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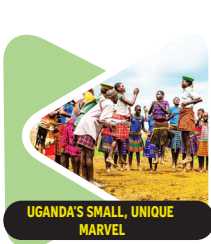


A Special Feature



UGANDA TURNS TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FOR FUTURE

UGANDA'S SMALL, UNIQUE MARVEL



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Uganda's Small, Unique Marvel

Uganda turns to sustainable tourism for future

World over, several countries are jostling to take a share of the world's tourism market cake whose size globally hit the value of \$631 billion in 2021.

JONATHAN KAMOGA
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

While countries struggle to rake in more revenues from tourism through intense investment and advertising, sustainable tourism is being ignored, with ripple effects that could hurt future generations.

The World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities.

Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices apply to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments.

Players and commentators on the sector in Uganda believe that the promotion of sustainable tourism should be regarded as an urgent matter if the country was to realize some of the Sustainable development goals that align with the sector.

"For sustainable tourism purposes, it is not enough to just look at the number of tourists we get or how much the sector contributes to the country's GDP. The question should be that, 20 years from now, shall we have these revenues and numbers coming in so other generations can enjoy them," said Dr. Imokola John Baptist, a scholar and media trainer.

Uganda's National Development Plan (NDPIII) aspires to make the country one of the top five tourism destinations in Africa by 2025, given the sector's important role in economic growth and employment generation, and the government is positioning sustainable tourism as a game changer.

Over the years, the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) has called on all players

in the tourism sector value chain to prioritize environmental protection, good business governance, and respectful co-existence with the host communities in the areas where they operate in the bid to promote sustainable tourism.

According to UTB chief Executive officer Ms. Lilly Ajarova, there is a need for the country to establish a proper balance between these three dimensions, including making optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential ecological processes, as well as conserving natural heritage and biodiversity to ensure the sector thrives longer.

"Tourism is a threat to the environment if not well managed, and based on what climate change effects have done to the sector, it should be a wake-up call that more should be done in tourism business operations to intentionally conserve and protect the environment, as we highly depend on nature for survival as a sector," Ajarova said.

According to UTB, ongoing efforts to promote sustainable tourism across the country are aimed at ensuring the long-term viability of the tourism industry.

This, they say, has been done through activities that protect and preserve Uganda's natural and cultural resources, including the promotion of tourist activities in the country through encouraging visitation of eco-tourism's abundant natural attractions.

"We also encourage tourists to participate in activities that do not harm the environment through responsible tourism practices. Such practices include good waste management, conserving water, and respecting local cultures. We also support community-based tourism through promoting activities that benefit local communities," Mr Gessa Simplicious, UTB's Spokesperson said.

By doing that, he added, conservation and preservation of natural and cultural resources is possible. This is made possible through partnerships with local communities, government agencies, and other stakeholders to protect these resources as value addition is made to the tourism products.

Currently, many investors in the sector, tour operators, and other service providers are aligning their products with sustainability as they view it as a game changer that would allow their businesses to survive for decades.

Ms Tina Katushabe who runs the Ihamba eco-lodge located beside the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park said that



Tourists Visiting Murchison Falls National Park Uganda.

investors, especially those in the hospitality sector, should put into consideration the delicate ecosystems their premises find themselves in, so they can survive future decades.

"At our residence, we only use solar energy for example. We also do not use single-use plastics and the food we serve our guests is locally sourced so the community can also directly benefit from our establishment," she said.



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UTB chief Executive officer
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Until the COVID-19 crisis started, Uganda's tourism sector had grown exponentially, with visitors arriving in the country increasing from 200,000 in 2000, to over 1.5 million in 2018.

With the COVID pandemic, the number of arrivals dropped to 156,000 in 2020, and the hospitality sector suffered great losses from 2019 to 2021.

Before that, the sector contributed to 7.7% of GDP and earned USD 1.6 billion annual-



Daudi Migereko Board of directors
Uganda Tourist Board (UTB).

ly, twice as much as the forex income earned from the largest export, coffee (UNDP, 2020).

According to the Ministry of Tourism, the tourism and hospitality sector accounts for around 667,600 staff, with 90% employed in the hospitality sector; the sector contributes to about 6.7 % of the total national employment.



Lake Mburo National Park; Uganda's small, unique marvel



Buffalos bathe in a road side pool of muddy water in Lake Mburo National Park

JONATHAN KAMOGA
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Tucked away in Uganda's western district of Kiruhura known largely as the land of milk and spanning to the central district of Masaka a coffee-growing area, the Lake Mburo National Park, the country's smallest savannah national park, stands tall in its uniqueness.

The park stretches only 370 square kilometres, but is rich in variety with an estimated 350 bird species and a high concentration of animals such as zebras, impalas, elands, buffalos, oribi, Defassa waterbuck, leopard, hippo, hyena, topi and reedbuck.

Interestingly, because of earlier pressures on the park, mostly encroachment by large communities around it, the number of predators like leopards, and lions here went to almost zero over the years.

This is attributed to years of poaching and revenge killings by the pastoral communities that live around the park in cases where these big cats attacked and killed their animals.

"We have several leopards here and a lion. Although the leopards are too shy and could not be easily spotted," our ranger told us.

Although the Uganda Wildlife Authority claims the park has some leopards and at least one lion, many visitors who have visit-

ed the park have not reported seeing either.

Visitors can stroll through the short savannah and scattered shrubs to get a closer look at the shy giraffes that had kept evading vehicles. A walk to the smaller down-warped lakes in the park gets you a better look at hippos.

"Because of the uniqueness of the park, having cattle ranches and large communities nearby, we have not yet thought about repopulating it with the big cats for now," Mr Sam Mwandha, the Uganda Wildlife Authority Executive Director said.

The local communities also believe there are no predators here, which explains why while on a game drive, you can bump into community members casually walking from one point of the park to another without fear of being mauled down by a lion.

But it is this absence of major predators that has attracted a string of several fun and adrenaline-filled activities that, out of the country's over 10 national parks, can only be done in Lake Mburo National Park.

But because of its location along the Kampala-Mbarara highway, a major getaway to several attractions in Western Uganda, tourists mostly pass by for a shorter time, many only doing a game drive.

But then they miss out on some interesting activities the park has to offer.

This is the only park in Uganda



Giraffes at Lake Mburo National Park.

where one is allowed to move out of the vehicle, cycle around among dazzles of zebras, and race with impalas on horseback!

Private investors are coming through with a string of such activities to spice up visitors' experiences in the park on top of making available accommodation facilities ranging from high-end to low-budget accommodation.

The name Lake Mburo National Park is derived from one of the huge lakes that the park has, Mburo. This lake, together with 13 others, five of which lie within the park's borders, form part of a 50 km-long wetland system linked by a swamp.

There are routine boat cruises, mostly during evenings along Lake Mburo during which one can

view the sun setting behind the hills and rocky ridges surrounding the park, with its golden rays reflecting on the lake's waters.

One is also able to sight more animal species along the shores like Buffalos, Warthogs, bush pigs, and hippos.

Agro-tourism walks.

According to the Uganda Wildlife Authority, the park's precarious past has seen wildlife virtually eliminated several times by communities around this park.

Firstly, the authority says, there were various attempts to rid the region of tsetse flies, then to make way for ranches, and finally as a result of poaching.

The park's outskirts boast several cattle ranches with farmers

herding hundreds of the coveted Ankole longhorn cattle.

It is a common and equally beautiful sight to spot groups of zebras grazing together with cattle or drinking water from the same water troughs in some of these ranches, as one drives through the park's outskirts.

The Ankole longhorn cattle have in recent years been getting global recognition. Last year, a zoo in Philadelphia USA, introduced three of these cows as some of its new animals.

The cows, also known as cattle of kings, have also become popular in South Africa after Uganda's president, Yoweri Museveni, a huge rancher of the same sold some to his South African counterpart Cyril Ramaphosa.

Ranchers here, in a bid to cash from the tourism numbers trickling into the park have set up a tourism aspect to their ranches. Here, tourists who visit the park also have an opportunity to visit these ranches in a new but growing tourism product known as agro-tourism.

Here, visitors are given a feel of the ranch, taken through the history and cultural attachment of these particular cows to the Ankole people, and have the opportunity to graze or milk them.

The visitors are also told about the wider Ankole culture, a region where the park lies.



UGANDA'S SMALL, UNIQUE MARVEL

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Agro Tourism: A new emerging product to Uganda's tourism sector

Deep into Western Uganda's Bushenyi district lies the Bushenyi Demonstration Farm, a relatively large piece of land of about three acres housing a family home, animals in different corners in their wooden structures and paddocks; and several crops in small gardens.

The farm, owned and run by Mrs Bridget Bashasha, her husband and three of their children has different crops grown in an agronomy structure. Several types of vegetables like cabbages, sukuma wiiki, and others line up in plastic pots and sacks along the farm's pathways and verandas of its permanent structures.

A relatively small banana plantation stands at the edge of the farm while a pineapple garden rests on the other edge.

From the entrance, you can hear the sounds of the farm animals from cows, chicken to pigs.

While we were used to visiting farms to only make purchases or dig, this time we were here to tour and learn.

The farm is just one of the several others within this region and other parts of Uganda that are positioning themselves for a newly emerging tourism product in the country, Agro-Tourism.

According to Mrs Bashaha, the family earns money from the sale of their farm produce, training people about quality farm practices and incubating other smaller start-ups for a fee.

Now, they are positioning themselves to earn from tourism, Uganda's biggest foreign exchange earner, by attracting both local and foreign visitors to have a farming experience.

The target is mainly the foreign tourists and Ugandans in urban centres that would fancy visiting them for leisure, educational trips and training.

Already, Bashasha says most of the visitors they get to the farm are a few individuals, tourists



Agro-farming in Bushenyi district, Western Uganda.

brought in by travel agencies and schools at a charge of Shs 30,000 (\$8) per head per day.

Although the numbers are still low, the family believes that they will increase the reason why they are currently investing more in accommodation facilitates on the farm for tourists who intend to stay for some nights which when complete could host up to 30 people.

"We believe that through agro-tourism, we can get much more revenue and I think that being in partnership with UTB is a step in the right direction," she said.

Agro-tourism is the business of establishing farms as travel destinations for educational and recreational purposes.

It is a new venture in Uganda and Rwanda but developed in Kenya and Tanzania.

It is a concept that merges some elements of both agriculture and tourism to open up new markets for farm products and provide travel experiences.

Uganda is exploring different ways of reviving a badly battered tourism sector brought to its knees by the corona virus pandemic which has seen foreign tourists locked out of the country for over five months.

One of these is diversification of its tourism products from the traditional nature based tourism to history based, agro tourism, adventure and experiences.

The country is also set to lose a big chunk of the \$1.6 billion it

earned from tourism in 2018 because of the advent of the pandemic and its ensuring lockdown.

To save jobs tourism offered especially those in the private sector and also ensure that the sector gets back to its feet, the government has embarked on campaigns to promote domestic tourism during this time and diversification of the country's tourism products.

The Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) through its tourism product development and diversification programme has partnered with agribusiness enterprises to support the development and promotion of agro-tourism across 18 regions and 51 districts in the country.

Authorities say that with ag-



Visitors touring Coffee Nursery Bed in Western Uganda.

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riculture employing nearly 60 % of Ugandans, a successful agro tourism campaign based on particular crops like coffee — which is the biggest export for the country— would increase earnings for farmers, compel them to add value on their products and eventually improve their livelihoods.

This, experts from the Agro-tourism Association of Uganda say could also increase tourism annual earnings by 30% within a year.

The move for Agro-tourism will help diversify the sector by adding a new experience to it, create jobs for youths and increase incomes of households running different farms according to the UTB executive director Ms Lilly Ajarova.

“As UTB, we are at a point where we are looking at product diversification and agro-tourism gives an opportunity for such. We need to give experiences that are different to add on what we already have as our products,” Ajarova said.

This initiative, is currently being piloted in the western districts of Mbarara, Isingiro and Bushenyi at Agribusiness incubation farms including; Gudie Incubation Farm Limited, Bushenyi Youth Forum Project and Excel Hort Consult Agribusiness Incubator Limited before it is spread out around the country.

According to Ajarova, the partnership with the different agribusinesses will include putting focus on the development of agro-tourism products and services, creat-



Caption: Tourists take part in coffee harvesting at an agro-tourism farm in Bushenyi, western Uganda.

ing awareness about their availability, and supporting and facilitating them.

The experience

For an agro-tourism experience, one is taken through different processes of growing particular crops or taking care of certain animals.

Tourists also engage in real on farm activities like milking cows, feeding rabbits,

harvesting pineapples or bananas, slaughtering and thereafter roasting a chicken among others.

According to Mr Alex Ariho the Excel Hort Consult Agribusiness Incubator Limited Director General, the product has different modules like simply touring the farms which helps visitors understand different farming methods and practices, skill-

ing tours which equip visitors with knowledge on what is done and agro-based tours that look into technology and value addition on farms.

Others are agro based tour events including festivals like banana festival, rabbit festival, coffee festival and agro- education where schools especially agricultural classes are brought to visit.

According to Ms Lilly Ajarova, agro-tourism can also boost domestic tourism in these times of the coronavirus pandemic that have seen foreign tourists away.

“Tourism is a multi-sector industry and we are trying to link it to other sectors. As we interest investors in agro-tourism, we need to interest the wider public in visiting them,” she said.

According to Alex Ariho, there is a plan to support the development of Agro-tourism incubator hubs in the 18 regions of Uganda within the next five years.

“In the next five years, we are targeting incubating 27,000 start-ups that will be joining the agro-tourism sector and that could take a total investment of about \$500,000,” Mr Ariho said.

While the biggest hindrance to the development of agro-tourism in Uganda is mainly lack of skills for the starters, capital to start, sustain and expand this agribusiness should be availed help by authorities.

“What UTB brings on board is policy, legal framework and mobilisation of sector players like tour operators whom we farmers might not even know,” Ariho said.

UGANDA'S TOURISM IN PICTORIAL

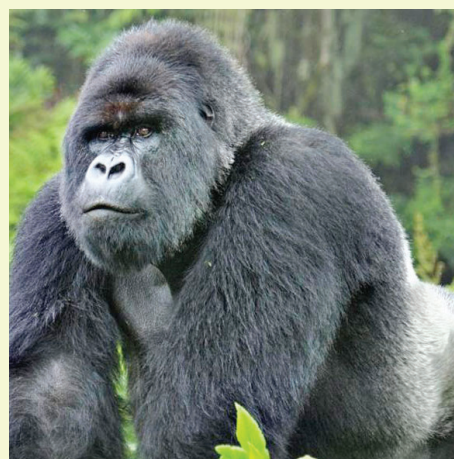
Murchison Falls.

Murchison Falls, also known as Kabalega Falls, is a waterfall between Lake Kyoga and Lake Albert on the Victoria Nile River in Uganda. At the top of Murchison Falls, the Nile forces its way through a gap in the rocks, only seven metres wide, and tumbles 43 metres, before flowing westward into Lake Albert.



Bwindi Impenetrable Forest.

Is a popular site that offers one of the world's most popular tourist activity - gorilla trekking. It also offers a range of other activities.



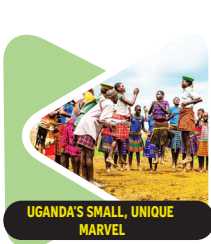
Red-tailed monkeys are a common sight in Uganda's Mgahinga National Park.



A view of Bulange, the seat of the Buganda Kingdom, from Kabaka Njagala Road. Embark on a journey through the heart of Buganda's rich history & culture.



Uganda is home to over 56 cultures, each with its unique customs, traditions & languages



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Jinja; Uganda's centre of adventure

Jinja City in Eastern Uganda is a tourism hub famed for features like the Source of the Nile, Lake Victoria and water activities for adrenaline junkies like white water rafting, kayaking, bungee jumping, zip lining in the high trees of the tropical Mabira forest and now there is a new addition to this buffet, tubing.

The area is commonly regarded as the adventure capital of East Africa due to the very many activities in town that one could engage in, especially for tourists.

Once Uganda's metropolis of choice for manufacturers, Jinja has endured decades of near-economic collapse, but is keen to bury its past and distinguish itself as a hub of "soft industry."

Jinja's revival, tourism sector player say, can exploit the advantage of its location at the source of the world's longest river, the Nile, to become a top resort for recreation and marine tourism with the right investment and marketing.

This hub of adventure tourism is approximately 81 kilometres by road, from the capital Kampala.

Adventure tourism is a type of tourism in which tourists engage in adventure activities such as trekking, climbing,

rafting, scuba diving, and gains much of its excitement by allowing the tourist to step outside their comfort zone.

Here are some of the spots and activities one can do while in Jinja;

■ Source of the Nile

Jinja is home to the source of the world's longest river, the Nile. Doves of both local and foreign tourists visit the town to view it and do other adventure activities like birding, sunset cruises among others.

■ White water rafting

Jinja is home to some of the world's finest grade 5 white water rafting. Initially, this adventure activity was mostly done by foreign tourists but lately, according to operators, several local tourists too are now opting for the adventure.

The adventure includes floating along the banks of the Nile, drinking in the breathtaking scenery, spying local wildlife and birdlife, while sharing the day with friends and family, this

is the adventure you deserve.

Fishermen in dugouts, an abundance of birdlife and wildlife to search for including Cape Clawless Otter, Red Tail Monkeys, Vervet Monkeys and Giant Nile Monitor Lizards, combined with fun and white water adventure make this the perfect family and friends day out on the Nile

■ Tubing

Tubing, done world over on both water and snow is a recent experience in Uganda and since the country has no snow, it is done on the River Nile.

It involves revelers sitting on inflatable tubes tied together in groups and then connected to a kayak that gives the group direction as they glide downstream through both calm and white waters.

■ Zip lining

Located in Mabira forests at the Griffin falls camp is Uganda's largest zip line running over 250 metres.

The challenge leads you to pass through trees as tall as 12 metres and has five platforms with lines running above tall trees and the river.

A zip line consists of a pulley suspended on a cable between two points, usually made of stainless steel, mounted on a slope and trees to enable a person to be propelled by gravity.

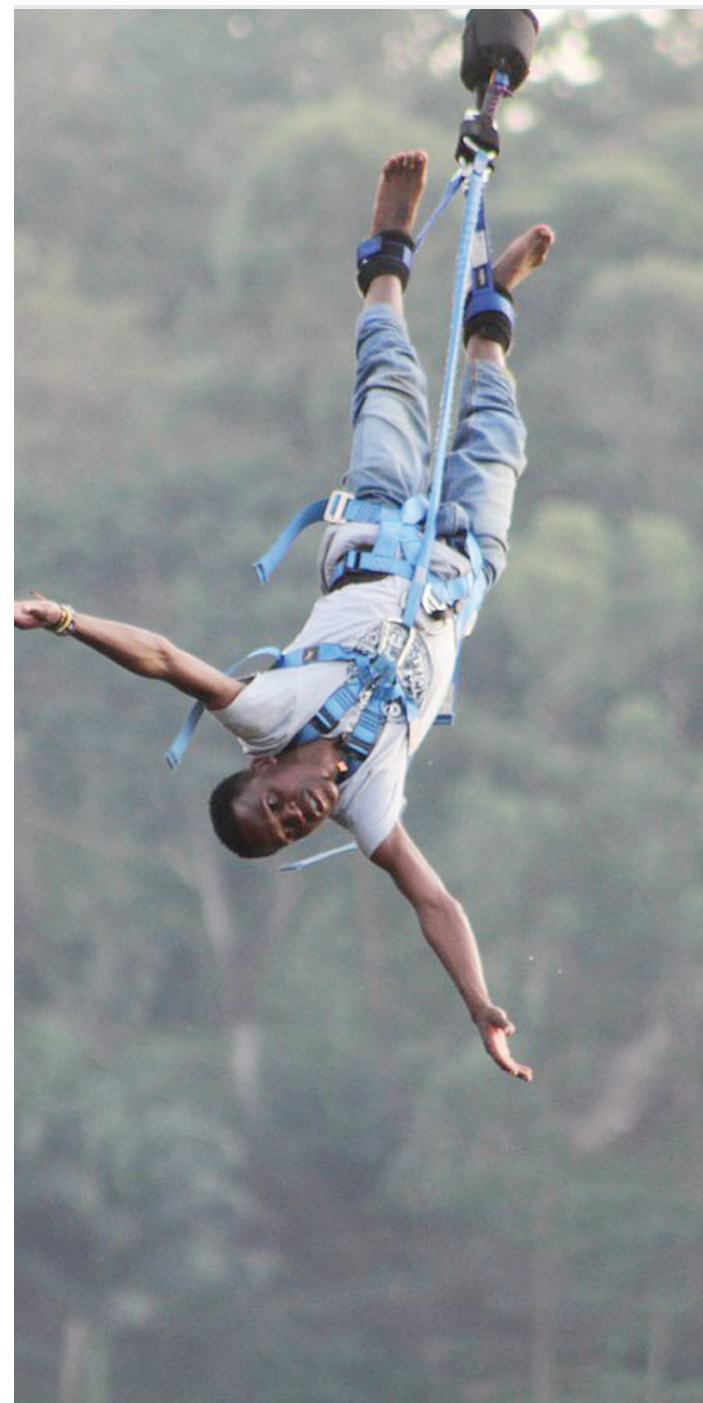
Foreigners pay \$50 while Ugandans pay Shs 60,000 (\$16) to take on the zip line challenge here.

Finishing the whole course takes about 3 hours of fun, tension and your heart wanting to jump out. Apart from zip lining which is the main activity here, the camp's rugged terrain offers a chance to hike and bike.

One can also track monkeys in the forest like the Uganda Mangabeys and the red tailed monkeys, or go birding to see species like the vultures, fishing eagle.

■ Horse riding

While not yet a popular adventure activity within the Ugandan audience, horseback riding has started picking up across the country as several spots spring up within the capital Kampala and its surrounding environs.



But in Jinja, it is one of those most attractive fun activities to do around the villages, rural areas and along the banks of the River Nile. One can choose from introductory rides (with guides walking and controlling horses), trail rides of 1 to 2hrs and advanced rider only trips of 2 hours.

■ Bungee Jumping

Bungee jumping is not for the faint of heart, but is particularly enjoyable simply for the experience of diving into the Nile River below. It is surely a story you'll be telling for the rest of your life.

This will be yet another scary but very interesting activity for you. This is done over the wa-

ters of the Nile River on the platform perched 44m. Try this out because it will be a memorable experience.

■ Fishing on the Nile

This is done both in the Nile River and Lake Victoria which are the largest fresh waters in Uganda with many fish species, Nile perch inclusive. One can get an opportunity to fish here if only you bring your equipment for the sport fishing activity and a permit from UWA.

■ Kayaking

The solo kayak at the Nile will be yet another opportunity to experience the white water.





IN BRIEF

Uganda tourist attractions at a glance

Uganda is blessed with immense tourist attractions dotted across the country. From plenty of sites of natural, historical and geographical interest to wildlife, the East African nation is one of the continent's must-visit destinations. The warm and welcoming people have over the years attracted millions of people from all over the world to visit. However, here are a few tourist attractions close to the capital, which a section of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association guests could have an opportunity to be treated with.

Kampala City

This is the capital city of the Pearl of Africa. The first sight one gets of Uganda, is a city that never sleeps as it is dynamic and invigorating. This city is filled with attractions and sites that offer a taste of what's to come from the country's offerings. Kampala is a mix of cultures from in and out of the country. The capital city has several attractions, which include:

The Kabaka's Palace

This is the official residence of the King of Buganda. It was constructed by Ssekabaka Mwanga II in 1885. It was custom for a new king in Buganda to choose a hill where he would set up a new palace. The palace usually became a new capital for the Kingdom and the King is said to have liberty to rename the place.

Kasubi Tombs

Kasubi Tombs is a burial ground for the four Buganda kings (kabaka) and other members of the Buganda royal family thus making it significant to the Buganda Kingdom. For that, it remains an important spiritual and political site for the Ganda people, as well as an important example of traditional architecture in Uganda.

Uganda Museum

The Uganda Museum is the biggest and oldest museum in the country. It was founded in 1908 at Lugard's Fort on Old Kampala Hill in Kampala city, according to the Uganda Tourism Centre. The facility displays and exhibits ethnological, natural-historical and traditional life collections of Uganda's cultural heritage.

Uganda Martyrs' Shrine Namugongo

This site is famous for those with strong faith. It has been visited by three Popes, including most recently, Pope Francis. There's a beautiful Basilica and Museum

at the Catholic and Anglican shrines respectively that no one would like to miss. The Uganda Martyrs were among the first converts to Christianity in Uganda. Between 1885 and 1887, 22 Catholics and 23 Anglican believers were executed after refusing to denounce their faith. The youngest was 16 and a relation of one of the executioners. Every June 3, over two million faithful from Uganda and the rest of the world make the pilgrimage to Namugongo, a site where most of the martyrs were executed.

Meanwhile, attractions outside of, but close to Kampala include:

The Equator Line

The Equator line in Uganda is found along the Kampala-Masaka Highway at a small town called Kayabwe. It is a widely known landmark and a must-go-to for all looking to witness the Equator experiment and photo opportunity. The Equator line is a regular and recommended stopover for all visitors and tourists going to the country's western region. The Equator Landmark also has many restaurants for one to buy lunch or a snack as well as crafts shops for souvenir shopping.

The Nile

Jinja is East Africa's adventure capital and is the source of the White Nile and home to some of the world's best and wildest white-water rafting. The Nile boasts rapids ranging from class one to six, making rafting an ideal activity for all levels – first-time rafters, families, and extreme adrenaline junkies. The area attracts outdoor tourists, as well as those looking for a thrill and involvement in all activities while having fun. Here you can have your experience of kayaking, white-water rafting, quad biking, mountain biking and horseback riding – all in a town with a gorgeous natural setting and some pre-independence architecture. In Jinja, you will discover that Uganda is truly both the Pearl of Africa and the place for adventure.

Kagulu Hill

Located in Busoga Kingdom in Buyende District, Kagulu Hill is estimated to be about 10,000 ft. above sea level. Kagulu Hill is believed to be the first migration and settlement centre in the Busoga region. The gigantic grey rock, dotted with limited green vegetation, offers a rare opportunity for any mountain climbing safari in the country.



Uganda at the Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban South Africa sharing the magic of our incredible wilderness locations



Uganda boasts of over 1,000 bird species making it one of the best birding destinations in the world.



SALT: Lake Katwe is a shallow and saline crater lake in the west of Uganda. It is one of the largest salt lakes in East Africa with a surface area of approximately 8 square kilometers and about 3,265ft deep.



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Uganda's Small, Unique Marvel

Why you should hold your meeting in Uganda

Planning on hosting your next big meeting or International Conference? The Pearl of Africa must be your top pick on your MICE Calender schedule!

Destination Uganda provides yet another conducive environment for hosting meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions amongst other destinations in the region as the Country prides herself in previously hosting big International meetings and conferences such as the 20th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Kampala between in November 2007 attended by upto 1,200 Ugandan delegates, 300 international delegates representing 600 organisations from 59 hosted Countries.

Others are the ICT4 Development Conference in 2019, Global Peace Summit, Solidarity Summit, African Union, the International Criminal Court, the Pearl of Africa Tourism Expos, UN SWITCH Africa Green Africa conference, the International Conference on the Great lakes Region (ICGLR) and the recently held 64th Annual meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in 2019.

Due to the vast and diverse tourism industry in Uganda which supports for incentive travel, a lot of Companies and Organisations prefer destination Uganda as a one stop midpoint for their staff and to hosting MICE activities as they can tap into a whole range of other facilities and tourism activities to enjoy from, also the MICE industry is central towards the survival and growth of the Tourism and Hospitality sector as these embraced MICE as a new product to further Uganda as a destination popular not for only leisure but business travel too. For instance the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was supported through the development of travel packages and guidelines in other wards most international conferences and business meetings take on the advantage to enjoy viewing Uganda's prized tourism sites, attractions, natural sceneries etc.

Actually, the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) – a Government tourism marketing agency mandated to promote destination Uganda's tourism both in the Country and World all-over has always collaborated with various stakeholders through a number of bids to bring in some of the biggest events and Conferences in the Pearl of Africa as this is clear testimony to a chain of global events always happening at the big hotels year on year.

On the contrary in 2019, Uganda Tourism Board showcased the destination's MICE & religious tourism potential at the Symposium of Episcopal Council of Africa and Madagascar Conference (SECAM) and



Aerial view of Kampala.

the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) as this witnessed the number

Destination Uganda does not only pride herself in being the heartbeat of Africa, or to having the most prized Tourism sites and attractions that attract large multitudes of tourism visitors but also boasts of a variety of both locally owned, International star rated hotel chains and luxury accommodation facilities.



Katonga hall at the Kampala Serena hotel.

of holiday bookings for end of same year (2019) mostly placed by delegates from Countries of; Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, Australia and United Kingdom at the closure of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference.

Destination Uganda does not only pride herself in being the heartbeat of Africa, or to having the most prized Tourism sites and attractions that attract large multitudes of tourism visitors but also boasts of a variety of both locally owned, International star rated hotel chains and luxury accommodation facilities popular for hosting MICE such as; Hilton Garden Inn, Onomo hotels, Mestil hotel and Residences, The Pearl of Africa hotel, Sheraton Kampala hotel, Golden Tulip hotel, Imperial Royale hotel, Grand Imperial hotel, Kampala Serena hotel and Conference Centre, Lake Victoria Serena Golf Resort and Spa – Kigo, Fairway hotel and Spa, Hotel Africana, Mbale Resort Hotel, Wash and Wills Country home in Mbale, the City Urban blue hotel, The Emin Pasha hotel, Tesh hotel, The Emperor hotels, The Grand global hotel, Troos hotel, Protea hotel by Marriot chain, Latitude hotels, Speke hotel, International hotel Muyenga, Speke Resort Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort and Conference centre, Jinja Nile Resort hotel, Nile Village hotel Jinja, Hotel Triangle, Metropole hotel Kampala, Xanadu Collection, Le Petit hotel, Colline hotel Mukono, King Fisher Resort Jinja, Imperial Botanical beach hotel Entebbe, Imperial Resort Beach hotel Entebbe among others that are all members of the Uganda Hotel Owners Association (UHOA) cater for large delegate numbers

when it comes to MICE activities. As each of these hotels contains a number of maximum conference rooms for instance; Sheraton hotel Kampala boasts of 10 conferencing and events rooms with various conference facilities that can accommodate gatherings of up to 500 people, with over 1,700 square metres of state-of-the-art banquet function space while Speke Resort Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort and Conference centre prides in the 19 Conference rooms (halls) that managed cater for the CHOGM delegates in 2007 not forgetting the 5 outdoor spaces for both conferences and weddings.

The MICE industry in Uganda plays a significant role in growth and development of the Tourism and Hospitality sector as it's a big support system hence a meaningful revenue generation industry. MICE in the tourism and hospitality sector is an elipsis for; Meetings, Incentives, Conferences/Conventions and Exhibitions or Events, in other wards its business tourism at its optimal point aimed at bringing together top professionals from almost every sector in an enhanced, tailor-made hospitality arrangement.

This is also evident to a number of FAM trips made pre or post the big hosted global events held in the Country as the delegates are taken around to testify to Uganda's natural beauty, for instance the previous Pearl of Africa Tourism Expos including the last physical one POATE 2021 - Uganda Tourism Board treated almost 50 hosted buyers to FAM trip expeditions across the Pearl of Africa.