

ACACIA AFRICA

MAGIC OF THE MOUNTAIN GORILLA - TOUR DOSSIER

Tour Code MMG5

KAMPALA - KAMPALA

5 DAYS

Tour Starts – 06:30 pick up from your Kampala hotel on day one

HIGHLIGHTS

Lake Mburo National Park
Queen Elizabeth National Park
Kazinga Channel
Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
Gorilla Trekking

Enter the lush valleys of south-west Uganda and discover its amazing wildlife. Game drive in beautiful Lake Mburo, cruise amongst hippo pods on the Kazinga Channel and enter Bwindi Impenetrable forest for an ultimate encounter with endangered mountain gorillas.



INTENDED ITINERARY

Whilst it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the tour and on occasion it may be necessary or desirable to make alterations to the published itinerary. Please therefore, treat the following as a guide only.

This tour is operated in association with a local operator. Acacia is proud to be working with local companies supporting local communities.

Duration: 5 Days
Countries visited: Uganda

DAY 1
Lake Mburo National Park
Lx1 Dx1
Park bandas/cabins

After being picked up from our Kampala hotel we travel south-west from the capital, following the shore of Lake Victoria until we are in the rolling valleys at the start of the Kigezi Highlands. We arrive at Lake Mburo National Park situated around its central lake and home to herds of zebra, Cape buffalo and antelopes including oribi, topi and Africa's largest, the eland. We enjoy a game drive here and there is usually time to enjoy a boat ride on the lake to see crocs, hippos and water birds. Alternatively you may like to do a self-guided walk on one of the many lakeside game trails. We stay tonight at a small lodge in the park where we also have dinner and time to enjoy our first night in the Ugandan bush.

DAY 2
Queen Elizabeth National Park
Bx1 Lx1 Dx1
Park hostel

This morning we take a morning safari walk and game drive after breakfast. Mburo is unusual as a national park in that you are not entirely imprisoned in a vehicle which makes a great change and refreshing experience of walking amongst nature. As well as spotting some of the parks larger animals, birdwatchers can enjoy a huge variety of birds, as more than 250 species can be found in Lake Mburo, including papyrus, Gonolek, brown faced lapwing and the barefaced Go away bird. This afternoon we head north up to the Queen Elizabeth Park and settle into our comfortable hostel close to the Mweya peninsular overlooking Lake Edward. From here, the

view takes in enormous Lake Edward below and the broad Kazinga Channel. The channel links Lake Edward to its counterpart, Lake Gorge, 32km east and is a haven for birdlife and large pods of hippo that wallow in its shallows. This afternoon we take a boat cruise here to watch hippo, crocs and animals that come to the shore to feed and drink. The cruise offers a great opportunity for photographers. The resident birdlife makes a fantastic sight too with kingfishers, cormorants, pelicans, storks, plovers and fish eagles just some of the birds frequently spotted along the banks.

DAY 3
Queen Elizabeth National Park
Bx1 Lx1 Dx1
Community bandas/cabins

We take an early morning game drive and head out into the park, where we may well spot hyena on their dawn prowl plus lions, buffalo, elephant, giant forest hog, waterbuck, topi and Ugandan Kob. Our drive takes us past grassy plains, bush dominated by giant euphorbias, tropical forest and volcanic craters containing soda lakes. This is all against the backdrop of the brooding Rwenzori Mountains to the north, Africa's highest mountain range.

This afternoon we leave the park and make our way to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Tonight we make prepare for our early trek tomorrow, into the jungle.

DAY 4
Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
Bx1 Lx1 Dx1
Community bandas/cabins

Today is perhaps the most exciting day of the tour: tracking for gorillas and view these gentle creatures in their natural habitat. Local guides lead us in small groups through the thick rainforest; we strongly recommend you carry your own water bottle, have good walking shoes or boots, and a rain jacket. The trekking can be demanding and the day long but the privilege of spending time with these gentle apes makes it all worthwhile and is without doubt one of Africa's greatest wildlife encounters. Once having located the gorilla 'family', we sit and watch them for one hour – the time regulated by the Uganda Wildlife Authority. Gorillas are extremely sociable and interactive primates, and groups normally number 12-20 individuals led by an 'alpha male', sometimes known as the 'silverback' (on account of the silver hair on his back which is attained on maturity). Although not the closest related primate to Man, at close quarters the gorilla is remarkably human-like – particularly in the social interaction between family members and in the 'play' activity in which the young engage. Photography is permitted although not with a flash, and there are restrictions in regard to video cameras.

After spending time with the gorillas we head back to the base camp for a late lunch and a relaxing afternoon. You may like to re-enter the park for a guided forest hike with a park ranger or take a community tour of the local village to visit the local school and 'banana brewery' where the local tippie 'banana gin' is made!

DAY 5
Kampala
Bx1 Lx1

We leave early this morning for our day's drive back to the capital. Passing small villages, swathes of banana plantations and deep valleys there is much to see on our way back. Just before lunch we reach sealed road and this afternoon cross the equator before our arrival back in Kampala late this afternoon.

TOUR INFORMATION

A fantastic journey through some of Uganda's most scenic landscape and a must for animal lovers. The trip requires moderate fitness for some days trekking.

TOUR STYLE

Short Safaris & Treks

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Tour highlights, transport, accommodation, meals as indicated, services of a tour guide & driver.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Visas, travel insurance, flights, airport taxes and transfers, tips, drinks, laundry, optional activities & items of a personal nature.

ACCOMMODATION

Simple shared rooms in hostels or bandas/cabins with shared facilities.

TRANSPORT

Minibus or 4x4

MEALS

Meals included are – Breakfast (B) x4, Lunch (L) x5, Dinner (D) x4. Most dietary requirements can be catered for. Please ensure you inform Acacia of any special requirements when you book or at your earliest convenience.

GORILLA PERMITS

The Uganda Wildlife Authority imposes strict regulations regarding the gorilla trekking permits. One of these is that permits must be booked and paid in advance. In order for us to do this we must collect your permit money, in addition to your normal deposit, at the time of booking. Like your deposit, the permit money is not refundable if you cancel your tour. The permits currently (Jul 2011) cost US\$500 per person. Please ask your agent or Acacia for the equivalent amount in your own currency.

OPERATOR

As this tour is run by a respected local tour operator, you will benefit from their extensive local knowledge and enthusiasm as well as helping Acacia support local businesses in Africa.

TOUR PREPARATION

BOOKING INFORMATION

When you make a confirmed booking for your tour you will be sent pre-departure information and related documents. Once you have paid in full you will receive a Travel Voucher giving full details of your joining point. Entebbe is well served by a variety of airlines. Your travel agent can advise on flights to and from the start and finish of your tour.

JOINING INFORMATION

Entebbe airport is approx 40km outside Kampala and taxi transfers are widely available between airport and the city. The tour begins with a pick up from your city hotel at **06:30 on day one** and a drop off at your hotel at approximately **18:00 on day five**. Please ensure Acacia has your hotel details in advance of the tour.

EXTENDING YOUR STAY

We recommend you stay in Kampala the night prior to departure as the tour leaves early the following morning, and the night of day five as final day travel delays may interfere with evening flight times. Any additional accommodation in Kampala can be booked. Please contact us to check current rates.

WHAT TO BRING

Please try to keep your luggage to a minimum, bearing in mind that most airlines impose a 20kg luggage limit. A large soft holdall or backpack and a smaller day pack are ideal. On this tour you should bring a mixture of lightweight, cool clothing for the day and warm clothing (i.e. fleece, long trousers and hat) for evenings and early morning game drives. For the gorilla trek it is recommended you bring a water bottle, light, loose, long clothing and light rain jacket. It is essential you bring boots or walking trainers with a good grip and ankle support for the rough terrain. A money belt/pouch, worn under the clothing is also a good idea. Please avoid bringing unnecessary valuables and use hotel safes wherever possible, to store your cash, passport and airline tickets.

VACCINATIONS/HEALTH

The table below indicates the vaccinations suggested for travel on this tour but **should be treated as a guide only**. You should seek professional medical advice from your GP or clinic at least six weeks prior to departure.

Country	Tetanus	Diphtheria	Polio	Hepatitis A	Hepatitis B	Typhoid	Meningitis	Rabies	Yellow Fever	Malaria
Uganda	R	R	R	R	R	R	-	R	R*	R

C = Compulsory, **R** = Recommended, * = If travelling from infected countries a certificate of proof may be required.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

The table below indicates the visas required for travel to the countries on this tour but **should be treated as a guide only**. At least one month prior to travel seek confirmation from embassies or a visa specialist, that these requirements are still current. For UK citizens the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) offers free up-to-date travel info: www.fco.gov.uk for other nationalities a number of travel advice websites are listed on the Acacia website.

Nationality	UK	AUS	NZ	USA	CAN	BEL	IRE	NED	DEN	ITA	GER	AUT	SWE	FIN	NOR	MEX	KOR
Uganda	Yes																

MONEY MATTERS

PERSONAL EXPENSES

Naturally you will require extra money for your own personal spending on the tour, for snacks, drinks, souvenirs, tips and items of a personal nature. Everybody has different spending habits but as a guideline we suggest you budget US\$10-20 per day. Also keep US\$ cash for relevant airport taxes and visas needed, optional activities and any additional accommodation before or after your tour.

- **Spending money** is best carried as cash in US dollars, Sterling or Euro which can then be transferred into the local currency on arrival. In East Africa especially, it is best to bring US dollars, but make sure they are **clean, post-2001 edition notes**. Older or dirty notes may not be accepted.
- **Currency:** Ugandan Shilling (UG)
- **ATM machines** can be found in Kampala city and Entebbe airport.
- **Credit cards** have limited use except to pay for extra accommodation in hotels or in larger shops. Please be mindful that charges for using them can be high by western standards.
- **Travellers cheques** can be difficult to cash but make suitable emergency funds.

It is recommended to bring your money in a mixture of ways and your guide can best advise on what to use where.

TIPPING

As in many areas where tourism is an important contributor to the economy, it is customary to give a small gratuity to local staff, including your guide and drivers, at the end of a tour or day excursion, for services rendered. This is at your own discretion.

INSURANCE

It is a booking condition of Acacia that you have full travel insurance valid for the duration of your tour to cover you for medical emergency and repatriation to your home country. Your guide will ask you for a copy of this when you join the tour. It is also important that you leave a copy of your insurance with the person nominated as your emergency contact. We can recommend a respected, specialist travel insurance provider for this tour. Please contact Acacia for more information.

ACACIA ON THE ROAD



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

We strongly believe that you get the most out of a journey by respecting the culture and people of the places you visit. On our tours we try to travel in a way that benefits the communities we pass through and minimises negative impact on the environment. This can be from ensuring the campsites we use are clean when we leave and dressing respectfully in conservative areas to getting involved with local charity projects. We ask that you are open to this when you travel with us. Being proactive in responsible travel helps develop cross-cultural understanding and friendships with the local people, and will greatly enhance your experience in Africa.

GET CONNECTED

Join our Facebook group www.facebook.com/AcaciaAfrica and get connected with other Acacia travelers, check out the pictures, videos and feedback from their tours and meet up with other people booked on your tour

Follow us on twitter @AcaciaAfrica and get the latest buzz. Got a question? Ask us on twitter!

Follow our blogs from the road <http://acaciaontheroad.blogspot.com/> and <http://africastuckonyou.blogspot.com/> get regular updates from our crew on the road as well as other Acacia Travellers

Don't forget to sign up to our newsletter to get regular updates and special offers www.acacia-africa.com

For information on our Premium Overlanding, Acacia Small Group Safaris, Short Safari's & Treks, Short Breaks & City Stays, Voluntours and Dive Tours please visit www.acacia-africa.com



Acacia Adventure Holidays Ltd

London

23A Craven Terrace
London
W2 3QH
Tel: +44 (0)20 7706 4700
Fax: +44 (0)20 7706 4686
Email: info@acacia-africa.com

Cape Town

PO Box 27632
Rhine Road
Cape Town 8005
Tel: +27 (0)21 556 1157
Fax: +27 (0)21 557 5983
Email: info@acacia-africa.com

