

Uganda

Primate Encounters

August 30 to September 10, 2025



Chimpanzee
© Scott Davis

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Submerge yourself in the mountainous jungle lairs of the elusive mountain gorillas and chimpanzee families, witnessing the intimate lives of our closest ancestors. In the spirit of legendary primatologists, Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey, you'll get up close and personal with these complex and social animals. Full-day access to Kibale National Park allows for ample chimpanzee trekking and photography opportunities as they groom, forage, interact, and play. Hike deep into Bwindi Impenetrable Forest and spend three days locating rare mountain gorillas and witnessing them trudge through trees to feed, socialize, and parent. Soak in the breathtaking landscapes of the countryside while keeping an eye out for some of the 13 primate species you could encounter on this unforgettable safari. You'll come away with a renewed sense of awe and an understanding of why Uganda is called the Pearl of Africa.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Observe the critically endangered mountain gorillas up close during the three one-hour visits deep within Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.
- Spend two days trekking in Kibale National Park with extended time to observe and photograph a full range of chimpanzee behaviors.
- Enjoy exclusive, private group encounters, with a variety of primates.
- Canoe through Mabamba Swamp to witness the famed Shoebill Stork.
- Expand your photography skills with biologist-turned-professional-photographer, Scott Davis.

LEADER: Scott Davis.

DAYS: 12, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 7.

COST: \$15,000 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for one-way flight from Bwindi to Entebbe), singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 4.

ACCOMMODATIONS: From a modern hotel to luxurious tented camps and cottages. Your tented camp near Bwindi is known for gorilla families visiting the grounds. See the *Accommodations* section on page 6.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Aug 30	Travel to Entebbe, Uganda.		
Aug 31	Arrive in Entebbe.	Protea Hotel, Entebbe	D
Sep 1	Day trip across Lake Victoria to Mabamba Swamp in search of Shoebill Storks.	Protea Hotel, Entebbe	B, L, D
Sep 2–4	Drive to Kibale National Park and then spend the next two days tracking chimpanzees and observing their behaviors.	Ndali Lodge, Ndali	B, L, D
Sep 5	Drive to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest with a morning boat ride down the Kazinga Channel.	Sanctuary Gorilla Forest Camp, Bwindi	B, L, D
Sep 6–8	Spend three days tracking gorillas.		B, L, D
Sep 9	Fly to Entebbe for flights homeward.	Protea Hotel, Entebbe (Dayroom)	B
Sep 10	Arrive home.		

LEADER



Scott Davis

Scott is a professional photographer (www.scottdavisimages.com/) specializing in wildlife, nature, and travel. Originally trained as a wildlife and marine biologist, his research and photo assignments took him to the far corners of the globe. National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, and renowned magazines have used his photography. His patience for teaching and love of capturing the essence of his subjects make him one of our most popular tour leaders.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Aug 30 ~ Travel to Entebbe, Uganda

Aug 31 ~ Arrive in Entebbe

Arrive in Entebbe, where our local agent will transfer you from the airport to the hotel to rest and prepare for your upcoming adventure. If you would like to arrive earlier, we can arrange divergent airport transfers and extra nights.

Sep 1 ~ Day trip to Mabamba Swamp

Set out across Lake Victoria to Mabamba Swamp, where you will embark on a canoe adventure in search of the famed Shoebill Stork. An impressive sight to behold, the Shoebill Stork, recognized by its shoe-shaped bill, stands 5ft tall with a wingspan of roughly 8ft. It uses a unique hunting technique known as “collapse hunting,” lunging methodically to catch fish and other small animals with precision. With an estimated 10,000 or fewer in the wild, the Shoebill Stork is currently classified as a vulnerable species, but conservation efforts are in place to protect their shrinking habitat and mitigate threats.



Chimpanzee
© Scott Davis

Sep 2–4 ~ Track chimpanzees in Kibale National Park

Drive from Entebbe to Ndali Lodge in the popular Kibale National Park. Kibale National Park is known for its rich variety and concentration of primates, such as vervets, l’Hoest’s monkeys, red colobus, black-and-white colobus, chimpanzees, and olive baboons. You may also encounter forest elephants, which are smaller and hairier than savanna elephants.

Kibale National Park is home to roughly 1,500 chimpanzees, all separated into various troops and some lone individuals. Several of the troops are habituated to humans, so you can observe them throughout the day without them getting anxious or upset. We have special permits that maximize time with the chimpanzees, so plan for a full day of activity. Wake up before dawn to hike into the forest, arriving at your focal chimp group just in time to see them stir and wake from their sleeping nests. Observe their daily routine while they interact in their natural habitat, and watch them eat, groom, play, and care for their young. Your expert guide will describe their behaviors and also help locate other animals that share the tropical forest, including other species of primates, bush pigs, dukiers, many amphibians and reptiles, and some of the more than 375 birds that inhabit this area.

Begin the last morning at adjacent Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary, recognized for its extensive biodiversity and affectionately called “the paradise of birds,” to view numerous bird species, primates, and other mammals including mongoose, warthogs, and otters. This wetland boasts a rich habitat and great conservation success story. The area, once known for poaching, is now managed by the locals who directly benefit from tourism. After touring Bigodi, you will return to follow your chimpanzee troop for the remainder of the day.



Baboons
© Adam Walter

Sep 5 ~ Drive to Bwindi

Embark on a scenic drive south to Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, home of the critically endangered mountain gorillas. Enjoy a stop in Queen Elizabeth National Park for a boat ride down the Kazinga Channel, one of the park's most dominant wildlife spots. The Kazinga Channel connects two freshwater lakes: Lake George and Lake Edward and acts as a main water source for the wildlife. Cruising the channel, you will have the opportunity to see statunga antelopes, waterbucks, buffalo, crocodiles, the world’s largest population of hippos, and even elephants. There are also various bird species along the channel, such as marabou storks, saddle-billed storks,

great and little egrets, white-bellied cormorants, African skimmers, common ringed plover, Kittlitz's plover, and marsh sandpiper.

Sep 6–8 ~ Track gorillas in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

Spend three days on gorilla treks in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. The forest is part of a national park that lies on the edge of the Albertine Rift Valley in southwestern Uganda, with a wide altitude range between 1,160m and 2,600m (peaking over 8,500ft above sea level). The forest dates back to the ice ages and is one of Uganda's oldest and most ecologically diverse regions. It is home to almost 400 plant species, 350 bird species, including 23 Albertine Rift endemics, and 120 mammal species including rodents, bats, mountain gorillas, olive baboons, chimpanzees, elephants, and antelopes. Your knowledgeable guide from the lodge will lead you on your venture to track mountain gorillas each day. Following a morning briefing by your gorilla guide, who will tell you about your assigned gorilla family and appropriate safety precautions, you will drive to the trailhead for the start of your thrilling quest. Expect a full day of hiking long distances in steep and sometimes muddy conditions, taking anywhere from two to eight hours to find the elusive mountain gorillas.



Mountain Gorilla
© Elizabeth Coler

Once you arrive at your gorilla family, you will spend one hour with them as they engage in their daily life. You will witness movement and behaviors such as feeding, playing, and tending to their young. Experience breathtaking and face-to-face encounters with giant mountain gorillas on an awe-inspiring adventure that few are lucky to know.

Sep 9 ~ Fly back to Entebbe and depart home

Take a private charter flight to Entebbe. You can refresh in your dayroom before catching your flights home.

Sep 10 ~ Arrive home

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$15,000
Single Supplement	\$2,000

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for one-way flight from Bwindi to Entebbe), singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will try to find a roommate for you, but if we cannot pair you with a roommate, we may charge you a single supplement. Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$3,000
Final	March 24, 2025	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, payments are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$2,750 per person (\$2,600 for the pre-purchased, **non-refundable** and **non-transferable** chimpanzee and gorilla trekking permits); \$150 per person of the cancellation fee can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the canceled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, and park entry fees for all activities unless described as optional.
- Permits for two full days of tracking chimpanzees in Kibale National Park (**non-refundable and non-transferable**).
- Permits for three one-hour gorilla visits in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest (**non-refundable and non-transferable**).
- One-way flight from Bwindi to Entebbe.
- Accommodations for the nights of August 31 through September 8 and a dayroom on September 9.
- Meals from dinner on August 31 through breakfast on September 9.
- Bottled water while trekking and in vehicles.
- Transfers between Entebbe International Airport and Protea Hotel, regardless of arrival or departure day.
- English-speaking drivers, park rangers, and trackers.
- Trip Planning Materials – information about entry requirements, flights, packing, gratuities, etc.
- Short-term [AMREF Flying Doctor emergency evacuation](#) insurance. This does not include hospital or treatment costs.

Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare (except flights listed as included), airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees. Round-trip airfare is approximately \$1,200 between the US and Entebbe, depending on origin.
- Passport and visa fees.
- COVID tests.
- Extra hotel nights (we can arrange for an extra cost).
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, we suggest budgeting about \$540 per participant for your drivers/guides, trackers, and rangers. This does not include any trip extensions.
- Optional hiring of local porters to carry your gear during chimpanzee and gorilla treks.
- Optional, additional [emergency evacuation insurance](#).
- Optional [Trip cancellation insurance](#).
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room

service, alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Traveler Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

[Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris](#)

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OTHER DETAILS

Climate

Uganda's temperatures generally stay the same year-round. Daytime temperatures range from 65 to 85°F and nighttime temperatures in the mid-50s°F, but with climate change weather is more variable, so prepare for varying climate conditions. September through November are the transitional months between the rainy and dry seasons in Uganda, so expect some rain. The Bwindi Impenetrable Forest is rainy and fairly damp year-round.

Fitness Level

You may hike to search for gorillas and chimpanzees for two to six miles per day (typically spending more than four to eight hours) in steep, uneven, and muddy terrain. You'll hike regardless of the weather conditions. Plan to hire a local porter to carry your gear during the hikes so that you can focus on photography and the rugged terrain. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Accommodations

In Entebbe, you will overnight at a modern hotel. While elsewhere, your lodging is at luxurious cottages and tented camps. All rooms have private baths. After a long day of hiking to find the apes, you will appreciate the niceties of a warm shower, sunset views at the bar, good food, and a comfortable bed. If you are concerned about the standard of accommodations being below your expectations, please ask us before booking.

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Entebbe, Uganda (EBB) by 11:59pm on August 31.
- Depart from Entebbe, Uganda (EBB) after 8:00pm on September 9.

Flights we book

- The one-way flight from Bwindi to Entebbe is included in the trip cost.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Ecotourism and Conservation for Uganda.**
- **Cheesemans' Trips are Carbon Neutral.**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.