

## **14 day Masai Mara and Gorilla tour**

### **Day 1 – Lake Naivasha**

The tour will leave the capital city of Kenya and travel north to Lake Naivasha where we spend the day at Hells Gate National Park that lies next to this shallow lake. Hell's Gate is named for the huge red-coloured cliffs that form the entrance to the geothermal interior. This is the only National Park where you can go hiking in and activities also include game and bird watching. The park entry fees are included in the tour and a popular optional activity is game viewing on bicycles. Another optional way to spend your afternoon is to take high-tea at Elsamere – the former home of Joy Adams, best known for her autobiographical novel *Born Free*. Optional Activities: Cycle hire, high tea at Elsamere  
Meals: lunch, dinner  
Accommodation: camp: Fish Eagle Camp  
Facilities: Good ablutions, Hot water, pool  
Route: Nairobi to Lake Naivasha ±160 km  
Travel time: ±3-4 hrs

### **Day 2 – Masai Mara National Reserve**

The Masai Mara National Reserve is the Kenyan side of the Serengeti National Park (located in Tanzania). Today the tour will be entering this 2430 square kilometre area of spectacular game viewing to photograph some of Africa's most abundant wildlife. Best known for the annual migration of around 1.5 million wildebeest, the Masai Mara is also home to many other plains animals including lions. In addition to what we hope will be a successful day's game viewing, cultural interaction with Kenya's native Masaai people will round off your experience.  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Accommodation: Camp: Masai Mara Campsites  
Facilities: Good ablutions, water not drinkable  
Route: Lake Naivasha to Masai Mara, ±250 km  
Travel time: ±6-7 hrs

### **Day 3 – Masai Mara and Lake Nakuru National Park**

After some further game viewing in the Masai Mara the tour will travel towards central Kenya and the home of the greater and lesser flamingo – Lake Nakuru. Originally created as a bird sanctuary, Lake Nakuru was upgraded to National Park status in 1968. Although the shallow alkaline lake is most famous for the large flocks of flamingos that congregate to feed on the blue-green algae, the National Park is also home to a further 450 species of birds and over 50 species of mammals. White Rhino inhabit the transitional savanna area surrounding the lake and if you are lucky you will get some great pictures.  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Nakuru Camp  
Facilities: Long drop toilets, drinkable water, cold showers  
Route: Masai Mara to Lake Nakuru ±160 km  
Travel time: ±5-6 hrs

#### **Day 4 – Lake Nakuru to Kampala**

The drive from Lake Nakuru, crosses the border into Uganda, travels through Eldoret – founded by the Afrikaner people at mile 64 (on the wagon route from Londiani). Uganda is hailed as 'Africa's friendliest country' and on arrival it will soon become obvious how true this is.

Kampala is the capital of Uganda and since 1986 the constantly improving economy and relative political stability have enhanced the attractiveness of Uganda as a tourism destination. When crossing the equator today there will be opportunity for photography.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
Accommodation: Camp: Red Chilli Hideaway  
Facilities: Flush toilets, Warm showers, bar, internet facilities  
Route: Lake Nakuru to Kampala ±550km  
Travel time: ±8-9hrs with a border crossing

#### **Day 5 – Kampala / Ngamba Chimpanzee Sanctuary**

Although officially this day is set aside for everyone to explore Kampala most people use this day to take an optional day trip to the Chimpanzee Sanctuary of Ngamba Island. This non-profit eco-friendly project was set up in 1998 to care for the orphaned chimpanzees that are the sad result of the illegal bush-meat trade. Ngamba Island is situated 23 km from Entebbe (near Kampala) in Lake Victoria and is only accessible by boat.

The Chimpanzee Sanctuary & Wildlife Conservation Trust (CSWCT) manages the project and as only one third of their operating costs are covered by visitors fees, all interested parties are encouraged to join 'Friends of the Sanctuary' if they choose to. Should the weather be unfavourable and the lake too rough for this excursion there are many other activities available in Kampala. Optional Activities: Ngamba Chimpanzee

Excursion, Kampala Markets  
Meals: Breakfast  
Accommodation: Camp: Red Chilli Hideaway  
Facilities: Flush toilets, Warm showers, bar, internet facilities  
Route: Optional Ngamba Island Excursion, ±50Km return journey  
Travel time: None

#### **Day 6 – Kampala and Lake Bunyoni**

Lake Bunyoni is a small but attractive lake with steep sides and abundant birdlife. Ringed by mountains, Lake Bunyoni is best known for its dense otter population and beautiful scenery. On this tour we make use of this beautiful spot to relax and spend the night before the final drive to the Gorillas.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Lake Bunyoni  
Facilities: Warm showers, toilets ,bar  
Route: Kampala to Lake Bunyoni, ±550Km  
Travel time: ±7-8hrs

### **Day 7/8/9 – Gorillas**

The Gorilla is one of our closest living relatives with over 95% similarity in our DNA. The Mountain Gorilla is extremely endangered and while exact numbers vary it is widely assumed that there are only 650 left. Visiting the Gorillas is a great way to support their future on earth as the money spent on permits is used for their protection.

An extremely important part of the future conservation of the remaining Gorillas rests in the community development work – as local communities change their attitudes towards wildlife and start to protect rather than poach the future of the Mountain Gorillas is assured.

As permits granting permission to visit the gorillas are extremely limited we require flexibility in both the tour itinerary and where we actually visit them. The home of the Mountain Gorillas is completely at odds with man-made borders and so their range encompasses Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo).

Whenever possible we choose to make use of the National Parks in Uganda, but this depends on the availability of permits and any one of the following National Parks could be used: Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (Uganda), Volcano National Park (Rwanda) and Virunga National Park (DRC).

The forest area that the Mountain Gorilla inhabits is split between two sections. The Bwindi Impenetrable National Park forms 330 square kilometers of forest area in Uganda. The Virunga Volcano region is located on the border between DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. The Virunga Volcano region is home to the other three National Parks – Mgahinga, Volcano and Virunga and is approximately another 300 square kilometers in size. The Gorillas themselves are split into two divided populations.

Should we not obtain permits to visit the Mountain Gorillas in Uganda then we will inform all passengers beforehand that the tour will travel to Rwanda or DRC. Visas for all nationalities are available on the DRC and Rwandan borders.

The Ugandan Wildlife Authority manages the availability and issuing of all permits to visit Uganda's gorilla populations. Six (6) people are permitted per trek per day and a total of eighteen (18) people can be taken in to Bwindi. There are only three family-groups of gorillas that can be visited, three groups in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, (Mubare, Habinyanja and Rushegura).

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Buhoma

Facilities: Cold showers, toilets, bar

Route: Lake Bunyoni to Bwindi NP, ±200Km

Travel time:  $\pm 5$  hrs

Please note:

Although there are 3-days allocated to Gorilla Trekking you will only spend one-day on the trek. The other days are there to provide a large enough window in which to obtain permits and to allow the entire group to trek if there are more than 6-of you on the tour.

For more information on the Mountain Gorilla please go to: <http://www.cet.edu/ete/modules/mgorilla/mgbiology.html>

### **Day 10 – Queen Elizabeth National Park**

The Rwenzori Mountains rise majestically above Lakes Edward and George. In literature and during the explorative period of Africa these 'Mountains of the Moon' have stirred the imagination of many a prospective explorer. Many game species are to be found in this mainly wetland park including the (elsewhere elusive) giant forest hog, and the legendary tree-climbing lions of the Ishasha Sector. The 1995 square kilometers of exceptional bio-diversity contain over 600 species of birds and nearly 100 mammals. Game is best viewed from the water and we recommend a sunset river cruise on the Kasinga channel.

When looking at some maps of Uganda it is possible to become confused as several of the National Parks and lakes have changed their names more than once since independence in 1962, and not all maps have been updated. Queen Elizabeth National Park was called the Ruwenzori National Park for many years until it returned to the colonial name. Meanwhile the Ruwenzori Mountains to the north of Queen Elizabeth N.P became Ruwenzori National Park in 1991.

Optional Activities: Kasinga Channel Sunset Cruise

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Camp: Queen Elizabeth National Park

Facilities: Showers, toilets

Route: Bwindi NP to Queen Elizabeth NP  $\pm 290$ km

Travel time:  $\pm 7-8$  hrs

### **Day 11 – Queen Elizabeth National Park and Kampala**

This afternoon we return to Kampala where there is opportunity to dine out at one of Kampala's many restaurants. There is a variety of different fare on offer and your guide will provide you with a choice of options. The next day the tour will leave early for Jinja – home to some of the best White Water Rafting in the world. As we need to pre book this activity our guide needs to know by the time we arrive in Kampala if you wish to participate in this optional adventure activity. Optional Activities: Meal out in Kampala

Meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Camp: Red Chilli Hideaway

Facilities: Flush toilets, Warm showers, bar, internet facilities

Route: Queen Elizabeth NP to Kampala  $\pm 390$ km

Travel time:  $\pm 6$ hrs

## **Day 12 – Jinja**

Jinja is Uganda's second largest city and is famous as the point where the Nile (officially the Victoria Nile) flows out of Lake Victoria and begins the 6695 kilometre journey to Egypt and the Mediterranean. Many people feel quite moved - knowing that the river in front of you nourished the Egyptian empires thousands of years ago and continues to sustain people to this day. The longest river in the world, the Nile goes by many names as it makes its way through Uganda, Sudan and Egypt. The correct identification of Lake Victoria as the source of the Nile was made by John Hanning Speke who was part of the 1856-1858 expedition led by Richard Francis Burton.

If you do not want to go rafting why not volunteer for the day at Soft Power Education - a UK registered charity that is doing a wonderful job in the education of Jinja's youth. Spending your day helping out will not only assist their projects, but will also allow you the opportunity to spend a day at grass-roots level helping Africa's youth. Optional Activities: White Water Rafting, Soft Power Education Project

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Camp : Nile River Explorers

Facilities: Cold showers, toilets, bar

Route: Kampala to Jinja ±80km

Travel time: ±1-2hrs

## **Day 13 – Eldoret**

The tour returns to Kenya today and this time we spend a night in the town of Eldoret. Eldoret is the 5th largest city in Kenya and is currently the fastest growing. Moi University (named for Daniel Arap Moi, President of Kenya from 1978 to 2002) is located here and almost 11 500 students are educated every year. The Great Rift Valley is still the dominant geographical feature of this region with the altitude at Eldoret being 2100 metres above sea level.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Camp : Naiberi River Campsite

Facilities: Warm showers, flush toilets, bar, laundry, internet access.

Route: Jinja to Eldoret, ±320km

Travel time: ±4-5 hrs

## **Day 14 – Nairobi**

The city of Nairobi was originally founded as a camp for the Mombassa-Uganda railway in 1899 and had since become the largest city in both Kenya and the East Africa region, with a population of between 3-4 million people. Nairobi is a cosmopolitan African-European city with many immigrants from former British colonies. The number of churches, mosques, temples and gurdwaras within the city bear testimony to its multiculturalism.

Nairobi is not a prime tourist destination, but it does have several tourist attractions, the most well known being Nairobi National Park.

The park contains many animals including lions and giraffes.

Nairobi also has more species of birds than any other capital city in the world. There are also several museums in Nairobi including Nairobi Railway Museum and the National Museum of Kenya, which houses many artefacts including the full remains of a Homo erectus boy.

Nairobi has the informal title "City in the Sun."

As this is the last evening together the group may choose to dine together at Nairobi's famous Carnivore Restaurant where vegetarians are catered for, but not encouraged...Optional Activities: Meal out in Nairobi

Meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Own Arrangements, we suggest the Meridian Court Hotel

Route: Eldoret to Nairobi, ±320 km

Travel time: ±6-7 hrs

NB: The itinerary is flexible and can be changed without notice in order to accommodate the best possible viewing of the Gorillas.

The Permit price to visit the Gorillas can also change without notice.

#### Tour dates:

Departs: 21-Oct-2007 Returns: 03-Nov-2007	<b>AVAILABLE</b>
Departs: 04-Nov-2007 Returns: 17-Nov-2007	<b>AVAILABLE</b>
Departs: 18-Nov-2007 Returns: 01-Dec-2007	<b>AVAILABLE</b>
Departs: 02-Dec-2007 Returns: 15-Dec-2007	<b>AVAILABLE</b>
Departs: 16-Dec-2007 Returns: 29-Dec-2007	<b>AVAILABLE</b>
Departs: 30-Dec-2007 Returns: 12-Jan-2008	<b>AVAILABLE</b>