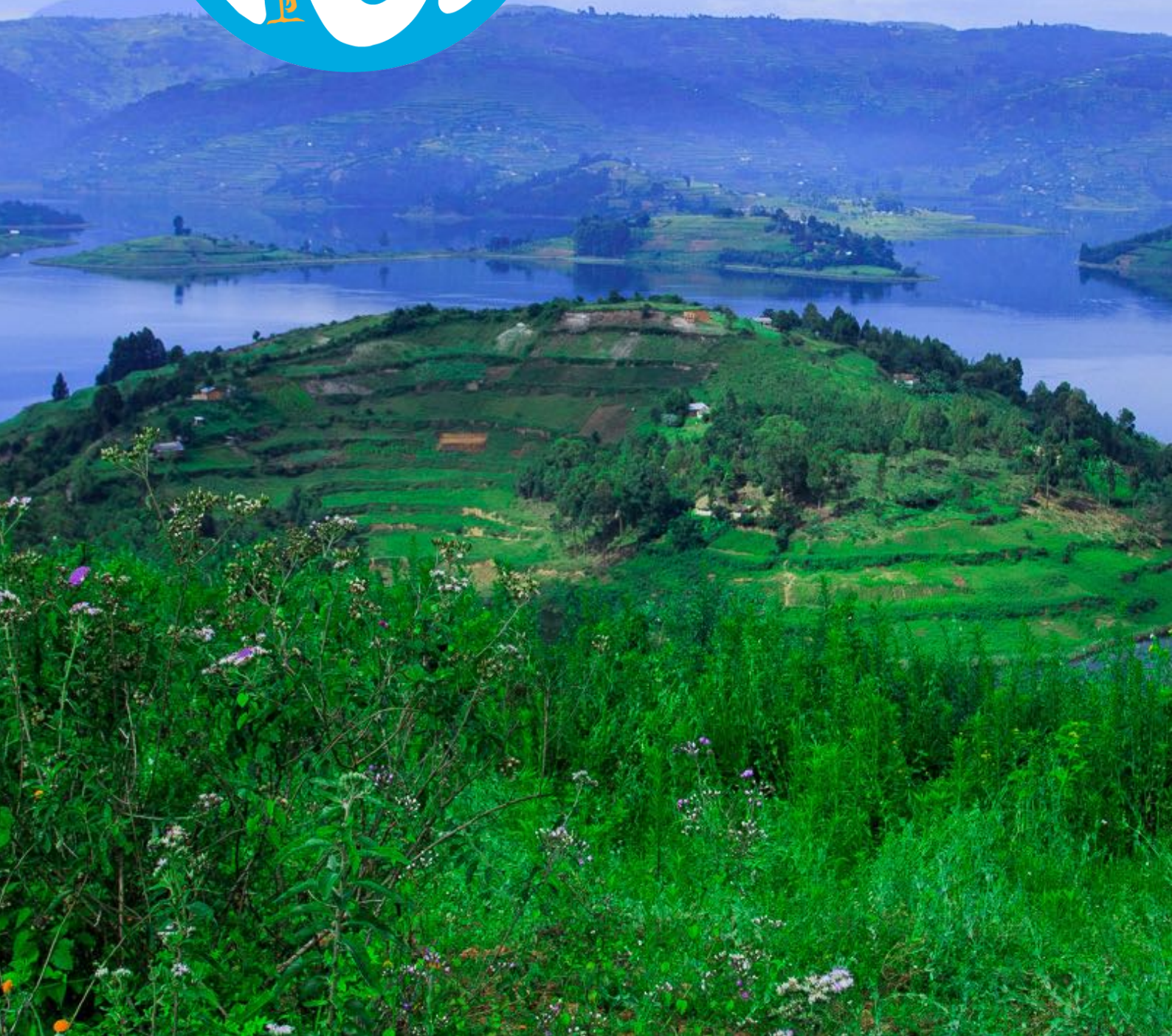


THE INTRICATE WEST

8 Day Safari





PHOTOS IN THE MIST

9 DAY PHOTOGRAPHIC SAFARI

THROUGH WESTERN UGANDA

Intro

Get lost in the west with chimps, birds, picturesque terrains, mountains, rainforests, blanketing rolling hills, tree climbing lions and elusive big cats on this amazing 8 day trip.

Itinerary Brief

Day 1: Pick up in Entebbe – transfer to Kibale

Day 2: To Kibale Forest National Park / Chimp Habituation Experience

Day 3 : To Queen Elizabeth National Park – evening game drive

Day 4: Safari game drive and boat safari in the Kazinga Channel in Queen Elizabeth National Park

Day 5: Ishasha sector – morning game drive and proceed to Bwindi

Day 6: Gorilla tracking in Bwindi impenetrable Forest National Park

Day 7: Transfer to Lake Mburo and take a night game drive

Day 8: Walking Safari Lake Mburo and transfer to Kampala/ Entebbe





Day One **Transfer to Kibale**

An early start from Entebbe after breakfast and transfer to Fort Portal Town reaching just in time for lunch.

Situated amid lush rolling hillsides swathed in near tea plantations and clouds permitting; offering excellent views across to the glacial peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains to the west. Fort portal is named after a British fortress constructed between 1891 and 1893, on the site of the town's present day golf club, with the aim of protecting the Tooro Kingdom from guerrilla raids by King Kabalega of the greater Bunyoro Kingdom.

Fort Gerry, as it was originally known, was named posthumously after the British consul general of Zanzibar Sir Gerald Portal.

After lunch we will head to our accommodation near Kibale Forest. 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.

Accommodation - Kibale Forest Camp (Midrange)

Kyaninga Lodge (high end)



Day Two: **Kibale Chimp Tracking and Bigodi Swamp**

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.

The Chimpanzee Habituation Experience begins early in the morning and lasts all-day long – you are with a guide, researchers, trackers and others as you are in the presence of Chimpanzees being habituated.

Not only will you see Chimpanzees, but other primates, birds, butterflies, trees, and mammals.

The Chimpanzee Habituation Experience is different from normal chimpanzee trekking in that you are an active participant in the habituation process itself. The Chimpanzee Habituation Experience – also called CHEX is one of the more popular activities for our safari clients.

Covering a total land mass of 560 sq km, the Kibale Forest National Park is dominated with a dense verdant forest in the north that gives way to the medium altitude, damp, ever-green, semi-deciduous forest in the south and all together covering about 77 percent of the total land mass. The remaining 23 percent consists of a number of plantations having exotic conifers and grasslands as well as swamps. All these serve as a diversity of habitats to the various species of birds living within this park. The Kibale National Park is a wide national park, sheltering a huge chunk of rainforest, and swamps that supports a diversity of flora and animal life. With a flourishing tropical rain-forest, swamp and charming diversity, this is one of the very attractive and striking forests within Uganda.

After tracking our closest cousins, we will head to Bigodi swamp to see some more interesting wildlife.

The Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary is an fascinating area, located in Magombe swamp. This area is recognized for an extensive array of biodiversity among which are several primates species like the red colobus monkey, baboon, black & white colobus monkey, blue monkey, grey cheeked mangabey, vervet monkey, red tailed monkey and the L'Hoest monkey. Additional Mammals such as chimpanzees, Sitatunga, mongooses, bush pigs, otters plus bush bucks, also visit this swamp coming from the adjacent Kibale National Park.

Accommodation - Kibale Forest Camp

Kyaninga Lodge





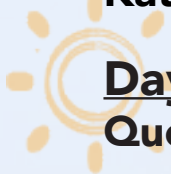
Day Three **Queen Elizabeth**

We will leave Fort Portal early morning after breakfast to drive to Queen Elizabeth. Reaching just in time for lunch and an afternoon game drive.

Set against the backdrop of the jagged Rwenzori Mountains, the park's magnificent vistas include dozens of enormous craters carved dramatically into rolling green hills, panoramic views of Kazinga channel with its banks lined with hippos, buffalo and elephants, and the endless Ishasha plains, whose fig trees hide lions ready to pounce on herds of unsuspecting Uganda kob.

Accommodation - Pumba Cottages (Midrange)

Katara Lodge (High end)



Day Four **Queen Elizabeth game drive and boat cruise**

Start your day early with a 6 o'clock coffee or tea wake-up call, ready for your early morning game drive. Make sure to ask the hotel staff for a packed breakfast that morning. A popular route for the game drive is the Kasenyi sector, well-known for its lions that prey on Queen Elizabeth's large population of Uganda Kob (antelope) that mate around this area.

Wildlife to look out for includes elephants, antelope, warthogs, baboons and occasionally a hyena. If you are very lucky, you may spot a Giant Forest Hog, Africa's largest pig. Keep your eyes peeled to spot an elusive leopard!

In the afternoon, you will take a boat for a water safari on the Kazinga Channel at Mweya that connects the two lakes of Edward and George. This is likely to be a big highlight of your trip! The Kazinga Channel lies in central Queen Elizabeth, its banks fertile with large mammals such as hippo, elephant and buffalo.

The expert Uganda Wildlife Authority guides will identify many of the Channel's 100 bird species and you're likely to see African Skimmers, Great White Pelicans, Spoonbill and a number of Bee eater species. Hippos wallow at the edge of the water, huge Nile crocodiles bask in the sun and elephants come down to drink.

After this excursion, we will drive to Ishasha where we will be spending the night.

Accommodation - Topi Lodge (Midrange)

Ishasha Wilderness Camp (High end)

Day Five

Ishasha game drive and transfer to Bwindi

In the early morning we will once again drive off in the adventurous vast savannah of the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth NP to search for interesting sights such as the endemic tree climbing lions.

These lions in Ishasha climb on the tree tops as a way of protecting themselves from crawling insects and gnawing tsetse flies that are at the bottom. However, some people believe that they move from branch to branch in order to get warmth and stay away from the heat that is on the ground. In the branches though, the winds are cool which might actually be the reason they are motivated to climb, though the real reason as to why these lions are able to climb remains unknown. In the evenings, the lions head to the trees to find rest and refreshment from the cool tree shades after having a sumptuous meal they might have hunted earlier.

After the game drive we head to the lodge for lunch and then start the drive to Bwindi Forest, the home of the mountain gorillas. The journey takes us from the savannah via cultivated hills to the jungle covered mountains of Bwindi.

Accommodation - Buhoma Gorilla Camp(Midrange)

Nkuringo Gorilla Lodge (High End)

Meal Plan : Full Board





Day Six

Gorilla Tracking Bwindi

You will have an early breakfast and be driven to the Park Headquarters for a briefing at 7:30 am about the rules of Gorilla Tracking. After the briefing, you will set off for the Gorilla trekking in the thick jungle.

The jungle is very lively with rich forest sounds. The trek ranges between 2 – 8 hours and you have one hour to stay with the Gorillas once sited.

Gorilla Tracking is a captivating and unforgettable experience which more than repays the effort needed to reach Bwindi and to trek through the forest. Bwindi has thirteen habituated gorilla groups that are tracked by tourists. Three of these are in the vicinity of Buhoma and one at Nkuringo. Uganda gorillas can also be visited in Ruhija and Rushaga regions of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

GORILLA TRACKING NOTE:

You can also choose to do the Gorilla habituation experience instead. By choosing this option, you will get to spend more time with the great apes.

Gorilla habituation experience in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is an initiative aimed at giving more time with gorillas to those who can afford. Gorilla habituation experience permits cost USD1500.00 per trek in the southern part of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and each gorilla family under habituation is visited by a maximum number of 4 people.



Optional Extra:

Batwa Community walk (\$85 per person)

In the afternoon after gorilla tracking, you can opt for a community walk among the Bwindi indigenous natives, the Batwa people who used to live in the Bwindi forest before it was gazetted as a National Park and learn about their life and culture as forest people. You will have dinner and stay overnight at your previous lodge.

For a long time, the Batwa pygmies depended on forest resources for survival. They used to hunt forest animals using spears and arrows for meat and gathering plants and fruits for food. They could harvest honey and depend on shrubs for medicine. They constructed huts using trees, leaves and climbing plants from the forest. In other words, one can conclusively say that the Batwa Pygmies lived in harmony with the forest, and animals like mountain gorillas, chimpanzees, forest elephants, birds among others.

When Bwindi Impenetrable National Park was gazetted and declared a world heritage, the Batwa were expelled from the forest and their life changed there and then leaving their lives endangered since they had no land outside the forest and were not used the life outside the forest.

The hike is moderately strenuous. Parts of the trail are steep but manageable. The path is well-maintained, and the guide will travel at your desired pace. The hike is not recommended for clients with major mobility issues or severe health problems that could place them at risk in an isolated environment.

Accommodation - Buhoma Gorilla Camp

Nkuringo Gorilla Lodge





Day Seven

Transfer to Lake Mburo

Have breakfast and drive to Lake Mburo National Park. Lying in the rain shadow area between Lake Victoria and the Rwenzori Mountains, Lake Mburo is home to over 350 bird and animal species including; the zebras, eland, impalas, oribi, buffaloes, water buck, hippos, leopard, reed-buck and hyenas.

With over 13 lakes in the area, this lake also forms part of the 50km long wetland system that is linked by the swamp. It's known that five of these lakes lie in the park's border. It was once covered with the open savannah and it contains woodland since there are no elephants to tame the unique vegetation. Within the western part of the park, the savannah is also spread with the rocky ridges as well as the forested gorges and patches of papyrus as well as narrow bands of the lush riparian woodland line in many lakes.

Depending on road conditions, we should reach just in time for an afternoon game drive. We will then check into our lodge to refresh and watch the sunset before embarking on an optional night game drive in pursuit of the elusive African Leopard.

The striking leopard is one of the hardest large species to observe in Uganda, thanks to its nocturnal, solitary behaviour and well-camouflaged coat. Their survival is partly due to their adaptability to warm and cold climates and ability to climb trees while carrying heavy prey - keeping it safe from other predators such as lions and hyenas.

Lake Mburo might have the highest leopard concentration ever recorded, due to its perfect leopard habitat and thousands of impala which are leopards' favourite prey in Mburo. The Leopard's secretive habits and wide-ranging distribution make it difficult to establish the actual population. A total of 27–36 individuals has been estimated in Lake Mburo National Park.

Accommodation - Rwakobo Rock



Day Eight **Walking Safari**

Early morning game drive with a packed breakfast in tow. We will go catch the morning light in all its glory with the added bonus of the wildlife.

We will then leave our vehicle and embark on a guided walking safari through the park.

Photograph game at your own pace and with the knowledge of a wildlife expert. Lake Mburo is one of the few parks where a walking safari is safe and highly recommended.

There are different trails that you can follow during these game walks in Lake Mburo national park. At Rwonyo, this guided walk will lead you to a salt lick where a variety of animals is attracted to the salty rocks. The trail to the western side of the lake begins at 7 am and usually takes approximately 2 hours. This early morning of the day, you may encounter hyenas returning to their dens and hippos heading to the lake. Walks through the woodland allow one to sight forest birds and mammals, and the hike to the top of the hill rewards visitors with an eye catching view of 9 of the region's 14 lakes. It is such a rare experience to be able to walk in a park amidst the wildlife with a breath of fresh air from the lake.

After you walk, we will proceed to Kampala/Entebbe stopping for lunch and photos at the equator.

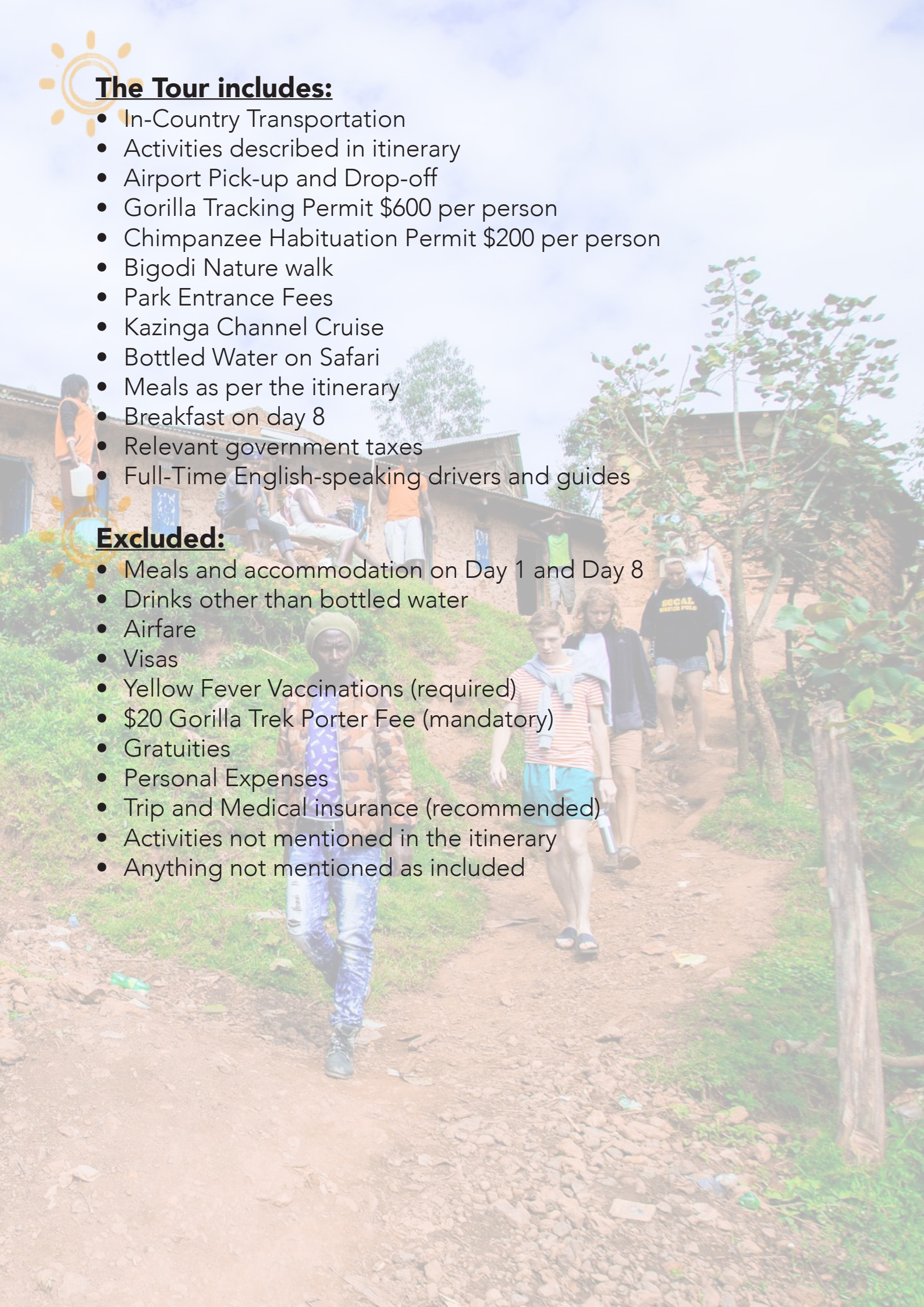


The Tour includes:

- In-Country Transportation
- Activities described in itinerary
- Airport Pick-up and Drop-off
- Gorilla Tracking Permit \$600 per person
- Chimpanzee Habituation Permit \$200 per person
- Bigodi Nature walk
- Park Entrance Fees
- Kazinga Channel Cruise
- Bottled Water on Safari
- Meals as per the itinerary
- Breakfast on day 8
- Relevant government taxes
- Full-Time English-speaking drivers and guides

Excluded:

- Meals and accommodation on Day 1 and Day 8
- Drinks other than bottled water
- Airfare
- Visas
- Yellow Fever Vaccinations (required)
- \$20 Gorilla Trek Porter Fee (mandatory)
- Gratuities
- Personal Expenses
- Trip and Medical insurance (recommended)
- Activities not mentioned in the itinerary
- Anything not mentioned as included





Gratuities Guidelines

(This is only a guideline. You may use USD)

- Drivers (\$5-10/day, placed in a group envelope at the end of safari)
- Hotel Staff (\$3-5/day; place tips in the Staff Box at reception)
- Chimpanzee Ranger (\$10-15, depending on the quality of your experience)
- Bigodi Walk Guide (\$5-10)
- Canoe Guide (\$5)
- Boat Captain (\$5-10)
- Gorilla Ranger/Tracker (\$10-20, depending on quality of your experience) There will be a lead Ranger, and several assistant Rangers. You may opt to tip them as well, \$5-10.
- Porter during Gorilla Trek (hiring at \$20 is mandatory, gratuity \$10-15 depending on level of assistance)

We will stop at a safe ATM prior to departure so that you can get Ugandan Shillings.

You will not need a lot, but if you plan to buy crafts at the market or from the communities, or snacks during gas/bathroom breaks, you will want to use shillings.

We have found that taking the equivalent of \$50-100 USD from the ATM is sufficient, and any extra can be left as tips before you leave Uganda.

