



## 5 Day Mountain Gorilla Expedition – Kampala to Kampala

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.

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.

**Tour Highlights:** Lake Mburo National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Kazinga Channel, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Gorilla Trekking

**Group Size:** Minimum 2

**Meals:** 4 Breakfasts, 5 Lunches, 4 Dinners

**Accommodation:** Tented camps & lodges

**Tour Includes:** All highlights, transport, accommodation, meals as indicated, services of a professional driver/ guide, gorilla tracker & permit

**Tour Excludes:** Visas, travel insurance, flights, departure taxes, airport transfers, tips, drinks, optional activities & items of a personal nature

## ITINERARY

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### Day 1: Kampala, Lake Mburo National Park (L / D)

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 waterbirds.

Alternatively you may like to do a self-guided walk on one of the many lakeside, game trails. We stay tonight at our luxury tented camp 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 (B / L / D)

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 safari lodge on 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, Buhoma (B / L / D)**

We take an early morning game drive and head out into the park, where we may well spot hyena on their dawn prowls 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 south into the Kigezi Highlands. We follow a valley road up through forest and farmlands to the village of Buhoma and rest tonight in our lodge near the park gates of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Tonight we make prepare for our early trek tomorrow, into the jungle.

### **Day 4: Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (B / L / D)**

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 (B / L)**

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.