**LAKE MBURO NATIONAL PARK**

Lake Mburo National Park is Uganda’s smallest savannah park and the easily accessed park located in Kiruhura district in the western part of the country in the rain shadow between Mountain Rwenzori and Lake Victoria. The park has an area coverage of 260 sq. km. the park derives its name from Lake Mburo which is the park’s center of attraction and activities though there are other 11 lakes in the area.

Lake Mburo has an interesting local myth of two Ankole brothers named Mburo and Kigarama, they both lived in the valley until one day Kigarama got a revelation dream warning him about the danger ahead that would befall them if they continued their stay in the valley. He shared it with his brother Mburo who didn’t believe his words, Kigarama decided to move to safety in the nearby hill and Mburo continued his stay in the Valley. One day it rained heavy and the valley flooded and drowned Mburo, hence the lake was named Mburo and the nearby hill named Kigarama after the two brothers.

Despite the park’s small size in comparison to other Ugandan Parks its boasts flat grasslands, rolling hills, Forests, Lakes, Swamps, Rocky outcrops, Bush thickets and Variety of Wildlife.

Lake Mburo National park is Elephant free which has led to the growth of healthy vast woodlands. The park also prides in being home to some of Uganda’s rarely found species in large numbers that’s to say Zebras, Elands, Klipspringers, Impala, Giant Bush Rats, the park is also the best place to sigh on leopards in the country due to their large numbers per kilometer squared.

Lake Mburo National Park is a lion conservation unit and besides lions the park is also home to other wildlife life like Buffaloes, Elands, Hippos, Impalas, Jackals, Leopards, Waterbucks, Zebras, Topis, Warthogs, Giraffes

**HISTORY OF LAKE MBURO NATIONAL PARK**

Lake Mburo National was on the edge of total elimination of wildlife due to poaching. In 1933 it was gazetted as a controlled hunting area and later in 1963 upgraded to game reserve level and it was officially becoming a National park in 1983 and the main reason was to chase away the local Banyankole pastoralists who were thought to be rebel lead by the now President of Uganda Yoweri Kaguta Museveni against the government of Milton Obote.

When the Obote regime failed, the Banyankole Pastoralists re-occupied and raided the park chasing away the park staff. Since then the park never regained its former size because the new government could only get back half of the park’s land for fear of hurting the locals.

Today the Uganda Wildlife Authority works closely with the local community to ensure that people can co-exist with Wildlife in Uganda, this collaboration has not only led to the successful reintroduction of animals in the park like Giraffes, Elands, Baboons among others.

**TOURIST ATTRACTIONS/ ACTIVITIES IN LAKE MBURO NATIONAL PARK**

**Birdwatching**

Lake Mburo national park is one of the best birding destinations in Uganda, the park is home to a number of different bird species. Birding in the park is mainly done along Warukiri and Miriti swamp. Some of the bird species in the park include African Grey hornbill, barefaced go-way bird, black-billed baret, Crested francolin, Greenwood hoopoe, Lilac-breasted Roller, White-winged warbler, African wattled plover rufous, Flappet larks, Southern bellied bustard, Rufuos chested swallow, Southern red bishop to mention but a few.

**Wildlife Viewing / Day and Night game drive.**

Lake Mburo offers both Day and Night gave drives, game drives are the best way to get a close encounter with the Park’s wildlife and birds. Game drives are led by a park ranger(Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) who know the park routes and will show you all the park’s wildlife by name and all details you require to know about them. Leopards are very rare to sight on but in Mburo there is a leopard rock where tourist can easily sight on leopards during the night game drive or even early morning safaris. Night game drives take 2 hours and are perfect to sight on Leopards, warthogs, Mongoose, white tailed mongoose, genet etc.

**Guided Nature Walk**

Unlike other Ugandan parks where nature walks can only be done in certain areas, in Mburo nature walks can be done in any part of the park under guidance of an armed park ranger guide. While on the walk you can across Zebras, Buffaloes, Giraffes, water bucks, birds, butterflies, warthogs, impalas among others.

**Lakeside Track**

Lakeside track is the same as nature walk though this is done along the southern part of the park on Lake Mburo. The track take you up to Kigarama summit which boasts great views of the lake and the park. possible sighting along this walk include bush duikers.

**Fishing**

Fishing in the park is done in Mazinga which located in a crocodile and hippo free areas, making it very safe for fishing. Spot fishing is allowed and visitors can use the fish for anything including frying it back at the lodge. Fish species include Tilapia, Lung fish, Haplochromes, Mud fish. Kilagala Escape Safaris can help arrange for you fishing gears and acquire fishing licenses.

**Boat Cruise**

The boat cruise in the park offers you a chance to get a close encounter with the park’s water animals at a close distance. The cruise is more so done in the afternoon. You will sight on Antelopes, zebras, antelopes, buffaloes along the shores. Crocodiles and hippos. Common birds to sight on during the cruise include Green-necked doves, Malachite Kingfisher, Hammerkops, Herons, Rufous Long-tailed starling, African Fish Eagle to mention but a few.

**Rubanga Forest Walk**

Rubanga Forest Walk is organized by UWA prior the hiking day and starts from Western shores of the lake, over 42 species of birds can be spotted during the walk. Tree species like Acacia, Fig trees, Plams, Platycaluz and Markhamia among others. Bird species include Green pigeon, Grey-backed camaroptera, narina trogn, harrier hawk etc.

**The Salt Lick**

This is where animals come to salty soil in the areas, the observation point is approved by UWA to give visitors a chance to sight on the animals that come salt licking namely antelopes, zebras. This activity starts in the morning and goes for 2 hours.

**Horseback Riding**

Lake Mburo National park is of the two Ugandan wildlife reserves where tourists can go wildlife viewing on the back of a horse the other being Kabwoya wildlife reserve along Lake Albert. The horse looks familiar to zebras and shy Elands hence they will keep a distance but not run away as for when on foot or presence of a safari car.

**Visiting the Igongo Culture Center**

Igongo cultural center is a 4 kilometers drive from Sanga gate, the center is where the Banyakitara tribes (Banyoro, Bakiga, Batooro, Banyankole) showcase their unique culture. Igongo has a small museum ancient and local art crafts are kept and things related to their culture. Visitors get a chance to learn about the history of these people and can also hike the Igongo hill.

**Rwakobo Rock;**

Rwakoo hill is very easy to hike to the top, located at Rwakobo lodge and offers beautiful Ariel views of the surrounding area. Perfect for photography and chilling.

**Quad Biking to Spot Game**

Because the park is lion free, quad biking is one of the best activities to do in the park. the bike takes you in the middle of the grazing zebras, spot Banyankole long horned cattle’s grazing.

**ACCOMMODATIONS IN LAKE MBURO**

The park has a number of accommodation Options ranging from budget, mid-rage and Luxury and some include. Mantana tented camp, Arcadia Cottages, Rwonyo Rest Camp, Lake Mburo Safari lodge, Eagle’s nest lodge, Mihingo Lodge, Rwakobo rock among others.

**HOW TO GET TO LAKE MBURO NATIOAL PARK.**

The park is strategically located along the high way that connects Kampala to other parks like queen Elizabeth national Park, Kibale Valley National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Lake Bunyonyi making it appealing to tourist who would love a stopover during the long drive to other parks of Western Uganda.

Lake Mburo is the best destination for tourists who would love a short trip to sight on Uganda’s wildlife in their natural habitat or a stopover before en-routing to other National Park.

**BEST TIME TO VISIT LAKE MBURO NATIONAL PARK**

Though the park is open to tourists all year round the best time to visit stands out being the dry season when the roads in the park are less muddy, animals are easy to sight on because they congest around major water sources to quench their thirst.