

## Uganda - Gorillas, chimpanzees and more (11 days, 10 nights)



Uganda is one of East Africa's less known safari destinations, even though it's got great things of beauty to offer. Its real strength, however, is the presence of several species of primates, with the mountain gorillas and the chimpanzees as the largest representatives.

The critically endangered mountain gorilla is the highlight of this trip. The time spent with a family of gorillas is an experience that one will never forget. These friendly giants are impressive by their size, while the young offspring entertain you with their curious glances and playful actions. But Uganda is also home to big groups of chimpanzees and is the country where you're most likely to be able to spot the shoe-billed stork. Finally, the gorgeous Queen Elizabeth National Park stands its ground as far as big game and birdlife is concerned.

Ingrid Vekemans, your tour leader and professional nature photographer, has been travelling to Africa for over 30 years and has lost her heart on the continent. She feels at home there and looks forward to sharing her knowledge and passion with the group.

This trip takes place in January because it's one of the driest months in Uganda. The gorilla treks will be easier if the ground and the vegetation are not too wet. Rain showers are always possible, but January gives us a good chance of a comfortable walk. On top of that January offers the best chances of spotting the shoe-billed stork.

The trip is aimed at people who love nature and wildlife, and who love photographing it (of course non-photographing partners are also welcome!) Unlike normal group tours, we will be looking especially for photographic opportunities, and will take whatever time is required if the situation is interesting from a photographer's point of view. The group is small, which enables a personal approach. For the game drives in Queen Elizabeth National Park, we will be using two 7-seater 4x4 vehicles for a maximum of 3 people per vehicle.

Besides photographing together, and immediate advice and tips, there will be extensive briefings and feedback, so that all participants get the best chances of returning home with great photos.

**TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THIS SAFARI DIFFER FROM THE OTHER SAFARIS LEAD BY INGRID?**

- 5 participants make our group very small. This ensures extra personal follow-up and more comfortable gorilla photography (group size there is normally 8 people, but our group will get a private trek, otherwise there would very often not be enough space for everybody to take pictures).
- We will use one vehicle to travel between the different locations. Only in Queen Elizabeth National Park, where we go on a couple of game drives, we will provide an extra vehicle.
- For the boat ride and the gorilla and chimpanzee treks, it is important that you can operate your camera-lens combination well hand-held. Taking a tripod is impossible and there is often no support surface for a beanbag. It is highly recommended to have your camera bag carried by a porter during the treks.
- For photographing the chimpanzees and the gorillas in the dark environment of the forest, a fast lens and a camera with a good ISO performance is certainly a bonus.

**THIS SAFARI IS OPERATED BY**



## **Day 1**

Our trip starts in Entebbe. In the course of the day or evening the participants arrive in the international airport where they will be picked and taken to the lodge. Here you can recover from the long flight and have a rejuvenating night's sleep.

## **Day 2**

Today we drive to Mabamba Swamp. Here we will go on a boat ride for a couple of hours during which we have a good chance of spotting the shoe-billed stork. In any case the swamp houses a wide range of birds, such as the African jacana and different kinds of kingfishers, herons and bee-eaters.



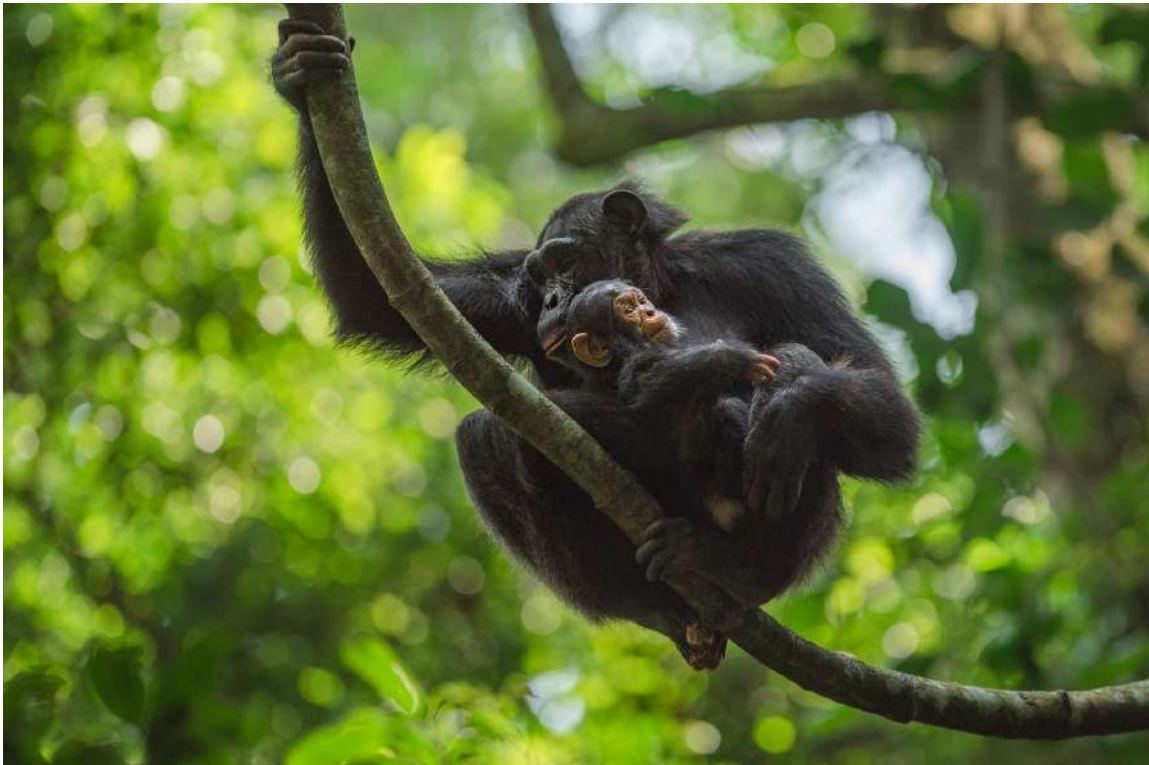
## **Day 3**

After an early breakfast we head off to Kibale Forest where we will arrive around lunch time. Our lodge is the base for the chimpanzee treks of the following days. After lunch there will be a photo-based briefing in which advice about how to best photograph the chimpanzees will be given. There might also still be time for photographing in the lodge's premises, where lots of birds and a few primate species like the black and white colobus monkey and the red-tailed monkey are present.



#### **Day 4-5**

These two days are all about chimpanzees. Our excursions are optimised so as to have as many photo opportunities as possible. Yet there will be periods when we have to wait patiently for the chimpanzees to climb out of the tall trees and appear in a visible place. During those waiting moments we can discuss the photos taken and indicate difficulties and give tips to be better prepared for the next opportunity.



## Day 6

After a very early breakfast we head towards Ishasha, the most famous sector of Queen Elizabeth National Park, where we will arrive on time for lunch in our camp in the middle of the park. We can relax a bit at the riverside before departing on our first game drive. In Ishasha we will almost certainly see kob antelope and the topi, and possibly elephants, giraffes, hyenas, leopards and lions. It is never a guarantee what we will witness as every safari requires a good dose of luck. In any case it is a beautiful park, full of wildlife, including numerous bird species.



## Day 7

Early morning we leave with our luggage and a packed breakfast for a further exploration of Ishasha. After a long morning safari we leave Queen Elizabeth and drive to Buhoma where we will arrive in our lodge in time for lunch. Our home for the next few days lies at the foot of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest and is ideally located to start our gorilla excursions. After lunch there will be an extensive briefing (illustrated by photos) with tips about gorilla photography. A good preparation only increases our chances to make good photos. We will do two gorilla trackings during the next few days, to make sure that everybody will return home with good photos. This program also gives the option to use a different lens per gorilla excursion, if desired.



### **Day 8**

After an early breakfast we leave with our packed lunch for our first gorilla tracking. Where a standard gorilla tracking takes groups of 8 people, we will only be 6. This is necessary to make sure everybody can photograph the gorillas. We are welcomed by a guide that will tell us more about the gorilla group that we will be visiting. It is impossible to predict how long we will have to walk before reaching this group. The gorillas move around the primeval forest freely and the level of difficulty of this trek totally depends on that. As soon as we have found the gorillas, we have exactly one hour to photograph them. After that we have to leave these amazing creatures in peace again. This hour is very intense and unforgettable. And that totally makes up for the often long and sometimes difficult trek.



## Day 9

A gorilla trek can be tiring, which is why we are including a day of rest here. In the morning one can enjoy some free time in the garden of the lodge or opt for a relaxing massage (optional!). As an option also local excursions can be arranged. After lunch there will be a feedback session about the photos made yesterday. The hour with the gorillas is intense and exciting, so - despite the tips before and during the photographing - a mistake here and there can possibly be made. During the feedback session we will trace possible areas of improvement. Today we will also reorganize our travel bags so that we keep things that we will need the next few days aside in a small hand luggage. The majority of the luggage will already leave with our driver and car to Entebbe tomorrow. On the last day we will take a domestic flight to avoid the long drive back to Entebbe. On this flight there are very strict luggage restrictions so only a camera bag and a small hand luggage are allowed.

*OPTIONAL: For the tireless who think they will not need the feedback session or the day's rest, it may (on the condition of permit availability) be possible to organise an extra gorilla tracking. This will be without photographic guidance and in a standard group of 8 people, put together by the rangers on the spot.*

## Day 10

This is a repeat of day 8, though the experience will normally be completely different. We will visit a different gorilla family with its own characteristics, while also the trek can be totally different as far as duration and level of difficulty is concerned. In any case it will be another very exciting and unforgettable day. And in the mean time we are loaded with lots of knowledge and experience after already spending a couple of days photographing chimpanzees and gorillas.



## Day 11

After breakfast we will be taken with our limited luggage to the local airport. Here we will take a domestic flight to Entebbe where we will arrive by lunch time in the same lodge where we started our exciting trip. We will have our last lunch together and be reunited with our travel bags. In the afternoon we have arranged an excursion to the botanical gardens of Entebbe, after which the participants will be taken to the airport to catch their international flight.

**ATTENTION: a change to the above travel schedule is always possible, if the circumstances dictate.**



## PRACTICALITIES

### TUI

The safari is organised by TUI tours, part of TUI Belgium n.v. The TUI Group is the largest tourism group in the world.

You can apply for your reservation or get a detailed non-binding quote with the TUI Belgium n.v. headquarters. To this end you can use the 'PRICE INQUIRY' button on the safari page of the website [www.ingridvekemans.com](http://www.ingridvekemans.com).

The invoice and booking terms and conditions will be sent to you by TUI Belgium n.v. TUI Belgium n.v.'s general and special conditions are applicable in so far as they do not deviate from the below mentioned terms. You can find all information on:

<https://www.tui.be/nl/reisvoorwaarden>

In case of cancellation by the traveler - special cancellation conditions: less than 36 days before departure: 100%. This amount has to be increased with the compensation charged by the airline and the administration costs in accordance with the time of cancellation.

The **price** of the trip is 10690€ and is based on sharing a double or twin room. The supplement for a single room will be 1290€. An advance of 500€ will be requested at the time of reservation of the trip, and as soon as departure is guaranteed, a second advance of 2000€ will be to be able to purchase the gorilla and chimpanzee permits. All prices mentioned on this website are subject to change in case of increase of local taxes or park income fees, domestic flight prices and fuel increases.

### **Safari period: 13 'til 23 January 2028**

**The price is inclusive of** accommodation in comfortable to luxury lodges and tented camps (10 nights), all meals (except possible meals on day 1 and a possible evening meal on day 11), soft drinks and local wines and beers (except on day 1, 2 and 11), drinking water in the vehicle, Flying Doctors membership, an experienced driver/guide during the entire trip, park entry fees, all transfers, all excursions, the domestic flight from Bwindi to Entebbe, guiding and advice about the animals and how to photograph them, photo analyses and an experienced and passionate tour leader!

**The price excludes** the international flight and related taxes, visa for Uganda, passport costs, travel insurance, drinks on days 1, 2 and 11, possible meals on day 1, a possible dinner on day 11, tips, personal expenses and the optional extra gorilla tracking or optional excursions and massage as described above on day 9.

For tips in the lodges, for our driver/guide during the duration of the trip, for the staff of the lodges and for guides, trackers and porters during the excursions, it is best to foresee a total amount of 400 USD per person. These tips have to be paid locally.

The optional extra gorilla tracking on day 9 is subject to permit availability. The cost of this extra tracking is 800 USD at the time this trip info is written.

**Number of participants:** 5 participants (minimum and maximum)

**Mimumum age for participants:** 16

As soon as the number of participants is reached, you will be contacted by TUI. TUI will then make you flight proposals for the **international flights**. You can then choose whether to book your flight through TUI or to take care of your international flights yourself. These flights can be booked at the earliest from 1 February 2027.

### **Insurance:**

It is strongly recommended for every participant to have cancellation and travel insurance.

### **Force majeure:**

The photo safaris are normally accompanied by Ingrid Vekemans. Only if Ingrid Vekemans would be prevented through force majeure an alternative - equivalent replacement will be sought in view of a good execution of the travel contract.

### **Luggage restrictions:**

To be certain we have enough space in the vehicle on travel days, maximum one soft travel bag (dimensions maximum h 40cm x d 40cm x l 80cm) per person is allowed as well as the camera bag. Only if every participant sticks to this restriction, the trip will be comfortable for all. Apart from the camera bag, no other hand luggage is allowed. The (empty) hand luggage that will be used to pack a few necessary belongings for day 10 and 11, has to be packed inside the travel

bag on the previous days. The maximum allowed weight of your luggage will depend on the airline with which you book your flight.

### **Requirements for the participants:**

This trip is aimed at photographers that already have a good notion of ISO/shutter speed/aperture and light metering. Obviously, their partners are also welcome. The trip can be physically demanding: the level of difficulty of the gorilla trackings is unpredictable. In the best-case scenario, the walk is 2 hours over flat terrain, but it can also be an 8 hour walk over steep and slippery terrain. Participants therefore should have no difficulties with walking and should be fit. They have to be in good health.

Participants have to take care of any necessary **vaccinations and medications**. For more information, check [www.wanda.be/en](http://www.wanda.be/en). The information on this website needs to be evaluated by the participant in consultation with a qualified physician. Participants have to make sure they have a **valid international passport (valid at least another 6 months after the date of return) and a visa** for Uganda. This visa can be obtained online at the earliest 2 months before departure. You will receive the necessary instructions for this in good time before departure. Price indication: 50€ per person. For the last update: see <http://diplomatie.belgium.be>.

Finally, respect for nature and the animals is a must!

Participants have to be aware that Africa sometimes requires patience and understanding: roads can be bumpy and things may not work as efficiently as at home. The pace of life is slower, which should ultimately benefit us all...

