



Uganda

POP 40.9 MILLION / 📶 256

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Prunes (p712)
- ➔ Anna's Corner (p718)
- ➔ Dutchess (p723)
- ➔ EcoBurrito (p724)
- ➔ Mediterraneo (p712)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Byoona Amagara (p729)
- ➔ Emin Pasha Hotel (p712)
- ➔ Red Chilli Hideaway (p712)
- ➔ Chimpanzee Forest Guest House (p723)
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Why Go?

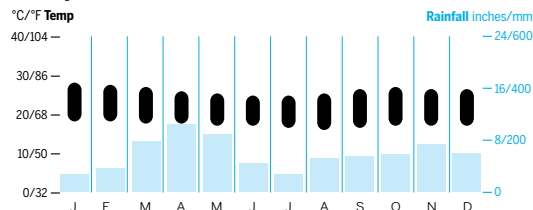
Emerging from the shadows of its dark history, a new dawn of tourism has risen in Uganda, polishing a glint back into the 'pearl of Africa'. Travellers are streaming in to explore what is basically the best of everything the continent has to offer.

For a relatively small country, there's a lot that's big about the place. It's home to the tallest mountain range in Africa (Rwenzori Mountains), the source that feeds the world's longest river and the continent's largest lake. And with half the planet's remaining mountain gorillas residing here, as well as the Big Five to be ticked off, wildlife watching is huge.

While anti-gay sentiments have cast a shadow over an otherwise positive tourism picture, Uganda remains one of the safest destinations in Africa. Other than watching out for the odd hippo at your campsite, there's no more to worry about here than in most other countries.

When to Go

Kampala



Jun-Sep The best bet weatherwise: not too hot with minimal rainfall.

Jan-Feb Perfect climate to head for the hills to climb the Rwenzoris or Mt Elgon.

Oct-Nov Can be rainy, but fewer travellers means gorilla permits are much easier to obtain.

KAMPALA

POP 1.6 MILLION / 0414

Bustling Kampala makes a good introduction to Uganda. It's a dynamic and engaging city, with few of the hassles of other East African capitals and several worthy attractions to keep you occupied for a couple of days. As the heartland of the Buganda kingdom, Kampala has a rich and colourful history, visible in several fascinating palaces and compounds from where the nation was run until the arrival of colonialism.

Sights

★ Mengo Palace

HISTORIC SITE

(Lubiri Palace; Map p713; Lubiri Ring Rd, Tsekobe; admission incl guide USh15,000; ☉ 8am-5pm) Built in 1922, this small palace is the former home of the king of Buganda, though it has remained empty since 1966 when Prime Minister Milton Obote ordered a dramatic attack to oust Kabaka Mutesa II, then president of Uganda. Led by the forces of Idi Amin, soldiers stormed the palace and, after several days of fighting, Mutesa was forced into exile. The building's interior cannot be visited, but the notorious underground prison here is open to tours.

Kasubi Tombs

MAUSOLEUM

(Map p713; www.kasubitombs.org; Kasubi Hill; USh10,000; ☉ 8am-5pm) The Unesco World Heritage-listed Kasubi Tombs are of great significance to the Buganda kingdom as the burial place of its kings and royal family. The huge thatched-roof palace was originally built in 1882 as the palace of Kabaka Mutesa I, before being converted into his tomb following his death two years later. The tombs were destroyed in an arson attack in March 2010, however, and are still being rebuilt, with no end to the work in sight.

National Mosque

MOSQUE

(Map p714; Old Kampala Rd; entry incl tour USh10,000) One of Kampala's premier sights, the prominent National Mosque (widely known as the Gaddafi Mosque) was begun by Idi Amin in 1972 but only completed in 2007 following a donation from Libya's Colonel Gaddafi. The hour-long tour allows you to scale its soaring minaret for the best views of Kampala, and takes you within its gleaming interior. Free entry for Muslims.

Uganda Museum

MUSEUM

(Map p714; Kira Rd; adult/child USh5000/2500; ☉ 10am-5.30pm) There's plenty to interest

you here with a varied and well-captioned ethnographic collection covering clothing, hunting, agriculture, medicine, religion and recreation, as well as archaeological and natural-history displays. Highlights include traditional musical instruments, some of which you can play, and the fossil remains of a Napak rhino, a species that became extinct eight million years ago. Head outside to wander through the traditional thatched homes of the various tribes of Uganda; plus get a look at Idi Amin's Mercedes.

Tours

Red Chilli Hideaway

SAFARI

(Map p713; ☎ 0772-509150; www.redchillihideaway.com; 3-day safaris from US\$320) An excellent choice for budget safaris to Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth National Parks. Also very affordable car-hire rates.

Coffee Safari

TOURS

(Map p714; ☎ 0772-505619; www.1000cupscoffee.com; 18 Buganda Rd; US\$100; ☉ 7.30am Fri) You can trace your coffee from the cup to the farm on day tours run by 1000 Cups Coffee House (p713). Book before noon on Thursday.



★ Festivals & Events

Kampala City Festival

CULTURAL

(www.kcca.go.ug; ☉ 1st week Oct) One of East Africa's biggest street parties is held early each October with floats and performers celebrating Ugandan culture. Traditional and contemporary art, fashion and music are all showcased over multiple stages.

Amakula International Film Festival

FILM

(www.amakula.org) Hosted at the Uganda Museum, the Amakula International Film Festival is one of Africa's oldest independent film festivals, and shows Ugandan and international features and shorts.



Sleeping

★ Bushpig

HOSTEL \$

(Map p714; ☎ 0772-285234; www.bushpigkampala.com; 31 Acacia Ave, Kololo; d US\$45, dm/s/d/tr without bathroom US\$15/25/35/53; ☉) A slice of luxury by the standards of African hostels, Bushpig is housed in a smart complex that also functions as a posh hotel and restaurant. The staff are exceptionally friendly and the cool vibe in the dorms and spacious doubles makes up for the street noise outside. Best of all is the excellent hostel restaurant and great water pressure.