



VISA INFORMATION

- For travel to Uganda, foreign nationals can apply for visas **online** at [Uganda Electronic Visa System](#) or at the Ugandan Missions or Embassy of the Country of residence.
- A **valid Yellow Fever Immunisation card** is required for all visa applications and entry to Uganda.
- **East African Tourist Visa**: applicable to foreign nationals who wants to simultaneously visit the Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Uganda for tourism. (Please note, Tanzania is not included in this agreement.) An East Africa Tourist Visa is valid for multiple entries within the three countries for up to 90 days. Applications for this visa can be lodged at any of the diplomatic representation of the Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Uganda, at the Immigration Offices of the respective countries or online where applicable. However, **application must be made in the country of first arrival**.
- Nationals of the following countries **do not require** a visa to Uganda: Angola, Eritrea, Malawi, Madagascar, Seychelles, Swaziland, Zambia, Comoros, Kenya, Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Antigua, Barbados, Fiji, Grenada, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, The Grenadines, Vanuatu, Ghana, Cyprus, Bahamas, Belize, Gambia, Jamaica, Malta, Singapore, St. Vincent-Tonga

The following **visa fees** apply:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Single Entry | U\$50 per person |
| Multiple Entry | U\$100 per person, 6-12 months |
| EA Tourist Visa | U\$100 per person, multiple entry for 3 months to Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda |

Online payment does attract a nominal surcharge.

This information is subject to change at any time so please consult the [Immigration Uganda](#) website or your local Ugandan Mission or Embassy for the latest information.

Kindly ensure that you have all necessary documents & visas prior to departure from your home country (unless you can obtain them on arrival), as Giltedge Africa cannot be held liable should entry be denied.

PASSPORTS

Passports must be valid for **six months** from your return date. Please ensure there are at least **two** (2) blank visa pages per country you are visiting.

Should you be visiting more than one country, please ensure that you have a sufficient number of blank visa pages (not endorsement pages) in your passport, i.e. at least 2 consecutive/side by side blank pages per country.

CLIMATE

Uganda experiences a temperate climate even though most of the country is in the tropics with temperatures ranging between 16 - 26°C for most of the year (April - November). However, during the warmer months (December - March) temperatures reach more than 30°C.

Uganda is suitable for travel any time of the year, but not advisable during rainy seasons from March/April till May and October till November, especially for gorilla and chimp trekking. Light rain season falls in November and December. Dry

seasons are from December to February and June to August. The best time of the year would be the dryer months of December to late February and from June to September.

CURRENCY

The local currency is the Ugandan shilling (USh), although US\$ is accepted. If you're using dollars, try to avoid bills printed before 2006, as often they're not accepted (due to a higher risk of them being counterfeit notes). If exchanging dollars, small denominations always get a much lower rate than US\$50 and US\$100 notes – so ask for larger notes when you collect your money.

The best exchange rates by far are offered in Kampala. Forex bureaus offer slightly better rates than banks plus much faster service and longer hours; but they're rare outside Kampala.

The biggest banks (Barclays, Stanbic, Centenary, Crane, Orient and Standard Chartered) have ATMs that accept international cards. Even many remote small towns will have at least one of these banks, though try not to let your cash run out as the system sometimes goes down and machines sometimes run out of cash.

Credit cards are accepted at better hotels in larger cities, as well as smarter restaurants and safari lodges, but it's always a good idea to bring plenty of cash as a backup. There can often be a surcharge of 5% to 8% when making payments by cards, but these are slowly becoming rarer as companies become more accustomed to people paying this way. Visa is the most widely accepted card, but MasterCard is increasingly accepted.

COMMUNICATION

International telephone communication is very good from Kampala and Kigali but more difficult from some up-country areas. The mobile telephone network is good and rapidly expanding.

DRESS

Ugandans appreciate modest dress. Temperatures range from warm to hot, and are often cold in the mountainous areas, so layered clothing is recommended especially for higher altitude stays.

We recommend the following clothing and equipment for **tracking the gorillas**:

- Warm 'moisture-wicking' clothes, including a fleece or light wool sweater, lightweight wool socks and long-sleeved shirt
- Bright colours and white are not advisable as this will contrast very strongly with the prevailing forest colours, and could well disturb gorillas at sightings.
- Strong waterproof walking boots (comfortable for going up and down steep hills)
- Sturdy walking trousers
- A breathable lightweight rain poncho or 'parka' with a rain hat
- Gloves to grip vegetation (inexpensive gardening gloves work well)
- Sunglasses, sunscreen and sun hat
- Torch
- A good supply of rechargeable camera batteries and/or fast film (remember no flash in the gorillas' presence)

- Binoculars
- A small backpack to carry water and a packed lunch
- Walking stick
- Tips or gratuities for the guides and porters

As mentioned, it is best to wear layers as temperatures fluctuate. Early mornings on the mountains can be cold, although as the sun rises in the sky, and you climb, you will start to feel the heat. It rains often, generally in the afternoons.

The ranger guides will make you a walking stick, if needed, or you can borrow one from your lodge. You will find the walking sticks come in very useful when climbing up and down slippery slopes.

We recommend the following clothing and equipment for **mountain climbing**:

- Mountain gloves or mittens, or overmitts for climbing; light pair of gloves for camp
- Hats for sun/rain; warm hat for high altitude climbing
- Mountain jacket and raingear
- Fleece jacket and sweater; 'moisture-wicking' T-shirts and long-sleeve trekking shirts
- Hiking or climbing trousers; shorts
- Lightweight long underwear
- Camp shoes or sandals
- Walking shoes (runners)
- Gaiters (a set for low and high altitudes)
- Mountain boots that can fit crampons

Equipment:

- Climbing rope and climbing harness
- Crampons and ice axe
- Carabiners; slings
- Day pack/climbing pack
- Tent, sleeping bag and sleeping mat. Waterproof sacks, such as large canoe bags (Ortleib) for packing tent, climbing gear, sleeping bag and clothes

ELECTRICITY

Uganda: 240 volts. 3-pin (square) sockets.

It is best to travel with your own adaptor. Most camps/lodges, even if they do not have power, can make arrangements for recharging batteries.

GORILLA TREKKING

Who can track the gorillas?

Trackers must be fit and in good health. Tracking in thick forest at heights of up to 3,000 metres, traversing steep-sided mountains and ravines, can be arduous, especially if it is wet. To protect gorillas from disease, no children under 15 are allowed. People who are ill on the day of the tracking may be denied. To minimize the possible transmission of human diseases, visitors are asked to maintain a distance of seven metres (about 22 feet) from the gorillas.

Gorilla tracking permits

Only a limited number of permits are available in each gorilla park. It is therefore essential to book well in advance. **Permits need to be paid for at the time of the initial safari booking** so that they can be purchased immediately. You will also need to provide a copy of your passport in order to register the permit. A delay in payment can result in permits not being secured for the intended dates. A percentage of the gorilla permit fee goes to communities living around the gorilla parks. Gorilla tracking permits are non-refundable, except for medical reasons, in which case a medical certificate must be provided. Gorilla viewing can occasionally be denied at short notice because of National Park or border closures, security changes or gorillas moving out of range. In such rare circumstances, refunds are at the discretion of the authority and are not within the company's control. Obtaining a gorilla permit therefore is not a guarantee of seeing a gorilla.

Gorilla tracking rules

At the National Park headquarters, ranger guides explain the rules for tracking gorillas. These rules are designed specifically to limit stress and behavioural impact, as well as potential disease transmission from humans to gorillas.

- Maximum viewing duration of any group is 1 hour per day.
- Maximum number of guests per gorilla trekking excursion is 8.
- Always wash your hands before you head out to the gorillas.
- Please do not consume any food or drink while in the presence of gorillas.
- Smoking is not allowed.
- Please keep the surroundings clean and free of litter.
- Spitting in the park is strictly prohibited.
- While gorilla sightings and encounters are very reliable, viewing is dependent on variables such as weather and tracking conditions. Gorilla trekking, itself, is undertaken regardless of prevailing weather conditions.
- When with the gorillas, please keep voices low. Do not make any rapid movements that may cause alarm.
- Should one need to cough or sneeze, mouths and noses must be covered and one must turn away from the gorillas.
- If a gorilla should charge or vocalise, do not be alarmed. Stand still, look away from the gorilla and follow the guide's instructions.
- The minimum age for gorilla viewing is 15 years – this is for reasons of safety and possible disease transmission, with children under this age being more prone to infection.
- Again, to minimise possible transmission of human diseases, visitors are requested to maintain a distance of 7 metres (23 feet) from the gorillas.
- Guests that display cold, flu or other respiratory tract symptoms will not be allowed to join a gorilla trek as the park office have the authority to deny any such guest/s access. In such instances, the cost of the gorilla tracking permit will be refunded.
- Gorilla trekking is strenuous and should guests have any condition that could be triggered by high altitude or vigorous exercise, we recommend that all guests consult with their general practitioner well in advance of their travel date as this will enable them to comply accordingly with said protocol (by having an issued certificate of health) and utilize the opportunity to discuss other sensible health precautions.
- No flash photography is permitted when taking images of the gorillas.

GRATUITIES | TIPPING

Tipping is not compulsory but certainly welcomed.

- **Professional Guides/Local Tour Leaders:** US\$ 20.00 per group per day.
- **Drivers/Guides:** US\$ 10.00 per person, per day.
- **Transfer only Drivers:** US\$ 3.00 to US\$ 5.00 per group, per transfer.
- **The General Safari Camp/Lodge:** US\$ 10.00 per guest, per day (this should be placed in the communal tipping box or handed to management to be distributed equally amongst all the staff)
- **Gorilla Tracking Guide/s:** US\$ 10.00 per person, per trek (usually there are two guides and it is standard practice to tip after each trek).
- **Porters on Gorilla Tracking:** US\$ 5.00 per porter, per day (this is optional – wage paid for porter to their association)
- **Hiking/Trekking Guides:** US\$ 15.00 per group, per day.
- **Baggage Porters:** US\$ 2.00 per person, per movement at hotels and airports.
- **Massage Therapists:** US\$ 3.00 to US\$ 5.00 per treatment.
- **Meals in Restaurants and Hotels:** 10% of the bill.

You may wish to add a nominal amount ranging between US\$ 10.00 to US\$ 30.00 per day for incidentals (subject to personal budget choice), i.e. if additional activities are booked once on your journey, if travel arrangements change for any reason, in acknowledgement of good service received in another area, etc.

HEALTH

Currently, all visitors to East Africa, including Uganda, are required to present a valid **Yellow Fever Certificate** on arrival as a condition of entry into the country. It is also required as part of the online visa application process.

Anti-malaria tablets and mosquito repellent are essential. Bring a good supply of any personal medication required. Drink bottled or boiled water only. Medical services, especially up-country, are basic. Check that your travel insurance includes medical and evacuation cover.

Altitude Sickness

Depending on your travel programme and your previous destination it is likely that you have arrived at a higher altitude than where you came from. Travellers going from lower altitude or sea level to higher elevations may suddenly experience shortness of breath, fatigue, headaches, nausea, and other symptoms resembling flu. This condition, called acute mountain sickness (AMS), is the most common type of altitude sickness. It can occur at elevations as low as 1 500 metres (5 000 feet), where it is likely to last only a day or so, however, is more common above 2 400 metres (8 000 feet). At elevations over 3 050 metres (10 000 feet), three out of four people will have symptoms.

Mountain sickness or altitude sickness results from a lack of oxygen caused by going too high, too fast. Barometric pressure decreases as you go higher – that is, the air gets thinner – and you inhale less oxygen per usual breath. Trying to compensate for this, you breathe more deeply. The likelihood of symptoms increases the higher you go. Not everyone feels sick at higher altitudes and there is no way to predict a person's highest comfortable altitude. Being physically fit is not necessarily a protection.

Symptoms of Mountain Sickness:

- Increased rate of breathing
- Headache
- A lack of energy and enthusiasm
- Fatigue and insomnia
- Loss of appetite
- Dizziness and nausea
- Shortness of breath and rapid heartbeat accompanying physical exertion

What Can You Do To Feel Better?

- Acclimatise and take it easy. Spend your first day at high altitudes relaxing; try to avoid strenuous exercise until you become accustomed to the new heights.
- Drink extra water. Drink as much as you can to remain properly hydrated, at least three or more litres (three to four quarts).
- Avoid drinking too many alcoholic beverages. The fast, deep breathing you must do at higher altitudes will tend to dehydrate you, an effect that alcohol intensifies.
- Eat foods that are high in carbohydrates.
- For relief from headaches, Acetaminophen or an NSAID (such as ibuprofen) can be taken.

Always check the latest requirements with your own doctor before you travel, although for a useful source of supplementary health information, check with the Scottish NHS or the CDC ([Centers for Disease Control & Prevention | Uganda](#)).

PHOTOGRAPHY

- For digital photography, remember to pack extra batteries and memory cards. Most lodges do have facilities to recharge batteries but packing a car charger can be useful if you are staying at lodges/camps that do not have electricity.
- If you are shooting film, bring as much film as you think you will need during your trip, as you are unlikely to be able to buy it in Uganda.
- Flash photography is not allowed near the mountain gorillas or the chimpanzees, so fast film is useful (400-1600 ASA). The mountain gorillas and chimpanzees are most usually found in the forests. Dark tree cover may obscure the light so bear this in mind when setting up your camera.
- We recommend that any camera equipment that you bring with you is suitable for use in very humid environments and be prepared for the likelihood of rain.
- There are many interesting smaller things that may be encountered in the forest, so some form of macro lens might be helpful.
- Personal DVD recorders are allowed, however professional filmmakers require permission to film in the National Parks and need to purchase filming permits in advance.
- Before photographing people, it is polite to ask their permission first. Photography is not allowed near soldiers or military buildings.

SAFETY

Uganda is a generally secure country, but take the same basic safety and security precautions that you would in any other country, i.e. do not carry excessive jewellery and money or leave them lying around, and do not walk unescorted at night.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Please ensure you have **full comprehensive travel insurance** covering you in the event of any serious illness or injury - due to the remoteness of some of the locations, your travel insurance should cover you in the event of an emergency airlift/evacuation being required. Please also note that travel insurance should be **purchased within 21 days of initial trip deposit to cover any pre-existing conditions.**

FINAL NOTE

The information contained in this guide was correct at the time of printing (*January 2018*) and compiled in good faith. Should your own experiences show that changes should be made to this information, we would be pleased to hear from you, so that we can update this guide accordingly.

We wish you an unforgettable African experience!