

ACACIA AFRICA

Updated
14/11/2008
FOR ALL 2009
DEPARTURES

TROOP TO THE GORILLAS – TOUR DOSSIER

Tour Code TTG6

KAMPALA – KAMPALA

6 DAYS

Tour Departure – 08:00

Pre-departure Meeting – 18:00 day prior to departure

HIGHLIGHTS

Kampala
Bwindi impenetrable National Park
Mountain Gorilla Trek
Lake Bunyonyi
Kigezi Highlands

Step into the lush jungles of East Africa for a short safari like no other. This tour journeys into the mountains to encounter the diverse wildlife and people who live here, before a thrilling jungle trek, bringing you face to face with some of the last surviving mountain gorillas on earth. The ultimate wildlife experience!



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.

The vehicle used for this tour is a fully-equipped safari truck. An additional transfer vehicle may be used for transfers to the start of the trek if we trek from Buhoma.

Duration: 6 Days
Countries visited: Uganda

DAY 1

Kampala to Lake Bunyonyi

Kampala is an attractive hilly city situated close to the shore of Lake Victoria. Despite its colourful history it is now settled and extremely welcoming to the visitor, offering vibrant African street life, roadside traders, markets and busy matatu (mini-bus taxi) stands. Kampala boasts an eclectic mix of hindu temples, hilltop mosques, tribal palaces and elegant colonial hotels, illustrating its diverse influences. All the while the city is circled overhead by impressive marabout storks, an ever familiar sight in the capital. We leave Kampala on the morning of day one and head southwest, skirting the coast of Lake Victoria and heading down into the mountainous region of Uganda. Although a long drive, the scenery is beautiful as we cross the equator and swamp areas of thick papyrus give way to mountain valleys and ancient forests. Heading deep into the Kigezi Highlands we stop at picturesque Lake Bunyoni, an ancient flooded valley with deep waters and scattered islands, only negotiable by small boat or dug-out canoe. We aim to spend a night in this beautiful region, known as the 'Switzerland of Africa.'

DAY 2 - 5

Gorilla Trek & optional local walks

Today we head to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, either to the main gates at Buhoma or the southern Nkuringo area. In rare circumstances we may trek in one of the neighbouring countries, depending on availability of gorilla permits. This region of Africa is home the world's remaining 700 mountain gorillas, half of which inhabit Bwindi. Local guides and trackers lead us in small groups through the thick rainforest. The trekking can be demanding and the terrain uneven as we trek through hilly rainforest, but the privilege of

spending time with a family of these gentle apes makes the effort well worthwhile. To many people, even those who stay in Africa longer than this two week tour, the day's trek and time spent with a family of gorillas in their natural habitat remains their most exciting wildlife encounter in Africa.

The usual procedure, once we have located the gorilla 'family', is to watch them for around an hour – the time set by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (the national body charged with controlling and maintaining the gorillas in Uganda). Gorillas are extremely sociable creatures, living in groups normally numbering 12-20 individuals led by an 'alpha male' known as a 'silverback' (named after the silver hair that grows on a male's back once he reaches maturity). Although not the closest related primate to man, the gorilla is remarkably human-like at close quarters – particularly in social interaction between family members and youngsters' 'play' activity. While photography without flash is permitted there are some restrictions on the use of video recorders.

Your permit allows you one trek and gorilla viewing. However because the authorities maintain strict limits on the number of visitors allowed to view the gorillas each day we may spend several days in the area while all passengers in our group complete the trek and viewing. On the days you are not participating in the Gorilla Trek there are other activities to do, depending on where we are located. These can include forest walks where you can spot some of Bwindi's 90 other mammal species and 300 species of bird, and community walks to meet the Bakiga and Batwa (Pigmy) people who live beside the forest.

DAY 6

Bwindi to Kampala

Today we return to Kampala through lush valleys of banana plantations and rural villages before rejoining Lake Victoria and crossing into the northern hemisphere. Our exciting trip finishes at the end of the afternoon/early evening on arrival in Kampala.

NB Depending on the availability of gorilla permits the tour itinerary may vary in day to day running order from that published in our brochure. From time to time we may visit neighbouring countries, eg. Rwanda, for the gorilla trek (instead of Uganda) and this may entail extra visa fees although we shall endeavour to advise you before departure of any significant change to the tour itinerary.

TOUR INFORMATION

Travelling overland is great fun, but it can also be challenging! This is a participation tour and your help will be needed in setting up the camp each night and assisting (usually on a rota basis) with the various day to day campsite duties, such as shopping, cooking and keeping the truck and camp tidy. But don't worry it's not all hard work and it's a great way to meet the local people and get to know your fellow travellers. Your contribution benefits the success of the tour - most people find the greater their involvement, the greater their enjoyment of the whole trip.

Africa is an adventure destination and travelling here is not always predictable so be prepared to "expect the unexpected" in difficulties or delays which might come our way! However, you'll soon find that the diversity of the African landscape, the wildlife and the communities we pass on our way, make the sometimes rough travel and long driving days worthwhile. Come with a sense of adventure and a flexible attitude and you will be sure to enjoy your Acacia overland tour across this amazing continent.

TOUR STYLE

Acacia Overland Tour

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Fully equipped safari vehicle, camping and cooking equipment, all road tolls and vehicle taxes, transport, sleeping mattresses, services of driver and tour leader, meals as indicated

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Local Payment excursions, visas, travel insurance, flights, departure taxes, airport transfers, sleeping bag, optional activities, drinks, tips & items of a personal nature.

ACCOMMODATION

We use 2-person dome tents with fly sheets, built in ground sheets, zip-up insect screens and thick foam sleeping mattresses. We mainly use designated campsites, which mostly have permanent wash and shower facilities, electricity points and sometimes even a small shop and bar .

TRANSPORT

24-seater, self contained, custom-built safari truck with onboard tables, plug sockets, freezers, library, i-pod jack, safety features and 70-litre individual lockers.

MEALS

Meals included are – Breakfast (B) x6, Lunch (L) x6, Dinner (D) x5

These meals are prepared in camp by the group and help preparing the meals is invited. Most dietary requirements can be catered for on the road. Please ensure you inform Acacia of any special requirements when you book or at your earliest convenience.

TOUR PREPARATION

BOOKING INFORMATION

When you make a confirmed booking for your tour you will be sent your booking documents and a pre-departure booklet with detailed information to help you prepare for your trip. Once you have paid in full you will receive a Travel Voucher giving details of your joining hotel. Entebbe is Kampala's local airport and 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

This tour starts in Kampala. **The pre-departure meeting is held at 18:00 on the evening prior to departure. The tour begins at 06:00 on day 1 and ends at the end of day 6.**

Meeting point/tour end point in **Kampala**: **Red Chilli Hideaway**
Address: 82 Sunderland Avenue
Mbuya
Kampala

Contact details: Tel. +256 (0)414 223903
Fax +256 (0)414 223903
E-mail: chilli@infocom.co.ug

Pre-dep. meeting: 18:00 prior to departure day
Tour start time: 06:00 on day 1
Tour end time: Late afternoon/ early evening of day 6

EXTENDING YOUR STAY

We recommend you stay in Kampala the night prior to departure and the night of day 6 as travel delays may interfere with evening flight times. Any additional nights can be booked on a direct pay basis. See below for a guide to extra accommodation costs. These prices may be subject to change so please contact Acacia or your agent to check current prices.

Description	Price (US\$)	Description	Price (US\$)
Kampala			
Pre tour accommodation – Single pp/pn	\$10	Pre tour accommodation – Double pp/pn	\$12.50
Pre tour accommodation – Twin pp/pn	\$7.50		

WHAT TO BRING

Please try to keep your luggage to a minimum, bearing in mind that most airlines impose a 20kg limit. It should be brought in a soft holdall or rucksack along with a smaller day bag. You will need to bring a mixture of lightweight clothing and warm clothing for the evenings and early morning game drives. For the gorilla trek it is recommended you bring a water bottle, 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. You also require a sleeping bag (and small pillow if preferred). We recommended you pack a small torch or headlamp, mosquito spray and a money pouch/ belt that is easily hidden. Please try to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables and use your hotel safe to store the bulk of your money, passport, and airline tickets. A full 'What to Bring' list is included in our **pre-departure booklet**, sent out when you book this tour.

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	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	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\$15-20 per day. Also keep US\$ cash for any 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 local currency on arrival. In Uganda 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** of Uganda is the Ugandan Shilling
- **ATM machines** are found in Kampala but are sometimes unreliable.
- **Credit cards** can be used for cash advances in Kampala banks but there is little time for it on this trip.
- **Travellers cheques** can be difficult to cash but make suitable emergency funds.

LOCAL PAYMENT

A Local Payment (LP) is to be paid to your tour leader at the pre -departure meeting. The LP fund is administered by the tour leader in conjunction with the group and covers most meals, all game drives using our own vehicle, campsite fees and meals prepared at the truck (usually two or three per day). You can choose to either pay the Basic Local Payment and pay for your excursions along the way, or pay for everything up front in the Fully Inclusive Local Payment.

Payment must be made in **US\$ cash in clean, post-2001 edition notes**. Traveller's cheques and credit cards are **not** accepted. The LP amounts set out in the brochure are estimates of local costs at the time of printing. It is subject to inflation, exchange rate changes and local price rises. These may vary from the amounts set out and on the rare occasion where there is a shortfall, passengers will be asked to contribute further. Conversely, where there is a surplus of LP funds at the end of the tour, it will be refunded equally amongst all passengers.

TIPPING

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

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

In order to give you maximum flexibility on tour we offer a number of optional activities, where possible. To help budget, approximate prices are listed below (subject to change and availability).

Activity	Price (US\$)	Activity	Price (US\$)
Bwindi			
Forest Walks	\$5	Community Walks	\$5

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.

Country Information - UGANDA

Facts

Capital: Kampala
 Size: 236 040 sq km / 146 675sq miles
 Population: 27 269 482 (Sept. 05)
 Groups: Baganda, Ankole, Basoga, Iteso, Bakiga, Langi, Rwanda, Bagisu, Acholi, Lugbara, Batoro, Bunyoro, Alur, Bagwere, Bakonjo, Jopodhola, Karamojong, Rundi, non-African (European, Asian, Arab)

Languages: English, Luganda, other Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, Swahili, Arabic
Local time: GMT + 3
Seasons: Dry (December-February, June-August), rainy (March-May, September-November)
Currency: 1 Ugandan Shilling
Telephone: Country code 256, international access code 000
Electricity: 240V / 50 Hz, rectangular blade plug

The Pearl of Africa' according to Winston Churchill - Uganda, to many people is one of the most beautiful and friendly countries in Africa. The capital, Kampala, is situated on hills on the northern edge of Lake Victoria, and the neighboring city of Jinja is built over the outlet from that lake. The scenery to the west along the border of Zaire is dominated by high ranges of mountains, the Ruwenzoris (Ptolemy's "Mountains of the Moon"), and is suitably spectacular, as are the regions to the north of Kampala, around the Murchison Falls. The 'Idi Amin' days have long disappeared. Uganda in the late 1980's and early 90's is a place of improvement and regeneration. Roads and buildings have been or are being rebuilt, and the economy is slowly re-asserting itself. The tourist industry is still small - but is growing; game parks are being restocked and services in Kampala and around the country being improved.

Points of Interest

Kampala

Kampala is capital of Uganda and previously capital of the old Kingdom of Buganda. The city is attractive, situated amongst seven hills on the northern shore of Lake Victoria. Historically, control of Uganda has been much fought over and such figures as Obote and Idi Amin took terrible hold over the country, causing enormous civil strife in the 70s and 80s. Uganda has come a long way since then. Today, Museveni's 20 year rule has settled the country and Kampala is welcoming to the visitor. The city has a vibrant African street life, roadside traders, markets and busy matatu (mini-bus taxi) stands. Kampala boasts an eclectic mix of Hindu temples, hilltop mosques, tribal memorials and elegant colonial hotels, illustrating its diverse influences. All the while the city is circled overhead by impressive marabout storks, an ever familiar sight in the capital.

While many of the Asian population left in the 1970s, there is still a thriving Indian population and a number of popular Indian cuisine restaurants around. The **Buganda Royal Palace** and the **Kasubi Tombs** are worth visiting for an afternoon for an insight into the pre-colonial tribal kingdoms of Uganda. Kampala is home to Makerere University, Uganda's premier university.

Lake Bunyoni

Lake Bunyoni is accessible from the south-western town of Kabale and is situated in the highly picturesque **Kigezi Highlands**, often nicknamed the '**Switzerland of Africa**' after its steep and verdant mountain valleys. The lake itself is an ancient flooded valley and widely considered the deepest lake in East Africa. Strangely the lake is devoid of fish, although the area is magnificent for birdlife and flora. A small number of the lake's islands are inhabited and one of the largest has a school. Transport on the lake is restricted to small motor boats or dug out canoe, the local's traditional means of getting around.

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park

This proclaimed World Heritage Site in the south-west is why most people come to Uganda. It covers 330 square kilometres of the most amazing landscape (hills, gorges, streams, rainforest) and is one of the biologically most diverse areas on earth. Its name derives from the dense ground cover of herbs, vines and shrubs with only a few trees. It is home to over 100 mammal species, including 11 primates. Its main attraction are the 300 endangered **mountain gorillas** (over half of the world's population) living here in four troops - to see these gentle giants in their natural habitat is one of the most rewarding experiences. They are the bulkiest, but yet most peaceful ones of the living primates and share 95% of their genes with us. Besides the famous gorillas, you will also find elephant, chimpanzee, monkeys, various antelope and numerous bird species in this park.

ACACIA ON THE ROAD – NEWS & EVENTS

FOOTBALL'S COMING TO AFRICA

In line with the 2010 Football World Cup, in Cape Town, Acacia's keeping its eye on the ball. We've got together with the charity Footballs for Fun to spread some goodwill and love for the beautiful game across the continent. In 2008 all our trucks will carry footballs which can be bought and donated to children in the local towns along our route. The footballs are a perfect ice breaker and a game with locals is a great way to make friendships despite language differences. And all the profit (at least £2 from each ball) goes straight back into Africa, helping support a selection of AIDS charities and children's homes. Make a difference, get kicking and buy a ball when you're next on one of our trucks.



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

We 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.

PHOTOS & STORIES SEARCH

If you've ever thought you can take better pictures than the brochures or have a great travel story and want to see yourself in print, then we're looking for you. If you've captured a great moment on tour, whether it's of the wildlife, local people, landscape or life on the road why not enter our monthly photographic competition starting in 2009. Not only do we give away a monthly prize, you may also see your photos published in a future brochure or on our website. We are also on the lookout for stories of life on the road, the funny, exhilarating, moving or simply unforgettable things you did on tour. We publish the best stories on the Tales from the Road section of our website. Send your photos or stories to acaciaontheroad@googlemail.com

Photos should be in digital format & good resolution (max 6 pics per person) and labelled with the location of where the photos were taken. Meanwhile if you have a story or anecdote about your tour (up to 400 words) it needn't be word perfect, we'd love to hear about it.

Legalities: You, the photographer/author, retain copyright of all images & words submitted but we reserve the right to use of them for Acacia brochures, promotions & advertising.

For information on our Acacia Small Group Safaris, Adventure Tours, Comfort Class Safaris, Short Breaks & City Stays, Voluntours, Dive Tours, New Horizons and Access Tours or to contact us please visit www.acacia-africa.com

<p>Acacia Adventure Holidays Ltd 23A Craven Terrace London W2 3QH</p> <p>UK Tel. +44 (0)20 7706 4700 Fax. +44 (0)20 7706 4686 SA Tel. +27 (0)21 556 1157 Fax. +27 (0)21 557 5983</p> <p>Email: info@acacia-africa.com Website: www.acacia-africa.com</p>			
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