

# Uganda Private Safari

CHIMPANZEE TRACKING, QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK, AND THE MOUNTAIN  
GORILLAS OF BWINDI IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK



## WHEN TO GO

June to September / December to February

For our Private Journey trips, you choose your own group and your preferred dates—there are no set departure dates. Private Journeys are available to groups as few as two people or as large as you like. While many guests choose to book this tour exactly as is, our Area Specialists can work with you to customize it to your wishes. Contact us for availability, questions, or to book your adventure!

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## Uganda Private Safari

CHIMPANZEE TRACKING, QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK,  
AND THE MOUNTAIN GORILLAS OF BWINDI IMPENETRABLE  
NATIONAL PARK

Uganda, with its mystical forests, sun-dappled savannas, legendary Great Rift Valley, and the snow-capped Ruwenzori Mountains, is an absolutely gorgeous setting for this Private Journey. Led by your own safari guide and in a private vehicle, enjoy a thrilling big game safari, gameviewing by boat, and the ultimate—the rare opportunity to track chimpanzees and mountain gorillas on foot! To observe these endangered creatures up-close in the wild is one of the world's most unforgettable experiences—the excitement of coming within a few feet of them is simply surreal.

### ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Wilderness Travel Private Journeys are designed for people who want to travel with their own small private group, but who still want to experience the same superb itinerary design, great accommodations, and signature quality of Wilderness Travel's escorted group trips. These Private Journeys allow you to choose your own dates and your traveling companions—and enjoy the WT touch on all aspects of the journey.



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# Itinerary

Note: The exclusive game lodges we use for this program, as well as the gorilla and chimpanzee permits, are often booked up well in advance. We urge you to make your reservation as early as possible to guarantee availability on your preferred dates.

## DAY 1

### ENTEBBE, UGANDA

Arrive in Entebbe, where you will be met for the transfer to your hotel. The remainder of the day is free to relax, but there are several choices for excursions in Entebbe. One option is a private sundowner cruise on Lake Victoria, with the chance to get a glimpse of life among the fishing villages along this expansive lake (at additional cost). Another option is to take a guided visit to the Uganda Wildlife Education Center, a conservation education center dedicated to protecting Uganda's biodiversity. All of the animals at the center have been rescued from poachers, illegal trade, or accidents. You can also take an optional excursion to the Entebbe Botanical Gardens. These famous gardens were laid out in 1898 during the British era and offer a fascinating introduction to some of Uganda's native flora and a rich variety of birdlife. Overnight at Karibu Guesthouse, or upgrade to the Protea Hotel or Hotel Number 5...meals on your own

Classic Accommodation: Karibu Guesthouse

Optional Upgrade: Protea Hotel or Hotel Number 5

See Lodging pages for descriptions and photos

## DAY 2

### KIBALE NATIONAL PARK

Known as the "pearl of Africa," Uganda is a gorgeous country. In the morning, fly for 1.5 hours, then take a roughly two-hour drive to Kibale National Park with your private guide. Your drive brings you through lovely countryside where every type of fruit and vegetable imaginable is grown. Amidst the farmland are traditional villages with their shambas (planted lots). Upon reaching Kyenjojo, in the lower foothills of the Rwenzoris ("Mountains of the Moon"), you drive through tea plantations and into the tropical rainforest of 296-square-mile Kibale National Park. Kibale is contiguous with Queen Elizabeth National Park at the same pleasant altitudes of 3,000 to 5,000 feet. In the afternoon, you have the option to go on a guided "Top of the World" hike, where you pass through villages and lush landscapes and take in panoramic views. The hike takes approximately 3 hours. Or, you can dive right into a primate experience with an afternoon chimp trek. Overnight at Ndali Lodge, or upgrade to Primate Lodge...BLD

Classic Accommodation: Ndali Lodge

Optional Upgrade: Primate Lodge

## DAY 3

### KIBALE NATIONAL PARK / CHIMPANZEE TRACKING

Kibale, home to 13 primate species, is said to have the highest density and variety of primates in Africa. Heading out with your local tracking guide, follow good pathways through a network of beautiful shady trails. You have the



## TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

<b>Length:</b>	8 days
<b>Arrive:</b>	Entebbe, Uganda
<b>Depart:</b>	Entebbe, Uganda
<b>Lodging:</b>	7 nights hotels or lodges
<b>Meals:</b>	All meals included except 1 dinner (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
<b>Activity:</b>	Safaris, Wildlife and Natural History
<b>Trip Level:</b>	1 2 3+ 4 5 6 1 day chimpanzee tracking on forested trails, 1 day of gorilla tracking on steep and sometimes muddy trails, 4WD gameviewing

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy thrilling encounters with mountain gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest
- Track chimpanzees on foot in Kibale Forest National Park
- Phenomenal gameviewing safari on the savannas of Queen Elizabeth National Park in the Great Rift Valley
- Private safari guide and vehicle



# Itinerary (cont'd)

option to visit with the chimps for an hour in the morning or the afternoon, or you can opt to spend the day with them as a part of the Chimpanzee Habituation Experience, a unique opportunity to visit with chimpanzees for a day at their nesting sites they built the night before.

Chimpanzee Habituation Experience Option: Limited to a maximum of six participants, the Chimpanzee Habituation Experience involves an early morning departure and moderate to strenuous hiking to spend time with the primates in their natural setting for the entire day. A packed lunch will be provided. The park guides have studied the patterns of the chimpanzee clans for years and know the daily locations of many groups. Once a clan of chimpanzees is found, you'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 you 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. You may also see other primates such as vervets, colobus, grey-cheeked mangabeys, and red-tailed monkeys. Many species of beautiful subtropical birds and butterflies abound in Kibale's rich habitat, along with duikers, bushpigs, and bushbucks, making for a day of absolutely world-class wildlife viewing. Overnight at your lodge...BLD

## DAY 4

### CULTURAL WALK, KIBALE FOREST / QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

This morning, enjoy a leisurely cultural walk with the opportunity to learn more about the local Bigodi people and their way of life. A delicious lunch is prepared by a respected community leader who teaches you about the farming techniques, harvesting, and cooking methods that go into preparing your meal. In the afternoon, a scenic three-hour drive through green farmlands and tiny villages brings you 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 and the fabled "Mountains of the Moon." 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 Q.E.N.P has recorded 547 avian species. Overnight at Twin Lakes Lodge, or upgrade to Elephant Plains Lodge or Kyambura Gorge Lodge... BLD

Classic Accommodation: Twin Lakes Lodge

Optional Upgrade: Elephant Plains Lodge or Kyambura Gorge Lodge



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## DAY 5

### QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK / KAZINGA CHANNEL

This morning you'll have the opportunity to don a researcher hat for a few hours 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. You'll also enjoy gameviewing by 4WD vehicle in the park's lake-dotted savannas, and a two-hour trip by boat in the Kazinga Channel, which runs through the park and links Lake Edward and Lake George. On this meandering waterway, you'll view large concentrations of hippos, elephant and other wildlife that often come to the water's edge to drink, and the birding is excellent. For a different and thrilling experience, you have the option to add on a night game drive (at an additional cost of \$190/vehicle). Overnight at your lodge...BLD

## DAY 6

### BWINDI IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK

With your guide, drive for about six hours to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, passing through the Ishasha section of Queen Elizabeth Park, where you'll look for its famous tree-climbing lions. 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 stretched from the Virunga Volcanoes to the Ruwenzori Mountains. There are 113 species of mammals in the park, including rare forest elephants, 200 species of butterfly, over 360 species of birds, and an enormous variety of trees, including ten endemic species. Among the 11 resident primate species are some 400 magnificent mountain gorillas, half of the world's population of this elusive and highly endangered mammal. Bwindi ranges in altitude from 3,800 to 8,500 feet and 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, or upgrade to Gorilla Forest Camp or Bwindi Lodge...BLD

Classic Accommodation: Mahogany Springs Lodge  
Optional Upgrade: Gorilla Forest Camp or Bwindi Lodge

## DAY 7

### BWINDI / GORILLA TRACKING

Today you'll enjoy the incomparable experience of tracking, then quietly observing, the mountain gorilla clans that reside in Bwindi's montane forests. You first have an orientation talk with the local trackers at the park headquarters on the etiquette of gorilla tracking, then break into small groups and search for the Mubare, Habinyanja, or Rushegura clans with a ranger guide. The tracking can be physically challenging. You'll 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 you find the gorillas. But the rewards are tremendous and the rigors soon forgotten when you spot a gorilla family and become absorbed in watching these gentle creatures. When not observing mountain gorillas, you have time to observe some of the amazing varieties of bird, butterfly, and animal species that make their home in this unusual park. Overnight at lodge...BLD

**Gorilla Health Center Visit Option:** Get a behind-the-scenes look at the Conservation through Public Health's (CTPH) outstanding gorilla conservation efforts. CTPH is an Ugandan-run non-profit lead by Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka that aims to improve the health of wildlife, ecosystems, humans and their livestock in and around Uganda's protected areas. Activities include a tour of the facilities, a demonstration of how CTPH analyzes gorilla samples (with the opportunity to participate!), and discussions about CTPH's work with the local community.

**Gorilla Habituation Option:** Limited to just four participants (rather than the usual eight), this option allows you to hike with a habituation team to a gorilla group living in the Rushaga area of Bwindi. In addition to your hiking time in the forest, you will spend a full four hours with the gorillas as they go about their daily life of feeding, playing, grooming, and bonding (compared to about one hour on the standard gorilla trek). This option is more strenuous and starts earlier in the day (7:30 am). It also requires staying at a different lodge—please call for details.

## DAY 8

### ENTEBBE / DEPART

Bid farewell to your guide and board your flight back to Entebbe (typically arriving in Entebbe by noon). A dayroom will be available for your convenience. Connect with evening homeward-bound flight...BL

# Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

## TRIP COST

### Prices are per person, valid through 2025

\$6,995 (4-10 members)

\$7,795 (2-3 members)

Single supplement: \$890

Internal airfare: \$960 (subject to change)

Chimp trek permit (1 trek): \$200

Chimp Habituation permit (1 trek): \$250

Gorilla trek permit (1 trek): \$700

Gorilla Habituation trek permit (1 trek): \$1,500

Note: Due to the small size of the camps, early booking is highly recommended

Free upgrade Gorilla Forest Camp in April, May, and November

*Prices are based on double occupancy and not guaranteed until services are confirmed.*

### Make it Your Trip!

The prices above are for the ready-to-book adventure outlined in this Detailed Itinerary, a popular option that has been handcrafted by our Area Specialists to include the best of every destination. While many travelers choose to book this tour as is, our Area Specialists are also happy to work with you to customize this Private Journey to suit your specific interests and style of travel. We can arrange for longer or shorter stays, offer hotel upgrades (see below for sample costs), or add an extension to additional places of interest. We can even add special activities or customize excursions depending on your interests. We invite you to contact us to discuss your options!

### Optional Hotel Upgrades

*All upgrade pricing is per person, per night, based on double occupancy. Please call for single occupancy pricing.*

Entebbe: Protea Marriott Hotel, from \$89

Entebbe: Hotel Number 5, from \$120

Queen Elizabeth National Park: Elephant Plains Lodge, from \$375

Kyambura Game Reserve: Kyambura Gorge Lodge, from \$1290

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park: Gorilla Forest Camp, from \$525

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park: Bwindi Lodge, from \$750

## TRIP COST INCLUDES

- All accommodations, based on double occupancy, as described in this itinerary
- All meals included except 1 dinner as indicated in the Detailed Itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)

- Services of private driver/guide
- All gratuities (except for private driver/guide)
- 4WD safari vehicles
- Land and internal air transportation as noted
- All airport transfers
- Park fees

## TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare, internal flight, fuel surcharges, meals not specified (BLD) in the Detailed Itinerary, any activities described as optional, airport departure taxes, optional tipping or gratuities to private driver/guide, additional hotel nights made necessary by airline schedule changes or other factors, pre-trip expenses such as medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas; and other expenses of a personal nature.

## SIGNING UP FOR A TRIP

Early reservations are recommended since accommodations often sell out far in advance. Please call 1-800-368-2794 and ask for our Africa Manager or email [africa@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:africa@wildernesstravel.com) with any questions that you may have about this trip. To reserve your Private Journey, we will need to know your preferred dates of travel. We will then check availability and send you a proposed itinerary with exact pricing for your adventure. We can typically hold a provisional booking for one week. At that time, we must collect your initial deposit or accommodations will be released. We accept Visa, Mastercard, or American Express card. Upon receipt of your deposit, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a letter of confirmation, Detailed Itinerary, Trip Application, Medical Form, and Pre-Departure Information Booklet with information to help you prepare for your adventure.

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Upon trip confirmation: 25% of trip cost

90 days prior to departure: Balance

## CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee: 25% of trip cost

90 days or less: 100% of trip cost

\*Please note that this differs from our regular catalog departures.

## 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](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance)

# Extend Your Adventure!

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 *Uganda Private Safari* webpage and click on the "Extensions" tab: [www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/uganda/uganda-private-journey/extensions](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/trip/uganda/uganda-private-journey/extensions)

## 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 \$3,795.*

## MURCHISON FALLS EXTENSION

Explore legendary Murchison Falls, the country's first national park, where you 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, you'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 your visit supports their protection.

*5 days. From \$5,795.*

## 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.

Please note: Naibor, Rekeru, and Mara Plains camps are small and exclusive and often fill well in advance; early booking is recommended. There is a 33-lb. weight limit on flights to/from the Masai Mara.

*4 days. From \$5,695.*



# Arrival & Departure

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## 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.

Entebbe, Uganda, is the meeting and end point for the trip. You will be met at the airport in Entebbe on Day 1 and transferred to your hotel. At the end of the trip, you will fly back to Entebbe and connect with your homeward-bound flight.

## FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Trip members are responsible for making their own arrangements for air transportation. Please do not purchase your airline tickets until you are confirmed on the trip and have reviewed your proposed air schedule with our office.

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](http://www.exitotravel.com).

Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so that we can send it on to the local guide (make sure to include your Trip Name and Trip Dates on it). Note: The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly; otherwise you may be denied boarding. Please remember this when reserving your flights. In addition, your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US (in most cases).





# Accommodations

## DAY 1 (1 NIGHT): ENTEBBE-UGANDA

In Entebbe, we stay at one of the following properties, based on availability and choice of accommodation:



### KARIBU GUESTHOUSE

“Karibu” means welcome, and you’ll feel very much at home at this cozy guesthouse, with its gracious staff, lovely gardens, and clean and comfortable rooms. Each offers a private bathroom, fan, and mosquito-netted beds. Set on a hill with views of Lake Victoria, it’s an ideal spot for a quiet overnight in Entebbe.



### PROTEA MARRIOTT HOTEL (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

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.



### HOTEL NUMBER 5 (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Just a short drive from the airport, this boutique hotel is set amid tranquil gardens and near Lake Victoria. Airy guest rooms have comfortable beds, large bathrooms, and private patios overlooking the garden—some even have views of the lake. The hotel has a spa, perfect for pre- or post-plane massages, and a good restaurant serving international and local dishes. If you have time, be sure to relax poolside with a gin and tonic or enjoy the sunset from the upstairs patio.

# Accommodations

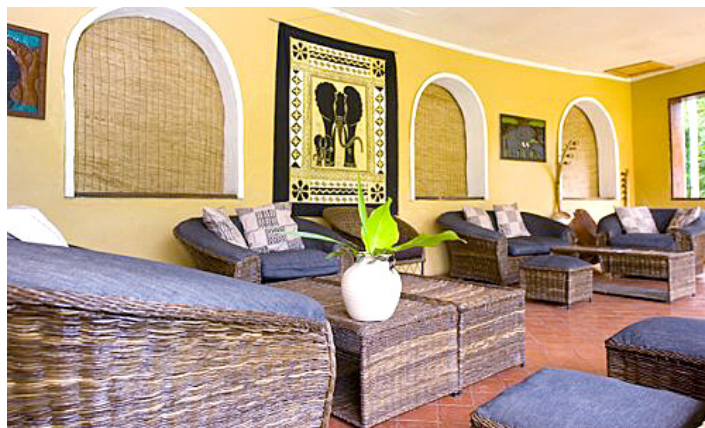
## DAYS 2 TO 3 (2 NIGHTS): KIBALE NATIONAL PARK, UGANDA

In Kibale National Park, we stay at one of the following properties, based on availability and choice of accommodation:



### NDALI LODGE

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. The dining room opens onto Lake Nyinambuga, and meals are served family style.



### PRIMATE LODGE (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Set in the heart of Kibale Forest National Park, Primate Lodge is aptly named. It's surrounded by lush tropical forest that's home to 13 species of primates, including chimpanzees. Each of the 16 cottages is well appointed and decorated in Africa style, with comfortable queen-size beds, an en suite bathroom, and a large veranda offering views of the forest. Public facilities include a well-stocked bar, open-air restaurant serving international and traditional African dishes, and a lounge area that's an ideal place to relax amid the chattering of red-tailed monkeys in the canopy above. The lodge is powered by solar electricity, and some cottages have backup generators to charge cameras and phones. Devices can also be charged in the bar or restaurant. The lodge's location is also ideal—access to the chimp trek is just down the road.

## DAYS 4 TO 5 (2 NIGHTS): QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK, UGANDA

In Queen Elizabeth National Park, we stay at one of the following properties, based on availability and choice of accommodation:



### TWIN LAKES SAFARI LODGE

With its stunning location on the edge of an escarpment, this lodge offers spectacular views overlooking Queen Elizabeth National Park, Lakes Edward and George, and the Rwenzori Mountains. There are nine spacious cottages, each with en suite facilities and private shaded veranda where you can relax and take in the stunning views. After a rewarding day of wildlife viewing, you can take a refreshing dip in the infinity pool before sitting down to a delicious dinner.



### ELEPHANT PLAINS LODGE (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

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.



### KYAMBURA GORGE LODGE (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Kyambura is set on the edge of Queen Elizabeth National Park with sweeping views of the rolling savanna, the distant Rwenzoris (“mountains of the moon”), and the deep Kyambura Gorge. The eight stylish timber-and-thatch bandas have contemporary furnishings, en suite bathrooms with flush toilets, and panoramic views across either the savanna or the gorge. This is the ideal spot for chimp tracking in the forests of the gorge and gameviewing in spectacular Queen Elizabeth National Park.

# Accommodations

## DAYS 6 TO 7 (2 NIGHTS): BWINDI IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK, UGANDA

In Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, we stay at one of the following properties, based on availability and choice of accommodation:



### MAHOGANY SPRINGS LODGE

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.



### GORILLA FOREST CAMP (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

This luxury tented camp is one of the only properties right inside Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The main lodge has a bar and dining room overlooking a large green lawn, and the 10 tented rooms have comfortable beds, verandas, and en suite facilities including a shower and claw-footed bathtub. The food is excellent, with open-air dining, and the service is friendly. Briefings for gorilla tracking are given around an outdoor fireplace in the evenings.



### BWINDI LODGE (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Overlooking the primeval Bwindi Impenetrable Forest and with stunning views of the forest canopy across a serene stream, Bwindi Lodge is one of Africa's unique lodges. The property has dramatic views of the impenetrable forest and is a great place to spot monkeys and birds hidden in the foliage. During 2021 two new deluxe bandas opened, standard bandas have been rebuilt and upgraded, and the lounge and library have been reimagined.

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 *Uganda Private Safari* webpage and click on "Accommodations."

# Trip Details

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## WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated Level 3+, Moderate. You will have a private guide and driver in a 4WD safari vehicle. 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.

The hike to see the mountain gorillas can last anywhere from 2 to 8 hours, which includes one hour spent with the gorillas, over terrain that can be steep, thickly forested, and/or slippery. Altitudes for the gorilla tracking portions of the trip range from approximately 3,900 feet to approximately 7,500 feet. You will be hiking through dense, thorny bush covering up to four miles or more in distance. You may be hiking in all types of weather; rain can occur in these mountains at a moment's notice. The climate is hot and humid. Gorilla tracking is a strenuous activity and it is important to be in good physical condition. We will often hike uphill to follow the clans, but will take breaks along the way. The shape you're in will be an important factor in your enjoyment of and ability to partake in these hikes. Make an effort to get in good physical condition with hiking, biking, running, or other kinds of exercise beyond your normal routine. Start getting in shape months before your departure. A brisk 30-45 minute walk every other day over moderately steep terrain can do wonders for your conditioning.

The hike to see the chimpanzees takes an average of 2.5 hours, though it can last up to 4 hours when chimps are on the move in search of food. We will hike on marked trails for at least part of the trek. However, as with the mountain gorillas, we will follow the chimps' movements, prompting us to sometimes go off-trail based on their wanderings. Altitudes during this portion of the trip range from approximately 3,900 feet to approximately 4,600 feet. Conditions can be boggy and since we are in a tropical rainforest, it can rain at any time.

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.

## GAME DRIVES & WILD ANIMALS

During drives and walks, you can at times get quite close to wild animals. Being very quiet improves everybody's chances of observation. In the interest of safety, your guide 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. You will track chimpanzees by following their morning vocalizations—they tend to call most just after sunrise. Once you hear these calls, the group walks 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 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

## Trip Details (cont'd)

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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. At this point, visitors can be taken to the gorillas for the daily visit, 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 old. 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.

### 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.

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## 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°-80° 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°-85°F, with a low of 65°F. 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° during the day (coastal areas are hotter and can range from 80° to 100°). The evenings range from 50°F to 60°F.

## April and May

The rainy season (the “long rains”) occur during these months.

## PRIVATE GUIDE AND SAFARI VEHICLE

You will have an English-speaking drive/guide and private vehicle from Day 2 to 7.

## 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](mailto: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.

## ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Wilderness Travel Private Journeys are designed for people who want to travel with their own small private group, but who still want to experience the same superb itinerary design, great accommodations, and signature quality of Wilderness Travel’s escorted group trips. These Private Journeys allow you to choose your own dates and your traveling companions—and enjoy the WT touch on all aspects of the journey.

## TOUCAN CLUB

Please note that Toucan Club discounts do not apply for our Private Journeys. However, your participation on these trips will count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel’s regular expeditions. For more information regarding our Toucan Club bonus program, please visit our website at [www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/resources/toucan-club)

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At [www.wildernesstravel.com](http://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.



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