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Update: June 2005, Lori Uyeno, Global Health Sciences Fellow

Basic Travel Guide to Uganda

INTRODUCTION: This is a very basic guide to introduce and prepare you for your visit to Uganda. If you have purchased your guidebook already, you probably know most of what you need to know to have a safe and enjoyable journey. The following might just have some few helpful up to date hints. No matter what, Uganda will be an unforgettable experience.

Uganda was known as the “Pearl of East Africa”. It is a beautiful, green country that has enjoyed relative political stability compared to its neighboring countries. Uganda is landlocked with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the west, Sudan to the north, Kenya to the east, and Rwanda and Tanzania to the south. Uganda was a former British colony that gained independence in 1962. Unfortunately Uganda is most infamous for the notoriously bloody reign of Idi Amin from 1972-9. President Museveni overthrew Milton Obote’s regime after Amin and has since led Uganda under a one-party rule. In July 2006, Uganda will have its first multiparty elections in the history of the country.

Uganda is for the most part safe to travel. However, precaution is always necessary as a visitor in a foreign country. Northern Uganda still suffers from a 20-year war led by an insurgency group called the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Over 1 million people have been internally displaced by the continued fighting and many of the northern districts including Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, and Lira which are still considered dangerous to travel.

Uganda currently has a population of 26 million. There are over 80 local languages spoken in Uganda, the most common being Luganda (Don’t worry you can get a pocketbook Luganda-English guide at Aristoc Bookstore in Kampala). English is the official language which makes travel and communication in Uganda much more enjoyable. And the Ugandans are famous in East Africa for their friendliness and laughter as well.

Uganda is truly breathtaking with the famous Rwenzori mountains also known as the “Mountains of the Moon”, Lake Victoria, the source of the Nile, and many national parks that are home to all the animals you can name that you have seen in a zoo (but in their natural habitat). The dry season is Dec-Feb and June-Aug with the rainy season March to May. The climate is most mild in the rainy season and will remind you of a sunny San Francisco day. The only difference is that one must remember an umbrella, insect repellent, and malaria prophylaxis. If you go during the dry season remember sunscreen, a hat, and drink lots of bottled water.

PLANNING:

- General contact info: Prior to and during your trip, you should check the embassy website for postings of safety concerns, the US state department travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html, or the Lonely Planet thorn bush www.thorntree.lonelyplanet.com. Each of you should check in with the US embassy: KampalaUSCitizen@state.gov or USA Embassy Uganda 041259791 upon your arrival as well as with a site contact in Uganda. Carry contact info with you and your cell phone to have at your easy disposal should you need it. Make copies of your passport in case it is lost or stolen.
- Medical evacuation insurance and/or travel insurance: Check your health plans before departure as some have some international coverage. Otherwise it is wise to buy extra medical evacuation insurance prior to departure through such groups as SafeTrip 1-800-732-5309 or International SOS: www.internationalsos.com. If you will be traveling with expensive electronics such as laptops or cameras, travel insurance in case of theft or damage is recommended.
- Health/Medical services: Immunizations are required prior to travel. Malaria prophylaxis Larium or Malarone is also recommended. Required immunizations are typhoid, hepatitis, tetanus booster, yellow fever (only if traveling through an endemic country. Be sure to check with your doctor). Also required immunizations will be on the US State Department travel site. Overseas Travel Clinic is a walk-in clinic in the Embarcadero at 49 Drumm Street that you can conveniently get your immunizations and medications.

Should you get ill or injured while in Uganda, you should report to an appropriate medical facility to get treatment and notify the UCSF and Ugandan contacts of your status. Most people in Uganda including the doctors you will work with at Mulago will use private services or clinics. The most popular and well equipped is the International Hospital Kampala (IHK) 041340531. It is located: Plot 4686 Kisugu-Namuwongo. It is a new, modern hospital founded by an Irish physician, Ian Clarke. Most likely you will have to pay cash for the services rendered. Carry your medical insurance or evacuation information with you at all times so that you or another person can expedite the process in an emergency.
- Needle sticks: You should not feel any pressure nor should you embark upon performing any procedures which you do are not comfortable doing. While we sincerely hope you won't be stuck with a needle. If you will be doing any kind of clinical care in which you will be potentially in direct contact with patients, you should have an HIV post-exposure prophylaxis kit. Notify **Dr. Peter Solberg at 075-751027**. If he is unavailable call **Dr. Jono Mermin at 075-759305**. The HIV hotline here in San Francisco has graciously agreed to help advise you of your risk should you need further advise. Their number is: **1-888-448-4911**
- Staying healthy: Remember the general rule, "If you can't boil it, cook it, or peel it, don't eat it." Drink bottled water and watch out for ice cubes which may not be prepared from boiled water. Salads also have the potential for trouble. Take your malaria prophylaxis, use insect repellent (Avon Skin So Soft is a good repellent and sunscreen) and nets (most hotels will have mosquito nets or spray the grounds), use sunscreen, and stay well hydrated in the heat.

CELLULAR PHONE:

Most people in Uganda now use mobile phones and are on the GSM network. Landline calls are more expensive and are being used less and less. The main mobile phone companies in Uganda are MTN and UTL. MTN has wider upcountry coverage. However, if you will be in Tanzania or Kenya, you can use UTL. It is very useful to have a mobile phone while in Uganda. All you need to do is have a GSM phone and buy a Uganda MTN or UTL SIM card once you arrive. The SIM cards cost about 15,000-20,000 Ush. Mobile GSM phones are also easily available for purchase in Kampala for around 100,000 Ush. Once you have the SIM card you just buy phone cards to add calling time. Learn to use SMS text messaging as that is the most popular and cheapest form of communication. Calling international from Uganda is extremely expensive, however, you will not be charged for incoming international calls. There is an inexpensive international calling card your loved ones can purchase in order to call you on the cell while you are in Uganda. Information is available at www.nobelcom.com.

COMMUNICATIONS/INTERNET:

Internet cafes are readily available in Kampala and even a few upcountry. The fastest LAN connections and Skype telephone headsets and connections are at WebCity Café on Collville Ave across from the Kampala Casino in the city centre. It is about 50 Ush/min. or 30 if you buy a membership. Otherwise, UTL has just introduced wireless "hotspots" in May of 2005. Many sites are free now during this demo period. There are about a dozen sites in Kampala: Grand Imperial Hotel, Fairway Hotel, Blue Mango, Café Pap, Rwenzori Coffee, International Hospital, Infectious Disease Institute (IDI) at Mulago Hospital to name a few. Fax services are also available but quite expensive to fax international. Main postal office in Kampala is on Kampala Road by city square.

MONEY:

Cash is the operative word. You can take traveler's checks, but realize that you should exchange these in Kampala and that the exchange rate is less than that of cash. US dollars in higher currency amounts (ie \$100) are your best option in regards to exchange rates, but smaller amounts less than \$20 are rarely accepted. Bring bills that have been printed after 2000. That is very important. Many merchants will absolutely not accept bills printed earlier. ATM machines are available in Kampala only. Barclays Bank and Standard Charter accept VISA cards; however you will be charged a fee by your bank in America about 5-7\$ for each withdrawal. Credit cards are rarely accepted except at large hotels and they will usually charge a 6% user fee. If you do use credit cards, the most commonly accepted is VISA/Mastercard. I recommend taking both traveler's checks, cash, VISA credit card, and ATM. Be sure when using travelers checks you have your receipt as many banks will require verification of purchase. If you are nervous about carrying large amounts of cash, keep most of it in your hotel safe. Separate your money in different places, carry some money that is easily accessible and keep the remainder in a money belt.

Estimating the cost of your trip is difficult because each of you will have different traveling styles. You can estimate the price of housing from the option that you choose

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listed above. Food and transportation will be around \$10-15/day and don't forget that you'll probably want to put some minutes on the cell phone. Travel costs within Uganda will depend on what you decide to do. When traveling, plan to have enough money to cover your time away from Kampala, as it gets difficult to change money outside of the capitol city. Several of the national parks will accept and actually prefer US dollars as payment, so bring some \$10 and \$20's as well.

ATTIRE/DRESS:

In general, the Ugandans are well-dressed and conservative in style. Among the residents and hospital staff, most men wear ties and women wear skirts that go below the knee with either closed-toe shoes or sandals. Long coats are worn by all physicians. Outside of the hospital, men are usually in long pants and button-down shirts, despite the heat. Most women are in long skirts or dresses, although they also wear pants at times. Shorts are generally only worn by tourists or by the few people found jogging in parts of the city.

It is advisable that during the rainy seasons (March-May and September-November) one carries an umbrella or raincoat. The rains come quickly and with full force and can catch you off-guard. Luckily they are usually short-lived and can be waited out under an awning or from within a building. It can get cool at night during the rainy season so bring a light sweater or jacket. Of note, while the dry season is mostly sunny and hot, there are still occasional rains, so one might consider having an umbrella nearby. Umbrellas can be purchased for less than \$2 in the city markets.

There are cheap laundry services and even dry cleaning available at most hotels.

IN KAMPALA AND AROUND:

ARRIVAL:

You will arrive at the Entebbe International Airport. At the airport you can obtain a Visa for one, three, or multiple visits. It is an easy process and cheaper than going through the Uganda Embassy in Washington DC. They will take US \$. The price for the 3-month is about \$45US. A special taxi from the airport in Entebbe to Kampala is about \$30US or 40-50,000 Ush. It is possible to take a cheap matatu or public taxi to and from the airport, but it will be inconvenient if you have a lot of luggage.

HOUSING:

There are multiple housing options in Kampala, ranging from basic to more luxurious. It is not uncommon to learn of housing choices once you arrive and you are welcome to make your own arrangements. We would recommend, however, that you consider safety for yourself and for your belongings and that you use mosquito netting at all times when you sleep. The following are a few listings with which to start.

Mulago Guest House: Located within Mulago Hospital grounds. Within 5 minute walk to the hospital. Option of single or shared room with or without attached bathroom. All beds with mosquito netting. Living room and dining room are shared by all 7 guests in the house. Breakfast served at house. Other meals can be obtained at the guest house for a cost of 3,500 shilling or at a variety of sites in the hospital.

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Cost (all per night with breakfast): 30,000 for single; 45,000 for double.
Contact person: Sarah 071700631

Red Chilli Hideaway: Located in the neighborhood of Bugolobi in the southeastern part of Kampala. Within 10 minute walk to Reach Out program site, 2 taxi stop commute to Mulago Hospital taking about 30-40 minutes. Several options for housing, including camping, dormitories, single rooms, double rooms, or self-contained cottages. Mosquito netting supplied for all but the dormitories and tents. Shared bathrooms and showers for all but self-contained cottages. Central building where most guests congregate has couches, tables, games, puzzles, and books. Kitchen serves 3 meals a day from a menu serving both Ugandan and Western food. Water/beer/juices/snacks are available all day and evening. Outdoor seating with tables and chairs. Hand-wash or machine-wash laundry available. The managers will store airline tickets and other valuables, and you can leave your stuff locked up in a storage area if you head out of town for overnight excursions. Very friendly and accommodating staff.

Cost (all per night with 10% discount if staying for a month or more): Camping 6,000; dormitory 7,000; private room with 2 single beds 13,000; private room with one king bed 16,000; self-contained cottage 25,000.

Contact person: Steve/Debbie chilli@infocom.co.ug www.redchillihideaway.com
077509150/077502306 (land line and FAX: 041223903)
PO Box 40288 Nakawa, Kampala, Uganda

Kateregga House: Located within Hospice grounds 5 km southwest of downtown Kampala in Makindye neighborhood. Short taxi ride to Nsambya Hospital, 2 taxi commute to Mulago taking about 30-40 minutes. Single or double rooms, laundry service, lounge with TV.

Cost (all per night): Single 12,000; single with breakfast 15,000; single with breakfast and dinner 20,000; single with all meals 23,000

Contact info: hospiceu@africaonline.co.ug (land lines: 041266867/041269445
Hospice Africa-Uganda PO Box 7757 Kampala, Uganda

Nsambya Hospital: Located on Nsambya Hospital grounds. Appropriate for those individuals wanting to include this hospital as part of their experience. Single rooms in same area where other hospital staff stay. Food typical of Uganda can be obtained at hospital cafeteria.

Cost: free if a majority of your time is spent working at Nsambya Hospital.

Contact person: Contact Dr. Silver Bahendeka at bahendeka@yahoo.com or 077409643 and ask for more information.

Blue Mango: Located in Bukoto neighborhood in northeastern part of Kampala. A 10 minute taxi ride to Mulago Hospital. As the most luxurious option on this list, you can stay in singles, doubles, or self-contained cottages with private or shared bathrooms. Mosquito netting provided. Restaurant, bar, reading areas, gift shop, and swimming pool all available. Near Kabira Club which is a work-out/country club.

Cost (per night per person in dollars. 10% discount if staying for a month or more): private room with two single beds \$20, private room with one queen size bed \$25, single

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with bathroom and breakfast \$45, double with bathroom and breakfast \$60, single self contained cottage with breakfast \$65, double self-contained cottage with breakfast \$80. Contact person: Christine 041543481.

FOOD:

Kampala has wonderful cosmopolitan restaurants and some of the best Indian restaurants outside of India. Most people will find they will actually gain weight in Kampala with all the rich food and carbohydrate-heavy traditional Ugandan food. Kenyan fast food chains are gaining popularity in Kampala. For all those who may miss American fast food, you can still get a burger and fries, fried chicken, and pizza. Upcountry food options will be much more basic and will mostly consist of Ugandan staples of rice, mataoke (plantains), cassava, sweet potatoes, and beans or stew. Wonderful tropical fruit is everywhere bananas, pawpaw (local papaya), watermelon, mangos, passion fruit, and jackfruit.

TRANSPORTATION:

Moving around the city of Kampala and into other parts of the country is easy once you are familiar with the system. When in doubt, you can always ask, as the Ugandans are more than willing to help. Things can get a bit nerve-wracking, as seatbelts are rare, traffic can be heavy, and the drivers are aggressive, but with time you either get used to it or you simply keep your eyes closed!

In Kampala: The best map available is the Macmillian map of Uganda and Kampala for 8000 Ush. It is available at Aristoc bookstore on Kampala Rd. in the City Centre and Garden City Mall.

Walking during the day is generally safe in most areas and is often a pleasant way to strike up conversations or see the various sites of Kampala. Be aware that the cars drive on the opposite side of the road than they do here in the United States, so look right when crossing the street.

Taxis, or matatus, are the most frequently used modes of transport and are the public transportation system. They are easily recognized at the white Toyota mini-vans with the checkered blue stripes on the side. Most work in and out of the Old Taxi Park but some go to the New Taxi Park a few blocks away. Standing on the hill overlooking the Old Taxi Park can be quite overwhelming, as there are hundreds of taxis and few have any signs indicating where they are going. You'll find your ride easily though if you enter into the park and start asking any of the drivers where to go to find your ride. Most taxis will not leave until all 14 seats are filled, but this usually happens quite quickly (5-20 minutes). Payment occurs during the ride or once you get out and is somewhat variable in price. Either ask the "conductor" (the one taking money and opening/closing the door) how much it costs or ask any of the passengers. Most conductors are honest about the price, but be aware that some may try to charge you more if you are a foreigner or "mzungu". When you want to exit the taxi, simply say "stage" or "masao" (Luganda for stop) and they will stop to let you out. To summon a taxi when you're not in the park, stick out your arm and wave your fingers and they will stop to pick you up pretty much

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anywhere. There are few designated bus stops. Most cost 200-600 shilling, depending on the destination.

Boda-bodas are scooters that will give you a ride on the back seat to any place in the city. In some cities they are bicycles. Negotiate a price before getting a ride. Most cost 500-1000 shilling. Since there are no helmets and the boda-bodas mingle with the rest of the traffic where there are few stop signs or traffic lights, caution about the safety of this mode of transportation is advised. You will see many accidents in Kampala involving bodas especially when the roads are wet. Also for women, be especially careful at night.

Specials are like our taxis in the United States. They are recognized as the (usually) white 4-door sedans with the black checkered stripes on the side. It is important that you negotiate a price before you get in the vehicle. Some bargaining is expected. Most rides cost 3,000 to 6,000 shilling, depending on where you are going. It is recommended that you use this mode of transport late at night or if you are in a hurry. Once you take a special taxi or hire, often the driver will offer you his personal mobile number. If the driver is safe and reliable, I recommend taking his number to call him when you need a ride. Recently the first metered yellow taxi service has been established in Kampala. They are easily recognized as “yellow taxis” similar to the one in the US. They actually tend to cost more on meter, but they are convenient and reliable as they are reachable on radio by just dialing “145” from your mobile phone.

Outside Kampala: To travel “upcountry” or to other towns, you need to be aware that distances on the map do not always correlate with expected travel time. Waiting for busses to fill, driving around potholes, fixing broken vehicles, loading and unloading passengers and animals, and other unexpected delays require you to be patient. A few words of advice: Use the bathroom before entering, as most have no bathroom options. You might be able to ask the driver to stop alongside the road if you’re desperate by telling him you need to do “short call” (you need to urinate). It’s also advisable to take a bit of water and snack food, as you can get thirsty and hungry if the rides last several hours. Using the local transport system, though, is a great way to see the country and you’re guaranteed to have an adventure!

The Post Bus: The postal system delivers the mail to others towns in Uganda on an almost daily basis and allows passengers to ride on its buses which are painted bright red. They travel only certain routes mainly long distance to Gulu, Lira, Fort Portal, Hoima, Mbale, Kabarole. To get a seat, arrive at the main post office in Kampala by 7:30am to buy a ticket. Most buses leave at 8 am. Many Ugandans and visitors consider this one of the most comfortable and safe modes of transport, although not always the most efficient. To return to Kampala, you need to ask at the local postal office what time the bus leaves, as it is sometimes quite early in the morning.

Buses: Most leave from the bus park and have listed departure times, although they will almost always wait until the seats are full before leaving. Travel times can be quite variable. In some cases you may want to buy your ticket ahead of time although that is

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rarely an option. Long distance bus companies such as Scandanavia Express offer advance tickets.

Taxis or matatus: Just like within Kampala (see above), these vehicles fill with 14 passengers and will drop off and pick-up passengers along the way. For areas outside the city, most will leave from the New or Old Taxi Park. You'll need to ask which taxi goes to a specific destination once you get to the park. These are convenient for short trips outside Kampala such as Jinga or Entebbe.

Private vehicle: You can arrange to hire a private vehicle with or without a driver for trips. If you need a driver, this is most easily done through a hotel or tour agency. While much more expensive than public transport, this might be the best option if you have a group of people, want to get to isolated areas, or want to make specific stops along the way. For some national parks, this is really the only way to travel, as public vehicles rarely enter the area. Most drivers are quite knowledgeable about Uganda and will entertain you with facts and stories. See the section on tours.

SAFETY

Theft: Pickpocketing does occur, especially in crowded markets and on buses. Try to leave valuables and larger sums of money in a safe place where you're staying. Carry enough cash to get you through the day, and keep small amounts of it in an easily accessible area so that you don't have to open your money belt each time. Upon changing money at a bank or exchange center, put all of your money away before leaving the building and do not linger around the entrance to plan your next adventure. You should pick housing options both in Kampala and on your travels that are in a secured environment. We have listed several housing options that would be appropriate for Kampala.

Night travel: While certain areas are safe at night, others are not, so ask a Ugandan whom you trust about the situation. At night you should use special hires rather than venturing through the taxi park. Careful walking at night as well as there are no street lights.

Road Accidents: Road accidents are common and there are no emergency services in most of Uganda. Be careful of boda-bodas especially after it rains and the roads are slippery. There is a new helmet law but it is just for the boda driver and not the passenger. There is also a new seat belt law but many taxis and specials do not have any. Always carry identification, emergency contact information, and medical insurance in case of an accident.

Women Travelers: Women travelers always require special caution. However, Uganda is in general safe for women travelers. In general, most women will be able to walk around alone without harassment. Always take precautions at night and it is best to hire taxi drivers that you know.

WEEKEND TRIPS/TOURS:

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A local publication called **The Eye** is published every two months and is a wonderful guide to events, entertainment, shopping, and attractions in Uganda. It is available at most hotels or guesthouses.

Some quick trips from Kampala or weekend sites:

Ngamba Island: (Chimpanzee Island). This is an island forest reserve run by the Uganda Wildlife Association (UWA) and the Jane Goodall Foundation for the rehabilitation and care of chimpanzees abducted from the wild by poachers. There are about 37 chimpanzees cared for on the island in the middle of Lake Victoria. It is a nice day trip. It is very educational and a nice opportunity to see the chimpanzees up close. A 90 minute boat ride through Lake Victoria leaving from Entebbe is required to reach the island and costs \$US30.

Entebbe: Only about a 45 minute matatu ride from Kampala that costs about 1,500 Ush. A quiet town on the shore of Lake Victoria that is the starting point for the trip to Ngamba Island, Botanical Gardens, and the Entebbe Zoo.

Jinja: Jinja is the second largest town in Uganda and has the attraction of having plenty of activity while still maintaining a small-town feel. Near Jinja you can visit the actual “Source of the Nile” and Bujagali Falls. Jinja has also become the site for adventure and adrenaline activities from Grade 5 white water rafting, bungee jumping, and All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) riding. The Source Café in Jinja packages has some of the best premium coffee (Kiira Kawa) in Uganda.

Rafting the River Nile: If you haven’t gotten enough of an adrenaline rush from the being in a taxi in Kampala, this is the perfect activity for a day. Both Adrift and Explorers Rafting run raft trips daily. Adrift has a package deal for about \$100 that includes transport to and from Kampala, an all-day rafting trip, and food and drinks for the day. There are also half-day options from both companies. Several of the rapids are Class V and quite exciting. You’re almost guaranteed to flip over at least once and you won’t forget that rush as the river roars through your ears. Luckily the water is warm and there are “rescue kayakers” who will help you back into your raft if they recognize the look of terror on your face after flipping. Life vests and helmets are required and provided. People in your raft will be from all over the world which further enhances the enjoyment of the trip. For the kayak fans, there are options to rent kayaks from the companies and try some of the rapids if your skills are adequate.

To make a weekend out of this adventure, consider staying at Speke Camp which overlooks an area of the Nile near Lake Victoria where the river splits and joins up again in 7 sections. You can camp there or stay in huts, and food is served overlooking the rapids below. It’s a splendid setting!

Murchison Falls Conservation Area: This park is located in the northwestern part of Uganda and is best reached via a tour group or a hired driver, as there is not much public transport available. Here you can go on game drives, Nile boat trips, and forest walks.

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You may see lions, giraffes, elephants, and a variety of antelope during your game drive, as well as innumerable glorious bird species. Bring binoculars! On the boat trip leaving from Paraa, you will travel up river to the base of Murchison Falls while passing hippos grazing in the water and crocodiles sunning themselves. Without question, be sure you drive to the top of Murchison Falls where you'll witness the spectacular site of the Nile rushing through a narrow gorge and cascading to the quiet water below as it continues its journey to Egypt.

There are a number of accommodation styles available in the park, from tents to bandas without electricity to luxury safari hotels. Reservations are wise during high season. Three day excursions are the most common. Many tour groups will make groups of 6-7 if you are an individual traveller. A popular tour group for Murchison trips is the Red Chilli Hideaway 077509150 and costs about \$US130 for an all inclusive 3 day trip including accommodations, transport, guide and park fees.

Sipi Falls/Mount Elgon Forest Exploration Center: Sipi Falls is probably the most commonly photographed place in the country. It lies near the base of Mt. Elgon, a peak of 4321 meters. You can arrange to stay at *Crow's Nest* or *Moses Campsite* where you have a view of the falls and can sleep in small huts with beds. Each place has a small outdoor restaurant that serves three meals a day. From there you can arrange guided hikes to caves, several waterfalls, local communities, or to the park boundary.

At the park boundary, you can stay at the Exploration Center which has areas for camping as well as dormitory housing and self-contained huts. This can serve as your base for climbing Mt. Elgon which requires a guide and takes 4-5 days. Alternatively you can explore the tropical forest for a few hours with one of the rangers based at the center.

To get to Sipi Falls, you can take a bus or taxi to Mbale, from which you can catch another vehicle to Sipi Falls. Tell the driver that you want to get off at the falls, as this is not necessarily a regular stop. You can hike to the Exploration Center with the help of a guide or catch a ride, but be warned that there are not vehicles that commonly travel to the park boundary so start your journey earlier in the day.

Kibale National Park: This park forest lies 36 km from Fort Portal on the western side of Uganda. Here you can track the chimpanzees and see them in their natural habitat. You'll also be able to view the magnificent plant and birdlife of this area. To get to the park, take a taxi or bus to Fort Portal. Just before entering the town as you're heading up a hill, you'll see an area where several taxis are gathered. This is where you can hitch a ride to the Kanyanchu Tourist Center. The vehicles leave when they are full, so early day travel is again advised to avoid arriving in the dark.

Accommodations are available at the center and include camping options and treehouses as well as wonderful bandas complete with the delivery of warm and cool water containers for outdoor sponge baths. Be advised that during busy weekends or holiday seasons, the tourist center can fill up, so call in advance for reservations. Food can be ordered from the Women's Group Canteen which is located within the compound.

From the center you can arrange to go on primate walks. While not guaranteed to see the chimps, the chances are good, as the guides are skilled at tracking them. They can

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also teach you about all aspects of the wildlife around you. Ask about other hikes and nature activities and be sure to check out the small museum they have there.

A few miles away is the town of Bigodi where you arrange a swamp walk with one of the guides for a few hours at the Bidodi Wetland Sanctuary. The guides are quite adept at recognizing birds, including the famous Great Blue Turaco, and you will likely see the colobus monkeys and other mammals. Proceeds from the tours benefit the Kibale Association for Rural Development.

Lake Nkuruba: Like Kibale National Park, this lake is located to the west of Fort Portal. A few mzungus run the place which is complete with hammocks, quiet places for reading and relaxing, and breathtaking views of the valleys below. Short hikes will take you to small villages for a bit of local flavor. The highlight, though, is the lake which is free of schistosomiasis (or at least that's what you're told), and there's nothing quite like swimming in a cool lake on a steamy Ugandan day with eagles soaring overhead. If you tell a taxi driver that you want to go to Lake Nkuruba, they'll know where to drop you off.

Other trips: There are many other options to explore. In addition to multiple parks in Uganda, there are those in neighboring Kenya and Tanzania. We hope you'll add to the list of places upon you return.]

A few tips about traveling:

- National parks: There are entrance fees which can be paid upon entering the park with either Uganda shilling or US dollars. A vehicle fee will also be requested. A four-wheel drive is essential, as roads can be muddy with large holes. Gorilla tracking in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest that borders Uganda/Congo/Rwanda and made famous by Jane Goodall's *Gorillas in the Mist* is probably one of the most famous tourist attraction in Uganda. However, it is very expensive and requires advance planning as gorilla permits are limited.
- Schedules: Keep in mind that transportation can be unpredictable and flexibility in your travel plans is essential. Do not, for example, plan on returning from an excursion a few hours before your flight back home is scheduled to leave. Certainly some of the best moments can come from serendipitous occurrences, so be patient and creative. All sorts of adventures await you and the Ugandans are generally eager to help you.

BOOKS OF INTEREST

Aristoc Bookstore in Kampala has the largest selection of books. There are two locations on Kampala Road in city center and at the Garden City Mall. They carry many of the following list of books as well as maps and local language dictionaries or guides.

UGANDA

Travel Guides

Footprints Guide to Uganda
Brandt Guide to Uganda

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Fiction

Uganda Writers:

Abyssinian Chronicles by Moses Isegawa

Tropical Fish: Stories out of Entebbe by Doreen Baigana

Song of Lawino by Okot p'Bitek.

Uganda Subject/History:

Last King of Scotland by Giles Foden. The story of a Scottish doctor who was the personal physician to Idi Amin. Currently being made into a Hollywood movie filming in Kampala.

Non-Fiction

Aboke Girls: Children Abducted in northern Uganda by Els de Temmerman

Uganda: Tarnished Pearl of Africa by Thomas P. Ofansky

Uganda: The Scars of Death: Children Abducted by the Lords Resistance Army – Human Rights Watch September 1997

Against All Odds: Promoting the Protection and Capacity of Ugandan and Sudanese Adolescents in Northern Uganda: Surviving the War on Adolescents - Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children September 2001

EAST AFRICA

Fiction

Dark Star Safari by Paul Theroux. This famous American travel writer actually taught at Makerere University in Kampala for many years.

White Nile by Alan Moorehead. Popular novel about the exploration of the Nile

Emma's War by Deborah Scroggins. Popular contemporary novel about a British aide worker in Sudan

Zanzibar Chest by Aiden Hartley. Popular contemporary novel about a western journalist born and raised in East Africa.

The Book of Secrets by MG Vassanji. Story of the Indian experience in East Africa by a writer of Southeast Asian descent born and raised in Kenya and Tanzania.

Green Hills of Africa by Ernest Hemingway. Classic Hemingway story of big game hunting in East Africa

The Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad. Classic novel based on the Belgian colonialization of the Congo

A Bend in the River by VS Naipul. Nobel laureate who spent time in Uganda at Makerere University and was friends Paul Theroux. He writes of the experience of Indians living in East Africa.

FINAL COMMENTS

We hope you'll have a wonderful time in Uganda! Each person will have a unique experience, so please add to this guide upon your return so that others may benefit from your expertise. While the wildlife and landscape are breathtaking, we suspect you'll

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particularly enjoy the Ugandan people. They are known as some of the friendliest people in Africa and you'll quickly see why. May you leave something of yourself in Uganda and come back enriched with many memories.