

## UGANDA, RWANDA & KENYA

**21 days**

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### Day 1 Arrive in Entebbe, Uganda

Today we arrive at Entebbe International Airport (the airport serving the capital) and transfer to our lodge nearby.

Welcome to Uganda! Nestled on the northern shores of Lake Victoria, Entebbe offers a serene and picturesque introduction to your Ugandan adventure. As the gateway to the country, this charming town boasts lush botanical gardens, vibrant local markets, and rich history.

Overnight in Entebbe.

Included Meal(s): Dinner, if required.

### Day 2 Entebbe - Murchison Falls National Park

Early this morning, we embark on a +/- 4 hour scenic drive northwards. Our first stop is the Ziwani Rhino Sanctuary, where we'll have the opportunity to track these magnificent creatures. After lunch here, we continue our journey towards Murchison Falls National Park.

Arriving in the mid-afternoon, we'll check into our lodge and freshen up before a scenic drive through the park. This afternoon's game drive will give us a glimpse of the park's diverse wildlife, including elephants, giraffes, and various antelope species. As the sun begins to set, we'll return to the lodge for a well-deserved rest before dinner.

Tomorrow, we'll witness the raw power of nature at Murchison Falls. The Nile River, on its journey from Lake Victoria, is dramatically forced through a narrow gorge, creating a breathtaking waterfall. This powerful display of nature's force is truly a sight to behold.

Overnight in Murchison Falls.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 3 Murchison Falls Park

We'll start our day bright and early with a game drive along the Buligi, Albert, or Queens tracks. These scenic routes offer incredible opportunities to spot iconic African wildlife such as lions, leopards, giraffes, elephants, and warthogs.

After lunch, we'll embark on a Nile River cruise. As we journey downstream, we'll witness the immense power of Murchison Falls, where the Nile River is dramatically squeezed into a narrow gorge and plunges 43 meters. Along the way, we'll encounter a variety of wildlife, including crocodiles, hippos, buffalo, elephants, and a diverse array of birdlife, such as herons, cormorants, and the elusive shoebill.

Returning to the lodge in the late afternoon, we'll enjoy a well-deserved dinner before retiring for the night.

Overnight at Murchison Falls.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 4 Murchison Falls - Kibale Forest National Park

Early this morning, we'll make a final stop at the top of Murchison Falls, where we can marvel at the powerful cascade of water. After taking in this breathtaking sight, we'll continue our journey by road to Kibale Forest National Park.

This approximately six-hour drive will take us to a lush, tropical rainforest renowned for its diverse primate population. Kibale Forest is home

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to 12 different primate species, including the chimpanzee. Tomorrow, we'll have the opportunity to trek through the forest and encounter these fascinating creatures in their natural habitat.

We'll spend the night at a lodge within the park.

Overnight at Kibale.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 5 Kibale Chimpanzee Viewing - Queen Elizabeth II National Park

This morning we trek to see chimpanzees. Kibale National Forest has one of the highest diversity and concentration of primates in Africa, and is one of the best places not only in Uganda, but in the world, to see chimpanzees. Kibale Park is connected to Queen Elizabeth National Park in the South, hence allowing wildlife to freely move. This park has a total population of approximately 1,450.

Then we'll have a walk through the Bigodi Swamps. The Kibale Association manages the Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary for Rural and Environmental Organisation, formed in 1992 with the aim of achieving social and economic development for local communities. While on our guided walk around the swamps, we can distinguish many from the approximately 137 bird species found here, including the Snowy Headed Robin Chat, Black and White Casqued Hornbill, Emerald Cuckoo and a variety of weavers, warblers, greenbuls and sunbirds. There is also an abundance of butterflies, and rich in vegetation, such as wild palms, polita figs and the dominant papyrus.

We depart Kibale by road for the Mweya Peninsula in Queen Elizabeth II National Park, dominated on its northern border by the snowcapped peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains -- the famous 'Mountains of the Moon.' The varied ecosystems of this park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve for Humanity, support a wide variety of species including elephant, buffalo, lion and leopard. Driving through huge banana plantations, we'll cross the equator and arrive at the national park.

Overnight at Queen Elizabeth II National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 6 Queen Elizabeth II National Park

This morning we embark on a game drive in open savannah covered by acacia trees on the edge of the Albertine Rift Valley. We will search for the unique tree climbing lions (among other things), a population which is found only in this part of the country. It is impressive to see the animals while they are resting on top of the fig trees.

This afternoon we cruise up the Kazinga Channel, a narrow band of water connecting lakes Edward and George. This is one of the most memorable experiences of a visit to Uganda, offering an opportunity to cruise amid members of Africa's largest hippo population. In addition to these giant semi-aquatic mammals, the launch affords unique opportunities to view other mammals and birds as they come to the water's edge to drink and bathe. Birding is excellent, and we expect to see species ranging in size from the tiny, brilliant Malachite Kingfisher to the giant Goliath Heron.

Overnight at Queen Elizabeth II National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 7 Queen Elizabeth II National Park - Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

Today, we'll embark on a scenic road trip through the Ishasha Plains and the East African Rift Valley. Our (+/- 6 hour) journey will take us through rolling hills, deep valleys, and lush forests, creating a picturesque landscape often compared to the beauty of Central Europe.

We'll enjoy a packed lunch along the way, taking in the stunning views. As the day progresses, we'll arrive at Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This dense, tropical rainforest is home to a significant population of mountain gorillas. We'll spend the night at a comfortable lodge within the park.

Overnight at Bwindi.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 8 Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park: Gorilla Trekking

Bwindi, a World Heritage Park, is home to just over half of the world's last surviving mountain gorilla population of 1,000 individuals. Today's trek\* can take from one to six hours, sometimes more, at elevations in excess of 2270 m (7,500 ft) and over rough terrain. Although the hike can be physically demanding, the anticipation of the exciting experience ahead is invigorating, and the beauty of the forest and its inhabitants is fascinating. For more info, go to [www.uwa.or.ug](http://www.uwa.or.ug). Your gorilla permits are included in the tour price.

The area around Bwindi is an excellent place for watching primates and birds and you may catch a glimpse of the noisy but evasive Chimpanzees or the beautiful Hornbills and Turacos. The forest is home to 120 species of mammals, 346 species of birds, 202 species of butterflies, and 163 species of trees, making it one of the richest ecosystems in Africa.

Overnight at Bwindi.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 9 Bwindi, Uganda - Parc National des Volcans, Rwanda

Today we embark on a +/- 6-hour journey to Parc National des Volcans in Rwanda. Our route takes us through the picturesque terraced hillsides that are characteristic of the Rwandan landscape. After a 2-hour drive, we'll cross the border, which typically takes about an hour. We aim to arrive at our accommodation near the park in the early-mid afternoon.

Parc National des Volcans is a stunning mountain range, home to the endangered mountain gorilla. As Dian Fossey once wrote, "In the heart of Central Africa, so high up that you shiver more than you sweat, are great, old volcanoes towering up almost 15,000 feet, and nearly covered with rich, green rainforest." The park's diverse ecosystems, including evergreen and bamboo forests, grasslands, swamps, and heath, provide a unique habitat for a variety of wildlife.

This afternoon, we'll take a leisurely walk to the Ellen DeGeneres/Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, a fantastic opportunity to learn more about gorillas and the remarkable work of Dian Fossey. The center offers informative exhibits and educational programs whereby visitors can gain valuable insights into gorilla conservation efforts and the challenges these magnificent creatures face.

We'll spend the night at a lodge near the park, preparing for our gorilla trekking adventure tomorrow.

Overnight near Parc National des Volcans.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 10 Parc National des Volcans: Gorilla Trekking

Early this morning we drive to the park headquarters where we are briefed by the guides of the Parc des Volcans before we start our gorilla trek. This 13,000-hectare national park protects the Rwanda sector of the Virunga Mountains, a range of six extinct and three active volcanoes which straddle the border with Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Bamboo forest is interspersed with alpine moorland, grassland and marsh.

Tracking the gorillas through the light mountain forest on the slopes of the Virungas is a magical experience. If you are lucky you will get to the gorillas, spend an hour with them, and be back at the base in time for a late lunch. Some gorilla families however are more elusive, and tracking can take a full day... especially when wet and muddy.

The Mountain Gorillas in the Parc National des Volcans are part of a worldwide population of just 740 individuals. The gorillas we are allowed to track belong to one of several habituated family groups. For up to five years each, these groups have undergone an extremely delicate

process that has gradually brought them to tolerate the presence of humans for a brief period every day and allowed a few privileged visitors to interact with them in the wild.

□  
The gorillas are by no means tame, and are completely wild animals. However, experienced guides will accompany us on our tracking, many of who have been involved in the habituation process themselves. The guides will use their knowledge of the gorillas' habits and information from the previous day to locate the group's whereabouts. Because of this, the time taken to track the gorillas varies enormously, from as little as 1 hour to as much as 8 hours before one returns to base. Once the gorillas are located, our group will be allowed a maximum of one hour with them.

□  
Please remember that the mountain gorillas are a wild animal and are not enclosed in any form and free to move as they please. For this reason actual sightings of the gorilla groups cannot be guaranteed. For more information on gorilla tracking in Rwanda, go to:

[www.visitrwanda.com/interests/gorilla-tracking/](http://www.visitrwanda.com/interests/gorilla-tracking/)

Overnight near Parc National des Volcans.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### **Day 11 Parc National des Volcans: Twin Lakes & Village**

We'll start our day with a leisurely walk to the Ellen DeGeneres/Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, a fantastic opportunity to learn more about gorillas and the remarkable work of Dian Fossey. The center offers informative exhibits and educational programs whereby visitors can gain valuable insights into gorilla conservation efforts and the challenges these magnificent creatures face.

We then have a scenic drive to the picturesque Twin Lakes of Burera and Ruhondo. Upon arrival at Virunga Lodge, we'll enjoy a short walk, taking in the stunning views of the surrounding mountains and the tranquil waters.

We'll then head to the bustling Musanze market. As we wander through the vibrant market, we'll immerse ourselves in the local culture, experiencing the sights, sounds, and smells of this bustling marketplace. We'll have the opportunity to interact with local vendors and learn about their products, from fresh produce to handcrafted souvenirs.

Overnight near Parc National des Volcans.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### **Day 12 Parc National des Volcans - Kigali**

This morning we'll embark on a cultural immersion experience, visiting a nearby village. We'll witness firsthand the daily lives of the locals, observing their farming techniques, beekeeping practices, and traditional clothing-making processes. We'll also have the chance to explore their homes and gain a deeper understanding of their way of life.

Later today we travel back to Kigali arriving later in the afternoon.

Overnight in Kigali.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### **Day 13 Kigali, Rwanda - Fly to Nairobi, Kenya**

Today we fly to to Nairobi, Kenya.

Part of Maasai land when the British arrived, Kenya's modern capital grew with the development of the railway. Derived from a Maasai word meaning "Cold Water," Nairobi is a pleasant mix of colonial British with modern and traditional African influences.

\* NOTE: This flight is included if you purchase your international air through Adventures Abroad. Land Only passengers can purchase this for an extra charge (pricing is subject to change without notice, but it has historically been in the range of USD\$350 per person).

Overnight in Nairobi.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 14 Nairobi - OI Pejeta Conservancy

Today we travel from Nairobi, through the "White Highlands," so called because of the large number of Europeans who settled here, northwards to the lower slopes of Mt Kenya, rising to 5199 m (16,728 feet), Africa's second highest peak. Our (+/- 4 hour) drive will take us into the Central Highlands, the heartland of the Kikuyu people. This is a very fertile region, well-watered, intensively cultivated, and thickly forested. The land was coveted by the Europeans who began arriving in ever-increasing numbers once the railway through the area was completed. The settlers established coffee and tea plantations on the eastern slopes of Mt Kenya and cultivated wheat on the western slopes.

Our destination is Sweetwaters, a luxury tented camp clustered around a water hole and set in the pristine calm of the private OI Pejeta Conservancy, a non-profit organization supporting endangered species, tourism and community outreach. OI Pejeta is East Africa's largest Black Rhino sanctuary, the only place in Kenya to see chimpanzees, and holds some of the highest predator densities in Kenya.

This afternoon we'll enjoy our first game drive within the conservancy.

Overnight at Sweetwaters.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 15 OI Pejeta Conservancy

OI Pejeta Conservancy is a sprawling landscape, a mosaic of diverse habitats stretching across over 350 square kilometers. Imagine rolling grass plains, interspersed with wooded grasslands, acacia woodlands, and patches of dense evergreen thickets – all contributing to a rich and varied ecosystem. This diversity of habitats supports an astounding variety of animals, including, of course, the iconic "Big Five" – lion, leopard, elephant, rhino, and buffalo.

Today, we'll immerse ourselves in this wildlife haven with both morning and afternoon game drives, maximizing our chances of encountering its incredible inhabitants. But that's not all! We'll also have the unique opportunity to visit the Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary, a truly special place. This sanctuary is the only one of its kind in Kenya, providing a refuge for the highly endangered and remarkably intelligent chimpanzee species. These chimpanzees, often orphaned or rescued from abusive situations in West and Central Africa, find a safe and nurturing home here. The sanctuary's dedicated staff carefully nurses them back to health, allowing them to live out their days in the security of a vast, natural enclosure. It's a chance to witness these fascinating primates up close and learn about the important conservation work being done to protect them.

Overnight at Sweetwaters Camp.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 16 OI Pejeta - Great Rift Valley - Lake Nakuru National Park

This morning we travel to Lake Nakuru, a shallow soda lake in the Rift Valley (+/- 5 hours). The Rift Valley was created millions of years ago under the strain of enormous volcanic eruptions which resulted in a giant split in the earth's surface from Syria to Mozambique. Lava flowed into the valley, forming escarpments on either side of the gigantic trough which can be up to 80 km (50 miles) wide, big enough to be visible from space. At the lake, depending on the water levels, we may have the opportunity to see flamingos,\* in addition to the over 340 species of birds that have been recorded in the Rift Valley!

Lake Nakuru is very shallow and can fluctuate up to five metres (12 feet) each day. When the water is low, you can see a white band of crystallized soda along the shoreline. This is also one of the best places in Kenya to view the rare White Rhino as we explore the park on our

afternoon game drive.

\* This, and other Rift Valley lakes, have been known in the past for huge numbers of flamingos; however, this can be very "hit and miss" owing to seasonal variations in rainfall and water level, and the increasing frequency of drought. The best we can do is hope for the best!

Overnight in Lake Nakuru National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 17 Lake Nakuru - Maasai Mara National Reserve

We rise early this morning and bid farewell to Lake Nakuru National Park, continuing our journey through the dramatic landscapes of the Great Rift Valley. Our route takes us past the serene beauty of Lake Naivasha and the imposing presence of nearby Mount Longonot. This relatively young volcano serves as a stark reminder of the Rift Valley's turbulent geological history. After a drive of approximately six hours, which includes a stretch on a less-than-perfect road, we'll arrive at our lodge nestled within the world-renowned Maasai Mara National Reserve, just in time for a well-deserved lunch.

The Maasai Mara is essentially a seamless extension of the vast Serengeti ecosystem, and it boasts an astonishing concentration of wildlife. This reserve is home to the largest population of lions in all of Kenya, a testament to its rich biodiversity. Large herds of plains game roam freely across the Mara's grasslands, creating a spectacle of nature at its finest. The Maasai Mara is also arguably the best place in Kenya to spot cheetahs, those sleek and graceful hunters.

Later this afternoon, we'll embark on another thrilling game drive, venturing out into the reserve in search of its incredible inhabitants. The possibilities are endless, and every game drive offers a unique and unforgettable experience.

Time permitting, we may have the opportunity to visit a local Maasai village. This cultural immersion would provide a fascinating glimpse into the Maasai people's traditional way of life, allowing us to meet its residents and learn about their customs and beliefs. If time constraints prevent us from visiting the village today, we'll make every effort to arrange this experience on our return journey to Nairobi.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 18 Maasai Mara National Reserve

The Maasai Mara National Reserve, a seemingly endless expanse of rolling grasslands, sits at the northern edge of the vast Serengeti Plain. Widely regarded as Kenya's premier park, the Mara plays a crucial role in one of nature's greatest spectacles: the annual wildebeest migration. These massive herds journey north from Tanzania around the end of June, gracing the Mara with their presence before returning south around the end of September. This incredible movement of animals is a sight to behold.

"The Mara," as it's affectionately known, is a haven for wildlife, supporting all of the famed "Big Five" – lion, elephant, leopard, rhinoceros, and buffalo. Beyond these iconic creatures, the reserve teems with an astonishing abundance of herding animals, including zebras, gazelles, and antelopes, as well as a rich diversity of other wildlife. As you traverse the reserve, you'll likely encounter the stately Maasai men and youth, easily recognizable by their distinctive attire, tending to their cattle and goats along the roadside. Their presence adds a unique cultural dimension to the Mara's natural beauty.

Today we've dedicated a full day to exploring this remarkable reserve, with both morning and afternoon game drives planned. This will give us ample opportunity to witness the incredible wildlife that calls the Maasai Mara home, from the majestic predators to the vast herds of herbivores, and everything in between. Every game drive in the Mara is a unique adventure, filled with the potential for unforgettable encounters.

In the Mara you will also have an optional opportunity to ascend over the northern Serengeti at daybreak in a hot air balloon (optional expense). From over 300 m (984 feet) above, you will be able to view the vast land and the myriad animals that inhabit the Maasai Mara. Today or tomorrow are the best days to participate in this activity - details sent upon booking.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 19 Maasai Mara National Reserve

We enjoy another full day with game viewing in Maasai Mara. Depending on the season and current game locations and viewing conditions, we may divide our day into morning and afternoon drives, or take our lunches with us in order to venture further into the reserve if conditions warrant.

Overnight in the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

### Day 20 Maasai Mara - Nairobi

After breakfast, we'll embark on our journey back to Nairobi. The drive itself is expected to take approximately six hours, factoring in comfort stops along the way.

A highlight of our return journey will be a visit to the Karen Blixen Museum, conveniently located just outside of Nairobi. This isn't just a quick photo opportunity; we'll delve into the fascinating story of Baroness Karen Blixen-Finecke. Imagine stepping back in time to the 1920s and 30s – this Danish Baroness made Kenya her home in 1918 and lived here until 1931. It was during this period that she drew inspiration for her most famous work, "Out of Africa," published in 1937 under her pen name, Isaac Dineson.

The museum itself is Blixen's beautifully restored former home. It offers a unique glimpse into her life in colonial Kenya, showcasing the style and furnishings of the era. As we tour the house, we'll learn about her struggles and triumphs, her relationships, and the profound connection she felt to the African landscape. It's a chance to connect with the author behind the iconic book and gain a deeper understanding of the historical context that shaped her writing.

We'll make a lunch stop in the vicinity before continuing to our Nairobi hotel.

Overnight in Nairobi.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

### Day 21 Departure

Departure from Nairobi.

SAFIRI SALAAMA!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast