Uganda is located in east central Africa, situated north and northwest of Lake Victoria. It is a landlocked country bordered by Sudan on the North, Kenya on the east, Tanzania on the South, Rwanda on the southwest and Zaire on the northwest.

The greater part of Uganda consists of a plateau about 4,000 ft in height. Along the western border of the Ruwenzori Mountains reaching heights of over 16,000 ft, while on the eastern frontier Mount Elgon rises to 14,178 ft. By contrast, the Western Rift Valley, which runs from north to south through the western half of the country, is as low as 3,000 ft on the floor of Lake Edward and Lake George and 2,000 ft on the flow of Lake Albert. The White Nile River has its source in Lake Victoria.

Travellers are flocking to Uganda's beautiful mountains, trekking opportunities and communities of mountain gorillas. Kampala is now the modern, bustling capital of a new Uganda, a country with one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. Uganda's long string of tragedies since independence has been a staple of the Western media, so most people still regard the country as an unstable place to be avoided. However, it's getting back on its feet and the transformation is little short of astounding. Before independence, Uganda was a prosperous and cohesive country. Its great beauty led Winston Churchill to refer to it as the 'Pearl of Africa', but by the mid-1980s it lay shattered and bankrupt, broken by tribal animosity, nepotism, insanely corrupt politics, mass murder and military tyranny. Despite the killings and brutality, Ugandans appear to have weathered the storm remarkably well. However, even rose-coloured glasses won't hide the country's huge debt, AIDS crisis and wonky human rights record.
FACTS FOR THE TRAVELLER

Visas: Citizens of most countries do require visas. All nationalities require an International Health Certificate showing proof of a yellow fever vaccination within the past 10 years.

Health risks: schistosomiasis (bilharzia), HIV/AIDS, yellow fever, malaria

Time Zone: GMT/UTC +3

Dialing Code: 256

Electricity: 240V, 50Hz

Weights & measures: Metric

KAMPALA, THE CAPITAL CITY

A modern, bustling capital, Kampala suffered a great deal during the years of civil strife. In the decade or so since President Museveni came to power, the city has gone from a looted shell to a thriving city befitting the capital of one of the most rapidly developing countries in Africa. The electricity works, clean water comes out of the taps, damaged buildings are now habitable, many new ones have gone up, and the shops and markets are once again well stocked. These days, Kampala even has casinos, nightclubs and fancy restaurants. And it's safe.

Kampala is said to be built on seven hills, but the city centre is on just one of them, Nakasero. The top half of the hill is a garden city of wide, quiet avenues lined with large houses behind imposing fences. This is where you'll find the embassies, international aid organizations, upmarket hotels, government offices and the rich. The bottom half is a completely different world, composed of shops, small businesses, budget hotels, cheap restaurants, street markets, Hindu temples, and the bus station and taxi parks. The streets in this congested area overflow with people, battered old cars, lottery ticket sellers and pavement stalls offering everything from rubber stamps to radio repairs.

If Kampala's streets don't put a spring in your step, there are a few standard attractions. The Uganda Museum's most interesting feature is its collection of traditional musical instruments, which you're allowed to play. The Kasubi Tombs are on Kasubi Hill, a royal palace enclosure first built in 1881. This is where you'll find the huge traditional reed and bark-cloth buildings of the kabakas (kings) of the Buganda people. The Uganda Wildlife Authority Office, a few kilometres northeast of the city centre, makes bookings to see the gorillas in outlying Bwindi National Park.

ACTIVITIES

The Rwenzori Mountains in southwestern Uganda offer some of the best trekking in East Africa and are almost as popular with travellers as Kilimanjaro and Mt Kenya, though definitely harder to climb. Be prepared for a five-day trek and take warm, waterproof clothing. Within the Bwindi National Park in the southwest, the Waterfall Trail, Muzabijiro Loop Trail and Munyaga River Trail are three beautiful walks of varying degrees of difficulty. The water around the Ssese Islands south of Kampala is clean, cool and perfect for swimming. On the Nile River, white-water rafting is an unforgettable experience; most rafting operators are based near Jinja, a town at the confluence of the Nile and Lake Victoria.
CLIMATE

Although Uganda is located on the equator, its climate is warm rather than hot, and temperatures vary little throughout the year. Most of the country receives an annual rainfall of at least 30 inches. In the Lake Victoria region an annual rainfall of 59 inches is distributed throughout the year and the average annual temperature is 21.6°C (71°F) with a daily range of 7 - 9°C (13-16°F). Further north rainfall averages about 35 inches, with a pronounced dry season in June and July. The mean annual temperature in this region is 15.5°C (60°F) with a daily range of 11-13°C (20-23°F)

NATIONAL PARKS AND GAME RESERVES

Murchison Falls National Park
The largest park in Uganda covering an area of over 3,840 sq kms, Murchison Falls park is also one of the most famous for its scenic beauty, magnificent falls and high concentration of game. It is situated approximately 350 kms north west of Kampala.

The mighty Nile River divides the park into the north and south sections with the spectacular Murchison Falls dropping some 40 meters through a narrow crevice. The river attracts large numbers of game, and a boat ride up the river provides the perfect opportunity to see and photograph the animals. Wildlife viewed in this park include elephant, giraffe, hippo, lion, leopard, buffalo, Nile crocodile, monkeys, and over 450 species of birds, including the magnificent shoebill stork.

There are plenty of activities in the park including river trips. Game drives, forest walks, fishing and bird watching.

The park has two light aircraft airstrips operating air charter services from Kampala.

Accommodation:

There are several lodges within the park and camping is available at the top of the falls but visitors must bring their own camping equipment.

Queen Elizabeth National Park
The park covers an area of almost 2,000 sq kms and lies between the Rwenzori Mountains to the east and Lake Edward to the west., approx 470kms from Kampala.

This parks wildlife once suffered from heavy poaching, but recent conservation efforts have restored much of the game and it now claims to be one of the best places on the continent to see high concentrations of hippo. Other animals found are elephant, buffalo, Uganda kob, variety of antelope, baboons and chimpanzees and the famous tree-climbing lion. There are also over 500 different species of bird making it an excellent destination for ornithologists.
A boat trip along the Kazinga channel between Lake George and Edward is a rewarding method of game viewing. The best time of the year to visit the park is just after the rains, between October and November and March and April when high concentrations of animals roam the whole area.

**Accommodation:**
Camping is available at Mweya Lodge and along Kazinga Channel. Other lodges in the park include Ishasha Safari Lodge and Lake George Lodge.

**USEFUL WEBSITES**

Tourism
http://www.africaguide.com/country/uganda/
http://www.visituganda.com/welcome/
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/africa/uganda/

National News
http://www.ugandaglobe.com/

General Information
http://us-africa.tripod.com/uganda.html

Health
http://www.canada.gc.ca/main_e.html

Makerere University & Mulago Hospital
http://www.makerere.ac.ug/services/library.htm

Visas
http://www.ugandahighcommission.ca/

Travel Cuts Airline Tickets