UGANDA & CONGO
8 DAYS BY HELICOPTER
Uganda HIGHLIGHTS
- wildlife & landscapes -

Kidepo National Park - rolling grasslands & wildlife

Murchison Falls

Ndali - Fort Portal, western Uganda

Scenic over the snowy peaks of the Rwenzoris - ‘Mountains of the Moon’
Helicopter ITINERARY

**Day 1** - Protea Hotel, Entebbe

**Day 2 & 3** - Kidepo Valley National Park. Apoka Lodge

**Day 4** - Fly via Murchison Falls, and on to Ndali. Ndali Lodge


**Day 6** - Gorilla trek from Bukima followed by Southern tour of park. Mikeno Lodge

**Day 7** - Scenic over the Northern part of Virunga. Mikeno Lodge

**Day 8** - Grauer Gorilla trek in Kahuzi-Biéga. Night on the rim of Nyiragongo. Nyiragongo Lodge

**Day 9** - Safari Ends
Situated in the far north east, Kidepo is Uganda's most remote national park. The pristine wilderness with rolling savannah grassland and rugged spectacular mountain landscape has a constant source of ground water.

An astounding 475 bird species are found here - including some of the rarest and most sought after birds such as Black-breasted Barbet and Karamoja Apallis. Kidepo has 80 mammal species, 28 of which are found in no other park in Uganda.
Located in the heart of Kidepo Valley, Apoka is a small lodge, with 10 semi-tented rooms, surrounding a rocky kopje with endless views across the golden savannah. The rooms offer comfort beyond expectations, with private verandas, looking out over the vast plains, dotted with wildlife. The lodge has a beautiful rock swimming pool.

Guests can walk with experienced guides along the sandy river bed, as well as enjoy exciting game drives, and visit the Karamajong cultural village.
The ‘Ik’ are an endangered tribe of only a few thousand. They live in the hills in north eastern Uganda, although their original territory was the Kidepo Valley where they were hunter-gatherers before the region was declared a park. Today, the ‘Ik’ are subsistence farmers who grind grain and live a materially impoverished life, with individual survival being their only motive.
SCENIC FLIGHT
- giant granite inselbergs -
The Murchison Falls National Park is Uganda’s largest conservation area, through which flows the River Nile from its source at Lake Victoria to Lake Albert. These incredible Falls are in the heart of the Park - where the Nile is channeled through a narrow gorge, creating one of the world’s most powerful flows of natural water.
The shimmering waters of Lake Albert, a fresh water lake lying between two parallel escarpments, supports thousands of people that depend on commercial fishing activities. Small fishing boats dock for the night, and nets are untangled, repaired and laid out for the morning.
Over 85% of Ugandans live in rural areas, and depend on subsistence agriculture - the rich soils and favourable climate mean that small scale farms are very productive.
Ndali Lodge near Fort Portal in western Uganda is the perfect base to explore the beautiful snow-covered mountain peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains. The Lodge is perched on the rim of an extinct volcano, in which lies the breath-taking Lake Nyinambuga. Ndali is a family run business, with 8 ensuite cottages.

From Ndali one can trek in Kibale forest in search of chimpanzees. There are also many lovely walks around Ndali estate, and the neighbouring vanilla plantation.
The volcanic soils in the west of Uganda are ideal for growing vanilla. ‘Ndali Vanilla’ is a fairtrade company that has partnered with local farmers in growing some of the world’s best Vanilla beans, sustainably.

Vanilla beans are cured, made into extract and powder, and packaged for export to high profile companies such as Lush Cosmetics, Ben & Jerry’s and Waitrose.
Known as the ‘Mountains of the Moon’ - not only are the Rwenzori’s permanently snow capped, but the largest glaciers in Africa are found here.
**Congo HIGHLIGHTS**
- forests, mountain gorilla & volcanoes -

**Virunga National Park**
Mountain & Lowland Gorilla
Chimpanzee trekking

Scenic flight over the **Virunga National Park**

The active volcanoes & lava lakes of **Nyamuragira** and **Nyiragongo**

Fresh water springs © Tom Parker
Virunga National Park is Africa’s oldest park, established in 1925 by King Albert the 1st of Belgium.

An outstanding diversity of habitats, ranging from swamps and steppes to dense primeval forests, and from lava plains to the savannahs on the slopes of volcanoes. This is a pristine habitat rich in biodiversity, and unique in that it has both lowland and montane forest, with diverse species of trees, ferns, butterflies and birds. Protected groups of Lowland and Mountain gorilla inhabit this region.
Located in the depth of the Virunga forest is Mikeno Lodge, with accommodation for 24 people in 12 thatched cottages. This is Virunga National Park's first lodge, and not only is it luxury but it is built with maximum consideration to its natural surroundings. Mikeno has easy access to the Park's most treasured assets - the Mountain Gorilla, Chimpanzee and Mount Nyiragongo. Just a few minutes walk away is the Senkwekwe Centre for orphan gorilla.
Built in 2008, the Senkwekwe Center is a gorilla orphanage that provides accommodation for both the gorillas and their dedicated carers. The centre raises money from donations for the conservation of the Mountain Gorilla by improving park infrastructure, as well as supporting the development of local primary schools. The centre provides a chance to learn about the challenges that this species faces in the wild.
Coming face to face with a Mountain Gorilla is one of Africa’s most exciting wildlife experiences! Gaining an insight into the behaviour and family dynamics of one of the world’s rarest primates is nothing short of captivating.

The last remaining habitat of the Mountain Gorilla is within the Virunga Mountains. This highly endangered charismatic animal is the flagship species that has enthused the conservation of the entire array of wildlife and habitat that make up this unique part of our planet.
Crystal clear swamps near Mount Tsiabeimu are filtered by layers of volcanic rock and sediment. The result is pristine turquoise waters and incredible palm forest - an idyllic habitat for wildlife and an array of bird life.

FRESH WATER SPRINGS-
Virunga National Park -
A vast 230km waterway connecting Lakes Edward and Albert, in Central Africa.

It follows the western foot of the Rwenzori Mountains, and the latter part of its course forms part of the border between Congo and Uganda. Within the Virunga National Park, a vast floodplain has evolved, attracting a variety of large and small mammals, including the rarely seen Okapi.
RWENZORI MOUNTAINS

- Congo side -
Mount Nyiragongo standing at 3,462 metres is Africa’s most active volcano. It has been erupting almost continuously for the last century, and its main crater contains a magnificent lava lake.
On the edge of the Nyiragongo crater within sight of the sweltering lava lake, stand eight simple cabins, coloured black to blend in perfectly with the lava rock surroundings.

It’s thrilling experience to watch the glowing molten lava throughout the evening!
The forests, mountains and valleys of Virunga National Park are home to a highly protected population of Chimps. Visitors are welcome to trek in search of a habituated group, accompanied by rangers. Red tailed monkeys, colobus monkeys and olive baboons also thrive here, and the bird life is prolific.
Heli Safari Ends
Safaris are informal and comfort should be considered above all else.

Durable, loose fitting, lightweight cotton clothes are recommended in neutral colours, so as not to alarm wildlife whilst in the bush. Something warm is essential for early morning and evening activities. Footwear should not be heavy. A pair of comfortable walking shoes, trainers or desert boots is best.

The following is a guideline for the maximum clothing you need to bring. Due to the limited space in the helicopters personal luggage is limited to a maximum of 15kgs per person that must be packed in a soft duffel bag (No rigid bags or bags with wheels). Guests should also carry a small daypack for carrying personal items.

- Clothing recommendation -

WHAT TO WEAR
The following is a guideline for the maximum clothing you need to bring. There will be limited laundry services available.

- Good quality sunglasses
- Sun Hat
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Sandals or flip flops
- 4 cotton shirts, 2 long sleeved
- 2 pairs long trousers / jeans
- 3 pairs of shorts / skirts
- Underwear and socks
- Swimsuit
- Sweater / Fleece
- Zip lock bags are useful for anything that might leak while travelling – Sun Cream, shampoo, creams etc.
- Good quality torch
- Tissues / wet wipes
- Any prescribed medication
- Insect repellent
- Binoculars not essential but useful
- Camera
Tropic Private helicopter and pilot / guides are provided by a leading air charter company based in East Africa, specialising in heli-safaris and adventures, with more than 14 years of experience in this field.

The Eurocopter AS 350 B3’s are perfectly adapted to fly in East Africa’s hot and high environments. Aircraft are fitted with satellite tracking software, pilots are trained in ‘first person on scene’ first aid, and all precautions are carried out to ensure maximum safety and comfort.

Nyiragongo © Max Melesi