19-Day Best of Uganda Safari: Savannas, Chimpanzees and Gorillas

Uganda



DURATION	COUNTRY	STARTING FROM
19 days, 18 nights	**Uganda**	**USD 5,980 per person**

TOUR SUMMARY

This 19-day safari is for travellers with more time to explore Uganda, known as the Pearl of Africa.

It visits four savanna parks: Kidepo Valley National Park, Murchison Falls National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park (including the Ishasha sector) and Lake Mburo National Park, with game drives and boat cruises. You also visit Karamojong villages, trek chimpanzees in Kibale National Park, track gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and go canoeing or hiking at Lake Bunyonyi.

ITINERARY

Arrival

You'll be picked-up from the airport (or hotel)

Accommodation before the tour departs can be arranged for extra cost

Day 1

Transfer to Gulu Town in Northern Uganda

After breakfast, you will be met by your guide for briefing about the tour. Thereafter, you will start your 19-Day Best of Uganda Safari with a drive to Kidepo Valley National Park northeast Uganda.

Note: You will have a stop at Ziwa Rhino Sanctaury for Rhino tracking before proceeding to Gulu town for overnight. All our tours to Kidepo National Park stop at Gulu town for overnight and to break the long journey.

Drive time: Approximately 7-9 hours

Meal plan: Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: African Roots Gulu

Day 2

Transfer to Kidepo National Park

After breakfast, drive to Kidepo valley National Park located in northeastern Uganda. Check in your accommodation property, relax and prepare for a late afternoon game drive. Kidepo Valley National Park was recently voted CNN as one of the best National Parks in Africa. It is the only place where you can see Cheetahs. The park is also home to several herds of elephants, giraffes, buffaloes as well as several prides of lions that can easily be spotted compared to other National Parks.

Drive time: Approximately 4 hours

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Kidepo Savannah Lodge or Apoka Bandas

Day 3

Morning and afternoon game drives

Today, you will spend both morning and afternoon doing game drives in the Savannah plains of Kidepo valley National Park. This park hosts a great variety of animal species in comparison to any other Ugandan parks. Eighty species of animals were recorded in this park in 1971. Twenty eight of these species weren't known to exist in any other park within Uganda. Carnivores existing include lions, side-striped jackals, leopards, black-backed jackals; various small cats as well as spotted hyenas. The distinctive Carnivore species found in Kidepo are: Hunting dog, Bat-eared Fox, Cheetah, Striped Hyena, Caracal and the Aardwolf. The more uncommon ungulates are: the greater & Lesser Kudu, roan antelope, Chandler's mountain Reed buck, beisa Oryx, Klipspringer and Bright's Gazelle. However, these species have greatly decreased in number over the years due to poaching. Among the other big ungulates are: elephants, oribi, burchell's zebras, Jackson's hartebeests, bush pigs, bohor reed buck, warthogs, Rothschild giraffes, defassa water bucks, cape buffaloes, elands, bush duskiers and bush bucks . Five species primate are also found within this park, with Kavirondo bush baby as the most endemic.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Kidepo Savannah Lodge or Apoka Bandas

Day 4

Karamajong villages and cultural visits

After breakfast, you will visit the the Karamajongo homesteads, known as the Manyatta. Here you will have the opportunity to interact with the elders and get to know more about their culture and lifestyle. Here you can contribute by making donations on any kind towards their social welfare. As part of our sustainability practice, we take our clients to appreciate their lifestyle and daily activities which include grazing and milking cows. we feel this is the perfect opportunity for those who like to immerse themselves in the cultures of the communities they visit.

Alternatively, you can choose to do more game drives on this day.

Drive time: NA

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Kidepo Savannah Lodge or Apoka Bandas

Day 5

Transfer to Murchison Falls National Park

After breakfast, you will drive back to Murchison Falls National Park in northern Uganda. This is the biggest conservation area in Uganda with amazing Riverine, forest and Savannah environments. Depending on the location of your accommodation within the park, an afternoon game drive in this park is usually a rewarding experience.

Drive time: Approximately 5-6 hours

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Pakuba Safari Lodge or Murchison River Lodge

Day 6

Morning Delta Cruise and boat cruise to the bottom of the Murchison Falls

Early morning departure from the lodge with picnic Lunch and transfer to catch the morning boat at the Jetty point. While on this boat cruise, you can spot several herds of buffaloes, Uganda Kobs, Jackson's Hartebeast, Giraffes, Elephants, and several other wild animals that flock the River Nile to drink water. Not forgetting the several bird species that can as well be spotted while on the boat. In the afternoon, you will come back for yet another excellent boat cruise to upstream to the bottom of the Falls. You will be in a much better position to observe how the might River Nile water squeezes itself through a very narrow gorge to only later explode in what has been referred to as the strongest and most powerful Falls on the planet earth. You will return to the Lodge for overnight.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Pakuba Safari Lodge or Murchison River Lodge

Day 7

Morning game drive and evening game drive.

After an early breakfast, you will head to the park for a game drive. Today, you will be able to experience beauties within this park as you drive along the Nile Delta stretch. You will sure likely see several animals including; Lions, Leopards, Jackal, Elephants, Giraffe and several other species of the Albertine Rift birds. You will return to the lodge for lunch, after which you can go swim or just relax at the lodge as you wait to return for an evening game drive to catch a glimpse of the beautiful animals have their last meal of the day.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Pakuba Safari Lodge or Murchison River Lodge

Day 8

To Kibale National Park.

As part of your 19-Day Best of Uganda Safari, you will drive to Kibale Forest National Park via Fort Portal town. You will have a stop in Fort portal town for Lunch before proceeding to check-in at Chimpanzee Forest Guest House. After checking in, you will drive to Bigodi Village for a wetland walk. This walk is designed and managed by the local community surrounding the park. All the fees you pay for this walk directly goes to benefit the local community living around Kibale Forest National Park. As Encounter Africa Safaris, we encourage our clients to take part in this walk as the money raised helps the communities to sustainably manage and utilize this wetland

Drive time: Approximately 4 hours

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Chimpanzee Forest Guest House or Isunga Lodge

Day 9

Chimpanzee trekking

After breakfast, you will be transferred to Kibale National Park headquarters located at Kanyanchu. Here, you will join other trekkers for briefing before you proceed into the forest for chimpanzee trekking. You will be led by a well-trained and experienced ranger/guide who will take you for a guided primate walk inside Kibale Forest National Park. This forest provides an opportunity to visit one of the habituated communities of chimpanzees. You are allowed to spend an hour with these Great Apes while observing their behaviour. You are allowed to take photographs. So make sure your cameras are nearby. Kibale National Park is also home to other 13 primate species which can also be spotted while trekking the Chimpanzees. Of course there are also numerous species of forest birds. In fact, this is another haven for bird lovers.

Return to the Lodge for overnight.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Packed Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Chimpanzee Forest Guest House or Isunga Lodge

Day 10

Drive to Northern Queen Elizabeth National Park

After breakfast, your will drive for 3-4 hours from Kibale National Park to Queen Elizabeth National Park. You will have an opportunity of passing through small towns while seeing several foothills of the magnificent Rwenzori Mountain. You will as well as cross the Equator at Kikorongo.Of course you will also see several small rivers that originate from the Rwennzori mountain ranges. You may head to the lodge for lunch or drive directly to Mweya jetty for an afternoon boat cruise on the Kazinga Channel. This two hour boat cruise is one of the highlights of Queen Elizabeth National Park. It provides you with an opportunity to view over 300 out of the 700 water bird species recorded here. There are also antelopes, crocodiles, elephants, buffaloes and hippos which can be sighted while on the boat.

Drive time: Approximately 3-4 hours

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Elephant Hab Lodge or Pumba Safari Lodge

Day 11

Morning and Evening Game Drives.

After an early morning cup of coffee, you will drive back to Kasenyi plains for a game viewing. It's this time of the morning that the big cats are usually out to hunt for their prey. There will be high chances of spotting lions and or leopards on a hunt or feasting on their kill. Obviously, there is a guarantee that you will see buffaloes, hippos, and several species of antelopes, and many more. You may return to the lodge for lunch and relaxation and return later in the day for an evening game viewing. Return to the lodge for overnight.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Elephant Hab Lodge or Pumba Safari Lodge

Day 12

Transfer to Southern Queen Elizabeth in Ishasha Sector.

Enjoy a Lazily morning game viewing en-route to the southern part of Queen Elizabeth National Park otherwise known as the Ishasha. After your lunch, you will drive into the park in in the afternoon to search for the popular tree climbing lions. Although this is the best place to see tree climbing lions, the chances of seeing them is not guaranteed. The Ishasha region also has other animals species like Buffaloes, Elephants, Antelopes and many others. You may also drive to River Ishasha to see the border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Thereafter, you will return to the Lodge for dinner and overnight.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Ishasha Jungle Lodge or Enjojo Lodge

Day 13

Game drives and Evening Community Experience in Ishasha Sector.

Bush Breakfast Start the day with a very short drive to our amazing Bush breakfast spot. Accompanied by your driver guide, you will enjoy your morning breakfast with the view of the Ishasha beautiful wilderness. After breakfast you will embark on yet another game drive in the rich Ishasha areas in search of wildlife including warthogs, bush bucks, water bucks, Uganda Kob, Elephants and countless bird species. Remember you also still have yet another beautiful opportunity to see Tree Climbing lions that are only famously found in the Tree figs. You will visit the Ishasha community projects later on in the day.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Ishasha Jungle Lodge or Enjojo Lodge

Day 14

To Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

After breakfast, you will drive to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park which is located in southwestern Uganda. Your journey to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park will take you through the rolling hills with terraced gardens of irish potatoes and sometimes tea. You will arrive late afternoon for overnight at the Lodge. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is home to almost half of the world's endangered Mountain Gorillas. By the way, this is the only National Park in Uganda where wild Chimpanzees co-exist with the Mountain Gorillas. Of course your well experienced guide will help you understand the differences between these Great Apes.

Drive time: Approximately 4-5 hours

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Trekkers Tervan Lodge or Rushaga Gorilla Havens Lodge

Day 15

Gorilla tracking and Village walk

After breakfast, you will transfer to the park headquarters to join other trekkers to be allocated a Gorilla family that you will trek. Of course the park staff will first give you a full briefing concerning the Dos and Don’ts while with the gorillas. After that, you will be driven to the starting point of your allocated gorilla family to start your trek into the beautiful Impenetrable Bwindi Forest. This trek may take between 30 minutes to three quarters of the day, depending on where the Mountain Gorillas will be found. Please noted that gorilla trekking can be strenuous and as such a certain level of fitness is required. Once you find the gorillas, you will be allowed to spend one hour to observe them and take photographs. Although this time may seem too short a time, the experience you get will be worth it. Thereafter, you will return to the park headquarters where you will be awarded a certificate in recognition of your effort in contributing to the conservation of these endangered mountain gorillas. Return to the lodge for relaxation followed by a village walk in the evening to learn more about the local people living around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. This walk will enable you appreciate the effort of these people in conserving the forest and the gorillas. You can choose to support them through donation in kind. Please note that this is a voluntary act.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Trekkers Tervan Lodge or Rushaga Gorilla Havens Lodge

Day 16

Transfer to Lake Bunyonyi

Drive from Bwindi Impenetrable National Park to Lake Bunyonyi in Kabale District. Lake Bunyonyi is one of the three Lava damned Lakes in Uganda. The Lake was formed when lava flowing from one of the volcanoes blocked a river channel and water was forced to flow back hence filling the space to create the Lake Bunyonyi. Bunyonyi locally means small birds. So the Lake got its name because of the abundance of small birds in this area in filled the area. Lake Bunyonyi is said to be the deepest lake in Uganda and the second deepest in East Africa. The beauty of this Lake Bunyonyi will surely not disappoint you. It is one of the best places in Uganda to relax after your gorilla trek.

Drive time: Approximately 3-4 hours

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Bird nest Resort

Day 17

Canoeing or Hiking

After breakfast, you are free to admire the beauty of the lake and its surrounding hills. You will have a choice of either taking a canoe ride on the lake to explore the different Islands with exciting histories behind them. For example, you will visit the Punishment Island. The story about this Island, it is the place where girls who were known to have conceived babies out of legitimate traditional marriage would be dumped and left to die. This is a whole day activity and you will surely enjoy it. Alternatively, you can hike one of the hills around the Lake Bunyonyi. Encounter Africa Safaris supports some projects around this area, which is part of our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). So, for those who want to do something in the community while on their tour, this is another opportunity for you to go for volunteer work. Return to the Lodge for overnight.

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Bird nest Resort

Day 18

To Lake Mburo National Park

After breakfast, drive to Lake Mburo National Park via the Great Lakes Museum or Igongo Cultural center to learn more about the cultures of the ethnic groups in western Uganda. Lunch will be served en route. You will arrive at Lake Mburo National Park just in time for an evening game drive. Lake Mburo National Park is popular for animals such as Impalas, Giraffes, Zebras and so much more. Return to the Lodge for overnight.

Drive time: Approximately 6 hours

Meal Plan: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Lodging: Rwakobo Rock or Lake Mburo Safari Lodge

Day 19

Drive to Entebbe International Airport

Today marks the end of your 19-Day Best of Uganda Safari. But, depending on your flight time, you can have a morning walking Safari or just embark on your journey to Entebbe International Airport. Of course you will have a stop at the Equator crossing in Kayabwe for photography and stretching.

Drive time: Approximately 5-6 hours

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Lunch

WHAT IS INCLUDED

Cost includes

- Park fees (For non-residents)
- Gorilla & Chimp permits (One per person, non-resident)
- All activities (Unless labeled as optional)
- All accommodation (Unless listed as upgrade)
- A professional driver/guide
- All transportation (Unless labeled as optional)
- All Taxes/VAT
- Meals (As specified in the day-by-day section)
- Drinking water (On all days)

Cost excludes

- International flights (From/to home)
- Round-trip airport transfer
- Additional accommodation before and at the end of the tour
- Tips (Tipping guideline US$10.00 pp per day)
- Personal items (Souvenirs, travel insurance, visa fees, etc.)
- Government imposed increase of taxes and/or park fees
- Some meals (As specified in the day-by-day section)

GOOD TO KNOW

- It can start any time on any date
- This safari holiday tour is guided by the new normal post covid lockdown safari SOPs
- The tour is all inclusive with all activities, meals, chimp and gorilla permits, park fees, lodges, car hire and guides fee. So there are hidden costs involved.
- Minimum number of participants is two people and maximum number is six people.
- Suitable for children aged 15 years and above.
- Safari starts and ends in Uganda
- You have an opportunity to trek chimpanzees in Budongo Forest, Kibale National Park and Kyambura Gorge
- You will visit three top National Parks in Uganda for game drives i.e. Murchison Falls National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park and Lake Mburo National National Park.

- You will enjoy four boat cruises on this tour. One on the River Nile in Murchison Falls National Park, another on Lake at Bunyonyi, in Lake Mburo National Park and on the Kazinga channel in Queen Elizabeth National Park
- If you enjoy walking safaris, a visit to the nearby villages will enable you to interact with the local communities and to learn the cultures of the local people in Uganda.

Ready to book this safari?

Request a quote and we will tailor it to your dates and group: **gorillatreking.com/safari/19-day-best-of-uganda-safari-savannas-chimpanzees-and-gorillas/**

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Starting prices are per person and depend on season, group size and availability; request a quote for exact pricing. Itineraries can be adjusted to suit your plans.