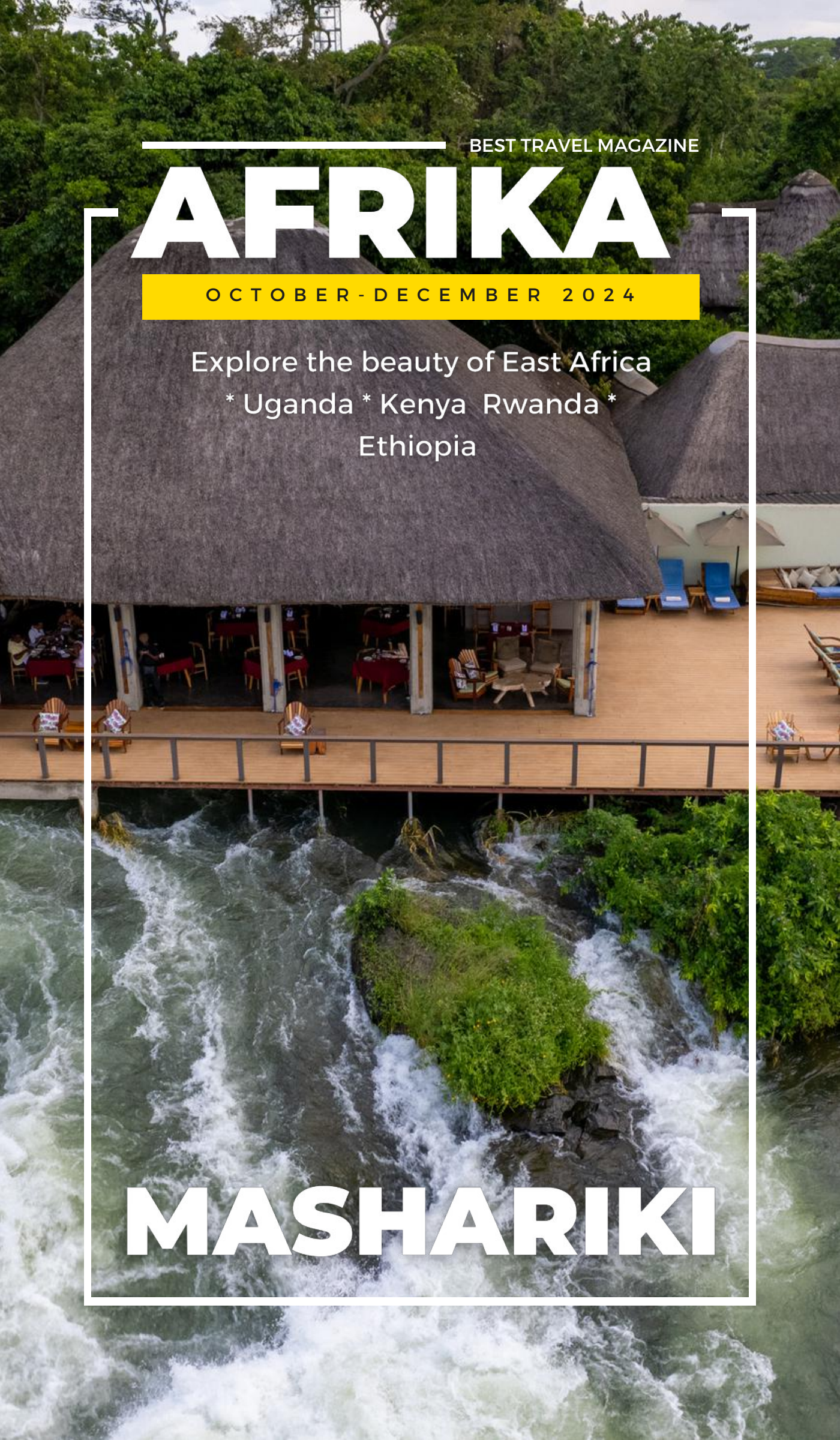
BEST TRAVEL MAGAZINE

AFRIKA

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2024

Explore the beauty of East Africa
* Uganda * Kenya Rwanda *
Ethiopia



MASHARIKI



LET'S GO EAST AFRICA

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LEMALA

An interview with James Haigh, Head of Sales and Marketing at Lemala, gives you an insight to 2025

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UGANDA - AND THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

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R1,000,000 IN TRAVEL PRIZES

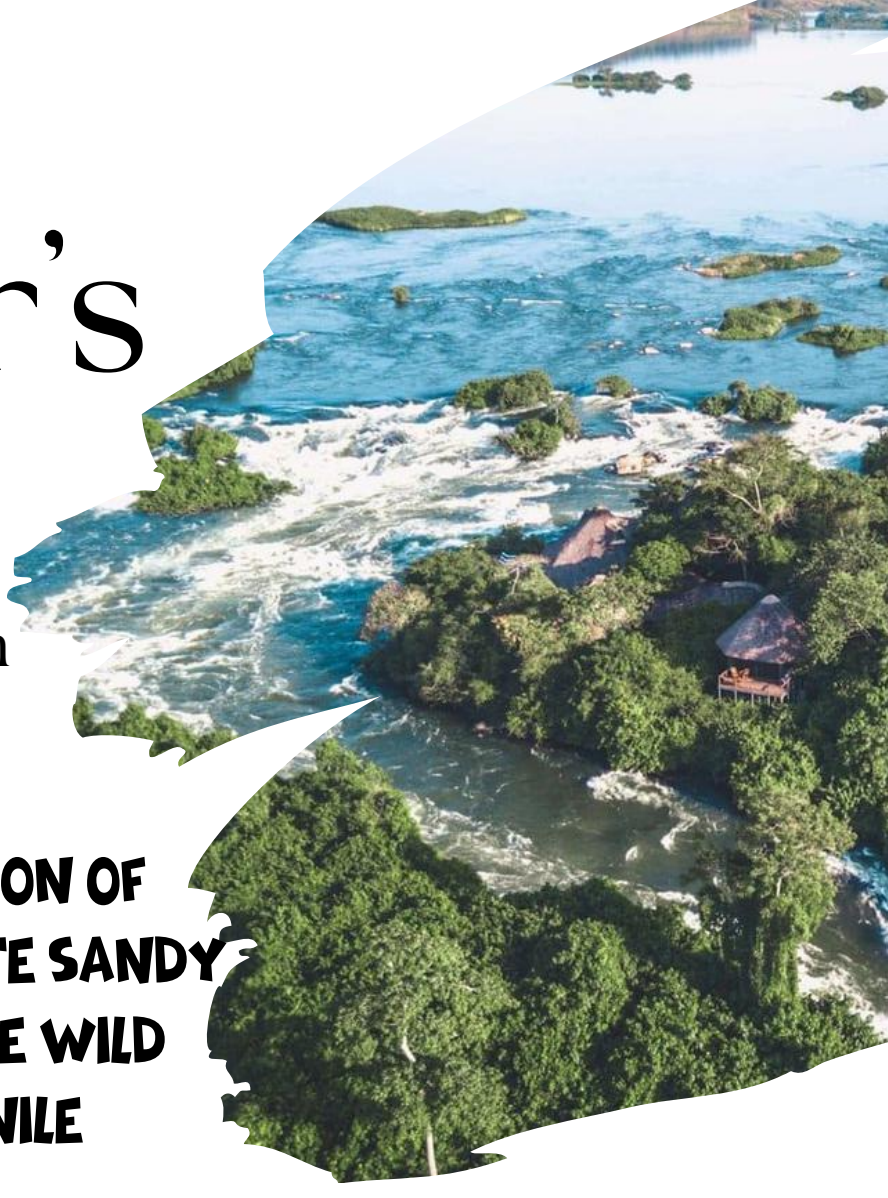
WIN!

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LEMALA
AUTHENTIC CAMPS & LODGES

Editor's Notes

Geniene Preston



ANNUAL MIGRATION OF WILDEBEES, WHITE SANDY BEACHES AND THE WILD WATERS OF THE NILE

All of these things inspire us to visit East Africa, the heart of Africa. From the people to the bush and the safaris, to beauty of climbing Kilimanjaro, its all there. We cover Lemala Camps and Lodges and together with Lets Go Tanzania, the next few issues is going to be both interesting as well as knowing that this has to be your next destination. The Pearl of Africa in Uganda gives us such great opportunities to visit as a group.

See you there

Geniene



FLIPMAGZ



Geniene Preston talks to James Haigh - Head of Sales and Marketing at Lemala Camps and Lodges





We were at POATE 2024 (Pearl of Africa Tourism Expo), meeting people from Uganda that have such an extraordinary story to tell. Some of the people have really great stories because they're the ones who are involved. And then there's others who get those involved from Uganda to make things happen.

While on our fam trip earlier in the week, we arrived at the Lemala resort, Wildwaters. Lemala is a South African brand and a proud part of the Tourvest Group. We also had an opportunity to visit the Adrift River Club, where we had the most amazing white river rafting experience, which is all part of the same property.

We were sitting on the veranda of the Wild Waters Lodge, just watching the river Nile rush past, and all I could think of was, “I just hope that's not one of the rapids we're doing on the white river rafting trip”. Apparently Wild Waters Lodge is the most Instagrammable hotel in the world. It could be the second most in the world. What an amazing experience. I just cannot tell you how privileged I felt to be there, and to sit in my bath on the veranda. What an experience, especially to arrive in a boat. We were dropped off on the side of the river and a little boat took us across to the lodge. What a lovely experience. Thank you for that - So tell me a little bit more”.

James Haigh : I think the word unique is overly and badly used in tourism. But I think Lemala Wildwaters Lodge is pretty close. The way I look at it is that it's a much more dramatic location than anything on the Zambezi”.

Geniene Preston : Oh, it is absolutely dramatic. And I didn't realize it until I got there. That was the first lodge’s video I received from UTB last year when I started the Pearl of Africa magazine. I saw this lodge and I just thought, “Oh, can you imagine staying in that lodge?” And while I'm standing on the veranda, I suddenly realized I've seen this video from a drone point of view.

James Haigh : You know the beauty of the whole project is the way that it combines a number of elements to do good in Uganda. At the end of the day, Wild Waters is a private island on a very short stretch of river where we have custodianship over some private forest that has not yet been cut down. It's not forested or farmed. We have Wild Waters, Adrift River Club that you went to visit, Adrift Overland Camp and the Adrift Activities Companies that come together to generate revenue that creates employment and economic activity in a rural community which is not wealthy. This encourages them not to bring the axe to those trees that are the same generations of trees that have grown there since the river flowed from when the pharaohs were building the pyramids - it's a unique piece of river that demands being looked after”.





Geniene Preston : Talking earlier you mentioned that a lot of your staff and a lot of the people you work with are women.

James Haigh : Women are nurturing by nature. So it's wonderful to see that tourism is using women because of their organizational skills. Remember, in East Africa traditionally they have to organize children, job, food, everything in their lives. And now they're also becoming integral to the hospitliaty industry because of their nurturing nature.

So when you arrive at the lodge, we feel nurtured. To give you some examples of that - I've got one of our hashtags that we used through COVID, when we were trying to communicate with the wider world, when it was a little bit difficult to show people what we did, is “Lamala lady led”. For example, my darling wife, Leanne is the CEO, our Head of Finance in Tanzania is a lady, our Head of Finance in Uganda is a lady, our Head of HR, our Head of Procurement, our Head of Operations are all ladies. So we're a very lady led group. which I think flows the whole way through the company. I have an amazing story, perhaps I could share from Tanzania. But it's a project that we want to introduce into Uganda. We had a Masai member of staff that came to us when he just got married. He is a clever guy.

He's fully biologically aware and has been educated. He worked out when he got married, as to why his two younger sisters had not gone to school for two days each month, the whole way through his childhood. Obviously, it's through menstruation and he was horrified at the idea that his sisters have been less educated than him. Because, if they miss two days every month, they miss X number of days in the course of a school year and they progress slower than the boys.

Uganda Airlines
Fly the Crane to the Pearl of Africa

Regional & International Route Map



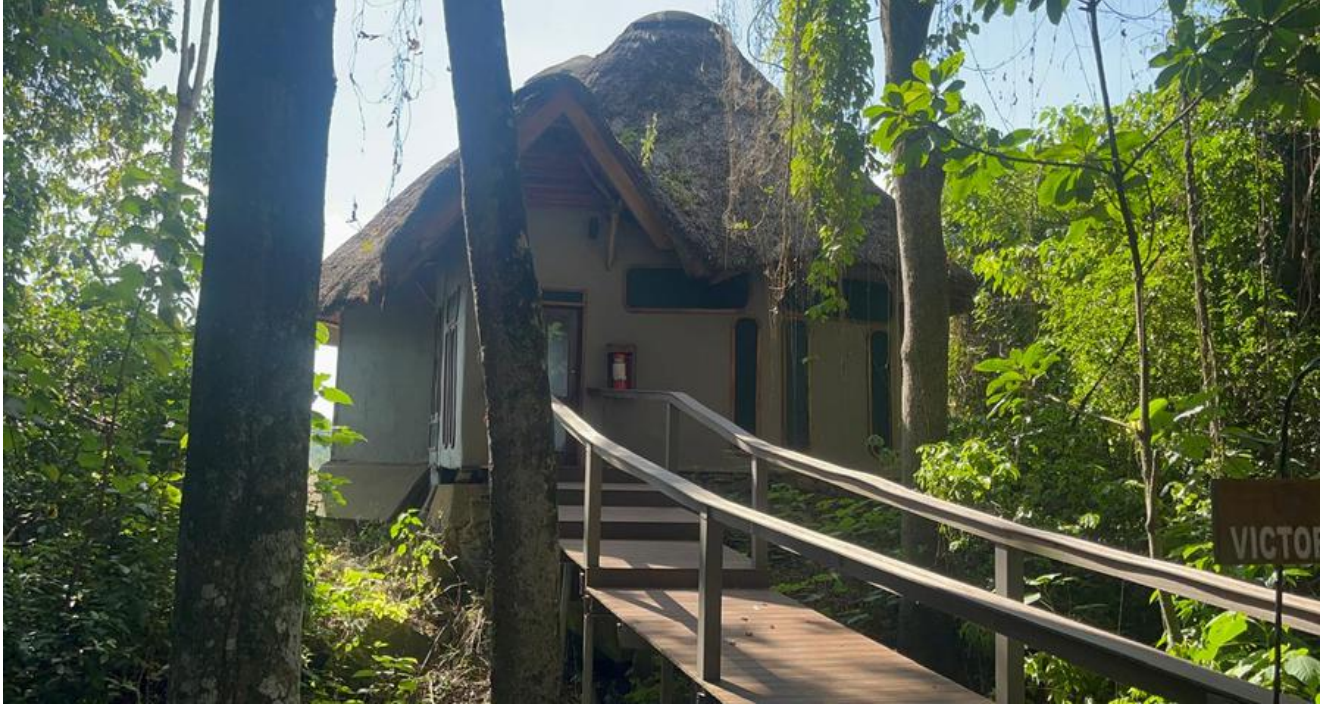
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And in a restricted finance environment, where parents have got to choose between which children are educated and which children aren't educated, the girls progress slower than the boys do. So the money flows to the boys. In a patriarchal society, and I'm not trying to excuse patriarchy, but there's an economic element to it which reinforces the patriarchy. At his behest and with his involvement, we work with a single ladies manufacturing concern in Tanzania and we manufacture reusable sanitary pads for young girls, that go to communities.

And we want to introduce that project here because it's empowering. It levels the playing field so that perhaps more girls complete their education, which means that they're going into motherhood with a greater educational background, so that they can participate financially. So that they can empower their goals.

Absolutely. And over the course of three or four generations that make a huge difference.







Geniene Preston : I think that's a wonderful story. One of the things I loved at Wild Waters was the sign on our bed. When we got there, it was done in coffee beans. It said, Welcome. And then next to my bed was a little sign that said, please don't steal our stuff. Basically in very simple English, don't steal our stuff. If you want something, ask us and we'll sell it to you. It was said as it was, there's no sugar coating. Don't take stuff out the room. It's not there for you to take with you and sustain. And I think at River Club, I loved the fact that they said, we do not support plastic. So we will not fill a plastic water bottle. So why don't you buy one of our aluminum water bottles and we'll fill for you at any time. Exactly. And I just thought, isn't that just saying it the way it is? It's making people aware of the responsibility they have – it's not only for the lodge owners to look after the environment.





James Haigh : Africa leads the way on environmental concerns like that. I travel the rest of the world and the waste, it boggles my mind how much waste there is and how much is all thrown away.

Geniene Preston : I had an interview with Robert, the guide who heads up the river rafting. He was such a cool guy. He's so chilled. I've never come across a more chilled guy than him. And we felt so safe on the river. We had all the kayakers around us. And of course, I lost my paddle in the swirling, whirling water. I felt so bad. I kept saying to him, guys, I didn't mean to drop it. It fell over. No problem. And here was this kayak guy. He said, here you go, here's your paddle. I was like, thank you, because I couldn't understand how they could still find it. But I think one of the nicest things was that you have River Club, the Adrift River Club, where you can stay, in a dormitory style, or a backpacker could stay, because that's what he can afford, right up to Wildwaters, where if you want to stay luxury, you have that.

James Haigh : So we cater for all income earners. Often birthday parties and weddings have a challenge with where people can stay. So let's say you choose a place like Wildwaters. Not everybody can afford the room, but here everybody can stay from an affordability of a tent because you have the Overland camp. And the beauty is that all of these people contribute equally to the conservation. And as you say, with a groups of people, you can have different touch points. Different experiences, but the quality will be the same.





Geniene Preston : What's lovely is you can congregate in the same area. Whereas I look at my son who's about to be 30 and him and his mates are all turning 30 at the same time because they went to school together, but they're all in different income brackets. They didn't all become rich overnight. So they're all in different income brackets. I phoned my son when we were there and I said, I have found the most ideal place for you. First of all, you don't have to drive miles for the activities because they love the bungee and the whitewater. And he said, mom, for the first time, I'm really jealous of where you are.

James Haigh : And the other nice thing that works really well for that kind of thing, is that there are no park fees. There are lots of wonderful places to go in East Africa. But the beauty is that you can go to somewhere like Wildwaters without having to pay park fees. Park fees in South Africa are not particularly expensive, but in East Africa they are very expensive. And in actual fact, quite often more than you would pay for a night of accommodation in Kruger National Park, for example. So people very rarely come just to chill. You can do that at Wildwaters, River Club and Overland Camp because you don't have any extra fees. It's purely goes on accommodation, which is why the accommodation is so affordable. And of course, you can fly here direct from South Africa now.

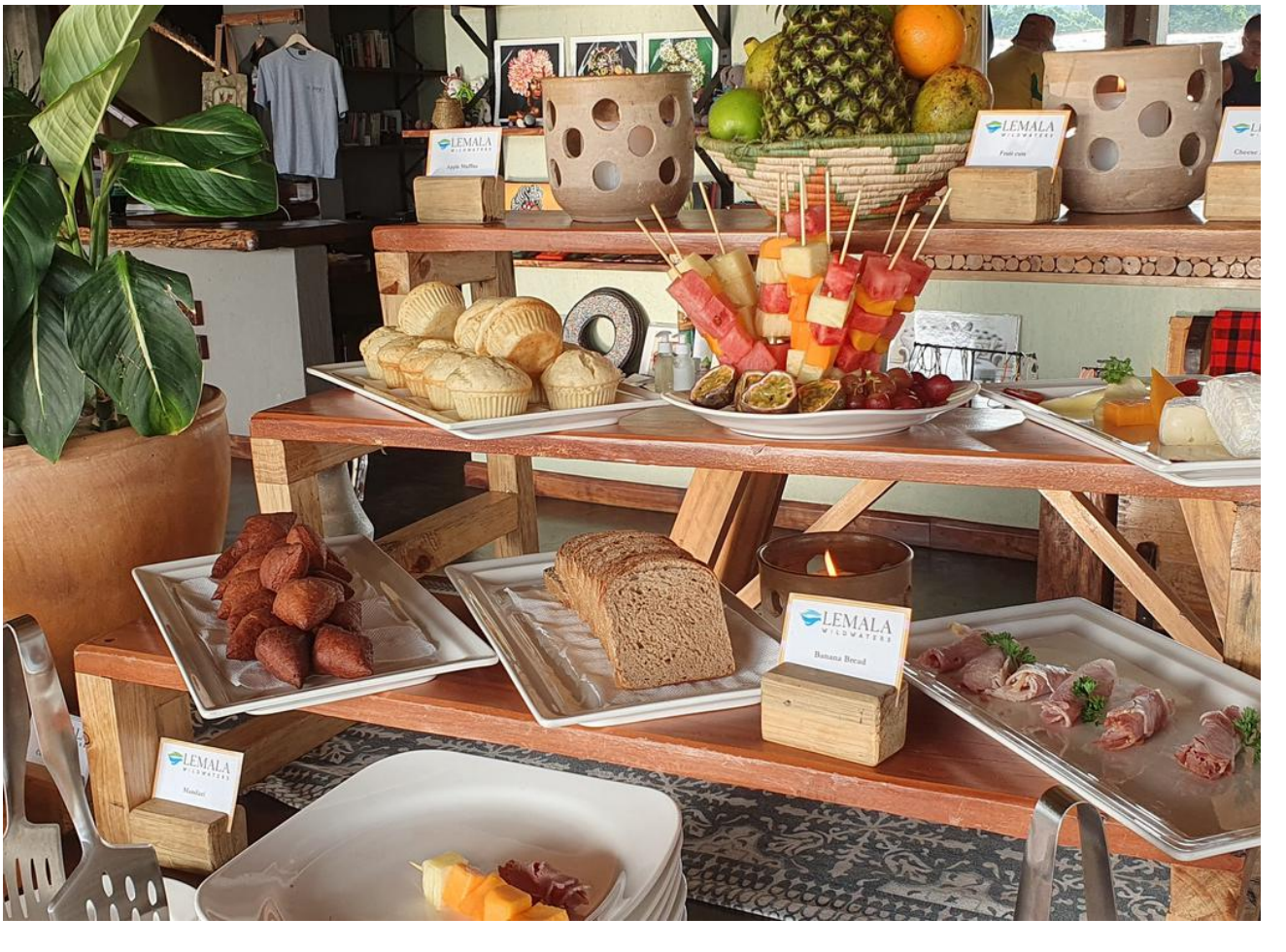
Geniene Preston : It really isn't far. And we found, we did the zip lining and the quad biking on the way to Jinja. So in fact, we did ours on the way back. But it's those kinds of activities, you can do one on the way there, one on the way back. Once you get to Jinja and you get to River Club, you can do all of those activities without travelling a million miles.

James Haigh : Because the one thing that really, I think when you go to an activity, is you don't want to spend two or three hours in the car going to do that activity.

GP And that's what you guys offer. Especially when you use the bypass. So thanks to the government for putting that in, because it makes transport east out of Kampala so much easier.

JH It is literally, we have people coming out for lunch from Kampala.

Geniene Preston : That's fantastic news. And it's democratic. And my goodness, was your food good? Whether we were up at the River Club or whether we were at Wildwaters. What did I have? I just know your Avo is just divine. Keith had a fruit platter. I had the fish curry. Ooh, fish curry is good.



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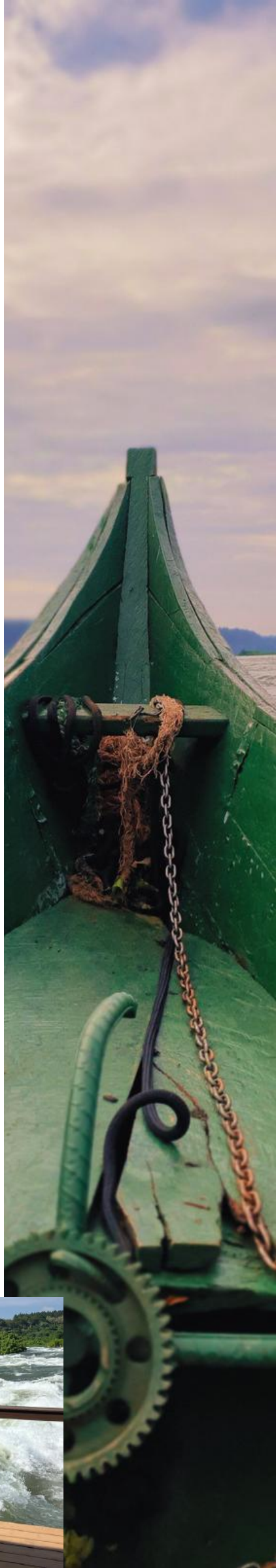
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James Haigh : We are so spoiled here when it comes to fruit and vegetables. Because nothing's pre packed. Nothing's packed and stored for four days and then, gets transported to the venues.You buy it and you eat it that day, or the following day.

Geniene Preston : The fruit and the vegetables that we've experienced here are just mind blowing. I'm not a banana lover. But it’s the best bananas, and best pineapples in the world. Love the pineapple, especially the watermelon, and in fact, as I say, my favorite has to be the pineapples. We should be selling that to the Europeans. With their infatuation with avocado toast. I completely agree. Because a lot of the avos that we get in South Africa are stringy, by the time we get them. Whereas when I come to Uganda, the first thing I always look for is their avos, because it has the very small pip, not the big one. I mentioned to my husband, I think one of the places we definitely have to come and live because we spend so much of our time here. Love the people, the smiles. We called your chef out to come and tell him what a wonderful meal we had and to thank him so much for that meal. The general manager was just amazing. Even at River Club. We were busy like little bees and then we had to fetch our suitcases across from Wild Waters to bring them to River Club. Always nice, always kind, smiled, no problem, nothing's ever a problem.







James Haigh : We're so genuinely pleased to have visitors. I mean it, we don't have clients. Clients are the agents that send people. The people that stay with us are our guests n the true old fashioned sense. It changes how you look at people.

Geniene Preston : It does doesn't it? But I must say, from the perspective of both, having experienced both the River Club, Drift River Club and the Wildwaters, what a package. I can't wait to see what you have in Tanzania and Kenya and other places. And there's more coming. Oh really? Teaser alert, that's what they call it, teaser alert.

James Haigh : There'll be more coming, because it's working. Fortunately in Tanzania and Uganda, we didn't have a bad COVID.

Geniene Preston - you did move your swimming pool at Wild Waters though.



James Haigh - We moved it from there because of some damage while the river was high one year. And I think where it is now is beautiful. And it's flood proof. When it was built when the river was at its highest peak. At one point we had three and a half thousand cubic metres of water a second going past the island. That's a lot of water. And my wife was responsible for rebuilding it and the design. The design prior to that was quite masculine, now it's a lot more feminine, a lot more lighter, which is reflected in the way the staff look at people and how people behave there.

Geniene Preston : And I think transferring the staff by river, I must tell you, I take my hat off to those people going across that river at night. When they go home at night, I just thought to myself, I have a new respect for Ugandans. In so many ways. Not only making baskets - we passed Iwafi on the way to you and I recommend everybody does that, leave Kampala in the morning, go past Iwafi on the way to you. But because it's just such a lovely experience to experience Ugandan life. As it's traditionally known. That's the lovely thing about the drive is that you're not put in a bubble in Uganda in the same way as you can be in some other safaris.

James Haigh : Correct. I think for the right people it's very important to see the reality of urban African life and the dream of the bush. If you just see the dream of the bush, then you're not taking as much from that experience as would benefit you.

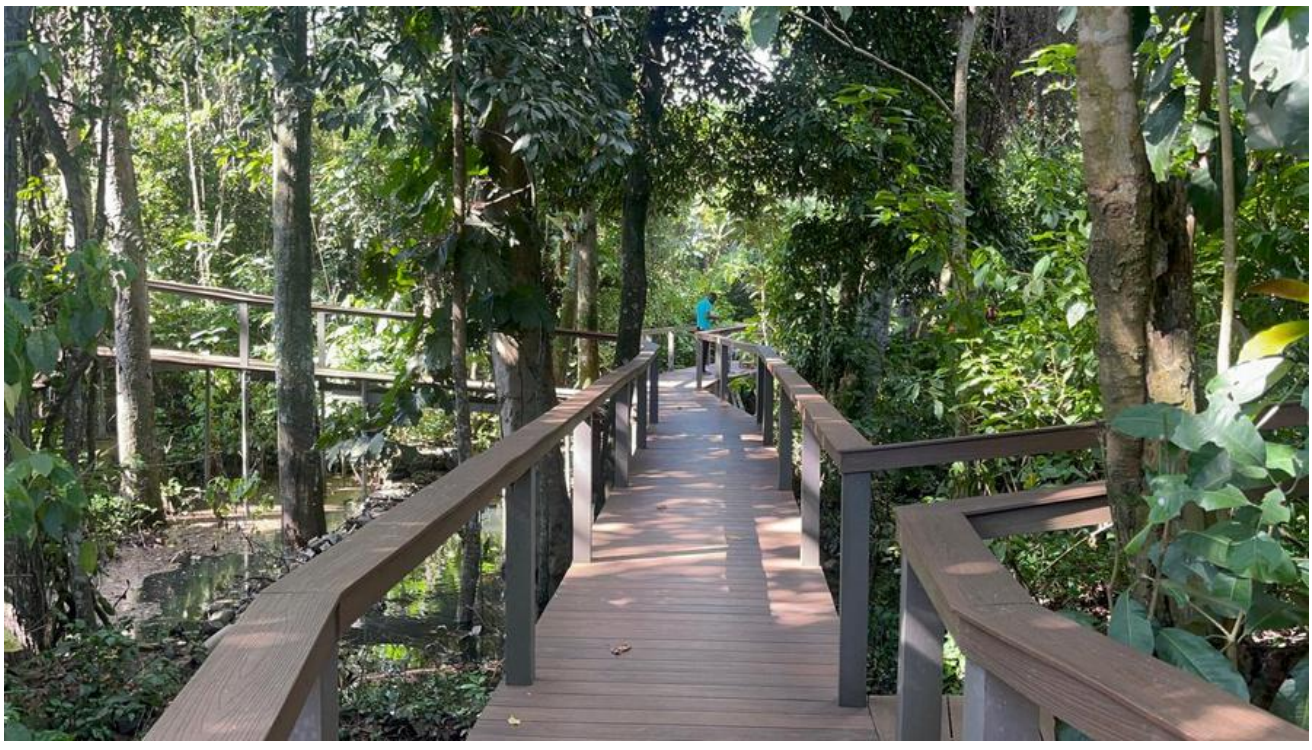


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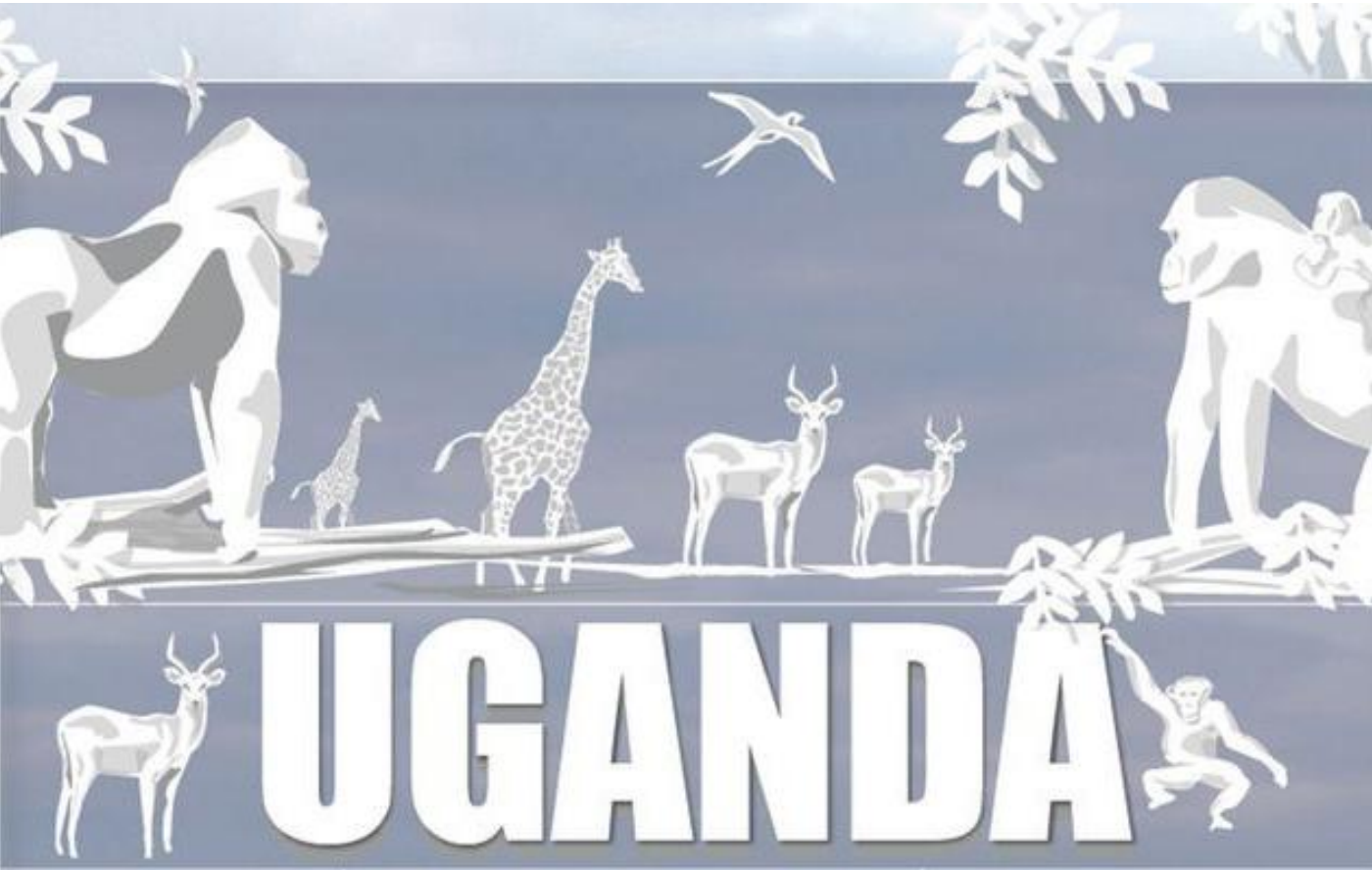
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GIVEAWAY TIME

R1,000,000 IN TRAVEL PRIZES





UGANDA

Capital
Kampala

Languages
English & Swahili

National bird
Crested crane

Currency
Ugandan shillings

Main exports
Coffee, cotton, tea, exotic flowers, vanilla, fruit, & vegetables

25% of Uganda is covered by lakes, rivers and wetlands making the landscape lush and green for most of the year.

More than 1 000 bird species have been recorded in Uganda.

Uganda's montane and lowland forests are home to mountain gorillas and chimpanzees.

Places to see

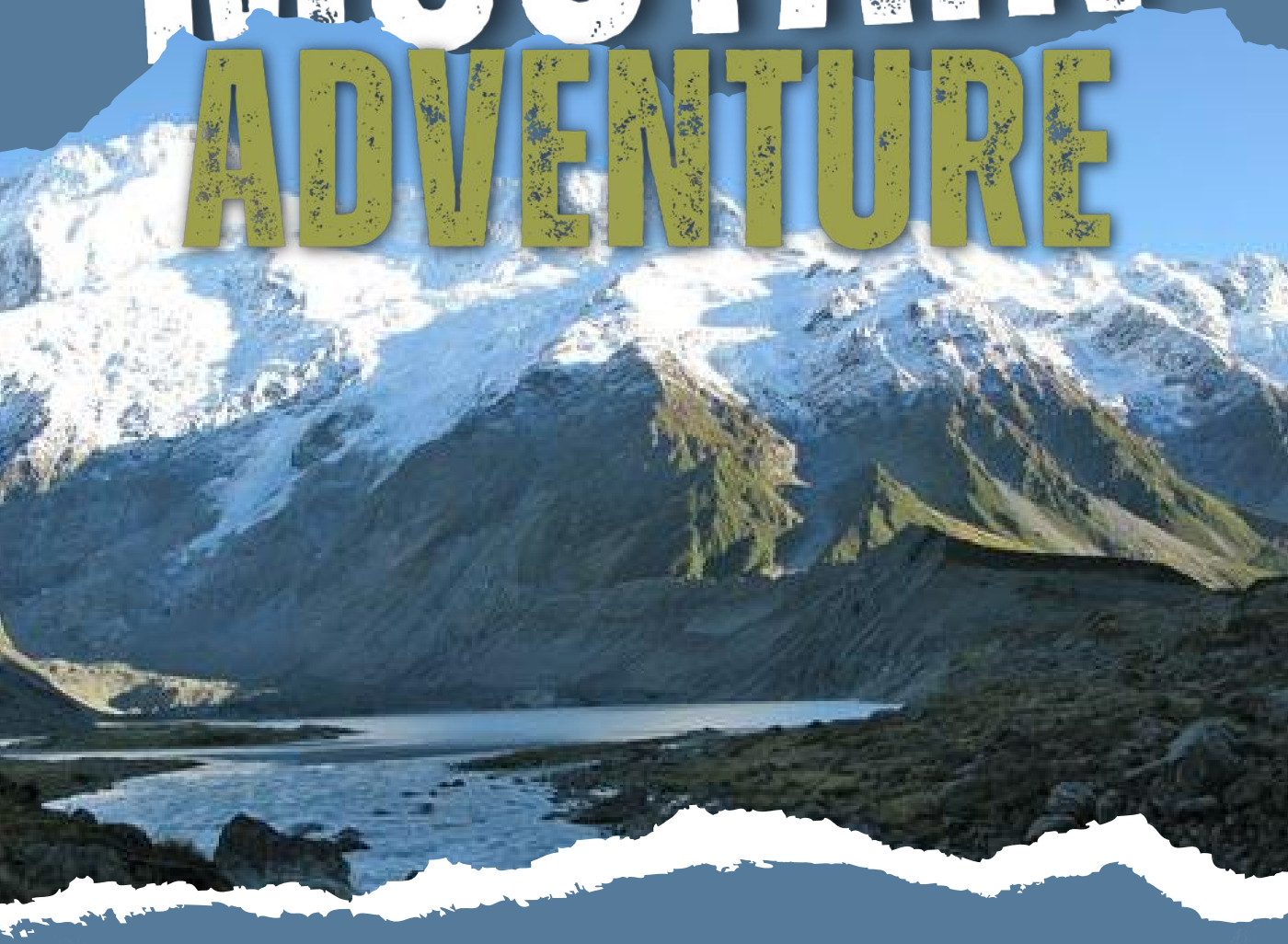


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January to February or June to September

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Adventure tourism in Uganda is booming, thanks to the country's diverse landscapes and rich biodiversity. Here are some of the top adventure tourism activities you can enjoy in Uganda:

Mountain Gorilla Trekking: Uganda is home to about half of the world's remaining mountain gorilla population, making it one of the best places to go gorilla trekking. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Mgahinga Gorilla National Park are the two main gorilla trekking destinations in Uganda.

Chimpanzee Tracking: Kibale National Park is famous for its large population of chimpanzees. Visitors can go on guided chimpanzee tracking excursions to observe these fascinating primates in their natural habitat.

White Water Rafting: The Nile River, particularly the section near Jinja, offers thrilling white water rafting experiences. Rapids ranging from Grade III to Grade V provide plenty of excitement for adrenaline junkies.

Hiking and Mountaineering: Besides gorilla trekking, Uganda offers excellent hiking and mountaineering opportunities. The Rwenzori Mountains provide challenging climbs for experienced mountaineers, while other areas like Mount Elgon and Mount Moroto offer scenic hiking trails.





Bird Watching: With over 1,000 bird species, Uganda is a paradise for bird watchers. Key birding destinations include Queen Elizabeth National Park, Murchison Falls National Park, and Semuliki National Park.

Safari Adventures: Uganda boasts an impressive array of national parks and wildlife reserves where visitors can embark on traditional game drives to see iconic African wildlife such as lions, elephants, giraffes, and more.

Cultural Tourism: Uganda's diverse cultural heritage offers opportunities for immersive cultural experiences. Visitors can interact with local communities, learn about traditional customs, and participate in activities such as drumming, dancing, and storytelling.

Mountaineering: Apart from the Rwenzoris, Uganda offers other mountains suitable for climbing, like Mount Elgon, the Virunga Volcanoes, and Mount Moroto.

Kayaking and Canoeing: In addition to white water rafting, Uganda's rivers and lakes provide excellent opportunities for kayaking and canoeing, allowing visitors to explore serene waterways and spot wildlife along the shores.

Zip-lining and Bungee Jumping: Adventure parks in Uganda, particularly around Jinja, offer activities like zip-lining and bungee jumping, providing thrilling experiences for adrenaline seekers.

Uganda's commitment to sustainable tourism ensures that these adventure activities are conducted responsibly, preserving the country's natural and cultural heritage for future generations to enjoy.

FOUR POINTS
BY SHERATON

Kampala





COMFORT AND CARE

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The Rwenzori Mountains, also known as the "Mountains of the Moon," are a stunning mountain range located in East Africa, straddling the border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). These mountains are renowned for their dramatic, snow-capped peaks and unique glacial formations, despite their proximity to the equator.

The Rwenzori Mountains are home to the third-highest peak in Africa, Mount Stanley, which rises to an elevation of 5,109 meters (16,763 feet) above sea level. The range is characterized by its steep slopes, deep valleys, and diverse ecosystems, including lush rainforests, alpine meadows, and glaciers.

The mountains are part of the larger Albertine Rift, which is one of Africa's most biodiverse regions, hosting a wide variety of plant and animal species, many of which are endemic to the area. The Rwenzori Mountains National Park, established in Uganda, protects much of this unique biodiversity and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

For adventurers and mountaineers, the Rwenzoris offer challenging trekking and climbing opportunities, with several routes varying in difficulty. The most popular route is the Central Circuit, which typically takes about 6 to 7 days to complete and provides stunning views of the mountain landscape.

Despite their natural beauty, the Rwenzori Mountains face various conservation challenges, including deforestation, climate change impacts, and pressures from surrounding human populations. Efforts are underway to address these challenges and preserve this unique ecosystem for future generations to enjoy.







The common or eastern chimpanzee, one of the two subspecies, is the only subspecies in Uganda, with an estimated population of about 5,000 individuals living in Kibale, Budongo Forest, Kalinzu Forest, Bwindi, Bugoma Forest, Rwenzori Mountains, and other forest reserves.

Chimps

NEW STUDY: CHIMPS UNDERGO MENOPAUSE TOO



It's long been thought that, aside from a few species of toothed whales, humans are the only mammal that experiences menopause. But researchers have determined that the females of the Ngogo group of chimpanzees in Uganda do experience menopause, and become infertile at about the age of 50.

RUBEN BOLLING 4:15 AM MON OCT 30, 2023

The researchers not only observed that females over the age of 50 stopped having offspring, menopause was confirmed by a hormonal analysis of the urine collected from those females.

Kevin Langergraber, a primatologist at Arizona State University, and one of the authors of the study, told The New York Times (link here) that he leans toward the explanation that chimps inherently are menopausal, and it is only now being observed in this population because only chimps in this population, due to a favorable environment, have lifespans that typically exceed 50 years.

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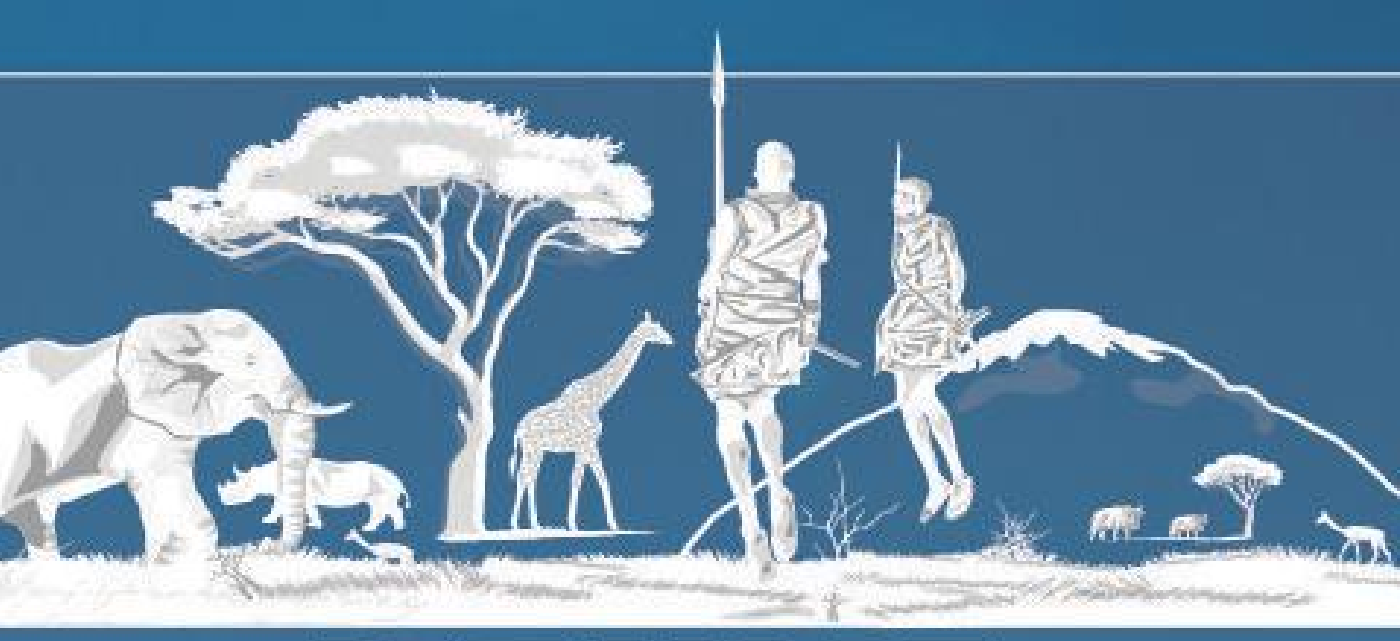
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The common explanation for the uniqueness of human menopause has been the Grandmother Hypothesis. Humans are so intensely social and cultural that evolution favored older females who didn't have their own children at that frail age, but instead assisted in the unusually great effort and time required to raise grandchildren.

But menopause in this chimpanzee group (not to mention the toothed whales) undermines that neat theory, because female chimpanzees leave their birth groups at adulthood. So grandmothers don't live in the same groups as their adult child-bearing daughters. Further, grandmother chimps are not seen to provide extra food to their grandchildren.





KENYA

Capital
Nairobi

Languages
Swahili & English

National animal
Lion

Currency
Kenyan shilling

Main exports
Exotic flowers, tea, coffee & vegetables

Nairobi National Park was established in 1946 and is Kenya's oldest park.

Kenya's national motto is 'Harambee', which means 'Let us all pull together' in Swahili.

The lilac-breasted roller is Kenya's national bird. Rollers are very acrobatic and graceful in flight.

Places to see



Best time to go

Wildebeest Migration
August - November

Safari season
All year round



Sun, sea & safari

Tsavo

- see the big five and a whole lot more
- watch hippos and crocs from an underwater hide
- explore the dramatic Shetani lava flow and caves
- enjoy the wild luxury of the classic East African safari



Kenya Coast

- go all Zen and chill out on a tranquil, palm-fringed beach
- kayak, snorkel or dive the gorgeous coast and reefs
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June - September

Kilimanjaro Treks
Jan - Feb
September

Birdwatching
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table manners

Wash hands before & after meals.

Eat & use utensils only with your right hand. Keep left hand in your lap.

Beverages are served at the end of the meal.

Stay at the dining area until signaled that the conversation is over.

foods to try



- Ugali
- Pilau
- Masala French Fries
- Peanut Stew
- Grilled Corn
- Mandazi Doughnuts
- Chai Tea
- Local Beers



BASIC SWAHILI



A handshake is the standard greeting & close friends may hug. Smiling & humor are highly valued.



Close male friends may hold hands while walking. However, being male homosexual activity is illegal.

HELLO
hujambo (hoo-JAHM-boh)

GOODBYE
kwaheri (kwah-HAIR-ee)

PLEASE
tafadhali (tah-fah-DHAL-ee)

THANK YOU
asante (ah-SAHN-tay)

YOU'RE WELCOME
karibu (kah-REE-boo)

PARDON ME
samahani (sah-mah-HAH-nee)

ENGLISH?
kiingereza (keen-ge-RAY-zah)?

YES
ndio (nDEE-oh)

NO
hapana (hah-PAHN-ah)



Adult women may be called "mama" & adult men "mzee." Children may call adults "aunts" & "uncles."



Haggling is expected at most markets. Typically you can reduce the price by up to half.

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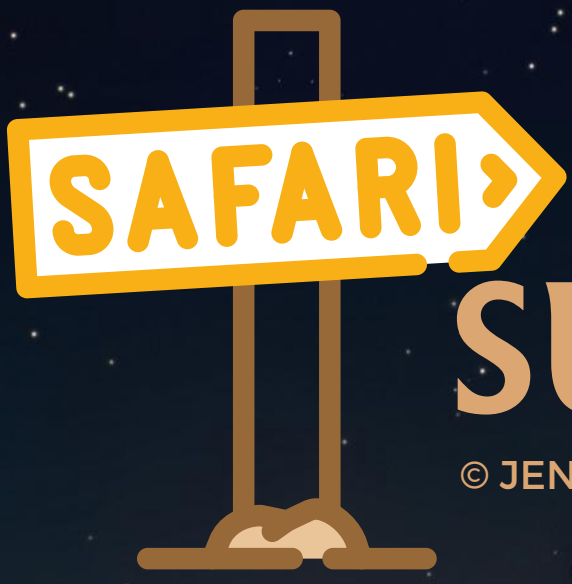
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SAFARI SURVIVAL

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You've saved the money and organised the leave, and you're ready for your First African Safari. If you're travelling from afar – like anywhere out of Africa – and you're not independently wealthy, it may be your only one. So, because it is so much less painful and less expensive to learn from the mistakes of others rather than your own, here's a short summary of wisdom gleaned from numerous safaris.

Broad or narrow

Assuming you only have a week or two, do you choose, say, one park and stay there for the entire trip, or do you visit lots of different parks? This is a tricky one, and it depends on what you want. If you have a definite list of must-see animals, and they include, say sitatunga, black rhino, springbok and mountain gorilla, you will need to visit a number of different countries, never mind parks – and you will spend a lot of time in planes. If, however, you just want to see a good number of different animals and birds, spend time in the bush and totally de-stress, your best bet is to pick an area and stick to it, so you spend more time actually watching animals and chilling, and less time travelling.

Style or substance

While some safari destinations can only be accessed through one or maybe two operators, most offer a range of options when it comes to comfort, service and budget. Ultimately, this choice depends on how much time and money you have, but a good compromise between how luxurious and how long a holiday you can afford is to break it up. Do the bulk of your holiday low budget, eg camping or self-catering, and splurge on a full-service lodge for the first or last day or two. Even better, if you can afford it, is to do both. Start off with a luxury lodge – and take full advantage of your field guide by picking their brains about what you should look out for during the rest of your stay – and then travel budget and independent before ending the trip on another indulgent day or two of being spoiled before you head home





When to travel

If you can choose when to take your holiday, research your destination carefully to find out the best time for game viewing, birding, watching migrations, walking or whatever else constitutes your dream safari. Many of these things are seasonal – some exceptionally so – and if you have always wanted to see, for example, baby turtles you don't want to arrive at the lodge a week after the last one has waddled into the sea.

Staying healthy

One mosquito bite can ruin your whole holiday – and possibly end your life. Most safari destinations harbour vicious, malaria-carrying anopheles mosquitoes, so don't mess around. Buy the nastiest-smelling, most effective insect repellent – and use it! And chat to a medical professional about malaria prophylaxis. If you are travelling with young children, seriously consider a safari in a malaria-free area, like South Africa's Eastern Cape, Northern Cape or Waterberg, some of the high-lying parks in East Africa, or a low-risk malaria area like the Kalahari or Etosha. And find out from travel clinics whether you need, for example, yellow fever inoculations for your destination.

Safari Packing List

Smartphone Gimbal: For smooth, stabilised footage on your next vacation, a gimbal holds your phone and has built-in controls that rotate it in one sweeping motion for professional-looking footage of your trip.





Refillable Sanitiser Wristband: Tired of losing your small sanitiser bottles? This circular storage tube has the shape of a watch and is easy to carry.

Mini Steam Iron: Featuring three fabric heating levels, this miniature iron is ideal for business travellers who need to remove the inevitable wrinkles from packed clothing.





Hi-Tech Foot Warmers: Equipped with state-of-the-art thermal technology, these remote-controlled foot warmers will keep your feet warm and dry thanks to a thermostat-driven control system.



Palladium ankle-high boots: These are the perfect safari shoes for cold days, walking safaris, hiking, etc, except for rainforests.



The AeroPress Coffee Maker: If you are a coffee lover, you'll know the pain of finding coffee that is just right for you when travelling. This portable and innovative coffee press has many coffee-loving travellers enamored.

Mini Wine Bag: A stylish and practical accessory ideal for picnics, romantic beach dinners and other alfresco occasions that require meals away from home.





Hiking Underwear: Undergarments made of synthetic materials like nylon and spandex are coated with antimicrobial protection for utmost health and odour reduction.This underwear will dry quickly with maximum breathability.



Money Belts: They are a smart and effective way to keep money out of sight. Attached to your body and out of sight, you can keep cash and valuables in a far safer place than your wallet or bag.





Packing

You need less than you think. You can do laundry in most places (or get it done for you) so you can get by with two or three outfits, and you really don't need more than two pairs of shoes.



Safari chic

It's amazing how many tourists turn up looking like an extra from Out of Africa, but animals will not be frightened away by a yellow shirt or blue jeans, so you don't need to wear khaki to go on safari. That said, most of the cool (in both senses) technical travel shirts and long pants do come in relatively muted colours, and they are so useful – light, crease-resistant, easy to wash and quick-drying. But cotton is also great, and it comes in – yes, khaki – but also so many more interesting colours, although you probably want to stick with neutral or pastel colours. Honestly, you can wear a floral sun dress during the day – as long as you have sunscreen. You want to stay away from dark colours, because tsetse flies and other insects are attracted to black, brown and – strangely – bright blue. And some insects are attracted to red (mostly butterflies, so that's not exactly terrifying). Carefully chosen prints don't show dirt that much, so that's a good idea, too. Of course, camouflage doesn't show dirt much, either, but it's not a good idea to travel with camouflage clothes, bags, etc, unless you enjoy being "randomly selected" at airports and border posts. In some African countries, wearing camouflage, or even having a camouflage toiletry bag, is illegal. Basically, wear clothes you like, and that you will want to continue wearing once you get back home.

Essentials

There are the obvious things you wouldn't ever leave home without, but there are also a few things you really should pack that may not occur to you if you haven't been on safari before. Here's a checklist, starting with the obvious.

- Insect repellent
- Day wear – see Safari Chic above
- Evening wear – if you're wearing shorts or a skirt during the day, you want at least one outfit consisting of a comfortable, cool, loose, light-coloured long-sleeved shirt and long pants to keep mozzies away. The shirt should have a cuff, and elastic on the bottom of the pants is also a good idea to keep the critters from flying up your legs. Wear closed shoes at night, preferably with socks that you have liberally sprayed with insect repellent.





- Warm clothing – Africa is not one great big sauna. It gets flippin' freezing in the early mornings on an open game-viewing vehicle. Bring a warm fleece, a beanie and scarf and – if you're travelling in winter – consider gloves. But do layers – it gets hot later.
- A waterproof shell or rain jacket – even in the so-called dry season.
- A good pair of closed walking shoes – and no - Manolo Blahnik flats do not qualify as good walking shoes anywhere outside of Manhattan. (Keeping your shoes sprayed with insect repellent is a good idea – both for night-time mosquitoes and day-time ticks and things.)

- Gaiters – if you are planning on walking even a few hundred metres in the bush, you will be grateful for these because there are few things more nigglingly irritating than burrs and prickly seeds in your socks.
- A pair of cool, comfy sandals
- A comfortable, light, broad-brimmed sun hat with a retaining cord
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- A kikoi or sarong – possibly the most useful item in the known universe, and it can be as colourful as you like.
- Water bottle – you will probably be offered bottled water at lodges, but try to minimise plastic, by carrying your own bottle and filling up from the main drinking water supply.
- Sports bra – those safari vehicles can be very, very bouncy on those rough tracks.
- Clear safety glasses – if you wear spectacles, you probably won't need these, but as your game drive heads into the evening you will have to take off your sunglasses – and that's when you find out just how many tiny flying insects there are. You can get comfy, clear plastic safety glasses very cheaply at hardware stores. They also come in yellow and orange, which are quite funky.
- Buff or bandanna – second only to a kikoi in terms of usefulness, and nice to pull up over your mouth and nose in dusty conditions, or keep your hair under control in the wind.
- Binoculars and camera
- Bird book and/or other field guides (not essential but nice).
- Torch – luxury lodges usually supply them, but it's worth packing a small one – or a head torch.




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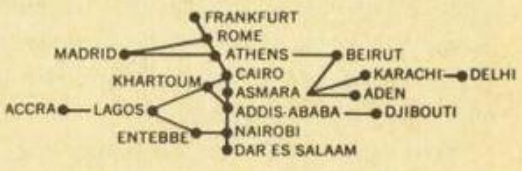
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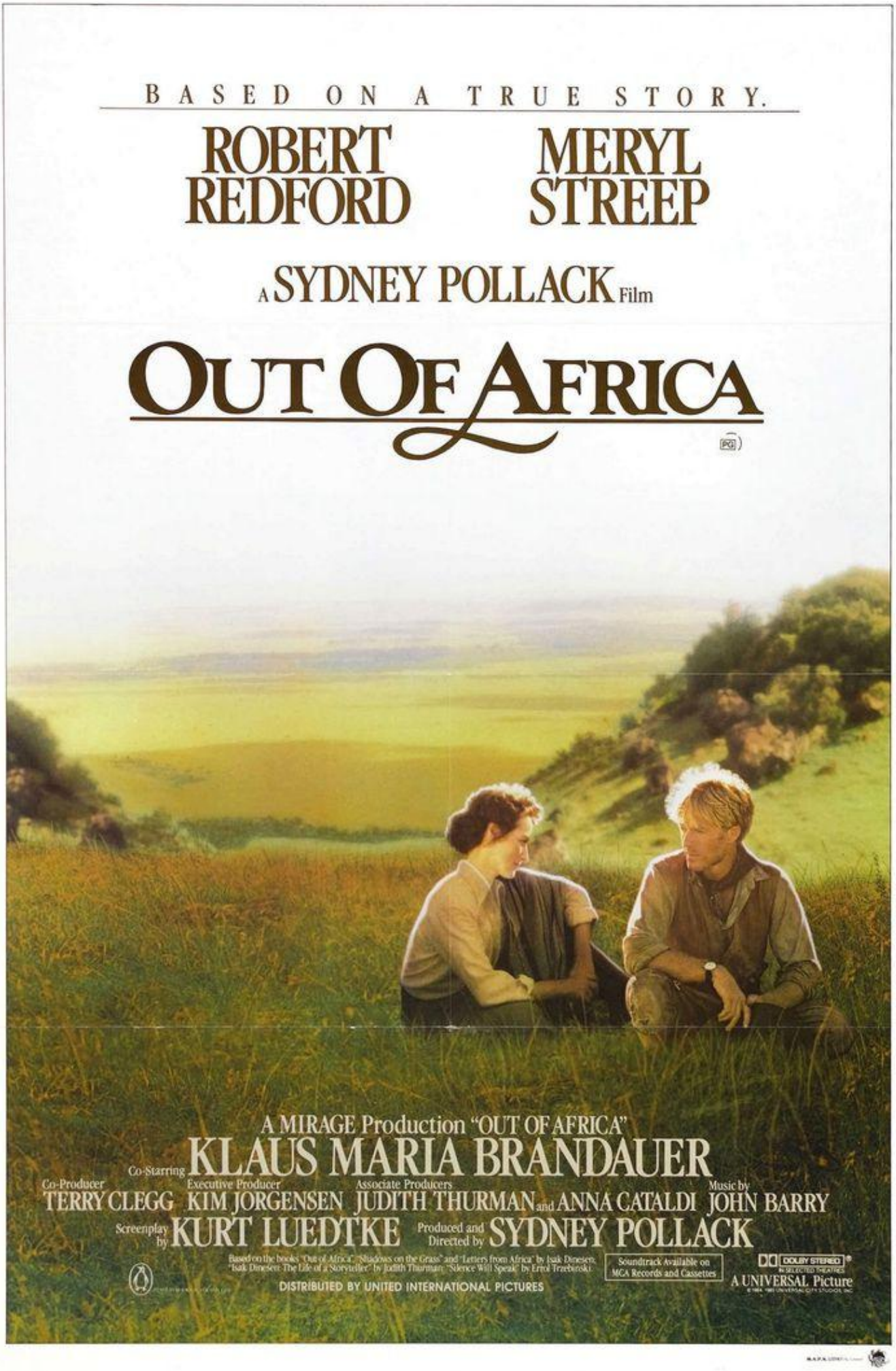
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The Romance of East Africa

Roger Ebert in December 20, 1985, published this review of one of the world's most iconic movies -

Earlier there was a moment when a lioness seemed about to attack, but did not. The baroness had been riding her horse on the veld, had dismounted, had lost her rifle when the horse bolted. Now the lioness seemed about to change, when behind her a calm voice advised the baroness not to move one inch. "She'll go away," the voice said, and indeed the lioness did skulk away after satisfying its curiosity. That scene sets up the central moment in Sydney Pollack's "Out of Africa." It comes somewhat later in the film. The baroness is on safari with the man who owns the cool voice, a big game hunter named Denys. They happen upon a pride of lions. Once again, the man assumes charge.

He will protect them. But then a lion unexpectedly charges from another direction, and it is up to the baroness to fell it, with one shot that must not miss, and does not. After the man and woman are safe, the man sees that the woman has bitten her lip in anxiety. He reaches out and touches the blood. Then they hold each other tightly. If you can sense the passion in that scene, then you may share my emjoyment of "Out of Africa," which is one of the great recent epic romances. The baroness is played by Meryl Streep. The Hunter is Robert Redford. These are high-voltage stars, and when their chemistry is wrong for romances (as Streep's was for "Falling in Love," and Redford's was for "The Natural"), it is very wrong. This time, it is right.







The movie is based on the life and writings of Baroness Karen Blixen, a Danish woman who, despairing that she would be single forever, married her lover's brother, moved out to Kenya in East Africa, ran a coffee plantation on the slopes of Kilimanjaro and later, when the plantation was bankrupt and the dream was finshed, wrote books about her experiences under the name Isak Dinesan. Her books are glories - especially Out of Africa and Seven Gothic Tales - but they are not the entire inspiration for this movie. What we have here is an old-fashioned, intelligent, thoughtful love story, told with enough care and attention that we really get involved in the passions among the characters.

In addition to the people Streep and Redford play, there is a third major character, Bror, the man she marries, played by Klaus Maria Brandmuer. He is a smiling, smooth faced enigmatic man who likes her well enough, after his fashion, but never seems quite equal to her spirit. After he gives her syphills and she returns to Denmark for treatment, she is just barely able to tolerate his behavior - after all, he did not ask to marry her - until a New Year's Eve when he flaunts his infidelity, and she asks him to move out.

He turns up once more asking for money, after Redford has moved his things into the baroness' farmhouse. The two men have a classic exchange. Brandauer: "You should have asked permission." Redford: "I did. She said yes."
The movie takes place during the strange blip in history when the countries of East Africa - Kenya, Uganda, the Rhodesias - were attracting waves of European settlers discontented with life at home in the years around World War I. The best land available to them was in the so-called "white highlands" of Kenya, so high up the air was cooler and there were fewer insects, and some luck could be had with cattle and certain crops.

The settlers who lived there soon settled into a hard-drinking , high-living regime that has been documented in many books; they were sort of "Dallas" crossed with "Mandingo." The movie steers relatively clear of the social life, except for a scene where Streep is snubbed at the local club, a few other scenes in town, and an extraordinary moment when she goes down on her knees before the British governor to plead for land for the Africans who live on her bankrupt farm.

Before that moment, she has not seemed particularly interested in Africans, except for an old overseer who becomes a close friend (and this is not true to the spirit of her book, where Africans are of great importance to her). Instead, she is much more involved in the waves of passion that sweep through her life like a comet on a trajectory of its own.

He wants to move "his things" in, but does not want to move himself in. He wants commitment, but personal freedom. His ambiguity toward her is something like his ambiguity toward the land, which he penetrates with truck and airplane, leading tours while all the time bemoaning the loss of the virgin veld.



Because "Out of Africa" is intelligently written, directed and acted, however, we do not see his behavior as simply willful and spoiled, but as part of the contradictions he needs to stay an individual in a land where white society is strictly regimented. The Baroness Blixen needs no such shields; she embodies sufficient contradictions on her own. In a land where whites are foreigners, she is a foreign white. She writes and thinks instead of gossiping and drinking. She runs her own farm. She scorns local gossip. In this hunter, she finds a spirit equal to her own, which is eventually the undoing of their relationship.

"Out of Africa" is a great movie to look at, breathtakingly filmed on location. It is a movie with the courage to be about complex, sweeping emotions, and to use the star power of its actors without apology. Sydney Pollack has worked with Redford before - notably in another big-sky epic, "Jeremiah Johnson." He understands the special, somewhat fragile mystique of his star, who has a tendency to seem overprotective of his own image. In the wrong hands, Redford can look narcissistic. This time, he seems to have much to be narcissistic about.



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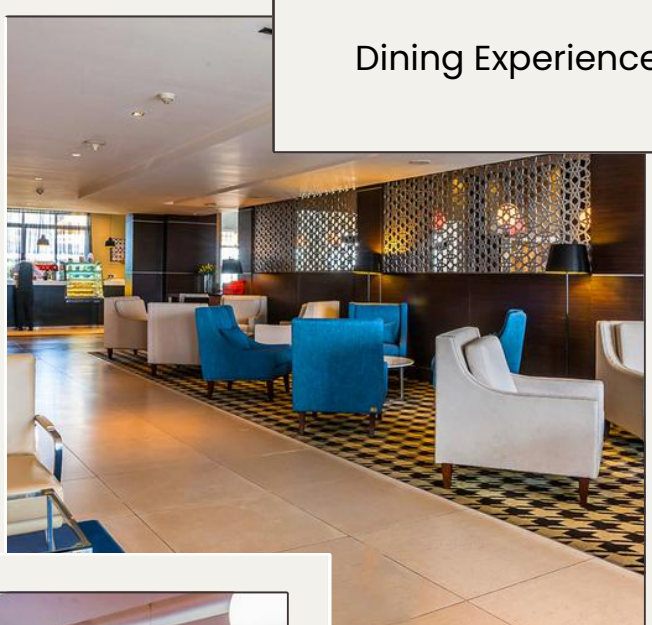
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Kigali

Languages
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National animal
Leopard

Currency
Rwandan franc

Main exports
Coffee, tea, hides & tin ore

Volcanoes National Park is home to half the continent's remaining mountain gorillas.

Rwanda's highest point is 4 519m or 14 826ft Karisimbi.

Rwanda is one of only two places in the world to see mountain gorillas.

Places to see



Best time to go

January to February or June to September

COUNTRY TRAVEL

Travel To Rwanda: 15 Useful Things To Know Before You Go



Travel to Rwanda doesn't need to be difficult or scary. In fact, it's one of the world's safest countries and has loads to offer the adventurous traveller.Most people travel to Rwanda to trek with the endangered mountain gorillas. Yet, many others hold off on this once in a lifetime adventure because they buy into the idea that Rwanda, like much of Africa, is unsafe.

Yes, the country isn't as developed to European standards, and yes, it's neighbours tend to be a bit batshit crazy, but that's all part of Rwanda's charm. Its imperfections make it one of the top destinations in Africa, and at the moment it's also one of the cheapest. But travelling to Rwanda doesn't need to be difficult. With tourism growing each year, the infrastructure is improving, and it's becoming easier than ever before to explore the Land of a Thousand Hills.



How to Get Your 30-Day Visa on Arrival for Rwanda

If you're like me and you hate visa paperwork, you'll love Rwanda. All African nationals are either visa-exempt or get their visa on arrival. South African's fall into the later, and you'll be happy to know the whole process is quicker than a queue at Home Affairs.

To get your visa, you'll need two things: your passport and $30.

If you haven't exchanged money before your trip, don't worry. Rwandan immigration accepts Visa and MasterCard payments.

Once you've paid for your visa, you'll go to a second queue where you'll have a quick chat with an immigration official.

And then you're done!

If you're travelling to Rwanda from a country outside of Africa, here's a handy map to see the visa requirements for different countries.

Is It Safe to Visit Rwanda?

Yes! It is safe to visit Rwanda. In fact, Rwanda is the safest country in Africa and the 9th safest in the world.

You can stop worrying Mom.

You're more likely to get shot in America than not survive a trip to Rwanda. I felt completely at ease here. While people did stare at me, it was more my blue hair colour then leering. I also didn't witness or experience any catcalling. Should we add the most progressive East African country to the list as well?

If you do encounter any problems, there is a policeman or someone from the army on every block – for real. While they might look intimidating, Rwandans are some of the friendliest people you will meet and will be more than happy to help.
It's also a good idea to get a travel insurance policy, especially if you're planning a trip to Rwanda on going gorilla trekking. The terrain can be quite difficult to climb (depending on the time of year), and if you do fall, you'll want to be covered for my hospital visits or broken gear.

Don’t Drink the Tap Water

The tap water is not safe to drink in Rwanda. Luckily, most hotels and hostels will have a free water dispenser that you can use. Before you travel to Rwanda, pack a reusable water bottle in your bag and fill up as you explore. If you need to buy water, it’s inexpensive and available at any of the shops and supermarkets around the country.

Rwanda Travel Vaccinations

You can travel to Rwanda without a Yellow Fever vaccination.

This means that there are no Rwanda travel vaccinations that you NEED to have. Of course, there are the recommended ones, but you won’t be denied entry into the country. But if you’re flying in from or to any of the neighbouring countries like Kenya or Uganda, you will need proof that you’ve had the vaccination.
Update: Although none of the resources I encountered (and no one asked to see any Yellow Fever vaccination before any of my flights) some people in the comment section are saying otherwise.

According to the link above, the CDC does not recommend a yellow fever vaccination for most travellers to Rwanda and Rwanda only requires proof of a Yellow Fever vaccination if you’re travelling from an at-risk country.

However, if you want to check all your bases, feel free to get the vaccination. It lasts for 10 years, and you won’t have to worry.



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Hostels in Rwanda

A quick search on Booking.com will only show a measly nine hostels in Rwanda.

But this doesn't mean those are your only options.

A lot of the places don't advertise on online booking sites. I recommend making a reservation for your first night and then exploring your options once in the country.

The hostel scene is small in Rwanda, but it's growing. If you pay a little bit extra, you can usually get a whole 6-bed dorm to yourself. This is because most backpackers stick to the cheaper 12-bed dorms and the hostels are rarely full to capacity.

What Currency is Used in Rwanda?

The official currency in Rwanda is the Rwandan Franc. However, the US dollar is widely accepted. You'll only need RWF to pay for smaller purchases, local transportation and food. Everywhere else will accept both currencies.

Is Rwanda Expensive?

Yes and no. Visiting Rwanda can quickly become expensive depending on your itinerary. The national parks, like Akagera, have a steep $40+ entrance fee for foreign nationals, and the gorilla trekking permits cost well over a $1,000.

But you can still enjoy Rwanda as a cheap destination.
The local food in Kigali is affordable if you stay away from international restaurants. When it comes to transport, there are cheap motorbike taxis and long-distance minibuses that will take you to most of the towns around the country for a couple of dollars.

Internet Access in Rwanda

I didn't have a problem getting online while in Rwanda. While it wasn't the fastest connection, I wasn't staring at my screen begging it to load. If you aren't planning on getting a local sim card for data, you might struggle to find a connection while exploring. Most of the restaurants I went to didn't have WiFi except the cafe at the Genocide Memorial.

But then again I was eating at super cheap places. Download a map of the area and join the cheapskate club if you don't want to hunt WiFi down.

How to Get a Permit for Gorilla Trekking and Other Hikes

One of the best things to do in Rwanda is to go gorilla trekking. But you can't just go on a hike and hope to see these majestic creatures. You need a permit. The permits for Volcanoes National Parks hikes and gorilla trekking can be bought either at the Tourism Headquarters in Kigali or the offices outside the national park.

Prices for the permits vary as well as their availability. For example, Rwanda tourism restricts the number of people that can see the gorillas each day, whereas the Diane Fossey Hike isn't capped.

I recommend emailing the tourism headquarters to find out what availability is like before you go. **Another important thing to remember is that the dates of the permit cannot be changed. If you can't go on that day anymore, you'll need to purchase a whole new permit.**



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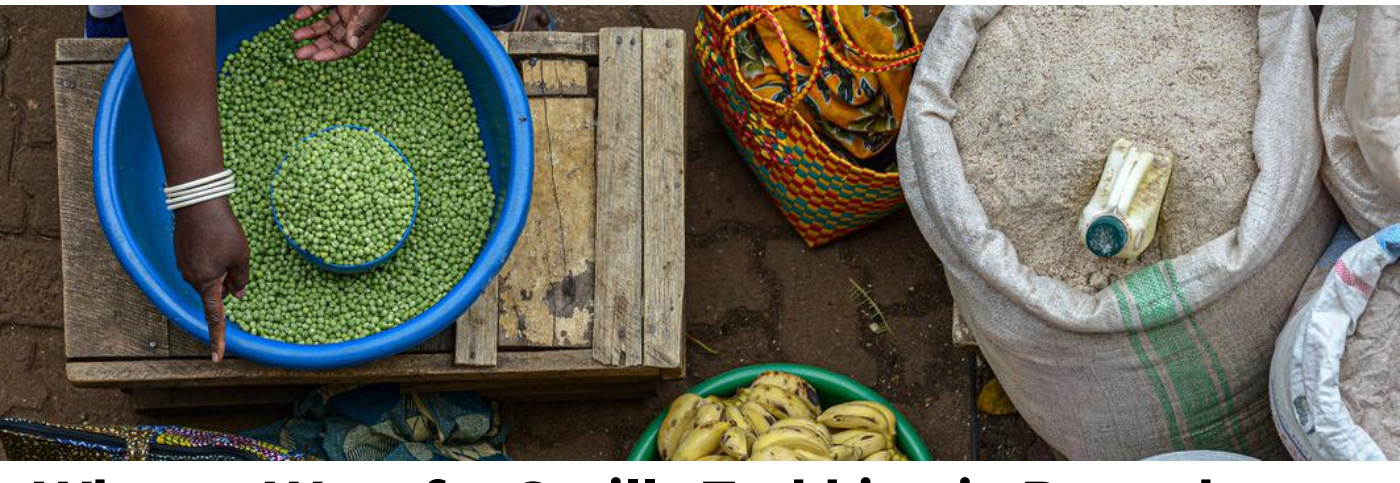
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How Much Does a Gorilla Permit Cost in Rwanda?

The Rwanda gorilla trekking permit costs $1500 per person. It's a super steep price and the most expensive out of the three countries (Uganda and Congo) that offer the experience.
The reason the price is so high is that it keeps the trekking exclusive. The gorillas are vulnerable to human diseases and it would be irresponsible to have hundreds of people seeing the gorillas each day.

It would ruin their habitat and change their behaviour.
Plus, your money goes towards their conservation and curbs poaching as the gorillas are now more valuable alive than dead.
When is the Best Time to Travel to Rwanda to go Gorilla Trekking?
The best time to go gorilla trekking in Rwanda is during the dry season. Not only will the terrain be easier to navigate, but you won't have to worry about the rain ruining your chances of seeing the gorillas.

I did the Diane Fossey trek at the beginning of the rainy season, and all the non-avid hikers found it difficult. There was lots of mud, steep inclines and swampy parts where almost everyone lost a shoe.



What to Wear for Gorilla Trekking in Rwanda

Shoes: A good pair of hiking shoes with a high ankle and good grip.
Hiking gaiters: If you don't have your own you can rent a pair for RWF 10,000 (R 160.00) from your guide.
Clothes: Wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt in neutral colours. This will protect you from the stinging nettles and help you blend in. Other essentials: A rain jacket for the sporadic showers, and a small backpack that can hold your water, camera and lunch.

Food in Rwanda

The local food is delicious. While I couldn't taste the majority of the dishes as it's quite meat-heavy, I enjoyed everything that I did get my hands on.



Travelling to Rwanda as a Vegan

In the capital city of Kigali, I found it pretty easy to get hold of vegan food. While there aren't any vegan restaurants, all the places I went to had a vegetarian option that could easily be modified into a cruelty-free meal.

A typical Rwandan breakfast includes a platter of fresh fruit so you shouldn't have any problems munching down.

Cooking Class Tours

If you want to learn how to make some of Rwanda's most famous local dishes, go to a cooking class. The Nyamirambo Women's Center offers one for only RWF 15,000 (R 250.00). Not only will you be helping vulnerable women in the community make a living, but you'll get an authentic look into the preparation and creation of traditional meals.

Plus, they have vegetarian options that can be made vegan on request.

Jumia Food – The Uber Eats of Rwanda

In case you don't know, I'm an odd creature of comfort. I have no problem falling asleep just about anywhere, and once I've found a spot I like, I'm in it for the long haul. So, as much as I love sampling the local food, I don't love the whole actually going to a restaurant. Sometimes I just want the food and me to have a moment without all the stress that comes along with going out.
In steps Jumia Food. It's Kigali's answer to Uber Eats, and it's fantastic. The app has a wide range of cuisines and price ranges to choose from that will be delivered straight to your hostel door with a swipe of a finger.

I highly recommend the Ethiopian restaurants if you don't mind the splurge. But if you want cheap and mouthwatering, order anything from Chap Chap.

Tipping in Rwanda

Tipping is not customary in Rwanda restaurants unless you're dining at the higher-end establishments in Kigali.
Tipping Guides in Rwanda. If you're doing a hike, you'll need to tip the guide. How much seems to be a debatable issue and I'd recommend asking the hotel staff or the company organising your tour for some guidance.

Keep in mind that the guides, porters and trackers are most likely former poachers. Your business helps them to make a living ethically and see the value in keeping the gorillas alive.

The Best Time to Visit Rwanda

The best time to visit Rwanda is during the dry season. From June to September, there will be minimal chance of rain ruining any of the great outdoor activities in the country.
Plus, it's also a great time of year to see Rwanda's wildlife. The animals in Akagera National Park will be easier to spot as they make their way to the watering holes and hiking conditions will be at their easiest. The only downside is that it's peak tourist season during this time. Rates will be higher for flights, hotels and activities.

If you visit outside these months, it will be cheaper, but you'll have to plan around the spots of bad weather.



How to Travel to Rwanda

The quickest way to get to Rwanda is to fly. I bought my return flights from South Africa to Kigali for under R 3000, but prices tend to hover around R4000.

If you're already in East Africa, there are local buses that run between the different countries. Some of the most popular routes are from Kampala, Uganda to Kigali or Nairobi, Kenya to Kigali.

How to Get Around Rwanda

The easiest way to get around Rwanda is to hire your own car, but it's expensive.

Luckily, the country does have a decent public transport system that makes it cheap and easy to travel in Rwanda without a car. If you want to visit Akagera National Park, you'll need to join a tour or use your own wheels. The same goes for Volcanoes National Park; no public transport runs to the entrance of the park. However, if you're just around the cities and towns, there is no reason to hire a car. There are dozens of moto-taxis waiting to take you around at reasonable rates. The best part is that the drivers don't inflate their prices and you don't need to waste time haggling.

But most drivers won't know street names. It's a good idea to have your final destination open on Google Maps to show the driver and to make sure you're going in the right direction.

In 1994, Rwanda went through a dark period where around one million Tutsis were murdered in 100 days. Only 25 years have passed, and it's still a fresh wound in the country. One thing that stood out for me while in Kigali was the high number of young people as most parents were killed during this period.

Before you going to Rwanda, watch the movie Hotel Rwanda to understand the basics of what led up to this traumatic event. And of course, a visit to the genocide memorials is a must to understand Rwanda's history and how the genocide has affected the entire nation.

Travel to Rwanda doesn't need to be difficult or scary. In fact, it's one of the world's safest countries and has loads to offer the adventurous traveller.

ETHIOPIA

DESTINATION MAGAZINE

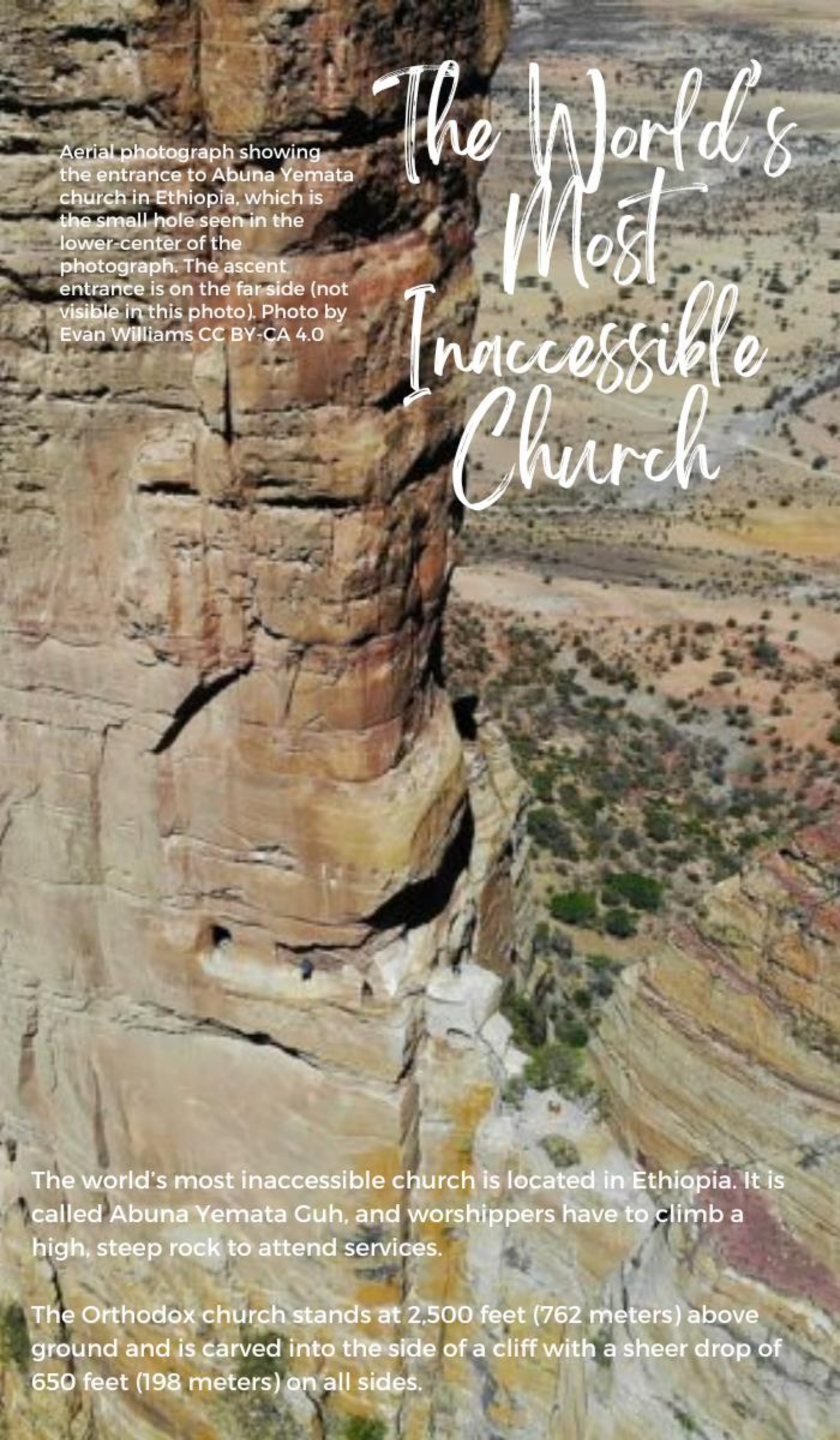
8

of Ethiopia's incredible endemic animals

Ethiopian Airlines



The World's Most Inaccessible Church



Aerial photograph showing the entrance to Abuna Yemata church in Ethiopia, which is the small hole seen in the lower-center of the photograph. The ascent entrance is on the far side (not visible in this photo). Photo by Evan Williams CC BY-CA 4.0

The world's most inaccessible church is located in Ethiopia. It is called Abuna Yemata Guh, and worshippers have to climb a high, steep rock to attend services.

The Orthodox church stands at 2,500 feet (762 meters) above ground and is carved into the side of a cliff with a sheer drop of 650 feet (198 meters) on all sides.

Abuna Yemata Guh is a monolithic church located in the rocky mountains of Gheralta in Hawzen woreda, an administrative district of the Tigray Region in Ethiopia. It is situated on a cliff with a height of 8,460 feet (2,580 meters) and has to be climbed to reach.

Devout worshippers and visitors alike have to cross a natural stone bridge with a steep drop of approximately 820 feet (250 meters) on either side.



After that, they have to cross a narrow wooden footbridge, followed by a climb up a vertical rock wall where they have to use hand grips and foot holds on bare feet, as the place is considered a holy ground, and footwear of any kind is not permitted.

Then they walk over a roughly twenty inch (50 cm) wide ledge facing a cliff with a 980 foot (299 meters) steep drop.

Once inside, one understands why people of faith and travelers go through such hardships to reach the particular church. What stand out are the architecture, dome, and Byzantine-style hagiography and art dating back to the fifteenth century. It is claimed that the icons were actually painted ten centuries earlier.

The sandstone walls are adorned with icons of saints and images from the Bible, as well as depictions of parables, mainly of the Old Testament and other Orthodox Christian art.



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Saint Abuna Yemata and the Orthodox Church in Ethiopia buried in a cliff. Local legend has it that the church in Ethiopia was built by Saint Abuna Yemata, one of the Nine Saints of Syria, Constantinople, or Rome to bring Orthodox Christianity to Ethiopia in the late fifth century.

According to yet another legend, the church was constructed in the sixth century and dedicated to Abuna Yemata. The Nine Saints are traditionally believed to have originated from Rome, Constantinople, and Syria between the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth centuries.



Church paintings date back to the initial traces of Christianity in Ethiopia and are centered around the Nine Saints and twelve apostles. The oldest icons are in the form of diptychs and triptychs.

The Abuna Yemata Guh church in Ethiopia has a local guide and vanguards at every step of the way to ensure that visitors know which foothold to use, which rock to climb, and to generally help out with the ropes.
The scary climb does not deter churchgoers and adventurous travelers, young or old. Even mothers carrying babies on their back endeavor to climb up to the church so as to attend services there.

HARAR

ETHIOPIA IS THE COMPLETE WANDERLUST PACKAGE

The high-walled city of Harar is spectacularly lined with a plethora of mosques and ancient buildings – 99 mosques and shrines to be exact. Known for its famous array of markets, the famous Hyena Men, ancient paintings and artefacts spanning all cultures, it's easy to get lost in the never-ending maze of the winding streets of Harar.Most travellers from within Ethiopia will come to Harar from one of two places: Dire Dawa or Addis Ababa, and the journey could be up to 15 hours by bus. One activity you can do while you are there is actually feeding hyenas. This activity has its origins in the 20th century when the Harari people started feeding the local hyenas to stop them from killing their livestock.

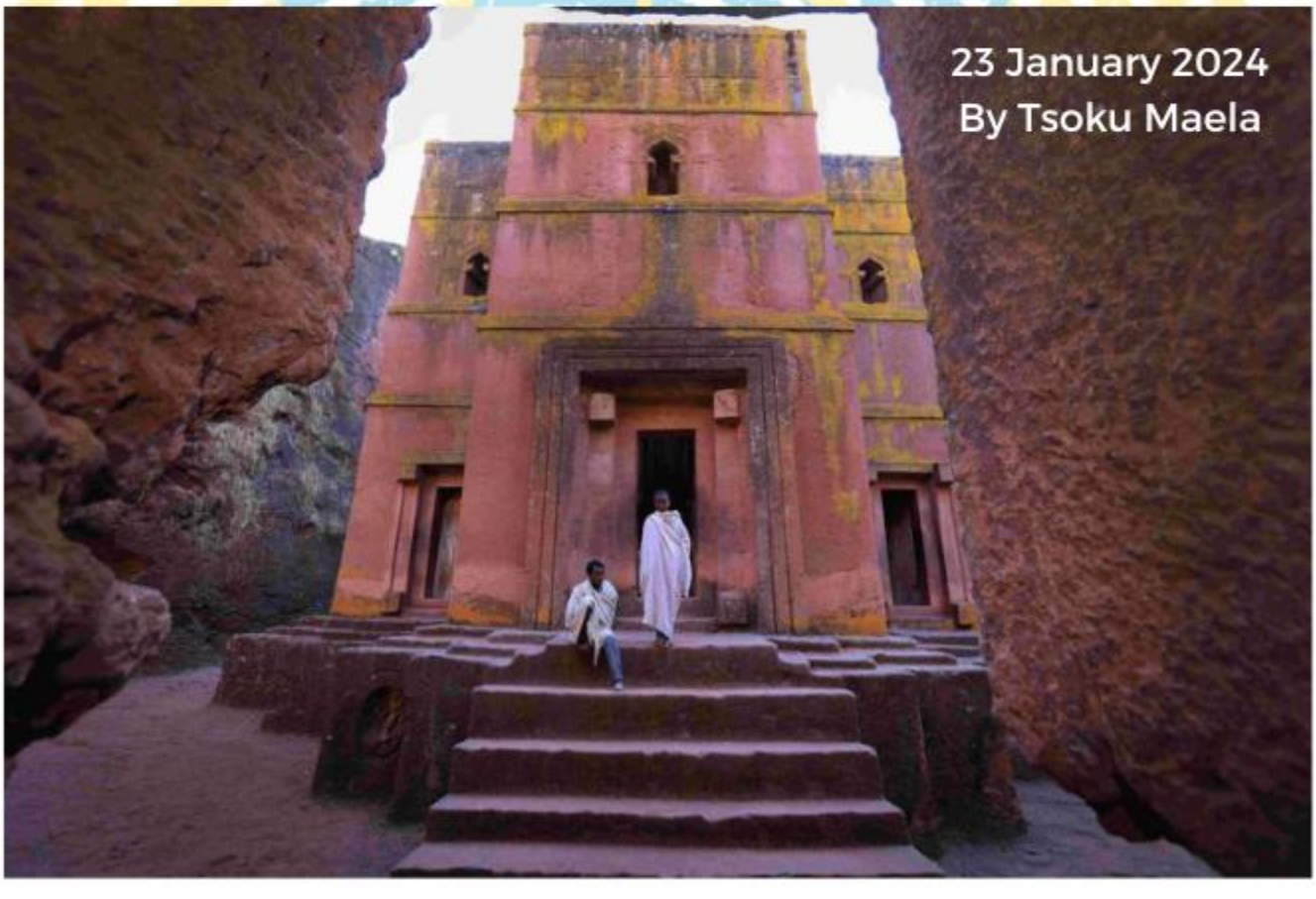
5 INCREDIBLE SIGHTS TO VISIT IN ETHIOPIA

Landlocked in the Horn of Africa and combining breathtaking natural beauty with jaw-dropping historical sights, Ethiopia is the complete wanderlust package.

But what sets this destination apart from its African neighbours? The excellent coffee? The fact that it had never been colonised? Or that Rastafarians regard it as their spiritual home? It might be all that and a whole lot more. If you're looking for a starting guide on things to look out for on your trip, we compiled five places to visit.

1. Lalibela

In the late 12th century, Gebre Mesqel Lalibela had 11 churches – Ethiopia is one of the oldest Christian nations – carved out of solid rock, all of which can be found in the town of Lalibela. A UNESCO World Heritage site, the town's eleven astounding monolithic churches are carved deep into the rock, hidden from sight. The destination is about a 10-hour journey from Addis Ababa but is well worth the visit.



23 January 2024
By Tsoku Maela



2. Harar

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3. Danakil Depression

The Danakil Depression is a geological depression caused by the continental drift of the African and Asian tectonic plates and is one of Earth's most unusual environments. With its desolate yet colourful landscape, bubbling hot springs, and mesmerizing lava lake, it is perhaps no surprise that it is also the hottest place on Earth with temperatures regularly rising above 48 degrees Celsius. It isalso home to salt lakes, lava lakes, volcanoes and neon acid springs.

Another sight to visit here is the Erta Ale volcano, where you can spend the night sleeping under the stars by the crater rim. The volcano contains an active lava lake where the thin charcoal crust is pierced by glowing red fissures of searing liquid lava below.



4. Omo Valley

Known for its cultural traditions and tribal diversity, this remote corner of Ethiopia has been a cultural crossroads for millennia. Its numerous tribes all have their own customs and ways of life to experience and it is a singular chance to learn more about different peoples and cultures. Despite being only tens of kilometres apart, the tribes often feel completely different from one another Omo Valley has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since the discovery of human remains dating back nearly 2.5 million years.

The major constraint is the drive times – all of the travelling in the area is done by road, so how long you can spend with each community depends on the number of villages you want to visit



5. Gonder

An astonishing collection of crumbling castles, fortifications and 17th-century churches, Gondar is often referred to as the "Camelot of Africa".

The city is the gateway town to the Simien Mountains National Park and is one of the best places to be during the festival of Timkat that takes place every January. Additionally, the town is home to Gondar University, Ethiopia's oldest medical school.



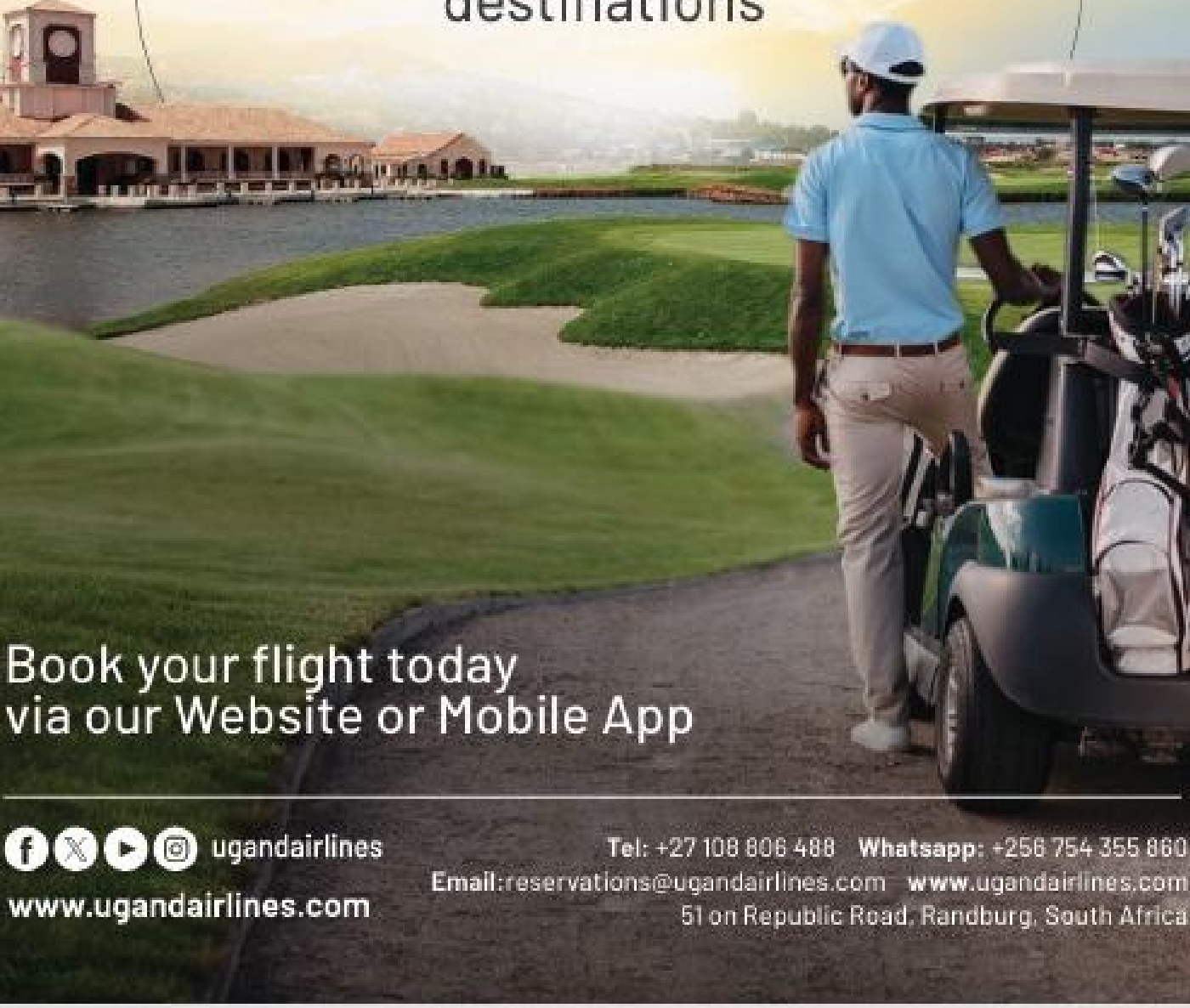
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