



## GENERAL SAFARI INFORMATION ON UGANDA

### GEOGRAPHY:-

DESCRIBED as “THE PEARL OF AFRICA” by Winston Churchill, Uganda lies along the equator covering 235,000 sqkms. It has a population of approx. 40 million people with Kampala as its capital city. In total it offers 10 wildlife parks and reserves with its safari highlights being the Gorilla and Chimpanzee trekking, the world’s longest river, THE NILE amongst others.

### PEOPLE:-

There are over 43 tribal ethnic groups, each with their own dialect, though most people in the country speak Luganda as well as their own tribal language. English is commonly spoken in the major towns and at all lodges and hotels.

### CLIMATE:-

Uganda falling along the Equator experiences tropical type of climate. As a result there no major variations on the climate. To be noted however is that in the high altitude areas such as Bwindi Impenetrable National Park cool weather is expected while the areas around the large water bodies tend to be hot and humid. Temperatures on the plains tend to range between 21°C and 30°C and in the mountainous areas they can go down to 10°C in certain months.

Over most of the country there are two rainy seasons:

- The Short rains which occur from late October through November
- The Long rains which occur from late March to end of May
- It is very possible to visit Uganda during the rainy season. The parks are usually less frequented which is great for tourists who prefer to enjoy “exclusive game viewing” without other vehicles in the vicinity. The National Parks are then fresh and green with beautiful flowers springing alive all over the plains.
- July and August are the coolest months and are often overcast especially in the morning. December - Mid. March is the warmest time of the year.

### HEALTH PRECAUTIONS: -

Due to presence of large water bodies in the country or along the main touristic destinations / attractions, malaria is quite prevalent and necessary measures need to be taken into consideration such as taking anti-malaria tablets and use of a very good mosquito repellent. It is highly advisable that you consult your personal doctor on what would be most suitable for you.



- Please note that **yellow fever vaccination is mandatory** for all travellers between 1 year and 65 years. Other vaccinations are only recommendations by WHO such as vaccination against Hepatitis A,B & C, Meningitis and other waterborne diseases.

#### INSURANCE:-

It is advisable that guests purchase the various insurances when traveling to Uganda as one is responsible for their own expenses. These insurances are: (1) Emergency evacuation insurance, (2) Medical insurance and (3) Travel insurance.

We recommend for our clients to have an **emergency evacuation insurance** which we include in most quotations (pls. check your inclusions / exclusions). This is basically an insurance that is already included in most overseas insurances as they offer repatriation to your home country. However, we still highly recommend the local second insurance as a back-up as evacuation takes place by air (FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE) and is far more effective than the overseas insurance. You are transported by either air / road from the point of emergency (the closest airstrip) to Nairobi. (to a local well renowned hospital with good medical care)

#### All clients are requested to inform us about:

- their overseas travel insurance details- passport numbers
- a contact person at home in case of any emergency
- your passport number and nationality
- your birth date
- your blood group

**Travel insurance** will take care of trip last minute cancellation charges due to unforeseen eventualities that prohibits you from traveling.

And lastly **personal items insurance** - Whilst every care is taken of you and your property, we cannot be held responsible for any accidents, injury, or illness that you may incur or for any loss or damage to baggage. We therefore advise that you and your property be fully covered by your own insurance and it is advisable to have separate baggage and ticket insurance.

#### DRINKING WATER:-

Please ensure that you drink bottled mineral water only throughout your stay. Good to note is that mineral water will be provided for your consumption throughout your safari. Mineral water is also provided for brushing at the various properties. However you may be required to pay for mineral water provided during meals at some properties (pls. check your inclusions / exclusions).

#### CURRENCY:

- The monetary unit is the Ugandan Shilling. There is no limit to the amount of currency that one can bring into the country but a source declaration may be required for huge sums of money. Most of the hotels, lodges and shops in Uganda will accept major credit cards as well as major currencies such as the US dollars. Good to note is that a surcharge may apply for credit card payments. We recommend exchange of currency at the forex exchange bureaus as they offer the best rates. It is possible to withdraw money for the local BANKS ATMS' too at the banks exchange rate. It is recommended that visitors do not change money on the black market, as they are more likely to receive a lower rate of exchange or prone to fraud. There is an opportunity for tourists to change their Euros, USD. or GBP among other currency at the Entebbe International Airport. Please note that it is important to have CASH during your travel.

#### TRANSPORT:

Main roads are generally good but travel is much slower than on western world. Secondary roads are of variable quality and often slow and bumpy especially around the gorilla parks. Be prepared for long car journeys often taking most of the day as most of the touristic destinations are located on the western part of the country while the airport is on the Eastern side. We have a fleet of custom-made 4x4 vehicles adapted to this environment.

However please note that there is an option of air travel i.e. scheduled or chartered light aircrafts.

#### LUGGAGE:

- Please ensure that your baggage is packed in soft bags and should weigh no more than 15 to a maximum of 20 kgs per person. It is possible to store luggage during the safari either at your hotel if you are returning thereafter your trip or in our offices. Most lodges offer laundry facilities at an extra charge. On air safaris the maximum luggage allowance per person is 15kgs including hand luggage.

Examples of soft bags:



#### VOLTAGE:

Voltage throughout the country is 220-240AC. Most safari vehicles have a cigarette lighter socket operating on a 12-volt system. On request, we are happy to furnish your safari vehicle with an inverter free of charge. Pls. request for the same. In most lodges and camps there is no mains power and generators are used during limited times during the day and in the evening. Please carry adaptors with a square 3-pin English standard option. In case you use CPAP machine you need to advise on this at the time of booking so that all properties may be notified accordingly.



#### COMMUNICATIONS:

All camps and lodges have efficient mobile phone and email communication. There is also excellent Wi-Fi connection nowadays at most camps and lodges in the main areas although at times internet speeds vary so heavy use may not be possible. Most phones do switch to automatic roaming. However, to be on the safe side, you can purchase a local phone line upon arrival for cheaper phone costs.

#### VEHICLE:

Your vehicle will be **custom built and safari equipped 4WD Landcruiser** not a pop-top van. Your vehicle has a game viewing hatch / pop-up roof for enhanced game viewing.

#### ON SAFARI:

When you are out on safari our schedule is completely flexible though timings need to be observed for fixed activities of the day such as Gorilla Trekking and Chimpanzee tracking that may have a different program. Our staff, and vehicles are there exclusively for your safari. We can spend the day exactly as you wish. The best times for viewing animals are the cool hours of the early morning and late afternoon. Therefore, our usual routine will be to have an early rise with a cup of tea or coffee before leaving camp on a game drive, returning to camp / lodge midmorning for breakfast. We'll stay in camp / lodge in the heat of the day and go out again after tea in the afternoon, or stay out the whole day with a picnic lunch. Your guide will be with you to plan your day, tell you about what you see, take you to the loveliest places, look after any formalities or negotiations with the local people, and take care of your safety and comfort. All our guides are fluent in English, speak the local language, are proficient in bush craft, and can tell you about the animals, identify birds, and help you learn more about the world around you.

#### CLOTHING ON SAFARI:

Light cotton clothing is recommended, ideal Safari outfits can be purchased back home. T-Shirts, short and long cotton trousers (or jeans), a sun hat, long sleeved shirts and sweaters for game drives (it can be cold in the morning & evening), swimming costume as some lodges / camps have swimming pools. Good and comfortable walking shoes (e.g. sneakers). A rain / wind jacket is a good idea too. Dress code in general is casual on safari. For **Gorilla and Primate Trekking** safaris, please refer to the enclosed Gorilla Trekking etiquette and packing list.

#### SECURITY:

Avoid carrying large sums of money. Be sensible with hand bags, jewellery and camera cases. Avoid walking at night. Lock up valuables in the safety deposit boxes, provided by most hotels / lodges and camps. In some bush camps, there are no safety deposit boxes, pls. carry anything really valuable with you or you may leave them at the camps office.

#### PASSPORT AND VISA REQUIREMENTS:

Ugandan visas are required by citizens of the European Union, the US, Canadians, Australian and Japan and pre-application may be required. Other nationals should check at <http://www.immigration.go.ug/page/requirementsentry-uganda> to confirm their requirements. Entry visas can be obtained at Ugandan missions overseas or at Entebbe airport or land borders. A single entry visa to Uganda costs **US\$ 50.00 PER PERSON** and is valid for three months. When combining your travel with Kenya and Rwanda, please do look out for single East African Community Visa.

Pls. also note that you require 2 empty pages in your passport and the passport need to be valid for another 6 months after leaving Uganda.

#### DANGERS OF THE BUSH AND PARK REGULATIONS:

- Although the animals we see may seem completely unconcerned by our presence, they are wild and they are dangerous.
  - DO NOT walk outside the limits of the camp.
  - DO NOT get out of the safari vehicle in the park without first consulting your guide
  - DO NOT climb out onto the roof etc. of your safari vehicle to photograph or view animals. This is strictly forbidden and can be fined by the park rangers.
- All the above are against park regulations. It is also against regulations to sit on top of the vehicle, play loud music in the bush, or to attempt to provoke some "action" from an uncooperative animal by hooting, whistling, or banging the side of the vehicle etc. Littering is of course prohibited. Should you come across an unwelcome guest - please call a member of staff to deal with.

#### CONSERVATION - Respect Our Flora and Fauna: -

- Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs. Let our beautiful flora and fauna thrive in a clean environment and in return, they will continue to look their best for your pleasure and appreciation.



- Give our animals nothing but space and respect. Do resist the temptation to follow or approach the wildlife. Respect their privacy and observe them only from afar. Please do not feed them, as this can upset their health and alter their natural behavior.
- Do not collect any natural objects from conservation areas i.e. souvenirs. Collection of trophies is illegal.
- Harassment of wildlife in any form is strictly prohibited.

#### SHOPPING:

There are a number of curios shops in case you want to buy souvenirs or handicraft to take back home, kindly liaise with your driver guide on this. Always remember to bargain for a fair price.

#### LOCAL TIME:

- Uganda has a single time zone which is GMT + 3. For the current local time.

#### EXTRAS/ INCLUSIONS / EXCLUSIONS:

- Pls. note that the **majority of camps and lodges do not** include beverages and excursions. These are extras payable. All town hotels are always booked and quoted on bed and breakfast. Therefore meals such as lunch and dinner are NOT included unless specified otherwise. All safari lodges / camps are usually quoted on full board accommodation hence all meals are included.
- Pls. carry some extra money for souvenirs that you may wish to purchase during your trip.

#### PHOTOS & PROHIBITED AREAS:

It is prohibited to take pictures of State house, airports, military installations, police stations, government facilities, any border post, soldiers or police. Pls. always seek advice from your driver/guide before taking pictures of tribes. Not everyone will agree to have their photograph taken randomly. Do not photograph local people without their prior permission / arrangement. Your driver/guide will advise you further on this sensitive matter. Take a good supply of memory sticks / cards with you as local supplies are limited when on safari. Binoculars are invaluable for game and bird viewing with your guide but we recommend that you carry your own pair along for convenience.

#### TIPPING:

Although tipping is a safari tradition, it is never compulsory and should only be done if you have received good services. The staff very much appreciates receives gratuity from you, our guests, because it is one way of assuring them, they are doing a good job.

Most lodges have a staff tip box located at the reception, or a central location. We recommend a **\$ 3.00 - 5.00 per client per day in a tip box**. Tips left here will be divided amongst the porters and waiters and all other lodge staff. If you are particularly satisfied with assistance received from someone, a personal tip is also acceptable. However, driver/guides are always tipped separately.



As for driver/guides: we do recommend approx. USD. 30.00 PER DAY PER VEHICLE as a recommended guideline.

It is not acceptable for staff to ask you for a tip or for a present for their family to be sent home etc and we would appreciate it if you reported any behavior of this sort.

***In case of further questions, pls. do not hesitate to contact us!***



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