

ACACIA AFRICA

Updated Jan 2010
FOR 2010
DEPARTURES

TROOP TO THE GORILLAS – TOUR DOSSIER

Tour Code **TTG6**

KAMPALA – KAMPALA

6 DAYS

Tour Departure – **05:00**

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

HIGHLIGHTS

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

A short safari journeying into the mountains of central Africa to encounter what may be the last few surviving mountain gorillas left in the wild.



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 city situated near the shores of Lake Victoria. Despite a colourful history the city welcomes the visitor with a vibrant African street life, countless roadside traders, thriving markets and noisy matatu (mini-bus taxi) stands. If time allows we suggest you spend another day or so here before flying home.

From Kampala, we travel south and west, skirting Lake Victoria and crossing the equator and heading into the mountainous region of southwest Uganda. Although a long drive, the scenery is very rewarding as we cross the equator and pass through areas of thick papyrus which give way to mountain valleys and ancient forests. Heading deep into the Kigezi Highlands we stop at picturesque Lake Bunyoni, an ancient flooded valley, before arriving at Bwindi National Park.

DAY 2 - 5

Gorilla Trek & optional local walks

This region of Africa is home to the world's remaining 700 mountain gorillas, half of which inhabit Bwindi. [NB: Occasionally we may travel into neighbouring Rwanda to trek for the gorillas.] On the day of our trek we gather in the early morning to meet our local guide and tracker. Walking in small groups we trek into the thick rainforest. The trekking can be demanding at times with uneven terrain and 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 six day tour, the time spent with the gorillas remains their most memorable wildlife encounter.

The usual procedure, once we have located the gorilla 'family', is to squat or sit down and simply observe 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 sociable creatures, living in groups between 12 and 20 individuals, usually led by an 'alpha male' (the 'silverback' - so called because of the silver hair on his back which grows once the male gorilla attains maturity). Most people find that the gorillas are remarkably human-like at close quarters – particularly in the social interaction between family members and in 'play' activity in which the young engage. Photography is permitted (although not with a flash and there are restrictions for those who wish to use a video camera.)

Your permit allows you one trek and gorilla viewing (time limited to one hour). 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.

NB Depending on the availability of gorilla permits the tour itinerary may vary in day to day running order from the above running order which is based on the brochure itinerary. 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.

DAY 6

Bwindi to Kampala

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

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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 including sleeping mattress, all road tolls and vehicle taxes, transport, 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, meals not mentioned in itinerary, 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 often have permanent wash and shower facilities, electricity points and sometimes even a small shop and bar/restaurant.

TRANSPORT

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

MEALS

Meals included are – Breakfast (B) x5, 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.

GAME PARK VISITS

In order to maximise the quality of game driving and to comply with local authority rulings, some of our National Park visits and game viewing may be carried out using services provided by local African ground handlers. As well as enhancing our experience it also allows us to contribute at a 'grassroots' level to local economies from which local people benefit. These local services are included in the Local Payment.

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 (Nov 2009) cost US\$510 per person. Please ask your agent or Acacia for the equivalent amount in your own currency.

On rare occasions, subject to permit availability, we may purchase trekking permits to view the gorillas in neighbouring Rwanda.

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 Airport (Kampala's international airport) is well served by a number of airlines and your travel agent can advise on flights to the start of the tour.

JOINING INFORMATION

This tour starts and finishes in Kampala. **The pre-departure meeting is held at 18:00** on the evening prior to departure. **The tour begins at 05:00 on day 1 and ends on day 6 in Kampala.**

| | |
|--|---|
| 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: | 05:00 on day 1 |
| Tour end time: | Late afternoon/ early evening of day 6 |

EXTENDING YOUR STAY

We recommend you stay in Nairobi the night prior to departure as the tour departs early on day 1. You may like to extend your time on Nairobi. Any additional nights can be booked on a direct pay basis. See below for a guide to extra accommodation costs. These prices below are given in USD equivalents and are subject to change. Please contact Acacia or your agent to check current prices.

| Description | Price (USD) | Description | Price (USD) |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Kampala | | | |
| Pre tour accommodation – Single pp/pn | \$20 | Pre tour accommodation – Double pp/pn | \$12.50 |
| Pre tour accommodation – Twin pp/pn | \$12 | | |

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. You also need 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 can be 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 (online version)**, issued when you book.

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.

Please be aware that the areas visited on this tour are **malarial**. We strongly recommend your seeking professional medical advice for the appropriate anti-malarial tablets.

| 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\$15-25 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 local currency on arrival. Your guide can advise how and when you can change the rest of your money throughout the tour.
- **Currencies** are as follows: Kenya – Kenyan Shilling; Uganda: Uganda Shilling.
- **ATM machines** are found in Nairobi and Kampala BUT please note they are sometimes unreliable and therefore we recommend you do not rely on them!
- **Credit cards** can be used to pay for optional activities although charges may be may be high by western standards (+/- 5%).
- **Travellers cheques** can be difficult to cash but make suitable emergency funds.

We recommend you bring your spending money in several different ways (some cash, some t/cheques, some cards); your guide can best advise on what to use where.

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 pay either the Basic Local Payment at the beginning, and then pay for your excursions along the way, or else you may 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 **cannot** be accepted as means of payment. 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 in the brochure or website and on 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

This is always a matter for your own individual discretion but 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 if services rendered have been to your satisfaction.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

In order to give you maximum flexibility on tour we offer a number of optional activities on the tour. To help budget, approximate prices are listed below (in US\$ unless otherwise stated. subject to change and availability).

| Activity | Price (USD) | Activity | Price (USD) |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Bwindi | | | |
| Forest Walks | \$10 | Community Walks | \$10 |

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 / 146 675 sq 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

To many people Uganda is one of the most beautiful and friendly countries in Africa. The capital, Kampala, is built on a series of hills on the northern edge of Lake Victoria, and the neighbouring city of Jinja built over the outlet from that lake. The scenery to the west along the border of DR Congo 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 1990'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

Jinja

The city of Jinja is built across the River Nile, just downstream from where the river edges out of Africa's largest lake. At the point where the Nile leaves Lake Victoria there are monuments to commemorate both John Hanning Speke (who was the first European to recognise the river's source) and Mahatma Gandhi (whose ashes were sprinkled here). In recent years various activities have been developed - white water rafting (the stretch outside Jinja boasts world class rapids) or adventure activities such as bungee jumping or quad biking.

Kampala

Kampala is capital of Uganda and previously capital of the old Kingdom of Buganda. The city is attractive, built on seven hills on the northern shore of Lake Victoria. Historically, control of Uganda has been much fought over and in the 1970s and 80s men as Obute and Idi Amin caused enormous civil strife throughout the country. However Uganda has come a long way since those days and these days Kampala welcomes the visitor. The city has a vibrant street life, many roadside traders, busy markets and noisy matatu (mini-bus taxi) stands. The city boasts a range of Hindu temples, hilltop mosques, tribal memorials and elegant colonial hotels to illustrate its diverse influences. Kampala is also home to Makerere University, Uganda's premier university.

Lake Bunyoni

Lake Bunyoni is situated in the picturesque **Kigezi Highlands**, often nicknamed the '**Switzerland of Africa**' and is accessible from the south-western town of Kabale. The lake is an ancient flooded valley and is perhaps one of the deepest lakes in Africa. Strangely, the lake is devoid of fish, although the area has magnificent 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 means of getting around.

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park

Situated in the extreme south-west of Uganda, Bwindi is the reason many people travel to Uganda. It covers 330 square kilometres of the hillside, gorges, streams, rainforest - one of the biologically most diverse areas in Africa. Over 100 mammal species, including 11 primates, inhabit the area but the main attraction is the 300 (or so) endangered **mountain gorillas** which live here. To see these gentle giants in their natural habitat is a highly rewarding experience - they are the bulkiest, but yet most peaceful of the living primates. Besides, the park contains elephant, chimpanzee, monkey, various antelope and numerous bird species.

Useful Swahili Words

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Hello | Jambo | Yes | Ndiyo |
| How's things? | Habari gani? | No | Hapana |
| Thank you | Asante | Bring here | Lete hapa |
| Mister | Bwana | To eat | Kula |
| Go away | Enda | Today | Leo |
| Slowly | Pole pole | Tomorrow | Kesho |
| Coffee | Kahawa | To sleep | Kulala |
| Tea | Chai | Goodbye | Kwaheri |
| Milk | Maziwa | How much? | Ngapi? |
| Water | Maji | Come here | Njoo hapa |
| Sugar | Sukari | Welcome again | Karibu tena |

| | | | |
|---------------|----------|-------------------|--------------|
| Food | Chakula | See you | Tutaonana |
| Please | Tafadali | No, thanks | Hapana santé |

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

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