

Uganda – In Search of the Shoebill

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart London.
Day 2	Arrive Entebbe and overnight.
Day 3	Lake Mburo National Park.
Day 4	Mbarara.
Day 5/6	Queen Elizabeth National Park.
Day 7/8	Kibale Forest National Park.
Day 9	Depart Entebbe.
Day 10	Arrive London.



Departs

February and November.

Focus

Birds (plus mammals on Bwindi extension).

Grading

Grade A/B.

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code UGA01) or Naturetrek brochure.



Highlights:

- Look for the magnificent Shoebill in the Mbamba Wetlands
- Extend your stay to trek for Mountain Gorillas in Bwindi
- Black Bee-eater, African Finfoot, Narina Trogon and Great Blue Turaco also likely.
- Cruise the Kazinga Channel between Lakes Edward & George.
- Optional trek for Chimpanzees in Kibale National Park.
- Other primates to look out for include L'Hoest's Monkey, Red-tailed Monkey & Guereza Colobus.
- Extend your tour to the Budongo Forest & the Royal Mile
- Led by expert local birder guides.



From top: Shoebill, African Finfoot & Mountain Gorilla, Images courtesy of R Goldsmith, P Price & J Jasunski



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Introduction

Described by Winston Churchill as ‘the pearl of Africa’, Uganda is a small landlocked country supporting more than 1,000 bird species, reflecting its diversity of habitats and transitional point between the East African savannah, the West African rainforest and the semi-desert to the north. Uganda has a lot to offer the wildlife enthusiast and is happily rising in popularity following years of political unrest. Tourists are welcomed and are increasingly being catered for all over the country, indeed Uganda is one of Africa’s most friendly destinations!



This birdwatching tour packs in some of Uganda’s finest and most diverse birdwatching sites including, Lake Mburo, Queen Elizabeth and Kibale Forest National Parks as well as Uganda’s best Shoebill location, the Mabamba Wetlands. The tour uses the best located lodges and hotels to optimise birdwatching potential which are simple, and occasionally luxurious, in nature.

The equatorial climate in Uganda remains stable all year round, with slight seasonal variations in rainfall. Most of Uganda is on a plateau at 900 - 1,800 metres above sea level. It is comfortably hot most of the time and rain showers are common, but do not hinder the birding. Average daytime temperatures are in the mid 20's Centigrade. These climatic factors also help to explain why all visitors are struck by just how green, fertile and beautiful Uganda is, which again is reflected in its abundant bird life.

Itinerary

NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather and other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1

Depart London

We depart London’s Heathrow Airport this evening on a scheduled Kenya Airways flight to Entebbe (via Nairobi).

Day 2

Entebbe

After an early morning change of aircraft in Nairobi we arrive into Entebbe where we meet our local guide and transfer to a comfortable hotel near the shores of Lake Victoria for a 1 night stay. There will be time for breakfast before visiting the nearby Entebbe Botanical Gardens. The Gardens were established in 1901

and sit on the papyrus-lined shores of Africa's largest lake, Lake Victoria. The mature trees are home to fruit-eating birds such as Eastern Grey Plantain-eater, Ross's Turaco and the large Black-and-White Casqued Hornbill, whilst the small remnant patch of rainforest is home to both Guereza Colobus and Vervet Monkeys. Other species to look out for include Verreaux's Eagle Owl, Woodland, Striped and Pied Kingfishers, Diderik Cuckoo and Splendid Starling. We will be able to check into our rooms from mid-afternoon so there will be time to relax before dinner.

Day 3

Lake Mburo National Park

We will make a very early start this morning, probably leaving the hotel around 0600 hours. The drive to the Mabamba Wetlands will take approximately an hour and a half, depending on the road conditions, and we hope to arrive between 0730 hours and 0800 hours to give us the rest of the morning to search for the magnificent Shoebill. On arrival we will transfer to wooden canoes and head out into the dense papyrus swamps in search of our goal. The Mabamba

Wetlands, on the edge of Lake Victoria, are probably the easiest place in Uganda (and perhaps the whole of Africa) to see Shoebill, and we should have a very good chance of seeing this magnificent bird, although as in all wildlife watching sightings can never be guaranteed! Mabamba also offers a large selection of other species which might include Carruthers' Cisticola, Saddle-billed Stork, Spur-winged and African Pygmy Geese, African Jacana, Purple and Goliath Herons, Yellow-billed Egret, White-faced Whistling



Duck, Yellow-billed Duck, African Fish Eagle, Black Crake, Long-toed Plover, White-winged Tern, Malachite and Pied Kingfishers, Blue-breasted Bee-eater, Swamp Flycatcher, Winding Cisticola and Fan-tailed Widowbird. The rare and elusive Sitatunga antelope also occur here but they are very shy and rarely seen.

Late in the morning we will leave Mabamba and begin the drive to Lake Mburo National Park, a journey



of around 4 hours. Lake Mburo is a relatively small park comprising of rolling hills, flat bush, grasslands and most importantly a 20% coverage of wetlands, papyrus swamps and lakes, of which Lake Mburo is the largest. This is one of the best sites in Uganda to see African Finfoot and most of the papyrus endemics. Mammals such as Olive Baboon, Vervet Monkey, Oribi, Plain's (Grant's) Zebra, Hippopotamus, Impala, Eland, Common Waterbuck, Buffalo, Warthog, Leopard, Otter, African Civet, Spotted Hyena and Bohor Reedbuck all occur here.

This afternoon we will follow our guides on some of the park trails, birds gracing our list might include; Crested Francolin, Black-bellied Bustard, Emerald-spotted Wood Dove, Brown Parrot, Bare-faced Go-away-bird, Lilac-breasted Roller, Common Scimitarbill, African Grey Hornbill, Blue-naped Mousebird, Spot-flanked Barbet, Nubian Woodpecker, Yellow-

throated Longclaw, Trilling Cisticola, Yellow-breasted Apalis, White-shouldered Tit, Black-headed Batis, Greater Blue-eared Starling and Marico Sunbird.

We will overnight in a comfortable lodge. After a delicious dinner we might be able to spot-light along the park's trails near the camp looking for African Scops Owl, Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, Fiery-necked or Black-shouldered Nightjars.

Day 4

Mbarara



Southern Red Bishop

We now have the majority of today to enjoy the abundant bird and animal life of Lake Mburo National Park. From our camp we can visit the shores of the lake in search of African Finfoot, as well as a wealth of other birds including African Darter, Hamerkop, Spur-winged Plover, Pied and Malachite Kingfishers, Yellow-throated Leaflove and Southern Red Bishop, (if it is available we hope to be able to use the park's boat for a lake tour). Later if we have time we can visit the taller mixed woodland to the south of the lake; the

localised Red-faced Barbet, Red-headed Lovebird, African Paradise-Flycatcher and Green-capped Eremomela all occur here. This small park also harbours a surprising 35 species of raptor, including Ruppell's Griffon Vulture, African Marsh Harrier, Banded Snake Eagle, Bateleur, Grey Kestrel, Shikra and Dark Chanting Goshawks, Long-crested Eagle or, with a lot of luck, even a Martial Eagle.

Cyperus papyrus not only provided the writing material of the ancient Egyptians, but also provides the habitat of some highly specialised birds. We will look for some of the papyrus specialists such as the rare Papyrus Yellow, White-winged and Greater Swamp Warblers, Papyrus Gonalek, Carruthers' Cisticola, Northern Brown-throated Weaver, Blue-headed Coucal and Swamp Flycatcher.

Later in the afternoon we must leave the national park and drive for around an hour and half to the town of Mbarara. By overnighing at Mbarara we can, not only spend most of the day exploring Lake Mburo National Park, but shorten our drive to Queen Elizabeth National Park the following morning.

Day 5

This morning we will make an early start to travel for around 4-5 hours to the famous Queen Elizabeth National Park, birdwatching along the way. Straddling the equator, Queen Elizabeth National Park is situated on the Kazinga Channel between Lake Edward and Lake George and to the south of the great Ruwenzori Mountains. This national park comprises rolling grasslands, crater lakes, tropical forests, papyrus swamps and extensive lake shore and contains

Queen Elizabeth National Park



Elephants

Uganda's best game populations as well as some of Uganda's best birdwatching, boasting an incredible bird list of over 600 species, one of the highest in Africa!

We will check into our lodge and should have time this afternoon to explore the grounds or take a short game drive in search of a variety of species including African Mourning Dove, Grey-headed Kingfisher, Black-headed Gonolek, Slender-billed, Yellow-backed and Lesser Masked Weavers, Pin-tailed Whydah or Black-winged Pratincole.

Day 6

Queen Elizabeth National Park

We will make an early morning start for a bird and game drive through a productive area of grassy plains, which support large flocks of a variety of stork species including the spectacular Saddle-billed Stork. Raptors include Brown Snake-Eagle, Bateleur, African Harrier-Hawk, Amur Falcon and Grey Kestrel. Lion kills can attract up to 6 species of vulture including Palm-nut, Ruppell's Griffon and the immense Lappet-faced Vulture. Other birds to be seen include Senegal, Crowned and African Wattled Plovers, Harlequin Quail, Common and Black-rumped Buttonquails, African Crake, Painted Snipe, Little Bee-eater, Yellow Wagtail (of various races), Red-necked Spurfowl and Rufous-naped and Flappet Larks.



Common mammals to be seen include great herds of Uganda Kob, Elephant, Giant Forest Hog and Lion. Other mammals include Buffalo, Warthog, Olive Baboon, Bushbuck, Defassa Waterbuck, Leopard and Spotted Hyena.

In the afternoon we will take a boat cruise along the Kazinga Channel which is a natural magnet for herds of Elephant, Buffalo, and abundant Hippopotamus. The birdwatching is also excellent, including White and Pink-backed Pelicans, Great and Long-tailed Cormorants, Open-billed Stork, African Skimmer, White-faced Whistling Duck and Knob-billed Ducks, African Fish Eagle, African Jacana, Water Thick-knee, African Wattled Plover and Yellow-backed Weaver.

Day 7

Kibale Forest National Park

We will spend this morning further exploring Queen Elizabeth National Park before making the 2 - 3 hour drive to Kibale Forest National Park. This is another beautiful journey and we could be lucky enough to see a rare view of the snow-capped Rwenzori Mountains that usually remain shrouded in mist. We will stay in a comfortable lodge.

Day 8

Kibale Forest National Park

Kibale Forest National Park protects a large block of rainforest that offers some excellent forest birdwatching. This morning we will drive for 30 minutes or so to the Kibale Forest Visitors Centre from where we will explore the park's trail network. For those of you who wish to track Chimpanzees, Kibale's organised walks offer you your best chance in Uganda for seeing wild chimps. The cost is currently around US\$150 (subject to change) and should be booked in advance to avoid disappointment. The secondary forest around the park visitor's centre offers the chance to see African Goshawk, Yellowbill, Uganda Woodland Warbler, Black-necked Weaver or even a Crowned Eagle circling overhead. The centre has a network of trails and we will be looking for species such as, Grey-winged Robin, Yellow-spotted, Hairy-breasted and Yellow-billed Barbets, Superb, Green-throated and Green-headed Sunbirds, Narina and Bar-tailed Trogons and African Grey Parrot.



Great Blue Turaco

Kibale Forest harbours one of the greatest variety (11 species) and concentration of primates in East Africa. Whilst birding the trails we might see Guereza Colobus, Red Colobus, L'Hoest's Monkey or Grey-cheeked Mangabey or even see or hear signs of Kibale's 'forest' Elephants.



Chimpanzee

In the afternoon we will visit the neighbouring Bigodi Wetland Sanctuary - a very interesting area of Papyrus and swamp forest. Distinct possibilities include White-spotted Flufftail, Blue-headed Coucal, Blue-breasted Kingfisher, Yellow-billed Barbet and Scaly-throated Honeyguide, Scaly-breasted Illadopsis, Blue-shouldered and Snowy-headed Robin-Chats, Black-faced Rufous Warbler and plenty of the spectacular Great Blue Turacos.

Day 9

In Flight

This morning we will have time to return to Kibale Forest's main track that leads to its visitor's centre, which offers great birdwatching with relatively open views, although species in the high canopy will still provide a challenge. A morning's walk might reveal species such as White-naped Pigeon, Pied Hornbill, Purple-headed and Chestnut-winged Starlings, Joyful Greenbul, White-headed Wood-hoopoe, Petit's Cuckoo-Shrike, Fine-banded Woodpecker, Black-and-white Flycatcher, Willcocks's Honeyguide and Dark-backed and Yellow-mantled Weavers.

We must then begin the 5 or so hour drive back to Entebbe and, after dinner at a nearby guesthouse, we will return to the Airport and await our Kenya Airways or KLM return flight to London which departs late evening (changing aircraft in either Nairobi or Amsterdam).

Day 10

London

We are due to arrive back at London's Heathrow Airport around 0900 hours this morning.

Extension options

Budongo Forest & Murchison Falls extension

Includes: all transfers, private transport, full board accommodation and local birdwatching guide. The cost of this extension varies depending on the number of people who wish to participate, starting from £1,395 per person, based on a group of 6 or 7 participants. Single room supplements will apply.

Please call or e-mail the Naturetrek office on 01962 733051 or info@naturetrek.co.uk for prices and further information.

Day 9

Masindi

As the main group leave for their return to Entebbe we will depart for Masindi, a small town near the Budongo Forest. The journey is long and bumpy and will take us through the typical Ugandan patchwork scenery of fertile farmlands, numerous papyrus swamps and isolated pockets of dense forest. With luck we will check into our accommodation in time for a little birding in the grounds.



Guereza Colobus

The lush tropical forests of central Africa are known as the "Central Refugium". Not only do they support a unique and fast disappearing habitat that is home to many endemic birds, but they are also home to an exceptional range of primates. Budongo Forest is famous for its Chimpanzees, although they can be hard to see, whilst White-nosed and Blue Monkeys, Guereza Colobus and Olive Baboons are plentiful. The unusual Scaly-tailed Flying Squirrel and Tree Pangolin both occur in Budongo Forest and Bunyoto Rabbits may be seen on the forest roads at night. Whilst only 435 square kilometres in extent and small by Amazonian standards, Budongo nonetheless is one of the largest and most beautiful forests in Uganda and is home to more than 350 bird species.

Days 10 - 11

Budongo Forest, Masindi

We now have 2 full days to explore the forests and other habitats around Budongo Forest and the Royal Mile. Our first morning is likely to be spent birding the famous Royal Mile area of Budongo forest which is considered by many to be the country's premier forest birding site. This stretch of dirt road connects the Nyabyeya Forestry College to the main research station and passes through relatively open Ironwood-dominated forest. Chocolate-backed, Blue-breasted and African Dwarf Kingfishers are remarkably

common and this is definitely the best place in Uganda to see these species. Fruiting trees attract White-thighed and Black-and-White Casqued Hornbills, Yellow-spotted, Hairy-breasted and Yellow-billed Barbets, Western Black-headed Oriole and Purple-headed Starling. Greenbuls are abundant and include Cameroon Sombre, Slender-billed, Honeyguide, White-throated, Red-tailed and the very striking and conspicuous Spotted Greenbul. Canopy flocks may produce Buff-throated, Black-throated and the stunning Black-capped Apalises, Brown-crowned Eremomela, the elusive Lemon-bellied Crombec, Grey-headed and Green Sunbirds, Yellow-mantled Weaver and White-breasted Negrofinch. Yellow-crested Woodpecker, Rufous Thrush, Green Hylia, Grey Longbill, Uganda Woodland Warbler and Forest Flycatcher prefer the sub-canopy and mid-storey. We will search the undergrowth for Scaly-breasted, Brown and Pale-breasted Illadopses, Red-tailed Bristlebill, Fire-crested Alethe, Blue-shouldered Robin-chat, Red-tailed Ant Thrush, Forest Robin and the beautiful Jameson's Wattle-eye. Yellow-browed Camaroptera, Yellow Longbill and Grey-throated Flycatcher are reasonably common, but can easily be overlooked if their calls are not recognised. Budongo is one of the few sites in Uganda for the Yellow-footed Flycatcher, which favours the under-storey of open, Ironwood forest and the secretive Nahan's Francolin is occasional seen when crossing the road.



Black & White Casqued Hornbill

On the second evening we will make our way a little further north, into the southern portion of Murchison Falls National Park, overnighting in a comfortable safari lodge.

Day 12

Murchison Falls National Park



Murchison Falls

Today will take a morning game drive in Murchison Falls National Park. Bisected by the Victoria or White Nile, Murchison Falls is Uganda's largest national park and rich in bird and mammal life. The Falls themselves are also a spectacular sight, and we will take a boat trip up to the base of them. We will again overnight in a comfortable safari lodge.

Day 13

In Flight

After a final morning game drive in search of the birds and mammals of Murchison Falls National Park we will return to Entebbe to catch our late-evening Kenya Airways or KLM flight to London (via either Nairobi or Amsterdam).

Day 14

London

We are due to arrive back at London's Heathrow Airport around 0900 hours this morning.

Bwindi Gorilla Extension

Includes, all transfers, transport, full board accommodation, park fees, 1 Gorilla permit, local driver/guides. The cost of this extension varies depending on the number of people who wish to participate. Based on a post-tour extension, for a group of 2 people the cost will typically be £2,495 per person, £2,195 pp for a group of 4 and £2,095 pp for a group of 6 or 7. Single room supplements will apply.

It is possible to arrange this as a pre-tour extension, however this itinerary requires an additional flight, so increases the cost by around £100 - £200 per person.

Please call or e-mail the Naturetrek office on 01962 733051 or info@naturetrek.co.uk for prices and further information.

Day 9

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

Today, we will have to leave Kibale early for a long, and in places rough, drive to Bwindi, enjoying a host of wonderfully scenic views along the way. We hope to arrive at the small village of Buhoma late in the afternoon/early evening where we check into Mahogany Springs Lodge our base for the next 3 nights. Mahogany Springs is a small lodge that commands a spectacular view over the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest. The comfortable chalets each have private facilities and dinners are taken in a small elevated restaurant overlooking the mountains.

This forest is one of Africa's most extensive belts of primary montane forest. Its exceptional altitudinal variation - rising and falling from deep river gorges and low hills at 1,200 metres to high forested ridges at 2,500 metres - ensures a unique range of flora and fauna, in particular birds and primates. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is home to 24 of the 37 Albertine Rift Endemics. Some of these endemics will top our wanted list and with luck we might see Red-throated Alethe, Kivu Ground Thrush, Montane Masked Apalis, Grauer's Warbler, Short-tailed Warbler, Red-faced Woodland Warbler, Yellow-eyed Black Flycatcher and Rwenzori Batis.

Day 10

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

Today is the day for our exciting gorilla tracking, which with luck will live up to our expectations of being one of the world's most exciting and intimate wildlife experiences. The Mountain Gorillas are undoubtedly the prime attraction of this area. Over three hundred – half of the world's population – live in the park, and three of the family groups living close to the park headquarters at Buhoma have now been

successfully habituated to allow humans to approach. Each day, 24 visitors – split into three parties – are allowed access to these gorillas for up to an hour's viewing.... often in exceptionally dense cover.

Please note, however, that it can take up to 8 hours of tracking in the most arduous of terrain in order to find the gorillas (although 2 to 4 hours is more typical), and so this part of our itinerary is only suitable for those who are fit enough to walk several miles, over rough, uneven and sometimes steep terrain, in humid conditions. Not only will we be moving, off-trail, through dense forest all day, we will be continually



moving up and down on the steep, plant-covered slopes of very rugged hills. At the end of the day we will certainly appreciate why this forest has earned its name, though it will be well worth the effort! Whilst our tracker/guides will maintain our distance at a comfortable 5+ metres, we hope to afford some close views amongst the dense vegetation; an exciting and truly memorable experience. These habituated gorillas usually ignore human presence, but you never know when you might make eye contact, or a playful youngster will come to investigate! We would

strongly encourage anyone that is unsure of their ability to complete the Gorilla trek to call the Naturetrek office for a more detailed discussion prior to booking. Please also note that it is possible to hire one, or more, porters to carry your bag and help you with the trek. This is organised and payable locally.

Day 11

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest

Today we will spend the morning exploring the National Park Headquarters trails system. The main trail leading south offers good views of canopy and forest edge species which might include Equatorial Akalat, Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo, Dusky Tit, the scarce Oriole-Finch, White-tailed Ant Thrush, Black Bee-eater, African Sooty Flycatcher, Petit's Cuckoo-Shrike, Short-tailed Warbler, Western Bronze-naped Pigeon, Elliot's and Fine-banded Woodpeckers. The rare and elusive Red-fronted Antpecker can sometimes be seen probing and gleaning amongst the dead branches. We will follow our guide along the Waterfall Trail which winds through beautiful forest to a series of Cascades along the Munyaga River. We will be hoping to see White-bellied Robin-Chat, Grey-chested Illadopsis and Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo. Other birds along further trails include White-chinned Prinia, Luder's and Bocage's Bush-Shrike, African Broadbill, Equatorial Akalat, African Black Duck, Dusky Blue Flycatcher and Mackinnon's Shrike. We return for a late lunch. The afternoon is at leisure and you may choose to birdwatch around the village or at the entrance to the park, purchase souvenirs in the numerous stalls that line the road or simply relax overlooking the forest.

Day 12

Depart Entebbe

You will have a morning at leisure before transferring to Bwindi's small airport in order to catch your afternoon flight back to Entebbe (luggage weight restrictions apply). After dinner you will be transferred back to Entebbe's international airport for your Kenya Airways or KLM flight back to London (via Nairobi or Amsterdam) which departs late evening.

Day 13

London

You are due to arrive back at London's Heathrow Airport around 0900 hours this morning.

Other Extension Options

It is possible to extend your holiday to other parts of Uganda. We can arrange a wide range of extensions, including cultural or historic excursions. Please contact the Naturetrek office for further details.

Grading

This is a grade A/B birdwatching tour, that involves leisurely walking in the forest reserves and the use of boats and traditional vehicular game-viewing in the national parks. However, in order to cover as wide a range of habitats as possible in a short time, this tour does include regular long drives, together with early starts and some late arrivals at hotels.

Please note that some of the forest trails can be steep, muddy and uneven in places and are poorly maintained, so a good level of fitness is preferable if you are to get the most out of this tour. It cannot be over-stressed that Gorilla trekking can be very strenuous and this extension should be considered a C or D grade hike. Please confirm that you would like to do the trek as soon as possible, so we can book the permits as they are hard to obtain. Chimp trekking at Kibale can also be quite strenuous, with a B/C grade.

Focus

This holiday is focused primarily on birds, although mammals and other wildlife will also be looked at. To make the most of the time in country, there will be early starts in the mornings (sometimes pre-dawn), full days out and late arrivals at the accommodation in the evenings.

Weather

A typically equatorial climate ensures that the weather will be varied, and you are likely to encounter some rain on tour. Showers should not last too long and will not hamper the birdwatching. Days will generally be warm or hot and sunny; however, overcast conditions are frequent, particularly in the forest and mountain areas. Nights will be mild to warm, cooler at higher altitudes.

Entry requirements

UK passport holders will need a visa for Uganda, which needs to be applied for online. You should have at least six months travel left on your passport from the return date of travel. Yellow Fever vaccination is mandatory for travel to Uganda and a certificate needs to be presented to the immigration officials on

arrival. Malaria prophylactics should be taken as this is a high risk country. We advise you to visit your GP as far in advance as possible to discuss your travel plans to Uganda.

Food & accommodation included in the price

All accommodation and meals are included in the cost of this holiday, from breakfast on Day 2 until lunch on Day 9 (or Day 13 if you are on one of the set extensions). Drinks will be extra throughout the tour, payable on a tab system to the hotels en-route, although water will be available in the tour vehicle during the day. Please bring a water bottle, so that you can refill it from the larger containers.

We use a combination of comfortable lodges, tented camps and guesthouses on this tour. Whilst standards are improving in Uganda, some of the accommodation can be quite simple in nature. All rooms are clean, however, with private facilities and should be perfectly adequate for the group's needs. Occasionally, in some areas, even the best available accommodation can have issues with maintaining the property, so you should be prepared for a few problems like leaky plumbing, lack of hot water, lights not working, slow service in the restaurant, etc. If you do experience any problems with your room, please let your local guide know and they will always endeavour to rectify the problem with the lodge. A number of lodges operate generators for electricity, which are only run during the day so keeping a torch by your bedside is useful if case you need to get up in the night.

Additional expenses

On this tour you will need to budget extra for:

- Your visa, which should be applied for prior to departure. The current cost is US\$50 if applying on-line for an e-visa.
- Chimp trekking permits are also excluded from the main tour cost and should be requested at the time of booking as there are a limited number available. The current cost of the permit is US\$150 per person (subject to change). Please book these early to avoid disappointment.
- Drinks other than bottled water (which is provided in the vehicle throughout the day).
- Personal expenses – souvenirs, laundry, postcards, etc.
- Discretionary tips to local guides and local staff.
- Additional activities not included in the tour itinerary.
- Dinner in Entebbe on the last day.

Group Size

This tour will be accompanied by a local Ugandan tour leader /ornithologist, who will also be your driver. The maximum group size will be 7, to allow everyone to travel in the same vehicle and to be able to make the most of the wildlife sightings.

Transport

We will use Toyota Landcruisers for this tour. Each vehicle has sufficient window seats for the whole group to have one, although we would ask that you rotate round the vehicle to give everyone the opportunity to have a seat towards the front of the vehicle. A good amount of our time will be spent away from the vehicles on bird walks. Some roads can be quite dusty, particularly on the longer drives, so you may find it more comfortable to wear either a face mask, neckerchief or scarf over your mouth and nose to reduce the chance of breathing in dust.

There is a good amount of luggage space in the vehicles, however it is preferable if you can bring soft sided luggage as this is easier to pack in, and keep your packing to a sensible, practical minimum. We would ask that group members please restrict themselves to 1 large item of luggage per person.

At Mabamba Swamp and Queen Elizabeth National Park we will also use small boats or canoes to view birds from the water. Life jackets are available and it is recommended that these are worn throughout the boat trips.

Your safety & security

Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website – www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/Uganda or telephone 0870 6060290 prior to travel.

How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.

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