

UGANDA, RWANDA, KENYA & TANZANIA

27 days

Created on: 20 Jan, 2025

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

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. 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/

Overnight near Parc National des Volcans.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 11 Parc National des Volcans: Gorilla Trekking

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□ Overnight near Parc National des Volcans.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 12 Parc National des Volcans - Kigali

Today, we'll embark on a 5-hour journey back to Kigali, making a significant stop at the Kigali Genocide Memorial. This poignant memorial, established in 2004, commemorates the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. While the genocide was a complex event with multifaceted causes, it remains a dark chapter in Rwandan history.

Visiting the Genocide Memorial is a powerful and thought-provoking experience. It offers a sobering look at the tragic events of 1994, highlighting the resilience and strength of the Rwandan people. As we learn about the history and the impact of the genocide, we'll gain a deeper appreciation for the country's journey toward healing and reconciliation.

Overnight in Kigali.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 13 Kigali, Rwanda - Fly to Nairobi, Kenya

Today we fly 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 - Ol 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 Ol Pejeta Conservancy, a non-profit organization supporting endangered species, tourism and community outreach. Ol 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 Ol Pejeta Conservancy

Ol Pejeta is a mosaic of grass plains, wooded grassland, acacia woodland and evergreen thicket extending for over 350 square kilometers. The conservancy boasts an astounding variety of animals, including the "Big Five."

We will have morning and afternoon game drives today, as well as a chance to visit the Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary -- the only place in Kenya where this highly endangered and remarkably intelligent species can be seen. The facility was initially established to receive and provide lifelong refuge to orphaned and abused chimpanzees from West and Central Africa. Here the chimpanzees are carefully nursed back to health so they can enjoy the rest of their days in the safety of a vast natural enclosure.

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

Early this morning we depart from Lake Nakuru National Park and continue our journey through the Rift Valley, passing by Lake Naivasha and nearby Mount Longonot, a relatively young volcanic reminder of the Rift's violent past. We arrive at our lodge (via bad road) in the Maasai Mara National Reserve in time for lunch (+/- 6 hour drive).

The Maasai Mara is a natural extension of the Serengeti eco-system and has an amazing concentration of wildlife. The largest population of lions in Kenya is found here, along with large herds of plains game. The Maasai Mara may also be the best place in Kenya to view cheetah. Later this afternoon we enjoy another game drive.

Time-permitting, we may be able to visit a Maasai village to witness the local way of life and meet its residents. If time does not permit, we will attempt this visit the village on our way back 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 consists of rolling grassland and is located at the northern end of the Serengeti Plain. Considered the best of Kenya's parks, it is on the pathway of the yearly wildebeest migration, which comes north from Tanzania about the end of June and returns to Tanzania around the end of September. "The Mara" sustains all of the "Big Five" -- lion, elephant, leopard, rhinoceros and buffalo -- as well as an astonishing wealth of herding animals and other wildlife. You can see the stately Maasai men and youth along the road tending their cattle and goats.

We have a full day in the reserve, with morning and afternoon game drives.

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 depart for Nairobi (+/- 6 hours including stops). En route, just outside the capital, we visit the Karen Blixen Museum. Baroness Karen Blixen-Finecke emigrated from Denmark to Kenya in 1918 and, in 1937, wrote under the pseudonym, Isaac Dineson, "Out of Africa." The novel tells the tale of the Baroness's experiences on a Kenyan farm. Her home is now a museum, restored to the style in which she maintained it.

Overnight in Nairobi.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 21 Nairobi - Amboseli National Park

Today we travel south from Nairobi to the Amboseli National Park (+/- 4 hours, depending on lodge location and animals spotted en route).

Just across the border from Tanzania, this park is situated on the African plain at the foot of snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro, the continent's tallest mountain at 5894 m (19,300 feet). Here the cone-shaped mountain seems to hover majestically over the shimmering African plains.

The Amboseli National Park is also famous for its large herds of elephants. Here they cover themselves in red dust, giving them an even more imposing appearance. On this afternoon's game drive we hope to view animals grazing on the open plain with Mt Kilimanjaro providing the classic backdrop (weather-permitting).

Overnight in the Amboseli National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 22 Amboseli, Kenya - Lake Manyara National Park, Tanzania

This morning we cross the border into Tanzania at Namanga and travel to Lake Manyara National Park via the town of Arusha, the starting point for the northern safari routes of Tanzania. Today's journey is +/- 5 hours, depending on animals spotted, views of Kilimanjaro, and the border crossing.

Manyara is the smallest of the northern parks in Tanzania (330 sq km, of which two thirds is the actual lake) hosting a wide variety of vegetation, ranging from savannah to ground water forest to riparian habitats. The park is host to thousands of pelicans, ibis and flamingo that can be heard from afar. Other common visitors to this beautiful lake are hippos and the majestic African fish eagle, which can be seen swooping down from its perch to snatch a fish from the still waters of the lake.

After lunch at our lodge we will have an afternoon game drive in the park, located at the base of the Great Rift Valley escarpment and comprising of forest, woodland, grasslands, and swamps. Wildlife interest at Lake Manyara is not confined to bird life only; animals such as buffalo, elephant, giraffe, impala, hippo and a great variety of smaller animals also inhabit the park.

Overnight at Lake Manyara.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 23 Lake Manyara - Serengeti National Park

This morning we enter the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, a beautiful rolling landscape with periodic views over the Ngorongoro Crater. Before descending onto the Serengeti Plain, we'll stop at a viewpoint overlooking the crater.

The name "Serengeti" derives from a Maasai word meaning "Land-without-end." This is a land of superlatives, both in the vast landscape that surrounds you and the incredible biodiversity it supports. It is here that you have a chance to witness one of the most compelling natural dramas on earth -- the annual migration, a sight unparalleled anywhere in the natural world. Our afternoon game drive provides an excellent introduction to this fantastic landscape and the biodiversity it supports. Today's journey is roughly 5 hours, depending on animals and lodge placement.

Overnight in the Serengeti National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 24 Serengeti National Park

Today we have a full day of game viewing on the Serengeti. We will visit the "kopjes," a series of low, incongruous hills dotting the open landscape that often provide a vantage point for hungry predators contemplating the endless stream of hooved animals parading past them. Depending on the season and the timing of the rains, up to 1.5 million wildebeest and a half a million zebra embark on a single-minded and perilous quest for water and grazing land. Following this spectacle, of course, are the meat-eating opportunists, hoping to capitalize on the physical toll this journey exacts on the desperate grazers. Even outside of "migration" time, large herds are still seen as they bear their young and feed, gaining strength for their annual return to the park's northern reaches. Resident species that do not migrate make for rewarding animal viewing in any season.

It may be possible to take an optional hot-air balloon safari over the plains at daybreak; today is the best day to participate in this activity -- details will be sent upon booking.

Overnight in the Serengeti National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 25 Serengeti - Olduvai Gorge - Ngorongoro Conservation Area

Travelling back to Ngorongoro today we make a stop at Olduvai Gorge, site of the Leakey excavations in the 1960s and 70s that established this region as the prehistoric habitat of some of the earliest species of hominids with some finds dating back 1.8 million years. Experts in the life sciences have argued that the Olduvai contribution to the story of human origins remains unsurpassed by any other prehistoric site in the world. A small museum on site outlines the unique geological and human history of the area.

Called the 'eighth wonder of the world' and stretching across some 8300 sq km, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area boasts a blend of landscapes, wildlife, people and archaeology that is unsurpassed in Africa. The volcanoes, grasslands, waterfalls and mountain forests are home to an abundance of animals and to the Maasai. Ngorongoro Crater is one of the world's greatest natural spectacles and its magical setting and abundant wildlife never fail to enthral visitors. Depending on road conditions, gorge stop, animal sightings, and lodge placement, this journey can be 5-6 hours.

Overnight in the vicinity of Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Canada/USA
1-800-665-3998

Email
sales@adventures-abroad.com

Day 26 Ngorongoro Conservation Area

Today we enjoy a half-day tour in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.* After an early breakfast we descend into the crater far below for a game drive in this incredible setting, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We explore the Ngorongoro Crater, 20 km (13 miles) wide and 700 m (2,300 feet) high where we may see the "Big Five" as well as many herbivores like wildebeest, gazelle, zebra and hippopotamus, as well as thousands of flamingos on Lake Magadi.

* In order to reduce congestion and stress on wildlife, the Tanzanian government limits visitors to half-day visits of the crater. Depending on what time "window" we are assigned, our excursion may take place first thing in the morning, or later in the afternoon (both of which are equally advantageous for game viewing, given the relatively mild climate at this altitude).

Overnight in the vicinity of Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 27 Ngorongoro - Arusha - Depart

This morning we descend the Ngorongoro Highlands, retracing our steps back to Arusha via a lunch stop at Gibb's Farm. Founded during German colonial times and still privately owned, Gibb's Farm is now a small hotel perched on the outer slopes of the Ngorongoro Highlands, surrounded by coffee plantations with long views over lush and beautiful agricultural country.

We pass again through the town of Mto Wa Mbu ('Mosquito Creek'), famous for its lively cosmopolitan atmosphere and red bananas, which taste the same as regular bananas but their skins are a startling bright red. We continue to Arusha to connect with homeward evening flights (a +/- 5 hour journey including lunch).

LAND ONLY PASSENGERS need to take into account our morning journey when booking their flights out of Arusha (JRO). Your departure should occur no earlier than 8:00 pm.

SAFARI NJEMA!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch