

General Information on Uganda

History:

Ugandans are traditionally hunters and gathers, until about 1700-2300 years ago. At this time Bantu-speaking populations from Central and Western Africa migrated into the south of the country. This migration allowed for development of iron-working skills and ideas on social and political organisation. In about A.D. 120, the Nilotic people entered Uganda from the North, these were cattle and subsistence farmers.

In the 1860's British explorers came to Uganda in search of the source of the Nile. They were followed by Protestant missionaries in 1877 and Catholic missionaries 2 years later. The United Kingdom places Uganda under the charter of the British East Africa Company in 1888 and ruled as a protectorate from 1894.

Uganda gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1962, but maintained Commonwealth membership. The first post-independence government was formed with a man called Obote as Executive Prime Minister.

Uganda is in-famously known throughout the western world for it's past president, Idi Amin and the Lord's Resistance Army. Idi Amin removed Obote from power in 1971 and ruled Uganda for 8 years. Amin's rule was a dictatorship and Ugandan paid dearly throughout his leadership.

Amin's reign was ended after the Uganda-Tanzania war in 1979, in which Tanzanian forces aided by Obote and others forced him out of power. Obote was quickly replaced by General Okello. Okello ruled for 6 months until he was displaced after the so called 'bush war' with the National Resistance Army (NRA) operating under the leadership of the current president, Yoweri Museveni. Museveni has been in power since 1986.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was formed in 1987 and is led by Joseph Kony. Kony believes that he is a spokesperson of God and a spirit medium, primarily of the Holy Spirit. The LRA has had a long running conflict with the Ugandan Government although for the past decade or so, there has not been any major issues with Uganda and Kony and his men have been hiding in the depths of the DRC forests.

Security:

Uganda has been an acceptable safe travel destination ever since Museveni took power in 1986. Relative stability has returned to Northern Uganda with the departure of the

LRA in 2006. Recent LRA activity has been restricted to the remote region of Garamba in DRC.

With the improvement in infrastructure and the political stability, Uganda is developing to be one of the world's top safari destinations. In fact, Uganda was nominated the World's number one travel destination for 2012 by the Lonely Planet Guide. Both the Government and the local communities appreciate the benefits of tourism and want to share 'the Pearl of Africa' with visitors. However, with any travel, whether in your own country or abroad, a little bit of common sense is required. For example, use the safes provided in the accommodations, don't wear or bring your most treasured belongings or valuables with you and listen to the advice and instructions of your guide.

Immigration:

A visa is required for visiting Uganda and there are two types of visas available. A single entry visa costs \$50 and is valid for 1-3 months. A multiple entry visa is \$100 and valid for 6 months.

Visitors who are doing a combined Uganda and Rwanda trip are advised to purchase a multiple entry visa for Uganda.

Single entry visas can be obtained easily upon arrival into Uganda or through a Ugandan Embassy in your home country. Multi-entry visas must be obtained through a Ugandan Embassy prior to travel.

If purchasing your visa upon arrival into the country, it is best to pay in USD. The notes should be dated 2006 or later and in excellent condition. Please note that you should have the correct amount of USD notes to pay for the visa because change will not be given.

Passports must be valid for at least 1 year after your leaving date from Uganda and have 2 blank double pages.

Health:

For health requirements please consult your nearest tropical disease centre or travel clinic.

A yellow fever vaccination is required for anyone travelling to Uganda.

Malaria is present in Uganda.

Currency:

The currency in Uganda is the Uganda Shilling.

Credit cards are rarely accepted outside of Entebbe and Kampala. Visa cards are the most readily accepted and can be used in some of the ATMs but service can be unreliable.

Travellers' cheques are not recommended as they are very hard to exchange for local currency in Uganda.

It is best to bring cash for your expenses, US Dollar bills, UK pounds and Euros can all be exchanged in the larger towns. Larger notes will bring better exchange rate.