of the lakeshore and the broad savannah. Among the birds found here are Kingfishers, marabou stork, bee-eaters and the cheeky bronze-tailed starling, as well as the majestic crowned crane, the national emblem of Uganda.

Day 11

Guided morning bush Walk with a ranger, you will return to the lodge after lunch and in the afternoon you will take an afternoon boat trip on Lake Mburo. Optional activities at this lodge include a night game drive and a horseback safari.

Mihingo Lodge is a peaceful and exclusive retreat adjacent to Lake Mburo National Park . It features ten rooms which are built on wooden platforms with stilts, covered by a thatched roof. Suspended under the thatched roof is a spacious and comfortable tent equipped with en-suite bathrooms with stunning views, including hot and cold running water, showers, and flush loos. Each luxury tented room is nestled on a private piece of the lodge's property, enabling guests to enjoy the tranquil environment in complete seclusion. Placed in varied settings, some rooms are situated in a forest, some with a lake view, and some on rocky outcrops.

The main dining area is a large thatched structure built of rocks, the wood of dead weathered olive trees found on the land, and native grasses. Below the dining area, an infinity swimming pool stretches out from the rocks and seems to disappear into the vast landscape beyond. From the dining and pool area, guests can enjoy the view of a westward oriented valley and its stunning evening sunsets over Lake Mburo National Park .

View at <http://www.mihingolodge.com/>

Day 12

Transfer to the Entebbe with a stop on route for lunch, you will be staying tonight at the Boma Guesthouse on a half board basis.

<http://www.boma.co.ug/>

Day 13

Transfer to the airport for your outbound flight with BA at 0915 hrs

TOTAL PRICE PER PERSON ON AN ENTEBBE TO ENTEBBE BASIS US\$4884 (£3250)

What's included?

Airport Transfers
Private 4x4 Safari Vehicle with English Speaking driver/guide
Full Board accommodation at all properties except where noted
Bottle Mineral Water in Safari Vehicle
All entrance and ranger fees at National parks
Activities and excursions as per Program
Chimp Trekking Permit in Kibale

What's not included?

International Flights
Visa Fees (US\$50 payable on arrival)
Gorilla Trekking Permits US\$500 per permit (two per person required)
Drinks at all properties
Tips
Items of a personal Nature

When to go

Although possible at any time of year the drier months are January/February and June to September making trekking conditions less arduous at this time of year.

Who should go

This a fabulous adventure in a part of Africa which still sees relatively few tourists and will suit guests who are prepared to experience Africa close up and personal rather than sealed off in five star game lodges. The tourist industry is relatively undeveloped and unsophisticated compared to its better known East African neighbors, so lodges and service are not quite at the levels seen in Kenya and Southern Africa. However in our opinion the friendliness of the local people, stunning scenery and unusual and varied wildlife all adds to the charm of this very beautiful country and more than compensates for any minor inconveniences.

This Safari will suit clients with an interest in photography, as the wildlife and the country as a whole is very photogenic.

The country is relatively inexpensive to visit and will suit those on a more limited budget.

We say

A trip to Uganda with both general big game viewing and Gorilla and Chimpanzee Trekking is a very special type of Safari experience and should not be missed. The chance to spend time with two of our closest relatives is a unique and very moving experience which cannot be replicated anywhere else in Africa. The fees you pay go into supporting these highly endangered animals and the communities that live along side them, in the case of the Mountain Gorillas if it were not for visiting tourists and the income they bring in these gentle giants would almost certainly be

extinct by now.

In our view a trip to Uganda offers a terrific combination of game viewing and the chance to explore one of Africa's most beautiful countries.

Why not extend your trip to neighboring Kenya where you have the chance to experience two of the most exciting wildlife experiences possible by combining a trip to see the Gorillas in Uganda with the Great Migration in Kenya's Maasai Mara.

Wildlife Sightings

Africa's wildlife is free ranging and moves according to seasonal availability of food and water therefore no sighting is guaranteed. The following species can be found in the areas visited on this safari and guests can expect to see many of them.

Lion, Leopard, Elephant, Sitatunga, Giant Forest Hog, Uganda Kob, Hippo, Crocodile, warthog. Topi, Cape Buffalo, Hyena, Jackal, Bushpig, Duiker, Oribi, Chimpanzee. Mountain Gorilla, Baboon and many other primate species.

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Our consultants are dedicated to providing you, our clients, with the safari holiday of your dreams, we will always endeavour to offer you the best value safari and beach holiday in line with the time available and budget guidelines you have supplied.

The camps, lodges and hotels included in our trips are regularly vetted by our consultants to ensure the highest standards are maintained and that every safari and associated beach stay is a unique and authentic African experience.

Safari Club will never compromise the quality of our safaris by offering a knowingly inferior product in the interests of price.

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Safari Club Ltd • The Old Post Office • The Green • Wingrave • Buckinghamshire • HP22 4PD

Tel: +44 845 0545 889 • Fax: +44 560 0752 031 • Web: www.safari-club.co.uk

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