The Ultimate Uganda Safari

MOUNTAIN GORILLAS, CHIMPS, BIG GAME SAFARI, AND MURCHISON FALLS

TRIP DATES

2027

June 10-21, 2027
July 1-12, 2027
August 3-14, 2027
September 7-18, 2027

2028

June 10-21, 2028
July 1-12, 2028
August 1-12, 2028
September 6-16, 2028

Wilderness Travel

The Ultimate Uganda Safari

MOUNTAIN GORILLAS, CHIMPS, BIG GAME SAFARI, AND MURCHISON FALLS

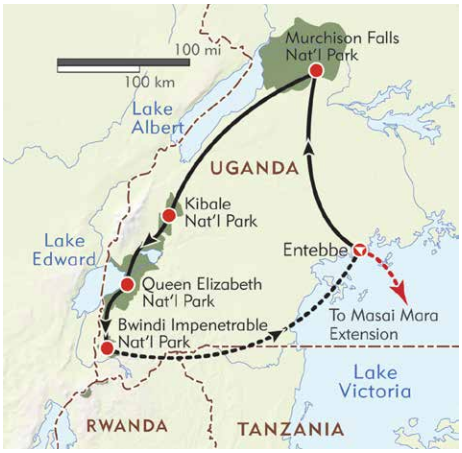
Join us on the ultimate experience of Uganda! Our wonderful safari explores this exquisite country, renowned as the most beautiful in Africa. We'll bring you to legendary Murchison Falls, the country's first national park, where we will have thrilling wildlife encounters in this uncrowded, yet spectacular park. The great Nile River funnels through a 20-foot-wide rocky gorge here, creating a thundering cascade. On a private excursion, we'll boat up the Nile right to the base of the falls, and enjoy fabulous game viewing in the delta area downstream (fantastic birding—more than 450 species!). The park is also only one of the few places in the world that you can see endangered Nubian (Rothschild) giraffe, and our visit supports their protection. One of the most incredible wildlife experiences on the planet is tracking mountain gorillas in the wild, and we'll give you two full days in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, so that you have the greatest chances of close encounters with these extraordinary creatures. We'll also hike in Kibale National Park, following wild chimpanzees as they move through the treetop canopy, and our big game safari in Queen Elizabeth National Park is utterly exhilarating. Our Trip Leaders open up the world of wildlife and community for us, and we'll have lunch with a community leader, a fascinating example of community support for a unique ecosystem. Throughout our adventure, wonderful lodges give us great access to the wildlife.

Itinerary

DAY 1
ENTEBBE, UGANDA
Arrive in Entebbe, where you will be met for the transfer to the Protea Marriott Hotel, set on the shores of Lake Victoria. This afternoon is free at your leisure. In the evening, we gather for our Welcome Dinner. Overnight at Protea Marriott Hotel...D

DAY 2
MURCHISON FALLS NATIONAL PARK
We head north through lush countryside to Murchison Falls, Uganda's largest and first national park (established in 1926). Along the way, we'll stop for a short visit at the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary to learn about its efforts to combat poaching. In addition to rhinos, approximately 20 other species of wildlife and 300 different bird species reside in this sanctuary. Murchison Falls is home to 76 species of mammals and an astounding 451 bird species, including the rare and bizarre-looking shoebill (a "must-see" for birdwatchers). Murchison Falls National Park is the best place in Uganda (and maybe in Africa) to see this huge, prehistoric-looking bird, which stands over four feet tall with a seven-foot wingspan. Four of the Big Five can be found in Murchison Falls—lion, leopard, buffalo, and elephant (no rhino). There are huge herds of buffalo and elephant and a healthy population of leopard and lion. The recent Great Elephant Census noted that Uganda is one of the few bright spots for elephants on the continent. Elephant populations in Uganda have increased 600% to more than 5,000 individuals from fewer than 800 that survived the poaching crisis of the 1970s. Jackson's hartebeest, bushbuck, Uganda kob, waterbuck, and warthog are among the other residents. Murchison Falls is also one of only three parks in Uganda with giraffe. Nearly half of the wild endangered Nubian giraffe (formerly known as the Rothschild's giraffe), a subspecies of the northern giraffe, live in the park, with only 5,200 individuals remaining. The acclaimed Giraffe Conservation Foundation is active here, and has successfully translocated nearly 40 giraffe across the Nile River to the south side of the park over the last two years to help support this endangered species. Overnight at Twiga Safari Lodge, set on the banks of the Nile River on the outskirts of the park...BLD
Driving Details: Approximately 7 hours total

DAY 3
GAME DRIVES / MURCHISON FALLS
The mighty Nile River, one of the longest in the world at 4,000-plus miles, flows through the heart of the park for a distance of some 70 miles as it journeys from Lake Victoria to Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. This morning we board 4WD vehicles for game viewing, searching for antelope, including bushbuck, waterbuck, and dik-dik; giraffe and elephant are also here in great numbers (they may cross the road right in front of us!). Herds of buffalo are common, as well as primates including baboon and patas monkey, and the birds, of course, are incredible!



TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

Length: 12 days
Arrive: Entebbe, Uganda
Depart: Entebbe, Uganda
Lodging: 11 nights hotels and safari lodges
Meals: All meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
Activity: Hiking / Trekking, Safaris, Wildlife and Natural History
Trip Level: 1 2 ③+ 4 5 6
2 days of gorilla tracking (1-6 hours on steep and sometimes muddy trails), 1 day chimpanzee tracking on forested trails (2-4 hours), 4WD game viewing, private riverboat excursions

HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore spectacular Murchison Falls, where the Nile forces its way through a 20-foot gorge
- Private boat excursion to the base of the falls
- Track mountain gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and chimpanzees in Kibale Forest National Park
- Phenomenal game viewing in Queen Elizabeth National Park in the Great Rift Valley
- Enjoy lunch with a local community leader and help support local environmental projects

Itinerary

The park's centerpiece is Murchison Falls, the famous falls where the thunderous White Nile squeezes its entire volume with explosive force through a narrow, 20-foot-wide rocky gorge to crash in a cascade of foaming white water onto the rocks 150 feet below. A short drive on a twisting road takes us to the top of the falls, where we can stand close to this churning mass of white water (90,000 gallons of water per second cascades over the falls). The view from the top is also spectacular, the narrow canyon and frothing falls framed by misty rainbows and the late afternoon sun glistening off the tranquil Nile downstream. And unlike other renowned waterfalls, Murchison Falls is refreshingly uncrowded.

A 2-hour private boat ride on the Nile brings us to the base of the falls (this is along the same stretch of river where The African Queen, starring Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn, was filmed in 1951). Cruising down the Nile provides great wildlife viewing as the animals come down to the water's edge to drink. The Nile supports the largest concentration of hippos and crocodiles in Africa—we may see hippos soaking in the deeper channels and the alpha predators lounging on the riverbank—and a dazzling variety of water birds. The views of the falls as we approach by boat are breathtaking. An interesting historical and literary monument is just downstream from the falls. On January 22, 1954, a private airplane carrying Ernest Hemingway and his wife crashed into the riverine forest after clipping a telegraph wire. Hemingway and his wife survived and were rescued the following day, only to have their evacuation flight also crash! After bivouacking on the riverbank, surrounded by hippos according to Hemingway, he and his wife caught a ride with a boatful of safari-goers. They had had their fill of planes! Overnight at Twiga Safari Lodge...BLD

Itinerary

DAY 4
GAME DRIVES / MURCHISON FALLS

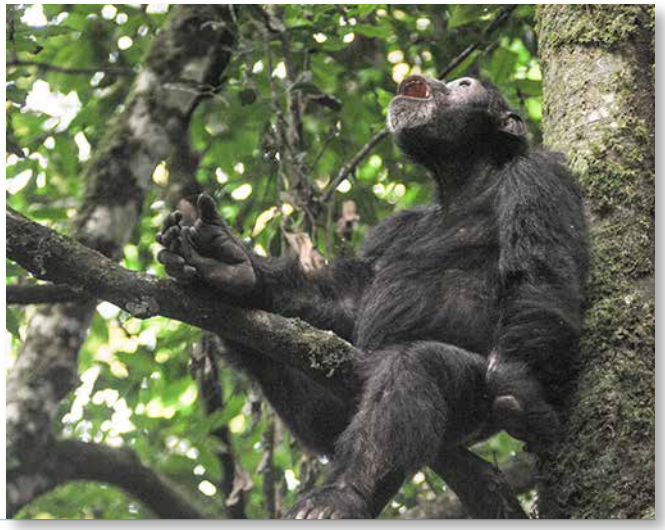
A private boat brings us to a wonderfully calm stretch of water of the Nile Delta, where the tranquil White Nile flows into Lake Albert. This is a key area for birds—its papyrus-lined banks burst with birdlife, including Goliath herons, great egrets, African fish eagles, and the sought-after shoebill, with its massive shoe-shaped bill. We return to our lodge for lunch and a siesta, then head out again in the late afternoon on game drives. Overnight at Twiga Safari Lodge...BLD

DAY 5
KIBALE FOREST NATIONAL PARK

We travel through lovely countryside where every type of fruit and vegetable imaginable is grown, and farmland where we pass traditional villages with their shambas, or planted lots. Upon reaching Kyenjojo, in the lower foothills of the Ruwenzoris, the renowned "Mountains of the Moon," we drive through tea plantations and into the tropical rainforest of 296-square-mile Kibale Forest National Park. Kibale is contiguous with Queen Elizabeth National Park at the same pleasant altitudes of 3,000 to 5,000 feet. Overnight at Ndali Lodge, perched on the rim of an extinct volcano above Lake Nyinambuga...BLD
Driving Details: Approximately 6-7 hours total

DAY 6
KIBALE FOREST NATIONAL PARK / CHIMPANZEE TRACKING

Kibale, home to 13 primate species, is said to have the highest density and variety of primates in Africa. With our local tracking guide, we follow good pathways hiking for about two to four hours through a network of beautiful shady trails. Our park guides have studied the patterns of the chimpanzee clans for years and know the daily locations of many groups. Once we find a clan of chimpanzees, we'll hike at a good clip, often off trail through thick vegetation, following these acrobats as they leap from tree to tree on their daily rounds of foraging. The chimpanzee groups are habituated to seeing people and take little notice of us as they play, squabble, and scamper across the treetop canopy. This is an extraordinary opportunity to observe these fascinating and intelligent creatures in the wild. In addition to chimpanzees, we may see other primates such as vervet, colobus, grey-cheeked mangabey, and red-tailed monkey. Many species of beautiful subtropical birds and butterflies abound in Kibale's rich habitat, along with duiker, bushpig, and bushbuck, making for a morning of absolutely world-class wildlife viewing. Overnight at Ndali Lodge...BLD



Itinerary

DAY 7
CULTURAL WALK / QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

We begin our day with a cultural walk through Bigodi. A local guide will discuss the "village of two tribes" and how it has come to be, and later, an elderly woman will give a briefing on life as a female including her chores and responsibilities. We'll also learn from a traditional healer who demonstrates herbal and spiritual treatments and a family who discusses economic activities—everything from handicrafts to beer brewing to agriculture. Other stops include a blacksmith who shows off his skills repairing plastic containers with herbs, a coffee farmer who demonstrates harvesting and processing without sophisticated machinery, and a school visit (only possible on school days). Expect 3-4 hours to complete the entire tour.

In the afternoon, a scenic drive through green farmlands and tiny villages brings us to Queen Elizabeth National Park. This beautiful park, protecting 770 square miles of the western Great Rift Valley, has as its stunning backdrop the Ruwenzoris, Africa's highest mountain range. Queen Elizabeth National Park is one of the best-managed parks in Africa and supports a wonderful diversity of wildlife in habitats ranging from lowland rainforest to wetlands to grassy savannas. Due to the park's beauty and immense variety of species, it has been designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Birders will be interested to know that QENP has recorded 547 avian species. Overnight at Elephant Plains Lodge. With a hilltop setting, it offers panoramic views of the western arm of the Great Rift Valley (and gorgeous sunsets too!)...BLD
Driving Details: Approximately 3 hours total

DAY 8
LION TRACKING / KAZINGA CHANNEL

Today we'll have the opportunity to don our researcher hats while using telemetry to track lion prides. The lion is one of the most sought-after safari species, and one of the most impressive to observe. Living in prides of around 15 individuals, lions adhere to strict social structures. Groups consist of related females and their cubs that are often born around the same time and raised communally. This afternoon, we board a boat for a 2-hour trip on the Kazinga Channel, which runs through the park and links Lake Edward and Lake George. On this meandering waterway, we view large concentrations of hippo, elephant and other wildlife often come to the water's edge to drink, and the birding is excellent. Overnight at Elephant Plains Lodge...BLD

DAY 9
BWINDI

Before our drive to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, passing through the Ishasha section of Queen Elizabeth National Park, we'll enjoy a walk through the wetlands. Set on Uganda's western border, Bwindi is one of the most biologically diverse areas on Earth, recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. The park protects a remnant of a once-vast primeval forest that

Itinerary

stretched from the Virunga Volcanoes to the Ruwenzori Mountains. There are 113 species of mammals in the park, including rare forest elephant, 200 species of butterfly, over 360 species of birds, and an enormous variety of trees, including 10 endemic species. Among the 11 resident primate species are 310 magnificent mountain gorillas, half of the world's population of this elusive and highly endangered mammal. Bwindi is dense with both montane and lowland forest vegetation, making it one of Africa's most superb wildlife environments, but mountain gorillas are the main attraction. Overnight at Mahogany Springs Lodge...BLD
Driving Details: Approximately 6 hours total

DAYS 10-11
BWINDI / GORILLA TRACKING

Our incomparable safari includes two full days for the unforgettable experience of tracking the mountain gorilla clans that reside in Bwindi's montane forests. We start with an orientation talk with the local trackers at the park headquarters on the etiquette of gorilla tracking, then break into small groups to search for the Mubare, Habinyanja, or Rushegura clans with a ranger guide. The tracking can be physically challenging. Each day we leave early in the morning and hike through dense, sometimes steep and muddy forests at altitudes of up to 7,500 feet for two to eight hours, depending on where we find the gorillas. But the rewards are tremendous and the rigors soon forgotten when we spot a gorilla family and have the opportunity to observe these gentle creatures. We bring picnic lunches and eat in the forest. When we're not watching mountain gorillas, we have time to see some of the amazing varieties of bird, butterfly, and animal species that make their home in this unusual park. With two full days here, we're ensured of encounters with these elusive creatures. After our first day of tracking, we'll enjoy an afternoon visit with a private, behind-the-scenes tour at Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH), learning about this award-winning NGO's work spanning the fields of conservation and local community health. CTPH has three integrated strategic programs: Wildlife Conservation, Community Health, and Alternative Livelihoods. A doctor from CTPH will be our guest at dinner on one of the nights at Bwindi. Enjoy a festive Farewell Dinner on Day 11. Overnights at Mahogany Springs Lodge...BLD each day

DAY 12
ENTEBBE / DEPART

We bid farewell to our trip leader this morning and board our regularly scheduled flight back to Entebbe. Day rooms are included at the Protea Marriott Hotel, with checkout time at 6:00 pm. In the evening, transfer to the airport and depart on homeward-bound flights... BLD

Pricing

TRIP COST

Prices are per person, based on double occupancy
2027
$11,195 (6-7 members)
$11,795 (4-5 members)
$12,595 (3 members)
Single supplement: $1,895
Internal airfare: $550 (subject to change)
Chimp permits (2 treks): $500
Gorilla permits (2 treks): $1,600
Lion tracking permit: $500

Please call for future years' pricing

To offer the lowest possible cost, our trips are priced according to the number of participants on the trip. All costs are per person, based on double occupancy. If you wish to have a single room, you must pay the single supplement fee. Please note that Wilderness Travel staff, or guests of Wilderness Travel such as travel writers, photographers, or leaders-in-training, are not included in the tier pricing count.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Because the prices published for our program are set so far in advance of the trip dates, we are occasionally faced with exceptional cost increases and/or currency fluctuations that affect the actual cost of running the trip. In most years, no price changes are necessary. However, we do reserve the right to raise or lower the trip price if there is a significant change in costs or exchange rates. If this is the case, your final invoice will reflect the difference in trip cost.

TRIP COST INCLUDES

- Expert leadership of a Wilderness Travel Trip Leader and local guides; safari camp staff
- Accommodations in hotels and safari lodges
- All meals included as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- House beer and wine with meals
- Guaranteed window seating in Land Cruisers
- Land transportation, airport transfers for passengers as noted, baggage handling
- All activities as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- Personal gorilla trekking porter

TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Travel to and from the arrival and departure location as indicated in Detailed Itinerary
- Additional hotel nights outside the trip's scheduled dates
- Optional gratuities to Trip Leaders or staff (tipping for trekking porters is included)
- Optional travel insurance
- Other expenses of a personal nature (some alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.)
- Visa fees

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: $3,200
90 days prior to departure: Balance

Please note that this differs from our standard policy. In addition to the standard deposit of $600 per person to confirm your trip, a nonrefundable and non-transferrable deposit of $2,600 is required to secure your chimp, gorilla, and lion permits ($500 per person for the lion permits, $500 per person for the chimp permits, and $1,600 per person for the gorilla permits).

CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee (Gorilla, Chimp, and Lion Permits): $2,600 per person
61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost
46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost
45 days or less: 100% of trip cost

Please note that this differs from our standard policy.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details: www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance

Extensions

To help you make the most of your adventure, we've created several exciting trip extensions. For detailed information, including full itineraries and complete pricing, please visit our webpage and click on "Extend Your Trip": https://www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/uganda-gorilla-murchison-falls-safari/

KENYA: MASAI MARA NATIONAL RESERVE EXTENSION

Set at an altitude of about 5,000 feet, the Masai Mara National Reserve is breathtakingly beautiful with the wide Mara River, one of Kenya's largest rivers, snaking through its green, tree-studded grasslands. The river is home to many hippos and enormous groups of elephant that wander through the lush marshes along the river's edge. Among the plains game found in the Mara are eland, topi, zebra, giraffe, and Thompson's and Grant's gazelle, and buffalo graze here in abundance. There are also some of the rare and endangered black rhino, not always easy to find but a wonderful sight when encountered. The Mara is one of the best places in Kenya to see lion, as there are numerous roaming prides. Early booking is recommended due to limited availability.

4 days. From $6,295.

GORILLA TRACKING IN RWANDA'S PARC NATIONAL DES VOLCANS EXTENSION

Join your ranger-guide for the exhilarating experience of tracking and observing the mountain gorilla clans that reside in the spectacular montane forests of Parc National des Volcans, where researcher Dian Fossey was based for 13 years. The hiking terrain ranges in altitude from 3,800 to 8,500 feet and preserves one of the largest natural forests in East Africa.

5 days. From $4,495.

Arrival & Departure

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

ARRIVAL & MEETING PLACE

Entebbe, Uganda

Suggested Airport: Entebbe International Airport (EBB)
Suggested Date & Time: Day 1, by 5:00 pm

Meeting Place: All trip members will be met at the airport on Day 1 and transferred to the Protea Marriott Hotel. Hotel check-in begins at 2:00 pm. A complimentary transfer is provided from Entebbe International Airport to the Protea Marriott Hotel for all trip members no matter what day they arrive.

DEPARTURE

Entebbe, Uganda

Suggested Airport: Entebbe International Airport (EBB)
Suggested Date & Time: Day 12, after 5:00 pm

A complimentary airport transfer is provided for all trip members from the group hotel to the Entebbe airport no matter what day they depart. Day rooms at the Protea Marriott are included until 6:00 pm on Day 12 (check out time is strictly enforced). If you wish to extend your day room to a full overnight room on Day 12 (at additional cost), please see the attached Extra Services Request Form for more information.

INTERNATIONAL AIR TRAVEL

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for flights to and from Uganda. Airlines with the most convenient schedules for this trip include:

British Airways
www.ba.com

Delta/KLM Airlines
www.delta.com
www.klm.com

Virgin Atlantic
www.virgin-atlantic.com

Kenya Airways
www.kenya-airways.com

British Air and Virgin Atlantic have a more spacious economy class that is an inexpensive alternative to business class. British Air calls it "World Traveler Plus" and Virgin Atlantic calls it "Premier Economy."

There are many online consolidators for booking travel, but for more personal help arranging air transport, you can contact Exito Travel at 970-818-8459 in the US or Canada. They are very adept at putting flight itineraries together, to even the most far-flung places. More information can be found on Exito's website at www.exitotravel.com.

Depending on your routing, it is necessary to depart from the US one or possibly two days prior to Day 1 of the trip itinerary. The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly, and your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US.

Please do not purchase your tickets until you are confirmed on the trip and have reviewed your proposed air schedule with our office. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so we can reserve your airport transfers.

EXTRA HOTEL NIGHTS

We are happy to arrange additional hotel nights for you in Entebbe. Please see the Extra Services Request Form to book these reservations.

INTERNAL FLIGHTS

Your charter flight tickets will be issued by our local office and will be given to you by your Trip Leader.

Accommodations

PROTEA MARRIOTT HOTEL

Entebbe, Uganda
Day 1 (1 night), Day 12 (day room)

This relatively new hotel is right on the shores of Lake Victoria, just a quick drive from the airport. Well appointed guest rooms are spacious and offer all the modern amenities, and at the end of the day, you can relax on the terrace with a drink while admiring the superb lake views. Nearby attractions include the Entebbe Botanical Gardens and the Uganda Wildlife Education Centre.

TWIGA SAFARI LODGE

Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda
Days 2 to 4 (3 nights)

Twiga Safari Lodge features 8 elevated thatched cottages set on the southern banks of the Nile River on the outskirts of Murchison Falls National Park. The cottages are spacious, with large en-suite bathrooms and private balconies. After a game drive, cool off in the inviting swimming pool or relax on your balcony with its great views of the river and opportunities for wildlife viewing. At sunset you might possibly see hippos emerging from the river to graze, and monkeys and birds also roam the property. Continental meals are served in the lodge's restaurant and there is a well stocked bar.

NDALI LODGE

Kibale, Uganda
Days 5 to 6 (2 nights)

Perched on the rim of an extinct volcano above Lake Nyinambuga, this family-run lodge was built by a British tea farmer and has the wonderful atmosphere of an English country home. The setting is amazing, facing the Mountains of the Moon, and the eight simple cottages feature four-poster beds with mosquito netting and en suite facilities with hot running water and flush toilets. Candlelight and oil lamps provide a romantic “Old Africa” feel, as there is no electricity in the lodge, and no noisy generators to disturb the setting. The cottages and main lodge have solar lights. Meals are shared family-style in a dining room that opens straight onto the volcanic lake, and as you explore the property, expect to be greeted by its friendly resident dogs!

Accommodations

ELEPHANT PLAINS LODGE

Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda
Days 7 to 8 (2 nights)

Perched high on the western edge of the Albertine rift among 80 acres of wilderness, the views from this lodge are some of the best in all of Queen Elizabeth National Park. The six guest cottages and two family cottages all have private verandas, large windows, en-suite bathrooms with tubs and showers, and views that overlook Lake Kikorongo where large numbers of elephant and buffalo congregate. The communal lounge is a great place to enjoy a gin and tonic or a glass of wine from the cellar, and you can take a plunge in the outdoor swimming pool where views of the open grasslands can't be beat. The restaurant has an international menu and both indoor and outdoor seating. We love the lodge's commitment to conservation—electricity is solar-powered, and the lodge was constructed with reclaimed, local materials.

MAHOGANY SPRINGS LODGE

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda
Days 9 to 11 (3 nights)

You'll feel like part of the family at this quiet retreat, set just outside the national park in a beautiful location overlooking the mountains. The spacious cottages have a large en suite bathroom and private terrace, an ideal spot for relaxing and taking in the views. Panoramic terraces around the front of the main building also provide beautiful views of the forest and river (and you might even see gorillas crossing the river outside of the lodge!). In the evening, relax in the lounge with its double-sided fireplace and settle in with a book from its library.

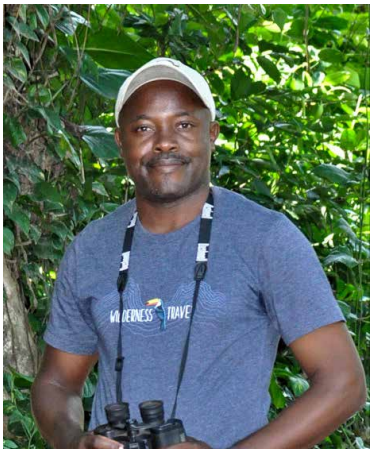
These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *The Ultimate Uganda Safari* webpage and click on "Accommodations."

Trip Leaders

Wilderness Travel Trip Leaders have a passion and a joy for creating an unforgettable journey. We are extremely proud of them and the incredible travel experiences they make possible. For more information about our Trip Leaders, including client comments about them and which specific trips they will be leading, please visit our webpage and click on "Trip Leaders": wildernesstravel.com/trip/uganda-gorilla-murchison-falls-safari/

JULIUS ABIGABA

With a certificate in tropical agriculture from Ssese Agro Vet College, Julius has a deep understanding of the local flora and fauna, enhancing every guest's safari experience. Before becoming a guide, he worked at the Uganda Wildlife Education Center (UWEC), where he was responsible for the training, enrichment, and welfare of various ungulates, primates, birds, and reptiles. In addition, he led conservation education to raise awareness among local schools, communities, and international visitors.



ROBERT SUNDAY

Robert was born and raised in Western Uganda and earned a university diploma in Wildlife Conservation. For over two decades, he's been guiding in Uganda and increasing his expertise in birding and mammals. His favorite activity on safari is, of course, birding, as it creates more opportunities to spot other wildlife since a lot of patience is given to birds' lives" (his favorite bird is the African fish eagle). Robert is a member of the Uganda Safari Guides Association (USAGA) and has taken courses in tourism principles at Katwe/Queen Elizabeth National Park, vehicle mechanics, first aid, general guiding, photography, and birding. When not on safari, you'll find him swimming, playing soccer, and relaxing with a good book. It wouldn't be a stretch to say that he's gifted at language—he speaks eight!—English, Kiswahili, Luganda, French, Rutooro, Runyankole, Rukiga, and Lukonzo.

What to Expect

WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated **Level 3+, Moderate,** according to our trip grading system. The hikes to see the mountain gorillas can last anywhere from 1 to 6 hours over moderately steep, thickly forested, and uneven terrain, and the climate will be hot and humid. Any African safari is an adventure, and the traveler to Africa should bring along flexibility, a sense of humor, and an openness to the unexpected.

Average Hiking Day

- 5 hours

Challenge Days

- Days 10-11: 1-6 hours (altitudes of up to 7,500 feet)

TERRAIN

We encounter various terrain on this trip, including savanna, wetlands, and dense tropical rainforest. Around Murchison Falls National Park, walks are generally short and on open terrain, with paths near the falls or along riverbanks with views of the Nile and surrounding savanna. In Kibale Forest, trails follow shaded rainforest paths and may go off-trail through thick vegetation while tracking chimpanzees. The most challenging terrain is in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, where gorilla trekking involves steep, muddy forest slopes and dense jungle at elevations up to about 7,500 feet, with hikes lasting 1 to 6 hours depending on where the gorillas are located. Gorilla tracking will occasionally feel strenuous as we hike uphill to follow the clans, but we will take breaks along the way.

GETTING IN SHAPE

The shape you're in will be an important factor in your enjoyment of these hikes. Make an effort to get in good physical condition with hiking, biking, running, or other kinds of exercise beyond your normal routine. A brisk 30-45 minute walk every other day over moderately steep terrain can do wonders for your conditioning.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Our accommodations will be in comfortable hotels, safari lodges, and tented camps with spacious tents equipped with en suite facilities.

TRANSPORTATION

During game drives in our 4WD vehicles, we guarantee window seating for all—there's no taking turns on who gets the window seats. We use five- or seven-passenger Nissan safari vehicles (never minibuses!), and all vehicles have roof hatches for easy wildlife viewing and photography. A cooler of drinks and refreshments is carried aboard. And our 4WD vehicles can go virtually anywhere, an important feature when we're tracking game. Please note there are some long driving days over rough roads and dusty dirt tracks.

GAME DRIVES & WILD ANIMALS

During drives and walks, we can at times get quite close to wild animals. Being very quiet improves everybody's chances of observation. In the interest of safety, your Trip Leader explains limitations on movement while on game drives, in the safari vehicles, and around camp. Specific guidelines are in effect for the viewing of chimpanzees and gorillas—both for their protection and for your own. Incidents with wild animals are extremely rare on safaris, but no trip can guarantee immunity from such incidents. Wilderness Travel is not to be held responsible for incidents involving the behavior of wildlife.

WILDLIFE VIEWING

In Uganda, the wildlife is truly wild. Unlike some of the Kenya and Tanzania game parks, the wildlife here has not been exposed to a great number of humans. Except when viewed from the launch trips on the rivers, Uganda's wildlife has a healthy, natural shyness of our vehicles. Here we have an opportunity to observe natural behavior. Binoculars are strongly recommended for observing animals as well as birds. They will also be helpful for observing chimpanzees and monkeys who spend much of their time high up in trees. We recommend 10-power if you are interested in seeing and identifying smaller birds.

CHIMPANZEES

Within the reserve, chimpanzees are wild and free to roam wherever they choose. Their movements are influenced not by people but by ecological and social factors. We track chimpanzees by following their morning vocalizations—they tend to call most just after sunrise. Once we hear these calls, we walk as quickly and quietly as possible to find them, as they may only call a few times. Chimps do not associate in permanent groups and the number and identity

What to Expect

of them encountered during a visit cannot be ascertained beforehand. As their movements are difficult to predict, finding them is dependent on their behavior and we cannot guarantee we will see them.

Essential Guidelines For Viewing Chimpanzees
Wild chimpanzees are very active and temperamental animals. Their response to visitors will be determined in part by the visitors' behavior. It is important that the initial approach to the chimps is quiet and calm. If the chimps are feeding, it will be possible to observe them quietly. Once they settle down, the local guides will search for the best possible vantage points and visitors can move around and speak softly. If the animals are traveling, so will the visitors. If the chimps are resting on the ground, visitors must try to be especially calm and quiet. If a chimp starts a threatening display, stay close to the guides and do not run away. If visitors do not disturb or annoy the chimps, it is unlikely they will be aggressive. Binoculars are essential for viewing chimps high up in the trees. Find a comfortable spot, lean back, and enjoy watching them feed, groom, and interact. Chimpanzees are very susceptible to human diseases, especially respiratory ones. To reduce the risk to the animals, visitors are not allowed to eat or smoke while in the forest. It is not possible to approach within five meters (16 feet) of the chimps. This not only protects the animals, but also reduces the risk of aggression from them. It must be remembered that chimpanzees are intelligent and curious, but also very excitable. Visitors must not encourage contact at any time. Photographing chimpanzees can be difficult. They spend much of their time feeding in trees and are often backlit. Flash photography is not permitted as the flash seems to bother them.

GORILLAS

The gorillas we visit have been habituated by park rangers over many years to tolerate the presence of small groups of visitors. The habituation process involves locating the family each day by following their trail of the previous day and then staying with them for as long as the "habituator" is tolerated. In the early stages of the habituation process, the gorillas are very nervous, and the dominant male attempts to intimidate the habituator by chest beating and repeated bluff charges, while the members of his family move away and remain hidden. As the gorillas become more used to these daily visits, the behavior of the adult male becomes less volatile and the daily observation period is gradually extended. Slowly the gorillas come to understand that the observer, whom they recognize, poses no threat to them and so curiosity overcomes fear and they begin to show themselves more readily. Visitors can be taken to the gorillas, starting with one and slowly building up to a maximum of eight people per family of gorillas per day.

Essential Guidelines for Viewing Gorillas
The minimum age for all gorilla tracking participants is 15 years. In order to protect gorillas from communicable diseases, to which they are very susceptible, gorillas cannot be touched by humans. Any traveler with an obvious cold or other communicable illness will not be allowed to participate in the treks. Groups may remain with the gorilla family for a maximum of one hour. It is very important to follow the instructions of your guide at all times. He or she works with the gorillas every day and understands them very well. Always remain in a compact group close behind the guide. The guide will locate the dominant male of the group and will attempt to position you in such a way that the gorilla can see you at all times. It is very important that the dominant male knows exactly where you are and for this reason you must always remain together in one group. If the dominant male approaches very closely or even charges, it is very important that you do not move backwards: remain exactly where you are. The guide may suggest you adopt a submissive posture by sitting down slowly. If a young gorilla approaches, under no circumstances should you make any move to touch it. The guide may try to discourage it from touching you, as this can create a dangerous situation with the dominant male. Avoid sudden movements or loud noises because they can be particularly disturbing to the gorillas. Do not move any vegetation to get a better photo opportunity. Shaking the vegetation is a gorilla threat display! Or, the gorilla may interpret it as an attempt to take away his food—not a good idea when in the company of a 400-pound gorilla. Flash photography is not permitted.

Often the gorillas are found in very dense vegetation where visibility is poor. The guide will very carefully try to maneuver the group of visitors into a better position, but this is slow work, so please be patient. Never forget that these gorillas, while tolerating your presence, are still totally wild animals.

What to Expect

WEATHER

The climate in Uganda is considered "modified tropical"—similar to the equatorial climate of other East African countries like Kenya and Tanzania, but slightly modified by its altitude, which ranges from 3,500 to 4,500 feet. Daytime temperatures are usually in the 70s and 80s, and humidity is fairly high. You can expect to experience some rain during the course of the trip. Like Kenya and Tanzania, Uganda has two annual rainy seasons, one between March and May and one between October and November.

June, July and August
During these months, the country is refreshingly green and the weather is coolest, especially in the higher altitudes, with a high of 70° to 80°F and a low of 40°. Riding in the safari vehicle can be chilly some mornings, but the temperature usually warms up by 10:00 am.

September, October and November
These are delightful times to visit Uganda and can be compared to springtime in the US. The jacaranda and other trees are bursting into blossom and the days are warmer. The high temperatures are 75° to 85°F, with a low of 65°. Scattered rains occur in November and early December. These "short rains" just freshen the country and lay the dust, although they can sometimes be heavy.

December to March
These are Uganda's "summer" months. The temperature range is from 80° to 90°F during the day (coastal areas are hotter and can range from 80° to 100°). The evenings range from 50° to 60°.

April and May
The rainy season (the "long rains") occur during these months.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Africa Manager or email us at africa@wildernesstravel.com.

REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At www.wildernesstravel.com, you can book your trip online or find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and one-time Limited Edition adventures that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access our complete library of detailed itineraries filled with enticing photos and videos, read bios of our Trip Leaders, find descriptions of trip accommodations, and check real-time availability of any trips that interest you.

Toucan Club Rewards & Discounts

We are very proud to have one of the highest rates of repeat travelers in the business, and have established the Wilderness Travel Toucan Club to reward you for your loyalty. For more information, please visit the Toucan Club page of our website at www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan.

Here's how it works:

YOUR FIRST TRIP

As a first-time traveler, you receive a lightweight Wilderness Travel T-shirt and set of durable WT Luggage Tags. On subsequent trips, we're happy to send you a new WT T-shirt and set of Luggage Tags by request.

YOUR SECOND TRIP

A top quality Wilderness Travel 32oz stainless steel insulated water bottle by CamelBak and a cozy Wilderness Travel fleece vest by Patagonia ($140 value).

YOUR THIRD TRIP

A versatile Wilderness Travel R-1 pullover by Patagonia ($150 value).

YOUR FOURTH TRIP

Discounts on the cost of your trip begin! You receive a 4% discount on the tour cost.

FIVE AND MORE TRIPS

You receive a 5% discount on the base trip cost. On your sixth trip, you receive a 6% discount, and so on up to your 10th trip. The maximum discount is 10%, with a ceiling of $500.

Note: Due to special pricing considerations, Toucan Club discounts do not apply to our Private Journeys or Special Events. However, your participation on these trips does count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular adventures.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Toucan Club travel discounts cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount, unless otherwise specified. Discounts are deducted from the base trip cost and shown on the final invoice. The base trip cost is the main land/tier cost and does not include single supplement fees, extensions, internal airfare, or other additional charges. Bonus gifts (T-shirts, luggage tags, vests, water bottles, and pullovers) will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to trip departure. Terms and conditions of Toucan Club bonuses are subject to change or cancellation at the discretion of Wilderness Travel, Inc.

T-SHIRT FRONT

T-SHIRT BACK

PATAGONIA SYNCHILLA FLEECE VEST; INSULATED CAMELBAK WATER BOTTLE

PATAGONIA R1 PULLOVER

Travel Notes

Travel Notes

WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

World's Best Tour Operators: *Travel + Leisure*, 2026, 13-time winner
Best Travel Specialists in the World: *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2026, 6-time winner
Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips: *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row
Best Adventure Travel Companies: *USA Today*
Trip of the Year: *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner
50 Tours of a Lifetime: *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row
Best Adventure Travel Companies: *National Geographic Adventure,* 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

Revised: October 8, 2026 11:10 AM

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