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National Parks and Tourist Attractions

UGANDAN NATIONAL PARKS

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Uganda has got 10 national parks namely; Murchison falls national park which is the largest, Queen Elizabeth national park being the second largest, Bwindi impenetrable national park – the home of mountain gorillas, Kibale forest national park – the home of Chimpanzees, Lake Mburo national Park being the smallest national park, Kidepo Valley National Park – a virgin destination for wildlife viewing in Africa, Semuliki National Park, Mt Elgon National Park, Mgahinga Gorilla National Park and Rwenzori National Park. Of all the parks mentioned above, the most visited are Murchison Falls National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park & Bwindi Impenetrable National Park with of course the first two offering the best wildlife viewing experiences in the country.

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

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The Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is a biodiverse, mountainous area in southwest Uganda. It's home to many of the world's remaining mountain gorillas, who feed on roots, leaves and fruits from the park's many tree and fern species. Restricted numbers of viewing permits help protect the endangered gorilla families. In the park, rough paths weave amid dense forests, which are home to many butterflies and birds.

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is well positioned at the rim of the western arm of the Great Rift Valley (the Albertine rift valley), in Southwestern Uganda. The park is shared by three districts: Kabale, Rukungiri and Kisoro.
Bwindi impenetrable rainforest – is one of those very few found in Africa which flourished throughout the last Ice Age and covers approximately 331 sq km at an Altitude Range between 1160 meters within the Ishasha gorge and 2607 meters up the Rwamanyonyi Peak. . It has a yearly average temperature ranging between 7□ C and 20□ C with the coolest time being from June to July and as well receives the heaviest rains in March and April as well as September and November, the rest of the year is normally dry.



Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

Attractions in Queen Elizabeth National Park

- **Gorilla safaris;**

With 326 Gorillas, gorilla safaris and **gorilla trekking** tours are the main tourist activity within the Bwindi. Each day, 2 gorilla groups are normally accessible for tourists to see. The Mubare group consisting of Sixteen gorillas with One Silver back, was officially opened up for tourism back in 1993.The second group is the Habinyanja group that consists of Twenty three gorillas with Two silver backs which was opened up in 1998, July . The final and 3rd gorilla group has Seventeen gorillas with two silver backs, is soon to be opened-up for tourism.

- **The Bird watching safaris;**

As mentioned earlier, the Bwindi is the finest birding safari destination in Uganda with more than 348 species of birds that are extremely hard or challenging to see in a number of other areas within East African. Some of the other special species include; the Dusky Crimson, honey guide, Bar-tailed Trogon, the Wing, Warbler, White-tailed Blue Monarch Short-tailed Warbler, Yellow-eyed black Fly-catcher, kivi ground thrush as well as Rusty-faced woodland Gruel's Rush Warbler and even a passionate bird watcher may be in a position to identify up to 100 species every day.

- **The Nature Walks to Bwindi Forest;**

Visitor having 2 or more days within Bwindi impenetrable national park may take part in a hiking tour across the 4 outland hiking-trails that are popularly conducted within the park. On each one of these trails, you'll be able to experience and acquire information about the different bird species, the various primates, several butterflies, different trees plus the other species in this Eco system.

- **The river Munyanga walk;**

A brief walk for the visitors with less time to spend on the edge of the forest offers tourist an unforgettable view of birds together with primates.



Queen Elizabeth National Park

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Queen Elizabeth National Park is in southwest Uganda. Leopards roam the Mweya Peninsula, which lies beside Lake Edward. Nearby Lake Katwe is a huge volcanic explosion crater. Boats on the Kazinga Channel float past hippos and Nile crocodiles. Chimpanzees inhabit the Kyambura Gorge. Trails lead to bat caves in the central Maramagambo Forest. The Ishasha area is home to tree-climbing lions and shoebill storks.

Size: 1,978km^2.
Queen Elizabeth spans the equator line; monuments on either side of the road mark the exact spot where it crosses latitude 00.
The park was founded in 1952 as Kazinga National Park, and renamed two years later to commemorate a visit by Queen Elizabeth II.
The park is home to over 95 mammal species and over 600 bird species.
The Katwe explosion craters mark the park's highest point at 1,350m above sea level, while the lowest point is at 910m, at Lake Edward.



Queen Elizabeth National Park

Attractions in Queen Elizabeth National Park

Mweya Peninsula

The peninsula is the heart of sightseeing activities with excellent accommodation in the park. The only way to enjoy your tour in this park is by touring with a ranger guide. This person helps you explore the park as well as the distant parts of the peninsula. Mweya information center organizes all the activities that tourists may want to get involved in. The most exciting aspect about this peninsular is the fact that its overlooks Katwe bay of Lake Edward. Morestill, it has a souvenir shop full of **Uganda safari** items that will always remind you of park

Kazinga Channel.

The Kazinga channel is about 40m long adjoining Lake Gorge to Lake Edward. It has the perfect view of the parks' major wildlife ventures. The shores of the lake attracts a large concentration of mammals, birds as well as reptiles all year around. The animals such as Uganda Kobs, buffalo, lions, elephants and others can be viewed well by the Nile cruise or probably at the entrance of Lake Edward. The operation of the cruise run from 15.00 and 17.00, furthermore voyages run 11.00 and 13.00 depending on the demand of the tourists.

The Equator and the Queen's Pavilion

The Uganda's Equator provides a beautiful place for photo shooting along with craft shops that can make you buy a souvenir .The Queen's Pavilion is easily spotted by the northern entrance to the Crater Drive.

Ishasha Tree Climbing Lions

Ishasha covers an area of about 100km south of Mweya.The Park's distant southern segment gives a genuine Africa wilderness experience. Among the inhabitants in this place include savannah woodland, Ishasha River along with Lake Edward that has a diversity of wildlife such as climbing lions, rare shoebill stork and man



Murchison Falls National Park

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Murchison Falls National Park sits on the shore of Lake Albert, in northwest Uganda. It's known for Murchison Falls, where the Victoria Nile River surges through a narrow gap over a massive drop. Park wildlife includes elephants and hippos, and there are chimpanzees in the Kaniyo Pabidi mahogany forest. The Lake Albert Delta is home to rare shoebill storks. There are game fish in the cascades of Karuma Falls.

Attractions in Murchison National Park Uganda, What To See

The Nile and Murchison Falls

- When the park was established in 1952, the Game Department enthused, 'The main tourist attractions of this park was definitely the unique Murchison Falls as well as the River Nile with its streaming hippo and serried ranges of crocodile along the sandbanks, as well as large numbers of different species getting down to drink & bathe.
- Presently the spotlight of a visit to Murchison is the launch trip up the stream to observe the Falls and riverbank wildlife. The launch starts at 09.00 and 14.00 every day. The round trip takes 3 hrs. Another boat trip goes downstream from Paraa down to the papyrus delta at the point were the river enters into Lake Albert. This 4-5 hr return adventure provides a good chance of discovering the shoebill stork and different varieties of Uganda safari wildlife.

Murchison National Park

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Attractions in Murchison National Park

- **Rabongo and Kaniyo Pabidi forests**
- Trails through Kaniyo Pabidi forest for 8 kilometer inside Kichumbar Gate, offer the opportunity to track chimpanzee and primates below Uganda's largest left mahogany. Birdwatching is excellent with the opportunity of sighting rarities while the yellow-footed flycatcher, white thi hornbill and Ituri batis. Nature walks are as well offered up at Rabongo forest.
- **Buligi area**
  The park's superior savanna game viewing aspect, this grassland wilderness is located between the Victoria Albert Niles with excellent views towards the western rift valley beyond Lake Albert in the DRC. A drive from Paraa passing Delta Point takes 3 to 4 hours. Morning & late afternoon are the best times for sight game drives. A ranger guide from UWA is recommended to help you in most of your game drive.
- **Flora and Fauna**
- The park is subjugated by woodland, wetland, savannah as well as tropical forest that is well known to be a habitant for over 76 mammal species and over 450 different bird species. Among the big mammals include hippo, Rothschild's giraffe,warthlog,cape buffalo, Uganda kob,hartebeest and elephants.The Nile corridor of the Murchison has a big collection of water birds such as rare shoebill stork and also has a large concentration of Nile crocodile.Kaniyo Pabidi forest is a home to primates, chimpanzees and over 360 species of different birds.

Lake Mburo National Park

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Lake Mburo National Park is located in Kiruhura District in the Western Region of Uganda. The park is about 30 kilometres (19 mi), by road, east of Mbarara, the largest city in the sub-region. This location is approximately 240 kilometres (150 mi), by road, west of Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest city. The coordinates of the park are 00 36S, 30 57E (Latitude:0.6000; Longitude:30.9500).

- The park has a variety of animals such as zebra, hippopotamus, impala, warthog, common eland, African buffalo, jackal, African leopard, and over three hundred (300) bird species. At 260 square kilometres (100 sq mi), the park is the smallest of Uganda's savannah national parks. The park has camp grounds and permanent tent facilities for visitors. In 2009, the Uganda Wildlife Authority, which manages the park announced plans to introduce balloon tourism in the park.[3]
- Since 2005, the protected area is considered a Lion Conservation Unit.

Attractions at lake Mburo National Park

- **Wildlife Game Drives:**Game Drives through the Park allow you to see many animals and birds. Be sure that a Uganda Wildlife Authority Ranger is on board the vehicle to point out the various species of birds and mammals you might otherwise miss.

Lake Mburo is the only park in Uganda with Eland, Impala Antelopes, Giraffes. Game drives prove to be rewarding with leopards and at time lions.

- **Night Game Drives:** Nocturnal Game Drives in Lake Mburo National Park are one of the memorable activities one can do here. Spot the creatures of the night such as leopards, even lions on the prowl in the park.

Lake Mburo National Park

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- **Boat Safaris on Lake Mburo:**

A boat ride on Lake Mburo gets you in touch with the flora and fauna of the lake. Along the bank, you will see lots of animals coming to water especially during the dry season. There are hippos, crocodiles, buffaloes, antelopes, zebras, also 3 kinds of otters are found in the lake itself.

- **Birding in Lake Mburo National Park:**

Lake Mburo National Park is one of the best place for birding in Uganda with over 350 species of birds that are found here.

Birders will find he swampy valleys of Warukiri and Miriti, and the roadsides between Rwonyo camp and the jetty to be excellent areas for birding and one may spot the rare shoebill Stork here.

Kibale National Park

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Size: 795km^2

Kibale is highest at the park's northern tip, which stands **1,590m above sea level**. The lowest point is 1,100m on the floor of the Albertine Rift Valley to the south.

351 tree species have been recorded in the park, some rise to over 55m and are over 200 years old.

Kibale's varied altitude supports different types of habitat, ranging from wet **tropical forest on the Fort Portal plateau** to woodland and savanna on the rift valley floor.

Kibale is one of Africa's foremost research sites. While many researchers focus on the chimpanzees and other primates found in the park, others are investigating Kibale's ecosystems, wild pigs and fish species, among other topics.

Kibale National Park

Kibale National Park contains one of the loveliest and most varied tracts of tropical forest in Uganda. Forest cover, interspersed with patches of grassland and swamp, dominates the northern and central parts of the park on an elevated plateau.

Kibale is famously known for Chimpanzee tracking

The park is home to a total of 70 mammal species, most famously 13 species of primate including the chimpanzee.

It also contains over 375 species of birds. Kibale adjoins Queen Elizabeth National Park to the south to create a 180km-long corridor for wildlife between Ishasha, the remote southern sector of Queen Elizabeth National Park, and Sebitoli in the north of Kibale National Park.

The Kibale-Fort Portal area is one of Uganda's most rewarding destinations to explore. The park lies close to the tranquil Ndali-Kasenda crater area and within half a day's drive of the Queen Elizabeth, Rwenzori Mountains and Semuliki National Parks, as well as the Toro-Semliki Wildlife Reserve.

Attractions at Kibale national park

Chimpanzee Trekking:

Most visitors to Kibale Forest go chimpanzee tracking, which means that you will be one hour with a chimpanzee group. Some want more of the experience of being with the chimpanzees and you can have more.

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Kibale National Park

- Chimpanzee Habituation Experience.

Kibale Forest is the best place in East Africa for the Chimpanzee Habituation Experience. It is an all-day experience with the chimpanzees in Kibale Forest

- **Bushcraft Children Activities:**

Children under the age of 15 cannot track chimpanzees but there are plenty Kid-Friendly Things to do and see while the parents are tracking the chimpanzees.

- Hikes and Nature walks

Nature walks and hikes abound in, near and around Kibale Forest National Park in Uganda. There is even a hike that traverses the length of the park.

- Nocturnal forest walks

The night forest walk takes place after dinner in Kibale Forest. You are guided by Uganda Wildlife Rangers equipped with spotlights to see the forest come alive at night.

Rwenzori Mountains National Park

Named after the Rwenzori Mountains, the park covers 998 sq kms in western Uganda, bordering Democratic Republic of Congo. Also known as the “Mountains of the Moon”, renown as a world-class hiking and mountaineering destination. The mountains have six (6) snow-capped peaks. Only experienced hikers are recommended to attempt the high peaks. The best periods to visit the park are in the dry seasons of December to February and June to August.





Semiliki National Park

Semiliki is 221 sq kms in size and located in western Uganda along the Albertine Rift valley system. Park of special interest to birders for some 40 Congolese bird species recorded no where else in the country. Park is home to 8 species of primate, 400 birds and 300 butterfly species, elephant, buffalo, leopard, civet, bush baby and flying squirrels. Game viewing, birding, guided walking safaris to hot springs and visits to the Bakonjo tribe (pygimies) are the major activities in the park.





Mount Elgon National Park

Set on the Kenya border in eastern Uganda, Mount Elgon National Park encompasses at 4,321 metre mountain for which it is named. It has the largest base of any volcano in the world. Activities include: day walks, caving excursions and hikes. Worth visiting is the romantic Sipi Falls.



Mgahinga National Park

This is the smallest gorilla home jus 33.7 sq. kms wide, located in the southwestern corner of Uganda, bordering Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo. Gorilla trekking, caving and volcano hikes are the major tourist activities. Enroute is the lovely 38 – acre island – Lake Bunyonyi hemmed in by the terraced hills in what has been branded 'The Switzerland of Africa'.



