

A Silverback Up Close, Then White Water on the Nile — An 8-Day Uganda Itinerary

Eight days across Uganda, from the source of the Nile to the misty ridges of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest — a day of white water rafting, a boat cruise past hippos and elephants on the Kazinga Channel, and an hour spent within a few meters of a mountain gorilla family, with real lodges, real outfitters, and 2026 prices.

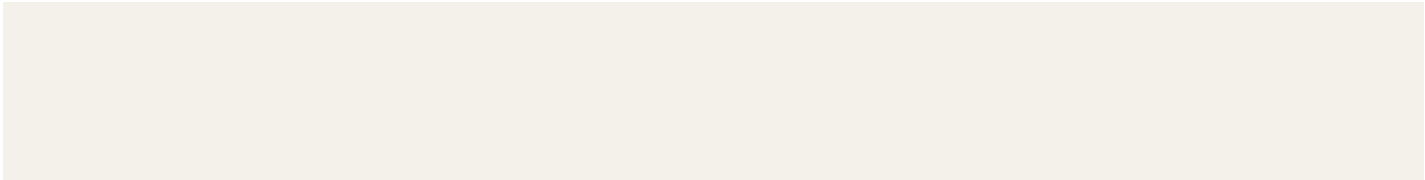
DURATION 8 Days	BEST TIME TO GO June–August & Dec–Feb the two dry seasons, when Bwindi's trails are least muddy for gorilla trekking; March–May and Oct–Nov are wetter and cheaper, with lodges quieter but hikes muddier underfoot	FROM \$2,600 USD / person for 2 people, incl. a gorilla trekking permit, 7 nights' lodging, a Nile rafting day, park entrance fees, and a domestic flight back to Entebbe
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Day 1

Kampala

A first afternoon in Uganda's capital, with a UNESCO royal tomb complex before settling in for the night.

Arrival — Entebbe International Airport ~45 minutes to Kampala • self-guided transfer Entebbe sits on Lake Victoria about 40 km south of Kampala — most itineraries arrange a private transfer straight into the city on arrival.
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Overnight — Jinja Nile Resort

From \$120 USD / night, for 2 people

A lawned riverside resort right on the Nile's edge, a short walk from Jinja town and the put-in point for the next day's rafting.

Jinja Nile Resort · tripadvisor.com/Jinja_Nile_Resort

Day 3

White Water Rafting the Nile

A full day on the river's Grade 3–4 rapids, one of the more accessible big-water rafting trips anywhere in the world.

Full-Day White Water Rafting — Nile River Explorers

~5–6 hours, Grade 3–4 rapids · from \$165 USD / person

A full day running the Nile's rapids below Jinja with safety kayakers shadowing every boat — lunch, drinks, a Kampala shuttle, and photos are included, and there's a calmer family-grade option for non-rafters.

Nile River Explorers · www.raftafrica.com

Evening on the Riverfront

self-guided · free

A quiet evening back at the resort watching the Nile go by — most rafters are ready for an early night after a full day on the water.

Overnight — Jinja Nile Resort

From \$120 USD / night, for 2 people

A second night by the river before the long drive west begins.

Day 4

Jinja to Queen Elizabeth National Park

A long day's drive west across the country, dropping down into the Great Rift Valley by afternoon.

Drive — Jinja to Queen Elizabeth National Park

~7–8 hours via Mbarara · self-guided or private driver-guide

The longest driving day of the trip, crossing the Kampala–Mbarara highway before turning into the park's eastern gate — most operators split this with a lunch stop in Mbarara.

Evening Arrival & Kazinga Channel Sunset

~30 minutes, self-guided · free

A first look at the Kazinga Channel from Mweya peninsula at sunset, with hippos already grunting in the shallows.

Overnight — Mweya Safari Lodge

From \$310 USD / night, for 2 people

The park's flagship lodge, built on a peninsula where the Kazinga Channel meets Lake Edward, with the Rwenzori Mountains — the “Mountains of the Moon” — visible on a clear day.

Mweya Safari Lodge · mweyalodge.com

Day 5

Queen Elizabeth National Park

A full day of wildlife on land and water, in one of Uganda's most biodiverse parks.

Morning Game Drive — Kasenyi Plains

~3 hours · park entry \$45 USD / person / day

An early drive across open savanna known for lion prides and large herds of Ugandan kob, the antelope males famous for their competitive mating grounds.

Kazinga Channel Boat Cruise

~2 hours · \$30 USD / person

A slow cruise along the channel connecting Lake Edward and Lake George, past what's often called the highest concentration of hippos in Africa, along with buffalo, elephants, and Nile crocodiles on the banks.

Overnight — Mweya Safari Lodge

From \$310 USD / night, for 2 people

A second night at Mweya, with the channel visible from most rooms.

Day 6

Ishasha & the Drive to Bwindi

A detour through the park's remote southern sector, famous for lions that climb trees, before the final approach to gorilla country.

Ishasha Sector — Tree-Climbing Lions

~2 hours · included in park permit

A quieter southern corner of the park where a resident lion pride has the unusual habit of climbing into the branches of fig and sausage trees to escape the heat and biting flies.

Drive — Ishasha to Bwindi

~2.5 hours · self-guided or private driver-guide

A rougher road climbing steadily into the Kigezi highlands, the terraced hillsides growing steeper as Bwindi's forest wall comes into view.

Overnight — Buhoma Lodge

From \$350 USD / person / night, for 2 people (low season)

Eight bandas built into the forest edge right at Buhoma, the original gorilla trekking trailhead — gorillas have occasionally wandered through the grounds themselves.

Buhoma Lodge · buhoma.ugandaexclusivecamps.com

Day 7

Gorilla Trekking Day

The centerpiece of the trip — a hike through Bwindi Impenetrable Forest to spend an hour with a habituated mountain gorilla family.

Mountain Gorilla Trek

~2–6 hours of hiking, varies by group location · \$800 USD / person permit

A ranger-led trek that can run anywhere from two to six hours depending on where the assigned gorilla family is that morning, ending in a strictly-timed one hour with the group — armed rangers and porters (hireable locally) come along throughout.

Batwa Cultural Experience

~2 hours · \$20–\$30 USD / person

Overnight — Buhoma Lodge

From \$350 USD / person / night, for 2 people (low season)

A second night at the forest edge, well earned after trekking day.

Day 8

Bwindi to Entebbe — Departure

A short domestic flight back across the country, trading Bwindi's dirt airstrips for the shores of Lake Victoria.

Domestic Flight — Kihiki to Entebbe

~1.5 hours · from \$260 USD / person, one-way