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Uganda & Rwanda - *The Green Pearls of Africa*

The thought of opening an oyster and finding a pearl is in itself an enchanting scenario. Real pearls are hard to come by, so traveling to Uganda and Rwanda feels like stepping into a hidden treasure trove. Because both countries are blessed with some of the most unique nature, the most exceptional wildlife experiences, and the friendliest people to be found in Africa.



Uganda is rightly called the "Pearl of Africa", because the country is a cornucopia of impressive natural experiences with its mountainous terrain, lush vegetation, dense rainforests, and vast savannah. Even seasoned Africa travellers must surrender to the country's natural beauty, diverse wildlife, and welcoming people.

Rwanda is rightly called "The Land of a Thousand Hills", because the scenic country is both lush and hilly. The country has only emerged as a travel destination in recent years and is therefore almost completely unspoiled in terms of tourism.

At the top of the list in terms of animals are the mountain gorillas, who today only live in the border area around Uganda, Rwanda, and the Congo. The meeting with our closest relatives in the animal kingdom is both an incomparable and emotional experience, which really cannot be described - it has to be experienced.

Evergreen Escape has tailormade a 14-day combined culture and safari trip, which gives you the opportunity to experience a string of natural scenery, magnificent animal experiences, and meet the local people on their terms, far from classic tourism. In short, a journey that gives you the opportunity to experience a real African adventure up close.

***Sightseeing in Kampala - cooking class Ugandan Style - Sightseeing in Kigali
Encounter with the Twa-tribe - Encounter with local fishermen in Lake Kivu
Chimpanzee trekking in the rainforest - Mountain gorilla tracking***

A true treat of a journey named: **Uganda & Rwanda - The Green Pearls of Africa**

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The journey begins in Entebbe, where we walk around the botanical garden used in the Tarzan films.

In Kampala we get an experience out of the ordinary when we go on a cooking course to learn how to cook traditional Ugandan food.

In Kigali, we must take a step back in time and gain a greater understanding of the terrible genocide that took place in the country in 1994. It is both a powerful and tearful experience.

It will be different uplifting when we go chimpanzee trekking in Kibale Forest and enjoy the sight of chimpanzees swinging in trees, playing with each other, and eating.

We will go on a game drive in the beautiful Queen Elizabeth National Park, and sail in the Kazinga Channel, where we will experience elephants, buffaloes, and a rich bird life on the banks.

We are going canoeing on one of the most beautiful lakes in the world - Lake Bunyonyi.

One of the greatest experiences of the trip is when we go gorilla tracking, and hike through real Central African jungle to come face to face with our closest relatives in the animal kingdom.

But no journey to the African continent is complete before we meet the locals on their terms, and get an insight into life at these latitudes:

Therefore, in Kampala we must go out and experience how the local people live. We must, among other things, visiting the country's largest slum area, which is characterized by hope and the belief in a better life, and visiting markets that sell everything the heart desires.

On the edge of the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, we will visit the local Twa tribe and gain a closer insight into their lives, which are lived in harmony with the rainforest. As a completely unique experience, we will meet a witch doctor and hear more about his supernatural abilities.

In Rwanda, we will visit a local fishing village at Lake Kivu, and get an insight into an industry that is probably global, but where fishing is completely unique to this area.

These are travel experiences you will never forget, and which you will talk about again and again for the rest of your life.



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Itinerary for Uganda & Rwanda - *The Green Pearls of Africa*

Day 1: Arrival to Entebbe

Entebbe is a beautiful little oasis on a green peninsula surrounded by Africa's largest lake, Lake Victoria. The city was the seat of government of the British Protectorate until independence in 1962. It houses Uganda's largest airport, which became world famous for Israel's dramatic rescue of more than 100 hostages captured by a Palestinian resistance group in 1976.

State House, the official residence of the country's President Yoweri Museveni, is located on a hill overlooking the centre of the city. The house has undergone a thorough renovation and has also been extended, so that today it is 17,472 m², which makes it easy to see when we drive from the airport. The city is also home to the United Nations, which has its base with various vehicles and equipment for its peacekeeping and other missions in the Central African region.

When you have made it through passport control at the airport, your Danish tour guide and local tour guides/drivers are ready to welcome you. Together we drive to our hotel, where there will be an opportunity to have a refreshing shower before we get ready for the first highlight of the journey.

We are going to visit the botanical garden and enjoy the park's wonderful animal and plant life. The park was established back in 1898 and is literally right in the middle of the Equator. The garden is divided into different zones, including a rainforest zone. The rainforest was used as a backdrop for several of the scenes with Johnny Weissmüller as Tarzan in the 1940s. In addition to trying your hand at the art of swinging in a creeper and letting out the characteristic Tarzan roar, there are good opportunities to see different mares, such as black-and-white Colobus monkeys, and several different bird species.



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If desired, a boat trip to Mabamba Bay Wetland can be arranged. The marsh area is home to more than 250 species of birds, including the rare and mysterious-looking wooden shoebill. It has a body length of 150 cm and a wingspan of well over 2.5 meters, making it one of the world's largest birds.

Its name comes from the very distinctive bill, which is very broad, hard, sharp and wooden-like. Its hunting technique is peculiar and distinctive, as it hunts by standing completely still and staring into the water while waiting for its prey to surface. When it sees the prey, it plunges its head into the prey with all its might and uses the pointed tip of its beak to impale the fish. This is probably the most important reason why it lives in swampy areas, as such a hunting technique would otherwise cause severe headaches on the mainland. The trip must be booked well in advance of departure.



We spend the night at the 3-star hotel Sunset Guest House, which is a charming building in old colonial style with a beautiful garden.

Accommodation: Sunset Guest House (<https://www.sunsetentebbe.com/>)

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Day 2: Entebbe - Kampala
(Distance: Approx. 65 kilometre)

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After a wonderful night's sleep, we continue the journey to the country's lively capital, Kampala, with a population of 3.3 million people. Historically, it was the capital of the Kingdom of Buganda built on 7 mounds. In line with the ongoing development, the capital now spreads over more than 20 hills, and is still growing. The city is dynamic and engaging, and today we are going out to experience it up close.

We begin today's sightseeing by visiting the Gaddafi Mosque. With numerous ornamented arches and copper domes, the mosque dominates Old Kampala Hill. The mosque was completed in 2006 and can accommodate up to 15,000 worshippers. Outside of prayer time, it is possible to climb the 304 steps to the top of the minaret and enjoy the spectacular view of the city.



From there, we go out to experience how ordinary Ugandans live and breathe when we go out to visit the city's largest slum area, Katwe. It is an area that has typically been characterized as a centre of African ingenuity - where artisans make woodwork and craftsmen repair all manner of electronic devices. The district has undergone improvements over the years as new infrastructure has come up.

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And then the district is also known for the story of Phiona Mutesi. Phiona was born and raised in Katwe. When she was 3 years old, her father died of AIDS, and soon after, her older sister died. She dropped out of school when her mother couldn't pay for her schooling, and instead she and her brother sold corn on the street. One day they meet a missionary who, among other things, teaches the children to play chess. Phiona quickly becomes a skilled chess player and participates at the age of only 10 in major international chess tournaments. Her story was made into a movie by Disney in 2016 under the title Queen of Katwe.



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The story brilliantly portrays that despite the economic and social challenges, it is also a slum area characterized by hope, where people can flourish against all odds.

We continue to the lively Owino Market, the city's largest open market. The market opened in 1971 and it is estimated that there are 50,000 traders, 70% of whom are women. The Owino market is particularly known for its sale of second-hand clothes, but everything from spices to household appliances can be bought. It can be quite a chaotic experience to move around among all the stalls, but it gives us a fantastic insight into the life of ordinary Ugandans.



After lunch we go out and experience the colourful Nakasero Market, where all kinds of fresh produce are sold - eggs, fish, chickens, fruit and vegetables of all sizes and shades.

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We end today's sightseeing by visiting the Bahá'í Temple, which was built in the years 1958-1961. The temple is home to the Bahá'í believers, who are the newest of the independent world religions. It is a monotheistic religion founded in 1863 and has its own holy scriptures. Central to the religion is that the earth is one country, and humanity its inhabitants.



The day and evening will end in style when we witness traditional dance and music performed by the Ndere troupe. They are composed of members from various ethnic groups and have achieved international recognition on their world tours.



We spend the night at the 3-star hotel Prestige Hotel Suites, which is centrally located in the city right next to the Danish embassy.

Accommodation: Prestige Hotel Suites (<https://www.prestigehotelsuites.com/>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 3: Kampala - Kibale Forest National Park
(Distance: Approx. 350 kilometre)

After a wonderful morning meal, it's time to get out and have some very special and unique experiences.



We start the morning by visiting the disability project in Ggaba. Many disabled children live in the Ggaba area, where the project is located. Children who do not go outside the home, both because there is no money for it and because disabled people are looked down upon in Uganda. It is often the case that the children are hidden away inside the house and in the worst case in "dog houses", and are not treated properly, either physically or psychologically. Many of them are left to fend for themselves. In general, parents prioritize disabled children and therefore do not support them financially either. However, this prioritization must not go beyond the children and on the basis of this, the project was born. Since 2015, the project has brought together disabled children and young people to play, get lessons and do other activities. There are associated approx. 20 children with various physical and mental disabilities, ranging from hearing impaired to spastics. We see and hear more about the project and greet all the children.

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After a memorable visit, there is time for another unique experience when we go on a cooking course - Ugandan Style. Food is a very important part of the culture of most countries, and this also applies to Uganda. That's why we're going out to try our hand at Ugandan cuisine and have an experience that very few tourists get to experience.

Ugandan cuisine varies slightly depending on where in the country you are, but most meals consist of a significant amount of carbohydrates accompanied by a protein-based sauce. Meat and large quantities of vegetables are rarely eaten, as it is simply too expensive.

There is a large selection of stable carbohydrates in the form of rice, pasta, potatoes, and sweet potatoes. In addition, matoke (or plantains) is the main ingredient in most Ugandans' food, as it both tastes good and fills you up for a long time. Matoke can be boiled, steamed, fried, and roasted. In addition, posho is also very popular. It is corn-starch that is boiled with water to a firm sticky consistency, which is used to soak up e.g., peanut sauce.

Under expert guidance, we learn to cook classic Ugandan food, which we then eat for lunch. With our visit, we help support the library, where our cooking course takes place.



After a delicious home-cooked lunch, it's time to continue the journey west to Kibale Forest National Park. We have 2 nights in small, charming cabins at Turaco Treetops Lodge with a scenic view of the forest and wildlife.

Accommodation: Turaco Treetops Lodge (<https://www.turacotreetops.com>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 4: Kibale Forest National Park

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After a wonderful night's sleep, it's time to get out and have an adventurous animal experience when we go out with a ranger to look for chimpanzees in Kibale Forest National Park. The forest is 766 km² and lies at an altitude of 1100-1600 meters in the north-east corner of the Queen Elizabeth National Park. Between the 2 parks there is a 180 km long protected corridor which the wild animals use as a passage.

Kibale Forest is one of the few places in the world where we can still experience chimpanzees in the wild. The tropical forest is home to approx. 1500 chimpanzees and 12 other primates, including the black-and-white Colobus monkey, the red-tailed monkey and the white-cheeked Managbey. The chimpanzee is, together with the gorilla, man's closest relative, with whom we share 98-99% of our genes.



The adult chimpanzees can be up to 160 cm tall and weigh up to 70 kg. Despite their smaller height and girth compared to humans, they are many times stronger than us. The chimpanzee's body is covered in black-brown hair, but the face, fingers, palms, toes, and soles are hairless. Like humans, the chimpanzee has opposable thumbs. However, its big toe is also opposite, so it can grip much better with its toes.

The chimpanzees live in large family groups with up to 150 members, but most often they stay together in somewhat smaller groups. They move both on the ground and in the trees. Mostly they walk on four legs, but over shorter distances they can move on two legs.

Their food mainly consists of leaves, fruits, seeds, and nuts, but is supplemented by insects and fallen prey. Chimpanzees can hunt and kill leopard cubs, other monkeys, and even chimpanzees from other family groups. In hunting for insects, chimpanzees demonstrate a formidable ability to make tools. An ability that, in terms of definition, was long reserved for humans as one of the

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basic traits that separated us from the animals. They can shape small branches to act as fishing rods, perfect for poking into the holes in a termite nest and fishing the termites out with.



On our trip around the forest, our ranger will tell us about the flora and fauna and how the chimpanzees live in the dense rainforest. The rainforest is home to a number of other large animals, including the forest elephant, which is smaller than the better-known savannah elephant, its tusks are straight and point downwards, unlike the savannah elephant's curved tusks, and so it has rounder ears, where the savannah elephants are more pointed.

For those interested in botany, the rainforest is a pure mecca, as it has an overwhelming variety of large and interesting trees, of which the giant fig trees are particularly impressive and attract many birds and monkeys. The chimpanzees especially love the ripe figs.

Together with our ranger, we will move in smaller groups and enjoy the sight of the chimpanzees swinging in the trees, playing with each other, and eating their food. We will probably hear them long before we see them, as they make a lot of noise and scream as part of their communication. But when we first see them, it almost makes one's heart sit up in one's throat with just bewilderment. Because the meeting with the chimpanzees is both a unique and a thoroughly fantastic experience.

We say goodbye to the chimpanzees and move out of the rainforest to drive back to our lodge to have our lunch and relax a bit.

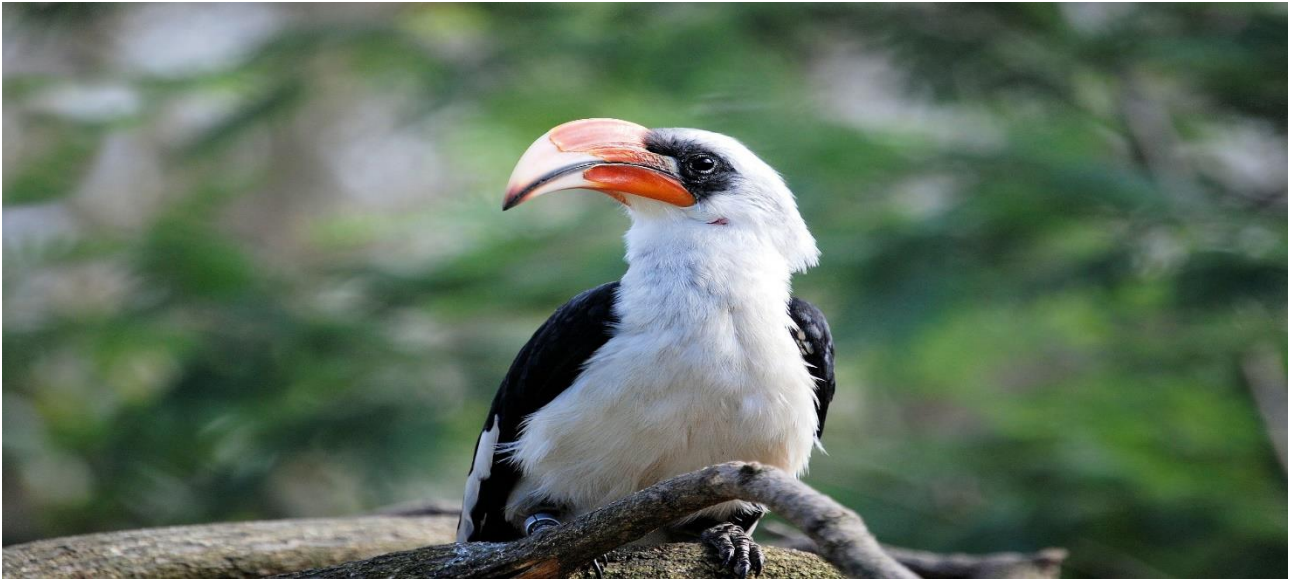
In the afternoon we will go hiking in the fascinating Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary, located in the Magombe Swamp. The area is known for a wide range of biological diversity, including baboons and mares, and the rare Sitatunga antelope.

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For bird enthusiasts, the area is a true paradise, as the swamps are home to more than 200 species of birds, including the blue turaco, hornbills, kingfishers, and weaver birds.



The wetland area is a very good example of a community-based approach to managing natural resources, which is also of economic benefit to the local people. With our visit, we help secure financial support for the local school, salaries for the schoolteachers and water for the village.

After a few hours of leisurely hiking, it's time to return to our cabins and enjoy a sundowner while we compare photos from the day's animal experiences.

Accommodation: Turaco Treetops Lodge (<https://www.turacotreetops.com>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 5: Kibale Forest National Park - Queen Elizabeth National Park
(Distance: Approx. 120 kilometre)

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After breakfast we leave Kibale and drive south along the Rwenzori Mountains or Moon Mountains, located in the border area between Uganda and Congo. Several of the mountains are quite high - 6 of them are over 4,600 meters high, of which Mount Stanley with its 5,110 meters is Africa's 3rd highest mountain.

When the Greek scientist Ptolemy drew his famous world map around the year 150, he placed a colossal mountain in the middle of Africa and described it as "the Mountain of the Moon, which with its snow feeds the source lakes of the Nile". The description and location are astonishingly correct with the geographical knowledge of the time, and although Rwenzori is drawn on recent maps throughout history, none of them indicate its position as accurately as the one made by Ptolemy. As the centuries passed, the Moon Mountains were regarded as something more or less unreal, and the thought of snow-covered mountains right down at the Equator perhaps also seemed slightly strange.

Even when the voyages of discovery in Africa began, the Rwenzori remained a mystery for a long time. In 1864 Baker penetrated along the Nile to Lake Albert, and in 1876 Stanley reached Lake Edward from the east - but neither of them discovered that between these 2 lakes rose a mountain range over 5,000 meters high, 150 kilometres long and 50 kilometres wide width. The explanation is that Rwenzori is almost always hidden in fog. In the language of the local natives, Rwenzori actually means "mist king" or "accountant". Only in 1888, when Stanley was at Lake Albert for the second time, were they discovered, and it happened by pure chance. When Stanley, after a month's stay, broke out from the west shore of Lake Albert, he was alerted by one of the natives to a peculiar phenomenon on the horizon—"a mountain of salt," as they called it. The enigmatic moon mountains were thus discovered by people outside Africa.



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On today's journey we pass several small villages and tea plantations. We stop at one of them and learn a little more about the process from picking the leaves to sitting and enjoying a cup of tasty tea at home on the sofa. We see the bushes and hear more about the cultivation and picking. From there we continue to the factory, where we hear more about the processing process from the leaves being picked to being exported.



We pass the Equator on the way, where it becomes possible to take pictures lying down, standing upside down or with one leg on either side of the line that separates the northern and southern hemispheres.



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In the afternoon we will go on a game drive in the Queen Elizabeth National Park. The park was established in 1952 and was originally called Kazinga National Park but changed its name after Queen Elizabeth II visited the country in 1954. The park is 1,978 km² and is home to as many as 95 mammals and over 600 different bird species. The nature in the park is very varied with its open savannah, dense thickets, and lake shores, which provides fertile ground for many different animals including buffalo, elephants, hyenas, leopards, lions, warthogs, zebras and the beautiful endemic Ugandan kob.



At sunset we drive to our lodge for the next 2 nights Kasenyi Safari Camp. We stay in tents that are located with amazing views of the Queen Elizabeth National Park and Lake Bunyampka.



Accommodation: Kasenyi Safari Camp (<https://www.kasenysisafaricamp.com>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 6: Queen Elizabeth National Park

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Today we will get up early and go on a game drive when the animals are most active. Although Queen Elizabeth is the most popular park in Uganda, there are very few tourists compared to the national parks of Tanzania, South

Africa, and Kenya. So, it is a bit of a luxury to be on the first floor of the wildlife without being disturbed by others.



The park is home to 4 of the 5 animals of The Big Five - the rhinoceros, the lion, the leopard, the elephant, and the buffalo. The term dates back to the 1800s, when big game was hunted on foot. The hunters judged that these five animals were the most difficult and dangerous to kill.

The wars that raged in Uganda throughout the 1970s unfortunately led to massive poaching especially of the rhinoceros, as there was no longer anyone to protect the animals. There is a great demand for the horns in Asia, where they are used in crushed form as traditional medicine. In 1983, the rhinoceros was therefore unfortunately declared extinct. Since 2002, several measures have been taken to reintroduce the rhinoceros to the country, where, among other things, has received rhino calves from Kenya and the USA. The goal is to reintroduce the rhinoceros to the wild when their numbers reach a level where it can be safe to release them into the wild.

But regardless of which animals we encounter on today's game drive, it is always a huge experience. To sit and watch the gazelles elegantly leap through the grass. Or the large herds of zebras, where each and every one of their patterns is as unique as human fingerprints. Or the warthog, which with its upright tail almost functions as an antenna.

In the afternoon we go out to experience one of the park's absolute highlights when we go sailing on the Kazinga Channel, which divides the Queen Elizabeth National Park in 2. The 35-kilometer-long natural channel connects the 2 lakes Lake Edward and Lake George.

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The canal is home to one of the world's densest populations of hippos and Nile crocodiles. The crocodile can live to be more than 100 years old, and this exciting animal is an absolutely superb predator. Its large gape consists of 64-68 pointed teeth, and when it bites together around the prey, it does so with such violent force that the animal has no opportunity to escape. The crocodile then kills its prey by dragging it underwater until it drowns. Then it turns round and round in the water to tear chunks of meat from the prey.



In the boat, we sail very close to the shore, so that we can experience the mighty animals in their right element.

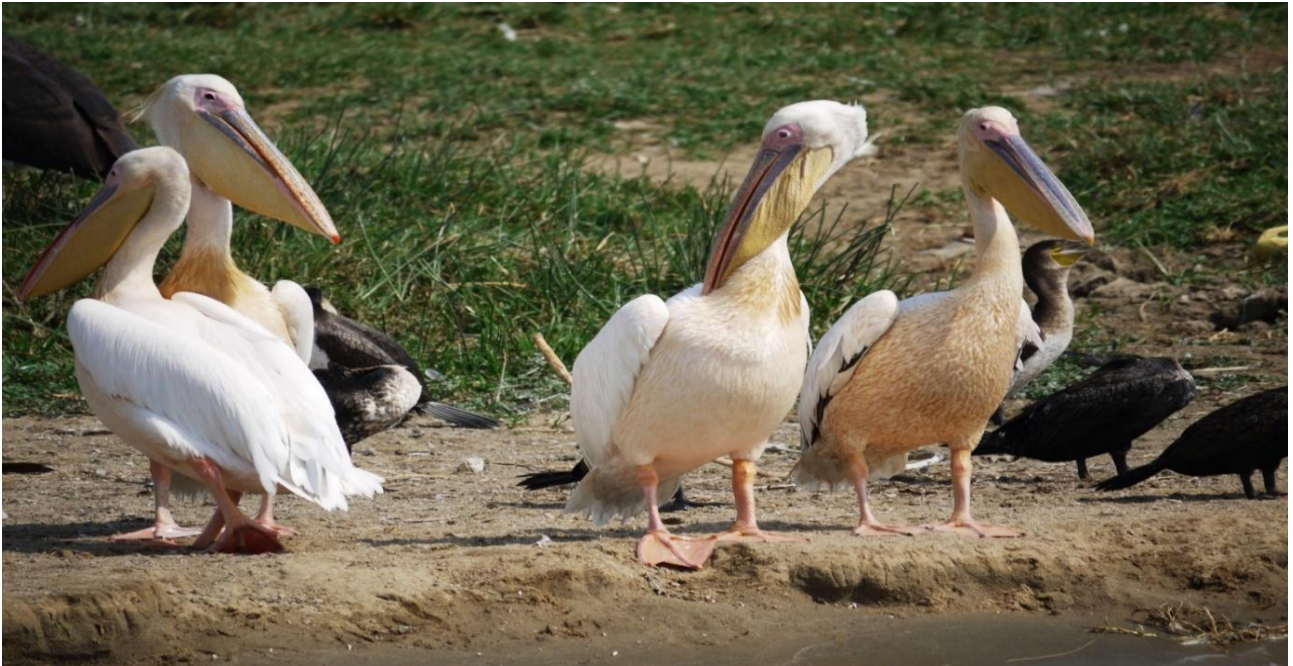


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A number of buffaloes and elephants also come down to drink and bathe. There is also an impressive birdlife with lots of herons, ibises, kingfishers, cormorants, storks, and pelicans.



After the boat trip, we go on a game drive on the way to our lodge.

Accommodation: Kasenyi Safari Camp (<https://www.kasenyisafaricamp.com>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 7: Queen Elizabeth National Park - Buhoma
(Distance: Approx. 150 kilometre)

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After a wonderful breakfast, we continue our journey south, where we will have an experience out of the ordinary. We are going to visit the Twa people who live on the edge of the rainforest. The Twa (pygmies) was called "Keepers of the Forest" because they lived in harmony with the rainforest. They lived in small huts made of leaves, branches, and grass, and dressed in the skins of the animals they killed. They hunted small game, such as monkeys, small antelopes, and wild pigs, with bow and arrow, and gathered plants and fruits in the forest.

Some anthropologists claim that the Twa have lived in the rainforest for at least 60,000 years. As forest areas were cleared to create farmland and pasture for cattle, the Twa were pushed back into smaller and smaller areas. In the late 1930s, the remaining rainforest area was declared a protected area. While this move prevented further deforestation and provided much-needed protection for the critically endangered gorillas, it removed the entire basis of the Twa's legal claim to the land they had inhabited for thousands of years. The final blow came in 1991, when the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest was established as a national park and added to the UNESCO World Heritage List, to protect the endangered mountain gorillas in their natural habitat. Forced out of the rainforest without any support or compensation, the Twa now had to survive in an unknown territory where their skills and ways of life did not fit into a modern environment.



Thus, when we visit them in their community it is not only a way to learn more about their traditional way of life, but also a way to support a people and a culture that has been almost wiped out by modern development.

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We spend time with the Twa, where we get the opportunity to walk in the rainforest and experience it and its inhabitants through the eyes of the Twa. We get to experience how to hunt with a bow and arrow. We learn how to survive in the rainforest and how every tree, thicket and bush has a meaning in traditional medicine. We are invited into their houses, and we are allowed to help make a fire. The fire is used, among other things, to smoke bees out of their nest to get hold of the sweet honey, which is an important source of energy for the Twa.

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As part of our visit, we also meet a traditional healer. In East and Central Africa there are two types of healers - one who works primarily with herbs and other forms of traditional medicine, and then the other (what we know as a witch doctor) who is believed to have supernatural powers. In that context, he is both able to bless and curse other people. The witch doctor's techniques, e.g., divination, natural medicine, and magic, make it possible to detect and combat witchcraft. A witch doctor is supposed to make positive use of his abilities but is surrounded by both respect and fear. Because his magico-religious insight and skills mean that the witch doctor is potentially a witch who can use his abilities with negative consequences.



At the end of our visit, the women and men show us their traditional dances and songs, as they have done for centuries.



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After a rare insight into a traditional tribal culture, where faith and superstition go hand in hand as a treatment method, and where we gain a closer insight into how to live and survive in nature, it is time to drive to our hotel for the night.

We spend the night at The Crested Crane Bwindi Hotel, located on a scenic grassy hill, which is a natural sanctuary for over 400 of Uganda's incredibly beautiful national birds, the crested crane.



Accommodation: The Crested Crane Bwindi Hotel (<https://www.thecrestedcranebwindi.com/>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 8: Buhoma - Lake Bunyonyi (Distance: Approx. 100 kilometre)

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After a wonderful night's sleep, it's time to drive to one of the most beautiful places in Uganda - Lake Bunyonyi. When Winston Churchill visited the area, he called it the "Switzerland of Africa". The area is dominated by terraced agriculture on the steep slopes. Bunyonyi means "place of many small birds", which it lives up to with its more than 200 bird species.

Lake Bunyonyi lies at an altitude of almost 2000 meters and has 29 larger and smaller islands. It is a smaller lake - 25 km long and 7 km wide - and is about 40 meters deep. However, some locals claim that the lake is 900 meters deep in places, and if it stands for believers, it is the second deepest lake in Africa after Lake Tanganyika.

Unlike most other lakes in East Africa, the lake is free of bilharzia (snail fever) and is home to neither crocodiles nor hippos, so it is possible to take a refreshing dip.



As it should be when you are in Lake Bunyonyi, we spend the night on one of the islands. We sail with our luggage out to Nature's Prime Lodge, which gives us a fantastic vantage point to experience the beauty of nature in a completely unique African environment. We either live in wooden cabins or tents that fit perfectly into the surroundings.

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In the afternoon we go on a canoe trip and experience life on the water's surface. We sail past Punishment Island, which got its unflattering name from a practice that was abandoned in the 1940s. Until then, the small island was used as a traditional way of punishing unmarried women who became pregnant. The women were placed on the island, where they could starve to death or drown trying to swim to the mainland. However, the women were often rescued by poor men who could not afford to pay the standard bride price and did not mind the stigma.



We put ashore at another island, where we visit a school and a hospital that treats people from the area. We sail back to our lodge for the night and while we warm ourselves by the fireplace, we hear anecdotes from the area.

Accommodation: Nature's Prime Lodge
(<https://www.supremeadventureparki.com/>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 9: Lake Bunyonyi - Kisoro (Bwindi Impenetrable Forest)
(Distance: Approx. 100 kilometre)

After a delicious breakfast to the sound of lapping waves and birdsong, it's time to sail back to the mainland and continue our journey to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in the southwest corner of Uganda, where we stay for 2 nights.

Bwindi covers an area of 331 km², lies at an altitude of 1100-2600 meters, and contains one of the richest ecosystems in Africa. It is estimated to be 25,000 years old and is thus one of the world's oldest rainforests. There are more than 160 different types of wood, including the beautiful reddish-brown African mahogany. The rainforest is home to more than 350 bird species, 220 butterfly species and 120 different mammals. And then the rainforest is also a habitat for over half of the world's remaining population of mountain gorillas, with around 600 in total. The mountain gorillas live in only 2 places in the world - in Bwindi and then in Virunga, located in the border area between Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda.



Once at our lodge, it's time to relax and prepare for tomorrow's gorilla tracking.

Accommodation: Lake Mulehe Gorilla Lodge
[\(https://www.ugandaculturallodges.com/lake-mulehe-gorilla-lodge/\)](https://www.ugandaculturallodges.com/lake-mulehe-gorilla-lodge/)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 10: Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

After an early breakfast, one of the greatest experiences of the journey awaits, when we go trekking after the mountain gorillas. We drive to the entrance to the national park, where we are registered and given a detailed briefing on the procedures regarding our encounter with the mountain gorillas. While we are being briefed, the rangers decide which mountain gorilla families we will visit. Since gorillas are not always in the same place, it can take anywhere from an hour to half a day to find them.

After the briefing, we are divided into groups of 8 people, introduced to our ranger and our porters, who take care of the backpack or other luggage, and are also given a walking stick, which is a suitable tool to have at hand when we walk through the jungle.

We tuck our trouser legs into our stockings, lace up our hiking boots and then we are otherwise ready to hike through real Central African jungle. We move through pristine forest slopes and tangled lianas. There are no paths, so occasionally our ranger hacks his way with his machete. The trip up through the jungle is beautiful, but at times also both wet and exhausting. But when we reach the mountain gorillas, we can enjoy these breath-taking apes in peace and quiet from just 7 meters away.



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“Scccchhhhyyy”... the ranger whispers and holds up a hand to stop us. We can hear some branches snapping close to us. Sweat beads down the face, but we don't care. We stand completely still, deep in the dense and humid jungle and listen. All our senses are awake, and no one dares to say anything. Some humming animal sounds reach our ears - “WRAAUU”. It's the mountain gorillas..., phew, it's still a bit VERY exciting. We are quietly getting closer and closer.

“WRAAAAUUUU” - the humming sound is there again and this time even closer. We stand almost completely paralyzed with our eyes directed straight ahead towards the clearing... there, exactly there, they are. Only a few meters from us, they are sitting and munching on the green leaves. There are 12 in that family and the big silverback - the biggest of them all - is looking directly at us...



The other gorillas circle behind him, their eyes curiously and expectantly looking in our direction. As we have been instructed, we stick closely together in the small group. We have been informed that under no circumstances must we run away, but instead stand completely still and keep our eyes on the ground if they come towards us. There we stand, close together, completely still, watching the gorillas.

A few of the females go a little away from the others, and find a place behind a tree, where they find some fresh leaves to eat. The silverback has accepted that we are there and does not pay us many glances. But there is no doubt that he can see all our movements and knows exactly what we are doing and what else is going on around him.

In a tree just above our heads, there is a young male looking down at us. He yawns a little and picks his nose, without letting us out of his sight. “The gods must know if it is actually us looking at the gorillas or if it is them looking at us”, whispers one of the groups while I take a few photos.

It's amazing how peaceful these animals seem. At first glance, it also seems as if they live a very carefree existence, alternating between eating, sleeping, finding a new place to sleep, and eating again. In the clearing, the children play with each other. One of them wants to climb and reaches for a branch. The mother tries to help by pulling down the branch so that he can get hold of it more easily, and he quickly climbs up. The mother follows right on her heels, at the same time as she releases a wind that almost sounds like a complete storm.”

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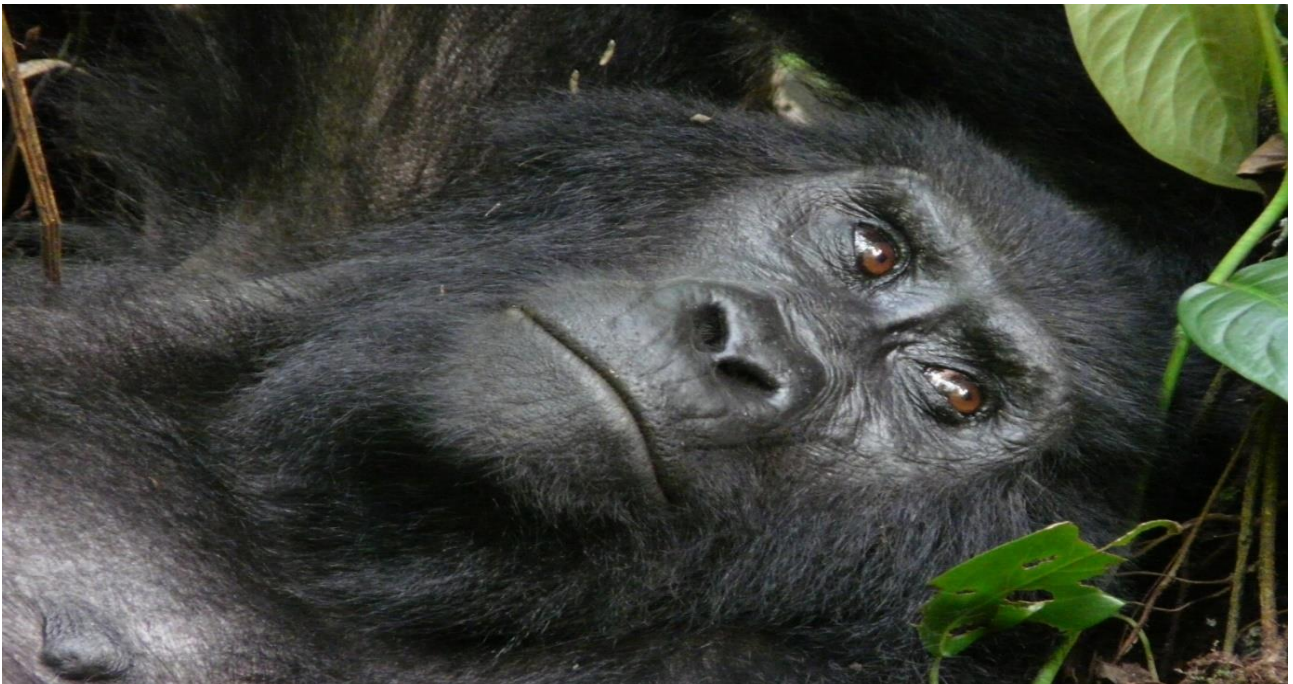


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Mountain gorillas live in family groups of up to 30 individuals, led by the dominant male - the silverback. The family can have one or more young males, as well as up to twelve females and several young. The female has her first young when she is about 8 years old and gives birth to one young every five years. The male becomes sexually mature when it is around 15 years old, and is then called silverback, due to the distinctive silver stripe on its back that adorns its otherwise dark coat. They can reach a size of almost 2 meters in height and a weight of 220 kg.

The family wanders around a larger territory in search of fresh plant food. They build a nest in the vegetation where they spend the night. The younger ones prefer to build them up in the trees, while the older ones sleep on the ground. An adult mountain gorilla can eat up to 18 kilos of food per day. All gorillas feed on roots, twigs, fruits, grass, seeds, and leaves. They can also eat termites, snails, caterpillars, and beetles. They do not need to actively drink water as they get enough liquid through the vegetation they eat and from the dew on the plants in the morning.



We spend an hour with the mountain gorillas, where we experience how they interact, communicate, and eat. And that hour just flies by. To meet our closest relatives among the animals with whom we share 98-99% of our genes is a huge experience. Although fighting your way through the jungle can be tiring, it is worth all the effort. It is a completely unique and emotional experience that you have to experience to fully understand.

When we have said goodbye to the mountain gorillas, we hike through the jungle to our starting point and from there drive back to our lodge, where we can exchange stories, photos, and videos.

Accommodation: Lake Mulehe Gorilla Lodge

[\(https://www.ugandaculturalodges.com/lake-mulehe-gorilla-lodge/\)](https://www.ugandaculturalodges.com/lake-mulehe-gorilla-lodge/)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

Day 11: Bwindi Impenetrable Forest - Lake Kivu

(Distance: Approx. 125 kilometre)

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After a wonderful night's sleep with mountain gorillas on the retina, it is time to say goodbye to Uganda and drive towards the border with Rwanda. The border formalities take a little over an hour, and then we continue our journey to Muzanze (Ruhengeri), where we will experience the Karisoke Research Centre, established by Dian Fossey in 1967, and hear more about

their work.



Dian Fossey was one of the pioneers in working with mountain gorillas, to which she literally dedicated her life. She studied them daily in the rainforest of Rwanda's Virunga National Park and set up her research centre in that connection. She was found murdered in her cabin on 26 December 1985 in the Virunga Mountains. The murder has been shrouded in mystery, but indications are that she was ordered murdered by a former governor of the area, who later became known for establishing one of the death squads that took part in the genocide in 1994. Her book "Gorillas in the Mist" from 1983 describes her work with the mountain gorillas. It was later made into a film with Sigourney Weaver in the lead role.

"When you realize the value of all life you dwell less on the past and concentrate more on the conservation of the future." – Diane Fossey

After lunch, we continue to our lodge for the night, the 4-star hotel Gorillas Lake Kivu Hotel, where it will be possible to take a refreshing dip in the hotel's swimming pool.

In the late afternoon there is an opportunity to get out and have another experience out of the ordinary when we go down to the border between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. There is a huge leben at the border crossing, which thousands of people cross every single day. To that extent, it is a fantastic spectacle that we can stand and watch.

In the evening we eat in the hotel's garden in the glorious Rwandan evening heat.

Accommodation: Gorillas Lake Kivu Hotel (<https://gorillaslakekivuhotel.com-rwanda.com/>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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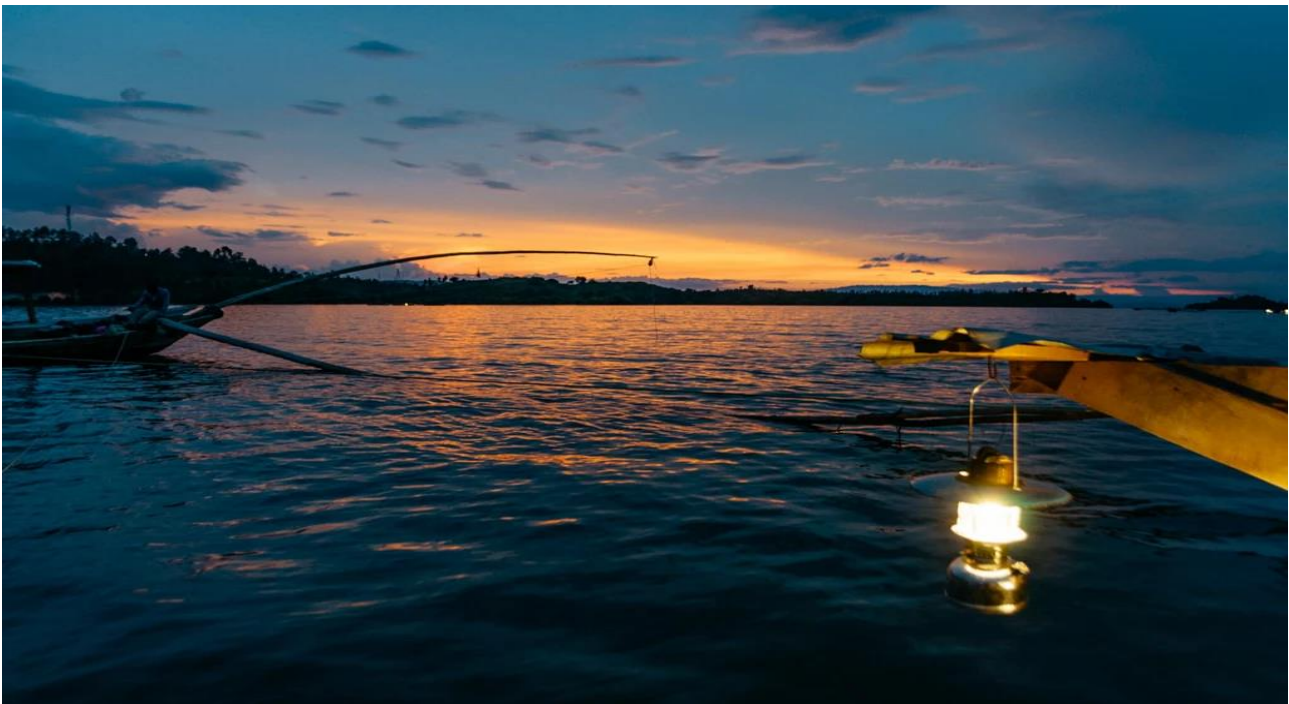
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Day 12: Lake Kivu - Kigali
(Distance: Approx. 165 kilometre)

After breakfast, we go down to Lake Kivu, which is on the border between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The lake is 90 kilometres long and 50 kilometres wide, and with its depth of 485 metres, it is Africa's deepest freshwater lake.

We are going to visit a traditional fishing village and get a closer look at life as a fisherman.

When the sun goes down, life begins in the small fishing villages around the lake. The fishermen get ready for another night's work and accompanied by the flute and song, row out to the middle of the lake. They sing and whistle to keep rhythm with each other. They typically sail in groups of three boats looking for sambaza, which look like a small sardine, and tilapia. Although the profession is global, the process is unique to the area - the fishermen's nocturnal journey across the lake with their melodious songs and bright lanterns is truly captivating.



The light from the lanterns is used to attract the curious sambaza, which are then caught in the net that stretches under the three linked fishing boats. Although from a distance it looks like the three boats are separate, they are connected by flexible eucalyptus poles. It takes patience to fill the net, and they typically fish all night before returning to shore. After the net has been reeled in, the evening's catch is sorted, and damaged or rotten fish thrown away. They hope to catch between 30 and 100 kilos of fish in one night. However, it is not a particularly lucrative business, as each fisherman earns approx. 10,000 Rwandan francs, equivalent to 65 Danish kroner, every month.

After the visit to the fishing village, we continue our journey further south-east towards the capital Kigali, where we spend 2 nights.

Accommodation: Flame Tree Village (<https://www.3bhotels.com/flame-tree/>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 13: Kigali - sightseeing

(Distance: Approx. 86 kilometre)

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After breakfast, we take a few steps back in time and spend the day on Rwanda's past. Because no trip to Rwanda will be complete until we also get an insight into the terrible genocide that took place in 1994. Not to dwell on the past, but to gain a better understanding of how far the country has come since then.

On April 6, 1994, President Juvénal Habyarimana's plane was shot down as it approached to land in Kigali. The president was on his way home from Arusha in Tanzania, where he had participated in peace negotiations to share power in the country. The shooting down of the plane was the starting point for one of the 20th century's most extensive genocides.

Less than an hour after the plane had crashed, members of the militia group Interahamwe and the presidential guard had set up roadblocks around Kigali. That it could be done so quickly suggests that the genocide was carefully planned. The masterminds were a group of extremist Hutus, led by the president's wife Agathe Habyarimana, who were extremely unhappy at the prospect of having to share power with the Tutsis. Instead, they had decided to get rid of the Tutsis once and for all.

In the years leading up to the genocide, the Tutsi had been the subject of massive hate campaigns from various Hutu-controlled radio stations and newspapers. The media portrayed the Tutsis as cockroaches and told the Hutus, bluntly, that it was necessary to exterminate these vermin.

Within the first two days after the shooting down of the president's plane, most prominent opposition politicians, journalists and civil rights activists were killed. Lists of the victims' names had already been drawn up in advance. The genocide began in Kigali, but quickly spread to the rest of Rwanda. At roadblocks, in their homes, in churches and on the run, around 800,000 people were killed over the next 100 days. People were stopped in the street and if their identity card revealed them as Tutsi or they were unable to produce their identity card, they were killed. Many sought refuges in churches in the hope that it would provide them with protection, but unfortunately that only made it easier for the perpetrators to hit several people at once.

It is estimated that 75% of the country's Tutsis were murdered, along with thousands of opposition Hutus. The massacres were led by members of the Interahamwe and the local police, but many thousands of ordinary people also participated as they believed they were defending their country against the Tutsi enemy. Local officials and the Interahamwe called meetings where the audience was informed that the Tutsis were planning attacks on the Hutus. Many Hutus therefore believed that it was a matter of killing before being killed.

The UN soldiers in Rwanda, whose job it was to monitor the power-sharing, were not equipped at all to deal with a genocide. Partly they did not have enough food, and partly they lacked both ammunition and petrol. The day after the shooting down of the president's plane, 10 Belgian UN soldiers tasked with guarding the Rwandan prime minister were killed. The tragic news caused consternation in Belgium, which therefore wanted to withdraw the rest of the soldiers. The extremist Hutus had thus achieved what they wanted. No other country wanted to take the place of the Belgians. So, while the genocide was going on, the states in the UN Security Council voted to reduce the force in the country to 270 men. However, they managed to send several hundred special forces to Rwanda beforehand to evacuate their own citizens.

On July 18, 1994, the last stronghold of the extremist Hutus, the town of Gisenyi, and the leader of the Tutsi rebel movement, fell, and the country's current president, Paul Kagame, declared the civil war over.

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We begin the day by visiting the 2 churches Ntarama and Nyamata, both of which are today memorials for the genocide. Both churches are located south of Kigali and the areas were formerly home to many Tutsis. During the genocide, they sought refuge and hoped that the churches could serve as a refuge. Unfortunately, the churches instead became pure death traps, where the extremist Hutus could kill many more at the same time. It is believed that at least 5,000 people were killed in Ntarama, and at least 10,000 people killed in Nyamata. At both memorial sites, we are followed around by a local guide who gives us a more detailed introduction to the events in and around the churches.

We continue to the Kigali Genocide Memorial, which serves as a museum for information and where locals meet, commemorate, and be reminded that history must never repeat itself.



We have dinner at the Hôtel des Mille Collines, known from the film "Hotel Rwanda", where 1,268 Hutus and Tutsis sought refuge and saved their lives during the genocide.



Accommodation: Flame Tree Village (<https://www.3bhotels.com/flame-tree/>)

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner

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Day 14: Departure to Denmark

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Enjoy the last morning atmosphere in Rwanda before we get ready to go to Kigali International Airport to begin our journey home to Denmark. Tired, but filled with lots of lovely holiday memories, new friendships and, of

course, unique camera shots.



Meals: Breakfast

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Overview of the itinerary *Uganda & Rwanda - The Green Pearls of Africa*

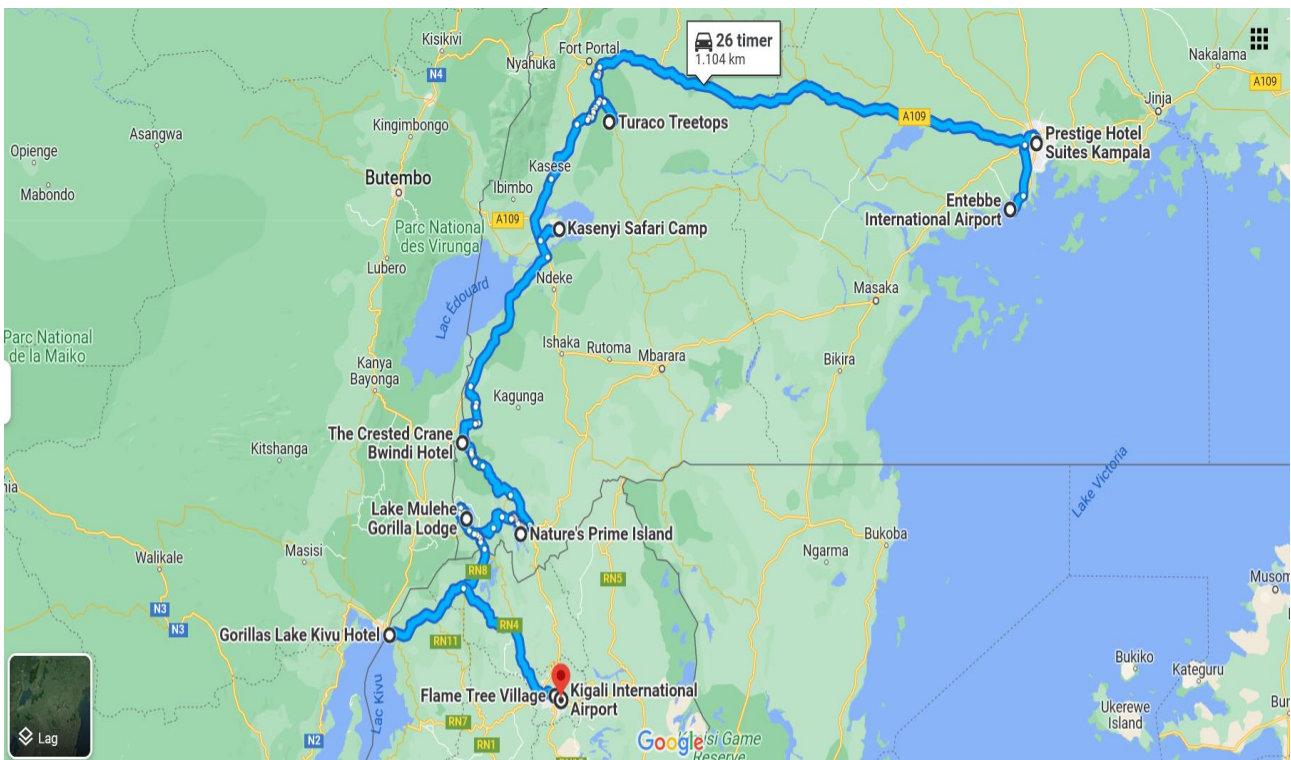
Day	Duration	Accommodation	Meals
1	1 night	Sunset Guest House, Entebbe	
2	1 night	Prestige Hotel Suites, Kampala	Dag 2 Breakfast, lunch & dinner
3 - 5	2 nights	Turaco Treetops Lodge, Kibale Forest	Dag 3 Breakfast, lunch & dinner Dag 4 Breakfast, lunch & dinner
5 - 7	2 nights	Kasenyi Safari Camp, Queen Elizabeth NP	Dag 5 Breakfast, lunch & dinner Dag 6 Breakfast, lunch & dinner
7	1 night	The Crested Crane Bwindi Hotel	Dag 7 Breakfast, lunch & dinner
8	1 night	Nature's Prime Lodge, Lake Bunyonyi	Dag 8 Breakfast, lunch & dinner
9 - 11	2 nights	Lake Mulehe Gorilla Lodge	Dag 9 Breakfast, lunch & dinner Dag 10 Breakfast, lunch & dinner
11	1 night	Gorillas Lake Kivu Hotel	Dag 11 Breakfast, lunch & dinner
12 - 14	2 nights	Flame Tree Village, Kigali	Dag 12 Breakfast, lunch & dinner Dag 13 Breakfast, lunch & dinner
14			Dag 14 Breakfast



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Overview of the travel route *Uganda & Rwanda - The Green Pearls of Africa*



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Practical information

Uganda & Rwanda - The Green Pearls of Africa

Travel budget

Most meals on our trip are already included. For drinks and additional lunches or dinners, calculate around DKK 100-150 per person.

Tips

It is customary to tip guides, waiters, and other service personnel. They receive a very small, fixed salary, and are therefore very dependent on the tips they receive when they deliver a good effort. Evergreen Escape Expeditions recognizes this custom, but also knows that Danes generally have a hard time tipping, as we are not used to it. That is why we have included tips for guides and drivers in the journey.

It is often a large item on a travel budget. Guests of Evergreen Escape Expeditions avoid this post and the considerations associated with it. Gratuities for both local guides and general guides, drivers and helpers are included in the price for the journey.

What remains are the small items such as tips for maids and porters. Most often, their salary is based on tips. We cannot change this. Therefore, it is always a good idea to show your appreciation in the form of a small amount, both to the dragon who takes the suitcase from the room to the lobby, and to the maid in charge of the room.

Likewise, Evergreen Escape Expeditions recommends that you round up - or add 10% - when paying at a restaurant. The same rule applies here as in hotels: the salary is based on the guests tipping.

Passport

Passport must be valid for six months beyond the date of entry and have 2 blank pages for entry and exit stamps.

It is always a good idea to have an extra copy of the passport's information page with you. It is kept in a different place than the passport itself.

We advise all travellers to check with the country's consulate about possible changes regarding entry requirements, as these can change at short notice.

Visa

Visa is required for EU citizens in Uganda and Rwanda. "East African visa" can be purchased online and currently costs USD 100. USD. It is valid for one month.

Vehicles

We use 8-seater Toyota Land Cruisers, where the roof can be lifted during the game drive.

Luggage

Please bring a soft bag or rucksack rather than a suitcase, as they are often easier to pack in the car.



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Packing List

Documents:

- Your passport & a copy of the passport (keep it separate from the original)
- Your flight confirmation
- Vaccination certificate & copy
- Contact details and insurance card for your international health insurance
- Cash in Euro or USD
- Credit card, preferably Visa
- Last travel documents with the contact details of the contact person on site

Clothing:

- Sturdy shoes
- Sandals
- Warm fleece or wool sweater for chilly mornings and evenings
- Light summer clothes
- Long-sleeved shirt/blouse and long cotton trousers
- Light rain/wind jacket
- Headgear
- Swimwear, bath towel and bath shoes

Equipment:

- Small backpack
- Money belt or chest bag for storing money and valuables
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight + extra batteries
- Headlamp
- Camera and possibly telephoto lens for animal photos
- Memory card
- Binoculars
- Power adapter
- Travel alarm clock
- Travel hair dryer if needed
- Neck pillow for travel and long journeys

Health/First Aid Kit:

- Sunscreen for skin and lips
- Mosquito spray (mosquito spray can also be bought on arrival - e.g., Nobite or Medisoft)
- First aid kit (with plasters and disinfectant)
- Important personal medicine
- Small provisions, e.g., biscuit
- A roll of toilet paper



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The prices include permission for gorilla tracking. If gorilla tracking is not desired, USD 700/= can be deducted from the above prices.

(Changes may occur, depending on exchange rates at the time of payment, fully booked hotels, etc.).

Price includes:

- Arrival and departure transfer
- Transport in Land Cruisers, where the roof can be lifted during the game drive
- Accommodation at hotels/lodges as specified
- Meals as indicated (1 x BB; 12 x FB)
- Danish tour guide
- English speaking tour guides/drivers
- Activities and excursions as indicated
- Game drives
- Park fees
- Remuneration of the Danish tour guide
- Remuneration of all involved local guides
- Tips for local guides
- All local taxes
- 24-hour emergency telephone

Not included:

- Flight tickets
- Flight tickets to a Danish tour guide
- Cancellation and travel insurance
- Visa for Uganda and Rwanda
- Beverages
- Tips for Danish tour guide