21-Day Uganda Birding and Gorilla Trekking Safari

Uganda



DURATION	COUNTRY	STARTING FROM
21 days, 20 nights	**Uganda**	**USD 6,900 per person**

TOUR SUMMARY

This 21-day safari is a birding tour of Uganda that also includes gorilla trekking.

It starts at the Mabamba wetland on the fringes of Lake Victoria, where you search for the shoebill. You then bird the Royal Mile in Budongo Forest and spend two days at Murchison Falls National Park. Next come Kibale Forest, with chimpanzee trekking and the Bigodi swamp, and Semuliki National Park including the Kirumia trail, followed by Queen Elizabeth National Park and Imaramagambo Forest.

ITINERARY

Day 1

Arrive in Uganda for the Ultimate Birding Safari

On arrival at Entebbe international airport you will be received by a representative of Namib Safaris to start your Uganda birding safari and there after transfer to your hotel in Entebbe. Depending on your time of arrival, you have an opportunity to bird Botanical gardens in case you have a morning flight. Otherwise you check into your hotel and prepare to start your birding tomorrow.

Journey time: 20 minutes

Meal plan: Dinner

Accommodation

Upmarket: Hotel No 5

Mid-range: Nkima Lodge

Budget: African Roots Guesthouse

Day 2

Birding in Mabamba Wetland Swamp & Transfer to Masindi

After an early breakfast we drive to Mabamba Swamp Wetland in Kasanje which is located on the fringes of Lake Victoria – 2nd biggest fresh water body in the world. The drive can take about an hour or more depending on the birding engagement en route which leads to several stopovers.

In Mabamba swamp, you will take a motorised canoe with the area site guide in search of the incredible Shoebill which is often seen standing in the mashes waiting to hunt or flying in the air above the papyrus plants.

There are also other variety of water birds like; African Jacana, White-winged Terns, African Purple Swamphen, Purple Heron, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Pied Kingfisher, Malachite Kingfisher, Winding Cisticola, Red-billed Fire-finch, White-faced whistling duck, Long-toed Lapwing, African Pied Wagtail, Saddle billed Stork, Cape wagtail, Fan-tailed Widowbird, Yellow-billed Duck Long-toed plover, African Fish Eagle and African Marsh Harrier, Swamp Flycatcher etc.

Journey time: 1 hour and 4 hours to Masindi

Meal plan: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation

Mid-range: Masindi Hotel

Budget: New Court Hotel

Day 3

Birding the Royal Mile in Budongo forest

Today we continue birding safari in the rich Budongo forest. Part of the forest is located in Murchison falls national park at Kaniyo Pabidi and the other part is located outside of the national park as a forest reserve known as Budongo forest. This forest is home to various primates including Chimpanzees and several tree species.

After an early breakfast and with packed lunch, we will leave for the royal mile – a stretch of 1 mile that the King of Bunyoro enjoyed to spend time. This is a full day's birding along the forest road and ending at the forest Bridge depending on the activity of the bird species.

Together with the site guide and your bird guide, you will look out for some of the exotic bird species; Ituri Batis, Nahan's francolin, Grey and Yellow longbills, Yellow-footed Flycatcher, Chocolate backed Kingfisher, Black-capped Apalis, Brown twin spot, White spotted fluff tail, Jameson's wattle eye, White breasted negro finch, Grey-headed Olive-back, Grey headed sunbird, Red headed bluebill, Green sunbird, Little green sunbird and the list goes on.

B, L & D

Day 4

Birding Tour to Murchison Falls National Park

After an early breakfast at your hotel, your bird guide will pick you and you start your birding journey to Uganda's largest and oldest National Park – Murchison falls national park with some stops in key areas along the way. You will drive to the Top of the waterfalls to have a view of the falls from the top and continue birding to your lodge.

Journey time: 2 hours

Meal plan: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation:

Up market: Bakers Lodge

Mid-range: Pakuba Safari Lodge

Budget: Fort Murchison (Tent)

Day 5

Birding Murchison Falls national park

We have an early morning breakfast and then go birding first while on the boat and later while in the car on a game drive.

Spend the morning birding on the boat towards the Delta. Some of the birds we aim for in this area include; the Shoebill, Great White and Pink-backed Pelicans, African Water Rail, Allen's Gallinule, Black Crake, African Crake, Grey-crowned Crane, Southern Pochard, The Egyptian, African Pygmy, and the Spur-winged Goose, Saddle-billed stork, Open-billed stork, Yellow-billed stor kand Marabou stork. More birds include; the Little and Dwarf Bitterns, Night Heron, Black Heron, Goliath Heron, Purple Heron, Green Backed Heron, Little Grebe, Common Squacco Heron, Great White Egret, Great and Long-tailed Cormorants, African and Eurasian Spoonbills, the Lesser Flamingo, Lesser Jacana, African Finfoot, Painted Snipe, Wattled Plover.

After the experience on the boat, you transfer to the car and bird in the Savannah in search for; Secretary Bird, Northern Carmine and Red-throated Bee-eaters, Giant, Pied, Stripped, Chestnut-bellied, Blue-breasted, Woodland and the African Pygmy Kingfishers, African Rock Martin; Lesser Stripped, Ethiopian, Angola, Red-rumped and Rufous-chested Swallow, Nightingale, Rock Thrush, Pied Wheatear, Whinchat, White-fronted Black Chat, Sooty Chat. Common Bulbul, Cameroon Sombre and Yellow-throated Greenbul, the Black, White-breasted, and Red-shouldered Cuckoo Shrikes, the Black and Penduline Tits, Black-lored, and Brown Babblers, Nubian Woodpecker, Cardinal Woodpecker, Brown-backed Woodpecker, Lesser Honeyguide, Scaly-throated Honeyguide, and many more.

B, L & D

Day 6

Birding the Escarpment and transfer to Kibale forest National Park

Today morning after breakfast, we transfer to Kibale forest with a stopover birding the Butiaba Escarpment for some birds of interest. Look out for; Beautiful sunbird, Black-billed Barbet, Grey-winged Pythilia, Buff-bellied Warbler, Northern Crombec, Cinnamon-breasted Warbler, Whin chat, Flappet Lark, Little weaver, Tawny-flanked Prinia, Lesser blue-eared Starling, Chestnut-crowned Sparrow Weaver, Marsh Tchagra, Copper Sunbird, Green-backed Eremomela, Long crested eagle, Foxy Cisticola, etc.

Kibale forest is home to 13 primate species with the highlight being the chimpanzees which are easily seen while on chimp trekking.

Journey time: 6 hours

Meal plan: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation

Up market: Papaya Lake Lodge

Mid-range: Turaco TreeTops

Budget: Chimpanzee Guesthouse

Day 7

Kibale forest birding for Green breasted Pitta

We will have an early morning breakfast and leave the lodge with our packed lunch so that we have maximum time in the forest. Our morning focus while birding will be to search for the elusive Green breasted pitta. This a sought after bird can also be rather difficult to sight in the forest but with guidance of the site guide and rangers we hope to increase our chances of sighting the Green breasted Pitta.

In the meantime as we search for the Green breasted Pitta we shall continue birding and equally search for many other bird species which include Western bronze-napped Pigeon, Great blue Turaco, Yellow-throated Nicator, White-headed Wood hoopoe, Red Headed malimbe, Yellow-spotted barbet, Dusky-blue Flycatcher, Grey-winged Robin, Blue shouldered Robin Chat, Yellow-spotted Barbet, White-naped Pigeon, Green-breasted Pitta, Red-chested Flufftail, African Pitta, Joyful Greenbul, Cabanis Greenbul, Grey-throated Flycatcher, Masked Apalis, Nahan’s Francolin, Tiny Sunbird, White-collared Oliveback and many more.

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Day 8

Chimpanzee Trekking and Birding Bigodi swamp

This morning we have an opportunity to trek the chimpanzees deep in Kibale forest for an experience of a life time. Your driver guide will transfer you to the briefing point. After briefing, you will divide in groups and given a ranger guide to guide you in the forest. In addition you will sight several butterflies, plants and many other primates.

In the afternoon, we bird Bigodi wetland for species we might have missed in the forest. This is a community initiative conserving the buffer zone to the forest; proceeds go to different community programs.

Day 9

Birding to Semuliki national park

Today after breakfast we bird our way to Semuliki national park for an experience searching for central African species found only here in East Africa. We shall have several stopovers birding nearby forest patches and swampy areas for different bird species.

Journey time: 3 hour

Meal plan: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation:

Mid-range: Mountains of the Moon

Budget: Rwenzori View Guesthouse

Day 10

Birding Kirumia trail in Semuliki national park

We shall spend the day birding in Semuliki forest for central African species of Congo's Ituri forest. Semuliki forest is a continuation of Congo's ituri forest. You have an opportunity of visiting both the 'female' and 'male' hot springs found within the park.

Some of the species we will look out for include the; Congo Serpent Eagle, Grey-throated Rail, Nkulengu Rail, Long-tailed Hawk, Spot-breasted Ibis, Yellow-throated Nicator, Northern Red-chested Owlet, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Black-collared Lovebird, White-bellied Kingfisher, Red-rumped Tinkerbird, Lyre-tailed Honeyguide, Zenker's Honeyguide, White-throated Blue Swallow, Bate's Nightjar, Yellow-throated Cuckoo, Orange-tufted Sunbird, Black-winged Oriole, Lemon-bellied Crombec, Rufous-sided Broadbill, Icterine Greenbul, Swamp Palm Bulbul, Crested and Blue-billed Malimbes, Fiery-breasted Bush-shrike, Pale-fronted Negrofinch, Piping, Red-billedWhite-crested, Black-casqued, Wattled and White-thighed Hornbills.

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Day 11

Birding to Queen Elizabeth National Park

Today after an early breakfast we start the trip to Queen Elizabeth national park birding along the way. You will have stopovers for both birding and photography moments of the beautiful scenery in this part of the country. Drive past several crater lakes, homesteads, farms and later with the Rwenzori mountains ahead as you drive.

The road through these crater lakes regions is not tarred therefore sometimes it is very difficult during the rainy season. In case it rains right before your set off, your guide may advise a different route on a more stable road. Because you will be having several stopovers for pictures and birding, you can expect to arrive at your lodge later that afternoon. Have some rest and prepare to start the next day very early for a whole days birding.

Journey time: 3 hours

Meal plan: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation

Up market: Kyambura gorge lodge

Mid-range: Twin Lakes safari lodge

Budget: Elephant Hab

Day 12

Birding Imaramagambo forest

We start early for a whole day birding in the park leading to Maramagambo Forest. We will have birding from the lodge towards Imaramagambo forest.

Bird species we expect to sight include Whinchat, Common Redstart, White-fronted Black Chat, Sooty Chat, Cameroon Sombre Greenbul, Yellow-throated Greenbul, the Black, White-breasted, and Red-shouldered Cuckoo Shrikes. The Black and Penduline Tits, Nubian Woodpecker, Cardinal Woodpecker, Brown-backed Woodpecker, White-tailed and Red-tailed Ant-thrushes, Brown Illadopsis, Shining-blue Kingfisher, Brown-eared Woodpeckers, Least Honeyguide, Grey Greenbul, Brown-chested Alethe, and many others.

B, L & D

Day 13

Birding to Bwindi Impenetrable forest

Transfer to Bwindi impenetrable national park, we have stopovers birding until we arrive at our lodge later that afternoon. You might have opportunity of sighting birds you could have missed the previous day.

In addition to the birding, there are opportunities of sighting the famous tree climbing lions of Ishasha. After a short game drive you proceed to Bwindi impenetrable national park.

Journey time: 3 hours

Meal plan: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation

Up market – Buhoma Lodge

Mid-range – Buhoma Haven Lodge

Budget – Buhoma Community Rest Camp

Day 14

Gorilla trekking

Mountain Gorilla trekking – a once in life opportunity and highly recommended. Today morning you will be transferred to the briefing point by your tour guide. On arrival at the briefing point, you will be divided into different groups which will trek different gorilla families with a ranger guide for each group.

You will then start your trek into the forest depending on location of the family you are to trek. It can take anything from a few minutes to several hours before sighting gorillas after which you are allowed 1 hour to stay in the presence of the gorillas before starting the trek back to the starting point.

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Day 15

Birding Buhoma Sector

Today after an early breakfast, we get back into the forest for biridng taking different trails as advised by the site guide. The site guides usually help with location of the different unique birds and they share information of where they last sighted them therefore increasing chances of locating them.

Today you look out for; Stuhlmann's Starling, Narrow-tailed Starling, Waller's Starling, Montane Oriole, African Golden Oriole, Strange Weaver, Brown-capped Weaver, Dusky Crimsonwing, Yellow-bellied Waxbill, Magpie Mannikin, Yellow-crowned Canary, Thick-billed Seedeater, Streaky Seedeater, African Green Broadbill, Oriole Finch, Mountain Buzzard, Ayre's Hawk Eagle, Handsome Francolin, Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo, African Wood Owl. More species; Bar-tailed Trogon, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eater, (Western) Bronze-naped Pigeon, Red-chested Owlet, Tullberg's Woodpecker, African Broadbill, Western Green Tinkerbird, African Green Broadbill, Lagdens Bush-Shrike, Petit's Cuckoo-Shrike, Grey Cuckoo-shrike, Toro Olive-Greenbul, Ansorge's Greenbul, White-bellied Robin Chat, Olive Thrush, White-tailed Ant-Thrush, Grauer's Rush-warbler, Neumann's Warbler and Red-faced Woodland Warbler.

Day 16

Birding to Ruhija via 'the Neck' of the forest

Early morning make your way towards 'the neck' of the forest linking Buhoma to Ruhija. We look out for; Yellow-billed Waxbill, Black Saw-wing, Chubbs' Cisticola, Grey Apalis, Petit's Cuckoo Shrike, Black Bee-eaters, Cinnamon-chested Bee-eaters, Cuckoo Shrike, Mackinnon's Fiscal, Little Grey Greenbuls, Chestnut-throated Apalis, Red-throated Martin, Yellow White-eye, Yellow-bellied Kite, Speckled-rumped Tinkerbirds. African Stonechat, Grey Cuckoo Shrike, Stripe-breasted Tit, Montane-masked Apalis, Red-faced Woodland, Montane Yellow Warbler, Regal Sunbird, Northern Double-collared Sunbird, White-tailed Blue Flycatcher, Yellow-whiskered Greenbul, Crested Guinea Fowl, Lead-colored Flycatcher, Black-necked Weaver, Red-bellied Paradise Flycatcher, Yellow-spotted Barbet, African Harrier Hawk.

Journey time – 2 hours

Meal plan: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation

Mid-range – Bakiga lodge

Budget – Broadbill forest camp

Day 17

Birding Mubwindi Swamp trail in Ruhija Sector

Today prepare to bird the entire day in Ruhija sector of Bwindi impenetrable national park – Mubwindi swamp trail. Birds in Ruhija are generally easy to see but the area is also considerably steep with lots of hiking as you search for birds. You will carry a picnic lunch and take a trail to Mubwindi swamp that promises some of the most difficult of all rift endemic species, look our for the beautiful Regal Sunbird, Archer's Robin-Chat, Grauer's Rush warbler, African green broadbill, Caruther's cisticola, Handsome francolin, African Hill babbler, Banded Prinia, Shelley's Crimsonwing, Dohertys Bushrike, Collared Apalis and others.

Return to the hotel later that evening, hopefully you will sight some of the Rwenzori night jars on the forest roads as you drive back.

Day 18

Birding to Mgahinga Gorilla national park

Transfer to Kisoro early morning after breakfast birding along the way; Papyrus areas at Lake Bunyonyi out flow and Echuya forest for some Albertine rift endemics that we might have missed in Bwindi impenetrable forest. Birds in Echuya forest include; Dwarf Honeyguide, Red-throated Alethe, Grauer's Rush Warbler, Red-faced Woodland Warbler, Grauer's Warbler, Collared Apalis, Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher, Rwenzori Batis, Strip-breasted Tit, Regal Sunbird, Strange Weaver, Brown-capped Weaver, Strange Weaver etc.

Journey time – 3 hour

Meal plan: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation

Up market – Mt Gahinga Lodge

Mid-range – Lake Mulehe Safari Lodge

Budget – Mucha Lodge

Day 19

Birding in Mgahinga Gorilla national Park

Mgahinga gorilla national park is home to over 180 bird species recorded including some Albertine rift endemics. This park with beautiful vegetation will reward you with more than birding. You shall traverse a variety of montane habitats along the excellent Gorge trail as you bird your way in the bird. This is the smallest national park in Uganda and was predominately protected to conserve the mountain gorillas and golden monkeys.

Some of the bird species we look out for include the Rwenzori Turaco, Dwarf Honeygude, Kivu Ground Thrush, Rwenzori Double-collared, Regal and the Purple-breasted Sunbirds, Archer`s Robin chat, cinnamon Bracken and Mountain Yellow Warblers, the Dusky and much Sought after Shelley's Crimson-wing and many more.

Day 20

Transfer to Entebbe

After a fulfilling birding experience ticking off several Albertine rift endemics, you start the journey to Entebbe. This is a whole days trip with short birding stops.

Journey time – 9 hour

Meal plan: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation

Up market – Hotel No 5

Mid-range – The Boma

Budget – African Roots Guesthouse

Day 21

End of Uganda birding and Gorilla safari

Today marks the end of your Uganda birding safari. We hope you had an amazing time birding Uganda in the various national parks and forest. We look forward to hosting you again for another region in Uganda.

B & L

WHAT IS INCLUDED

Cost includes

- Ground transport
- Park entrances
- Birding fees
- Boat trips
- Bottled water in the safari vehicle
- Full board accommodation for two nights
- Service of an English-speaking driver guide
- All mentioned activities except for the optional ones

Cost excludes

- Extras at the accommodation i.e. drinks, telephone, laundry etc.
- Tips to porters and driver/ guide
- Insurance

GOOD TO KNOW

- Long trouser and long sleeved tops
- Insect repellent
- Garden gloves (for gorilla trekking)
- Sun hut
- Rain jacket
- Waterproof hiking shoes
- Day pack to carry lunch and water
- Binoculars
- Camera

Ready to book this safari?

Request a quote and we will tailor it to your dates and group: **gorillatreking.com/safari/21-day-uganda-birding-and-gorilla-trekking-safari/**

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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.