

Uganda Birding Safari Tour: Itinerary and Information

Your Safari at a Glance:

Day	Destination	Accommodation	Type of room	Meal Plan
1	Arrival in Entebbe	The Boma	Suite	-
2	Entebbe- Murchison Falls NP	Budongo Eco Lodge	Forest Cabin	B-L-D
3	Budongo Forest	Primate Lodge Kibale	Luxury cottage	B-L-D
4	Murchison Falls NP- Fort portal	Mountains of the Moon	Cottage	B-L-D
5	Semuliki NP- Kibale Forest	Primate Lodge Kibale	Standard	B-L-D
6	Crater Lakes & Bigodi Swamp	Primate Lodge Kibale	Standard	B-L-D
7	Kibale Forest- Queen Elizabeth	Bush Lodge	Cottage	B-L-D
8	Queen Elizabeth NP	Bush Lodge	Cottage	B-L-D
9	Queen Elizabeth NP- Kampala	Cassia Lodge	Tented room	B-L-D
10	Mabamba Swamps			B-L

B = Breakfast

L = Lunch

D = Dinner

Day 1: Arrival

Arrive at Entebbe Airport, where you will be welcomed by a representative and transferred to your accommodation in Entebbe. Overnight at The Boma (B&B).

Day 2: Entebbe – Murchison Falls National Park (5 hrs / 300 km)

Today we will depart for the most beautiful protected area in Uganda: Murchison Falls National Park. We will make a stop at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary for lunch. In the afternoon, arrive at Budongo Forest in the southern part of the national park. Here you will take a guided forest walk for a first introduction to the rich birdlife of Uganda. Dinner and overnight at Budongo Eco Lodge (B-L-D).

At the dramatic Murchison Falls, the world's longest river explodes through a narrow, 7m cleft in the Rift Valley escarpment to plunge into a frothing pool 43m below. In the lush borassus grassland north of the Nile, elephant, buffalo, giraffe and a variety of antelope are regularly encountered. In the southeast, Rabongo Forest is home to chimpanzees and other rainforest creatures, while the River Nile itself hosts one of Africa's densest hippo and crocodile populations. Add a dazzling variety of water-birds, including the world's most accessible wild population of the rare shoebill stork- this is Murchison Falls National Park, an untamed African savannah bisected from east to west, for 115 kms, by the mighty River Nile.

Situated approximately 300 kms/5 hrs northwest of Kampala, this 3,840 km² park spreads inland from the shores of Lake Albert around the Victoria Nile. It is Uganda's largest National Park, and the only one where all of the 'Big Five' are to be found: buffalo, elephant, and lion, with the occasional leopard seen above the Nile. Rhinos are being bred in a sanctuary south of the park- 40 to 50 of them are lined up for release into the wild by around 2040. Together with the adjacent 748 km² Bugungu Wildlife Reserve and the 720 km² Karuma Wildlife Reserve, the park is part of the greater 5,308 km² Murchison Falls Conservation Area.

Special activities include launch trips to the base of the Falls, boat trips to the Lake Albert delta, chimpanzee tracking at Rabongo Forest and Budongo Forest en-route from Masindi, plus regular game-viewing drives.

Day 3: Budongo Forest

This full day is dedicated to birding in Budongo Forest Reserve. With 360 different species, Budongo is famous for its birding biodiversity, and is home to the rare Puvel's illadopses, a species endemic to this area. Other species include chocolate-backed kingfishers, chestnut-crowned eremomera, dusky long-tailed cuckoo, yellow-browed camaroptera, black-headed paradise flycatcher, slender-billed greenbul, green crombec and forest robin.

Dinner and overnight at Budongo Eco Lodge (B-L-D).

Day 4: Murchison Falls National Park - Fort Portal (9 hrs/365 km)

We depart Murchison Falls and head towards Fort Portal, with lunch en-route. The lovely town of Fort Portal rests in the shadow of the fabled Mountains of the Moon, and is famous for its many tea plantations. Dinner and overnight at Mountains of the Moon Hotel (B-L-D).

Day 5: Fort Portal – Semuliki National Park – Kibale Forest (4-5 hrs / 150 km)

After breakfast, we drive to Semuliki National Park for birding. The scenic, winding road will lead us through green mountains and offers you a magnificent view at the River Semliki and Congo. There are more than 400 species of birds recorded in this protected area. These include many West African forest species, such as four different hornbill species that are seen nowhere else in Uganda. There are also the red-rumped tinker bird and palm greenbul, which are endemics. In the afternoon, return to Fort Portal and continue to the dense forest of Kibale National Park. Dinner and overnight at Primate Lodge Kibale (B-L-D).

Kibale National Park, 320 kms/5 hrs from Kampala, is Uganda's primate paradise. Her 776 km² of moist evergreen rainforest is home to the highest concentration of primates in the world - 13 species, including the 'localised' red colobus, as well as L'Hoest's monkey. The elusive forest elephant, smaller and hairier than its bush counterpart, moves seasonally into the park, while other terrestrial mammals include buffalo, giant forest hog, leopard and half a dozen antelope species. Bird life is also prolific, with 335 species recorded, including hornbills, pittas, turacos, the endemic Prirogrine's ground thrush and African grey parrots.

But the park's principal attraction remains the opportunity to track her 500 habituated chimpanzees. These delightful apes, genetically the closest living relatives of man, are tremendous fun to watch as they squabble and play in fruit trees. Tracking usually takes about 4 hrs.

There is also another unique experience in Kibali: join the habituation team that goes out in the morning to study the chimpanzees and habituate them to humans.

Day 6: Crater Lakes & Bigodi Swamp

Have a relaxed breakfast before heading off for an exploration of the crater lakes. Enjoy the beauty of the numerous small lakes, surrounded by gentle hills, and the stunning views. At Lake Nkuruba, you will take a hike to encounter different species of birds. Return to the lodge for lunch and transfer to Bigodi Swamp. This wetland is a great attraction for birders, with over 200 bird species recorded, including the popular great blue turaco.

Dinner and overnight at Primate Lodge Kibale (B-L-D).

Day 7: Kibale Forest - Queen Elizabeth National Park (3 hrs/200 km)

After a delicious breakfast, we transfer to Queen Elizabeth National Park. Have lunch and relax at the pool, before going on a game drive in search of wildlife, including warthogs, buffaloes, waterbucks, elephants and a variety of birds.

Dinner and overnight at Queen Elizabeth Bush Lodge (B-L-D).

Day 8: Queen Elizabeth National Park

The day begins early as we start with a morning game drive and head to the mating ground of the Ugandan kobs. This is not only an area for excellent game-viewing, but also offers much to birders. We move through open grassy plains that support large flocks of white and Abdim's storks, as well as the spectacular saddle-billed stork during the migratory season. In the afternoon, we take a boat cruise along the Kazinga Channel, a natural channel between Lake Edward and Lake George. Watch hundreds of hippos, elephants and many migratory bird species, such as grey-headed gulls, African skimmers, water dikkops and great white and pink-backed pelicans. Dinner and overnight at Queen Elizabeth Bush Lodge (B-L-D).

Day 9: Queen Elizabeth National Park - Kampala (7-8 hrs / 430 km)

After breakfast, we transfer back to Kampala. En-route, we will pass the equator, where we will stop for photos and some souvenir shopping. Later in the afternoon, we will arrive in Kampala. Overnight at Cassia Lodge (B-L).

Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP), Uganda's most popular savannah park, is located in western Uganda, approximately 438 kms/6 hrs southwest of Kampala. Her 1,978 km² of open savannah, rainforest, dense papyrus swamps and brooding crater lakes extends from Lake George in the northeast to Lake Edward in the southwest, and includes Maramagambo Forest and the Kazinga Channel that connects the two lakes.

Day 10: Mabamba Swamps & Departure

Today there will be an early transfer to Mabamba Swamp, 50 km west of Kampala. Mabamba Swamp is one of the best places to spot the rare shoebill stork. Many other species can also be found here, like Allen's gallinule, grey heron, African water rail, goliath and purple heron, and a variety of egrets and ducks. The best way to enjoy the rich birdlife is by taking a canoe trip. After this activity, transfer to Entebbe Airport for your international flight (B-L).

Accommodation

The Boma, Entebbe



This welcoming guesthouse is situated on the outskirts of Entebbe, only 5 minutes from Entebbe Airport. It is a tastefully restored colonial homestead consisting of comfortable bedrooms. Each is decorated with African themes and has its own private bathroom. A diner's bar is set in a landscaped garden with lake views. The main house includes a private dining veranda and living room for overnight guests. Airport transfers are offered at a small supplement.

Budongo Eco Lodge, Murchison Falls National Park



Budongo Eco Lodge is located in the heart of Budongo Forest Reserve in Murchison Falls National Park. This reserve has one of the largest forests in Uganda, with an incredible biodiversity. The lodge consists of a visitor's centre, restaurant, comfortable self-contained cabins and spacious dorm rooms with shared facilities. In addition, the lodge offers many different activities in the direct surroundings, including chimp tracking, chimp habituation, forest walks and bird-

watching.

Mountains of the Moon Hotel, Fort Portal



The Mountains of the Moon Hotel is set on 15 acres of landscaped gardens, on the outskirts of town. The hotel was completely renovated in 2006 and now has 33 well-designed and fully-appointed rooms, offering internet access, television and a large balcony. All rooms are equipped with king or twin beds and bathrooms with showers and bath tubs. The main restaurant and dining room looks out onto the lush green gardens and offers Ugandan, European and African cuisine.

Other facilities include four well-stocked bars, an open fireplace, a swimming pool, massage parlour and well-equipped gym.

Primate Lodge Kibale, Kibale Forest National Park



The cottages at Primate Lodge Kibale are beautifully located in the middle of Kibale Forest. Each has a spacious bedroom, en-suite bathroom with hot running water, and a private veranda that overlooks the forest. The main lodge has a spacious dining room that serves local and international meals, with an adjacent bar and open lounge area.

Queen Elizabeth Bush Lodge, Queen Elizabeth National Park



Queen Elizabeth Bush Lodge is located in the heart of Queen Elizabeth National Park. With the small scale set-up and unique setting at the Kazinga Channel, where animals roam in and out of the camp, it forms an excellent base for your safari. The lodge consists of 6 self-contained units which are spaciouly placed in between the indigenous bush. Each room has its own private en-suite bathroom with an eco-toilet and an outside shower with two showerheads.

Cassia Lodge, Kampala



Cassia Lodge is located on Buziga Hill, one of the highest hills in Kampala, with an astonishing view of Lake Victoria as well as the city. The hotel offers 20 luxurious rooms with satellite TV, fridge bars, fans, safes and balconies overlooking the lake. International cuisine is served in the restaurant, which has an adjacent bar and separate panoramic balcony. In addition, the lodge features conference facilities, a business centre, Wi-Fi and a large swimming pool.