

Country Information Sheet



Uganda



UN Volunteers



Country

Uganda is a relatively small landlocked country located in the heart of the great African high plateau that rolls from the Ethiopian highlands towards southern Africa. The country lies astride the equator, between latitudes 4 ° 12 ° N and 1 ° 29 ° S. It is bound within longitude 29 ° 34 ° E and 35 ° 0' E. It is bordered by Kenya in the East, Tanzania in the South, Rwanda in the Southwest, Congo in the West and Sudan in the North.

Despite its small area of 241,547.6 km², Uganda has a diversity of physical land relief features, vegetation and animal life that give the country the capacity to maintain a marvellous heritage of game parks and forest reserves.

Eighteen percent of Uganda's area is open fresh water, four percent taken by swamps and rivers, while the remaining percentage forms the land area. The country comprises 62 districts, 63 town councils, 851 rural counties, 13 municipal councils, 34 municipal divisions and 5 city divisions.



People

Culturally, Uganda is a major crossroads, being a meeting point for two of the largest linguistic groups in Africa, namely the Bantu and the Nilotics, as well as being an intersection zone for the smaller linguistic and cultural groups. Its most ancient inhabitants, confined to the hilly Southwest, are the Batwa and Bambuti pygmies, relics of the hunter gatherer cultures that once occupied much of East Africa to leave behind a rich legacy of rock paintings, such as those at the Nyero Rock Shelter near Kumi.

This diversity of linguistic groups makes the country a vortex of great sociological complexity, one that underlies the political and military confrontations which have dominated the country's history for the past quarter century.

Approximately 33 percent of the people are Roman Catholics with about an equal proportion of Protestants. Muslims comprise 16 percent of the population while the remaining 18 percent of the people practice indigenous beliefs.

Economy

Since 1987, Uganda has implemented economic stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes with the help of the IMF, the World Bank, UNDP and other development partners. These programmes have reversed economic decline, facilitated rehabilitation of productive and social infrastructure, reduced inflation and financial imbalances, and increased national output. Uganda recorded average annual real GDP growth rate of 6% between 1990 and 2003, peaking at a record high of 10.1% in 1994/5. Inflation, which was 250% in 1987, had been brought down to 2.4% by 2002. Although there are concerns about inequitable growth, the maintenance of macroeconomic stability, a prerequisite for growth, has been commendable.

Language

English is the official national language of Uganda and is taught in the schools, used in courts of law and by most newspapers and radio broadcasts. Among the more than 30 different indigenous languages, Luganda is the most widely used in the central region and in the capital, Kampala. It is also the preferred native language for publications in the capital and may be taught in school.

Visas

A visa for Uganda is required before entry is granted. This visa can be obtained from the Ugandan Consulate in your country. A visa on arrival can also be secured at Entebbe International Airport for those countries where Uganda has no diplomatic mission. Cost of visa-on-arrival is US\$ 30.

Money

The unit of currency is the Ugandan shilling. The US dollar is traditionally the hard currency of preference, but Euro and Pound Sterling are also widely accepted. Hard currency cash can be changed for local currency at banks and private bureaux de change in all large towns. Travelers cheques are not widely accepted outside Kampala.

Local currency can be drawn against Visa and other major credit cards at selected ATMs in Kampala, at Entebbe International Airport and in other large towns.

Vaccination and Health

Certain vaccinations are mandatory for all UNVs entering Uganda, while others are compulsory for other travelers. It is possible that proof of some/all vaccination may be required at the airport. All UNVs must ensure that they are up to date with vaccinations for:

- Yellow fever
- Typhoid
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Tetanus
- Polio

Ensure that all the vaccinations are clearly and properly endorsed in the yellow International Certificate of Vaccination which is issued by all reputable medical and travel health clinics and recognized by the World Health Organization. Be aware that some vaccinations require a series of injections and consequently may require time to obtain the full cycle of shots. If for some reason you were unable to obtain the necessary injections before departing your country of recruitment, you will be able to obtain the necessary injections at the UN clinic.

The plasmodium variety of malaria reported to be highly resistant to chloroquine exists throughout the year. As malaria is rampant, you are well advised to take anti-malarial prophylaxis [preventive medication] to help reduce the risk. Note that it is usually recommended that you start taking your malarial tablets a week or two before traveling abroad. Be aware that NO ANTIMALARIAL gives complete protection. Consult the World Health Organization International Travel and Health website for further information.

Other health risks to be aware of include HIV/AIDS and here confidential counseling services are available.

You are advised to also carry all necessary medications especially for specific ailments.

Hospitals

There are international hospitals in the capital, Kampala, and local hospitals in most areas of Uganda. The UN has its own clinic located within the UNDP compound which is available to all UNVs and their dependents during the following clinic hours:

- Monday – Thursday, 0800H – 1300H, 1400H – 1730H
- Fridays, 0800H – 1400H
- Saturdays 0900H – 1300H

While most health concerns can be adequately treated in the country, the UNV may be medically evacuated to Kenya or South Africa for cases of serious emergencies. Medical evacuation procedures are quite fast and the Van Breda Insurance automatically covers all medical expenses.

Schools

The country operates on three education levels, that is, Primary level for seven years, Secondary level for six years and Tertiary or University level for three years. Local public and private pre-school, primary, and secondary schools operating on a national curriculum are abundant and found in all districts of the country. There are also Montessori schools and a relatively large number of International Schools patterned after British, American, Italian, French, and Indian school systems. Most schools are on a tri-term system.

There are a number of private and international colleges and universities located in Kampala and outlying districts that offer a wide range of degree, masteral, and doctorate courses. One of the leading universities in East Africa, Makerere University, is based in Kampala. In addition to colleges and universities, there are several technical and business institutes.

Electricity

Electricity in Uganda is not stable. Expect power blackouts about 3 nights a week and so power surge projectors are strongly recommended and can easily be purchased in stores in Kampala. Sockets fit square three-pin plugs (UK/European appliances) but adapters for round two-pin plugs are also readily available in stores.

Satellite Television

Excellent satellite television subscription packages like DSTV from South Africa in English and French are available in Kampala, but again expensive for initial set up of a decoder and dish. The three months subscription fee is approx US \$ 650. Some packages also offer Hindi, Italian, German and Portuguese.

Postage

The postal service in Uganda has been revamped and service is more efficient with overnight courier services provided. The UN does have a pouch service whereby official documents and certain other items can be sent. Personal items will be rejected. For urgent and important parcels/ documents, DHL and FEDEX courier services are available.

Mobile Telephones

There are 3 kinds of mobile networks operating in Uganda

- MTN: 22 Hannington Road
- UTL Telecel: Rwenzori Courts, Lumumba Avenue
- Celtel, Uganda: 40 Wampewo Avenue

Arrival Information

On arrival at Entebbe International Airport, you will be met by a UN Staff who will be standing outside the airport's Arrivals Exit. He will be carrying either a UN identification sign or a hand-written sign of your name for ease of identification. If for whatever reason you do not find the UN staff, please approach any airport official and ask to be directed to the information desk and call the UNV Programme Officer or the UNV Country Operations Assistant.

Keep an eye on your bags at all times and only allow the UN staff to help you. A UN vehicle will then take you from the airport to a hotel that is cleared by UN security and is located near the UNDP/UNV offices. Should you wish to change your hotel from the one the UNV Office has arranged for you, just inform the UNV Country Operations Assistant (COA) or the UNV Programme Officer (PO) for alternative arrangements to be made.

It is recommended that once you are settled, you contact your National Embassy or Consular Representative here in Uganda and inform them of your stay in the country and how you can be reached.

Assistance from the UNV Country Office Team

A UN staff will receive you upon arrival at the airport and will help you settle into your hotel. While on assignment in Uganda you will also be assisted with briefings, payments, administrative issues, information on deployment, etc. by the UNV COT.

While you are generally expected not to depend entirely on the UNV COT for all settling-in matters, the UNV COT always goes out of its way to be assistance by linking you with established real estate agents thoroughly familiar with UN security requirements, car dealers that can provide you with your choice of vehicle (if you opt to buy one) at a very reasonable price, etc.

Accommodation

You will be initially accomodated at the Clement Hill Hotel which is reasonably priced, and a stone's throw away from the UNDP office and a major shopping mall.

Should you opt to find other accomodation, Kampala is a modern capital city serviced by an excellent selection of international hotels, with very good and comfortable accommodation that includes wellfurnished rooms, garden rooms, en-suite bathrooms, swimming pools, television sets and telephone services. One of them is the high-rise Sheraton hotel right in the centre of the city (Ternan Avenue). Others include;

- Equatorial Hotel: William street
- Grand Imperial Hotel: Nile Avenue
- Hotel International: Tank Hill Road, Muyenga
- Kabira Club: Kira Road, Bukoto
- Fairway Hotel: 1/2 Kafu Road
- Emin Pasha Hotel: Akii Bua Road, Nakasero
- Fang Fang Hotel: Plot 9, Sezibwa Road
- Africana Hotel: 2-4 Wampewo Avenue.
- Serena hotel: Nile Avenue



Some of the nicely furnished rooms in Ugandan hotels

Administrative Arrangements

Payment of VLA and Banking information

Your Volunteer Living Allowance (VLA) will be paid in the first week of every month in US Dollars. Upon arrival, the UNV COT will assist you in opening a bank account with Stanbic Bank where UNDP maintains banking relations.

As you will at times be handling lots of cash, you do not want to walk around with it. There are many money transfer service providers, banks and Western Union outlets available for you to send money home. It is recommended thatbyou keep a certain amount of cash available in the event of an evacuation, relocation or other emergencies, but it is up to you to find a safe location, the prefered one being the Bank.

Home and Office Security

Police Officer guards are provided to UNVs. These guards are there to secure the home premises of the UNVs from 6 PM to 6 AM of the following day.

For insurance purposes, keep a record of all non-monetary valuables you have and keep receipts for anything you buy in case of theft. You will be requested to fill in a Personal Effects form listing these items and receipts within a month of your arrival and this will be kept in your file. It is crucial for you to do this as soon as possible as no theft claim will be accepted if it has not been filed.

Further briefing in this area will be conducted upon your arrival, but in general all staff are urged to exercise caution and maintain security awareness AT ALL TIMES including when making quick trips to other offices.

UN Security

The UN has its own security plan which is in place in all United Nations duty stations around the world.

Prior to the availability of a security briefing, the UNV is required to undergo the Basic Security in the Field Course via CD-rom. The Basic Security Certificate that the UNV should secure by completing the CD-rom course will be presented to the UN DSS and the UNV COT. The UNV COT will assist the UNV in accessing the Security CD-Rom.

ID Cards

An official UN identity card allowing access to all UN organization offices will be issued. Picture taking and ID card processing is only during Tuesdays and Thursdays after 2 PM at the UNDP office. For security reasons, it is important to wear/have your UNV identity card at all times during working hours. You are responsible for making sure your card is always up to date.

An application will also be made by the UNDP Protocol Officer for the UNV to be issued with an International Organizations Identification Card from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Issuance of the card will indicate that you are duly accredited with the MFA. However, it does not mean that you have diplomatic immunity.

What to wear

Daytime temperatures are generally warm to hot, so bring lots of light clothing. Evenings are cooler, especially at high altitudes so carry atleast a couple of light sweaters too.

Solid walking shoes and sturdy clothing are ideal for upcountry field trips, especially in Northern Uganda. You may also want to carry a hat and sunglasses. Dress code for office is suits. Jeans and other casual wears can be worn during leisure times. Traditional wears include bitengi, gomesi, mushanana and Indian wear is also quite common.

Driving

Driving is on the left side. Those without experience of African roads are advised to organize a vehicle with a driver rather than self-drive till they get familiar with the system.

Transportation

Road Transport

Road transportation in Uganda is of three types, namely,

1. The "Special hire taxis" which take you directly to your destination, but necessitate you to negotiate the fee depending on the distance. It is quite expensive than the others as it works according to that particular customer's interests.
2. The "kamunye / Mini bus taxis" which are small vans that ply on the main roads. It takes more than ten people and drops you most probably to the general area of your destination and not exactly at it. It is cheaper but quite slow since it involves picking and dropping of passengers on its way. The cost is approximately 500-1500 Ugandan shillings.
3. The "boda-boda / Motor bikes" take you direct to your destination and also necessitate negotiating the fee. They are much faster and not prone to traffic jam although they may not be necessarily safe to take due to the reckless nature of its driver resulting to the numerous recorded accidents.

There are other mini buses and buses used for longer distances to other districts. The surfaced roads link the capital to other large towns like Jinja, Mbale, Kabale, Kasese and Fort Portal.

Water Transport

The water transport has improved greatly. Now there is the Ssesse Island Ferry which goes from Bukakata daily to assist islanders and tourists who visit the beautiful islands of Lake Victoria. Activities on the island include bird watching, sport fishing, caves, and agro tourism among others. The ferry runs from Monday to Sunday unless there is a break. You can cross check with the ferry master (256 77 640 970) for the schedule or for more information.

Water trips have also been made easy on Lake Mburo National Park and this is through the securing of a fiberglass hydropower engine boat on the lake by the Uganda Wildlife Authority. Each launch trip takes 2 hours with a maximum of 7 persons per trip. In the morning it leaves at 8:00am and 11:00 am while in the afternoon it leaves at 2:00pm and 4:00pm.

Air Transport

Entebbe's modern international airport set on the Lake Victoria 40 km from Kampala is serviced by several prominent international airlines which include SN Brussels, British Airways, South African Airways, Kenya Airways, Air Tanzania, Rwandair Express, Egypt Air and Ethiopian airlines ensuring easy access from the USA, Europe and elsewhere in Africa. Charter flights can also be arranged.

Food, Entertainment, and Leisure Places

Uganda, especially Kampala, is very lively and people are generally very hospitable. There is a wide range of restaurants, entertainment and leisure activities available. It is advisable to get a copy of The Eye magazine so as to obtain complete information of establishments and activities that every expatriate needs to know in Uganda.

Restaurants

Most restaurants provide Ugandan food, however, there are also a number of restaurants that prepare the following cuisines: Belgian, Continental, Ethiopian, French, Fusion, Indian, Italian, Lebanese, Thai, Chinese and Japanese.

Cinemas

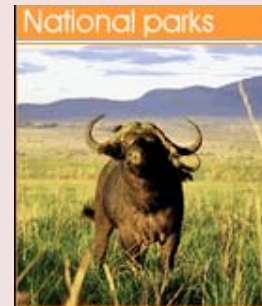
Cineplex: has 2 branches, one at Wilson Road and the other at Garden City Mall on Yusuf Lule Road.

Night Clubs

Kampala is abundant of Night Clubs and Bars that one could just have his/her own picking. Many bars are concentrated along Kisementi and Kabalagala areas, Kampala road and Gaba road (Kasanga)

National Parks and Game parks

Murchison falls National Park: This is the country's largest park whose palm-studded grassland accommodate variety of animals like lions, buffalos, elephants, giraffes, pata monkeys and Uganda kob. It is situated north of Masindi, 350 kms from Kampala. Many hippos and birds can be observed from morning up to afternoon, along the Nile before the speculator waterfall for which the park is named after.



Rwenzori Mountains National park: This one is found in Fort Portal in the west and supports large tracts of evergreen forests and also bamboo while the higher moorland zone is known for its other-worldly cover of giant heathers, lobelias and groundsels.

Queen Elizabeth National Park: It offers prime grazing to buffalos, elephants, giant forest hogs, the legendary tree-climbing lions of the Ishasha sector and various antelopes with about 600 – plus bird species. It borders Lake Edward and George.

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park: It is found in Kabale and is best known for its superb gorilla tracking. It also provides refuge to elephants, chimpanzee, monkeys and various small antelopes as well as 23 bird species.



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Mgahinga National Park: This one is found in the South West, bordering Rwanda and Congo. The main attraction here are the mountain gorillas. Others include golden monkeys, elephants, leopards and forest hogs.

Semliki National Park: This is a Ugandan extension of the Congo's Ituri Rainforest set at the base of the northern Rwenzori and among others, has 40 Congolese bird species not recorded anywhere else in the country. It also has enigmatic, swamp-dwelling shoebill.

Kibale National Parks: It's found in Fort Portal and hosts a population of more than 1,000 chimpanzees, half a dozen of Monkey species.

Lake Mburo National Park: It is centered on a series of Swamp-fringed lakes known for their rich birdlife, notably the secretive African fin foot. It has dense populations of Zebras, warthog, buffalos, antelopes, impala and various other grazers.

Kidepo Valley National Park: It is in the far North East of the country, bordering Kenya and Sudan. It habits many dry-country species not found elsewhere in the country, including cheetah and greater Kudu while its perennial waters attract large numbers of elephants and buffalo herds, especially during the dry season.

Most of these national parks are serviced by at least one up market lodge ensuring comfort for the visitors or tourists in terms of accommodation, fine cuisine, a range of chilled drinks and eats. Other places of accomodation are also widely available.

Sports and Hobbies

Football

This is the favourite sport in Kampala and is played at

- City Centre Nakivubo Stadium
- Mandela Sports Stadium: Jinja Road, Namboole.



Golf

- Kampala Golf Club: Kitante Road. 18 hole golf course in the city centre.
- Entebbe Golf Club: Entebbe Road (near Windsor Lake Victoria Hotel). 9 holes.
- Garuga Golf and Country Club: Entebbe Road. 18 hole course by the lake.
- Jinja Club: 9 hole course with 18 tees



Health Clubs/Gyms

- Bugolobi Leisure Centre: 15 Princess Anna Drive, Bugolobi
- Kabira Country Club: 63 Old Kira Road, Bukoto
- KK Health Club: 3 Commercial Road, Ntinda
- Mosa Court Apartments Health Club: 12 Shimoni Road
- Roots Health Club: 81 Buganda Road
- TLC Club: 7 George Street (behind C.P.S)

Exercise classes

Pilates Classes, weights/gym training, aerobics and body conditioning programmes are widely available.

Cricket

Cricket is played at Lugogo Stadium every Sunday. There are also club competitions at Lugogo, Kyambogo, Entebbe and Jinja Ovals.

Horse Riding

Riding lessons and hacks on the shores of Lake Victoria are available in Speke Marina and Riding Stables.



Mountain Biking

Adrift Adventure Co.: Guided weekend rides, offices now open at new UWA compound, Kiira Road

- Uganda Mountain bike: 27 Nkrumah Road, 3rd Floor, Rm 14

Quad Biking

• All Terrain Adventures: Bujagali Falls, Jinja

Running/Walking

The Hash House Harriers walks every Monday at 6pm and first Saturdays of the month at 5pm.

Rugby

- Lugogo Rugby Ground: Off Lugogo by-pass (Rotary Avenue)
- Kyadondo Rugby Club: Jinja Road.

Sailing

- Entebbe Sailing Club: Members club with sailing, racing, fishing, swimming pool. There are Lasers for hire.
- Victoria Nyanza Sailing Club: Kaazi, off Entebbe Road. Sailing and racing on Sundays. There are Lasers for hire.

Swimming

Most of the hotels in Kampala have swimming pools so check under the list of hotels. Swimming is also done at the beaches.

Tennis

- American Recreation Association: Makindye Hill Road
- Kabira Country Club: 63 Old Kira Road, Bukoto
- Lugogo Tennis Club: Lugogo by-pass
- Sheraton Kampala: Ternan Avenue

Other sports and hobbies such as bowling, bungee jumping, clay pigeon shooting, fishing, flying lessons, squash and white water rafting are available although most of them are situated in Kampala.

Internet Cafes

There are many internet cafes around the city and some of them include

- Alfabet: 1st Floor, Rainbow Arcade Opposite Agip House, Kampala Road
- Cyberworld café: Park Royale Shopping Arcade, Kampala Road
- Globenet Café: 32 Kampala Road, Radio One building
- Frans.com: Shop 2, Pioneer Mall, Kampala Road.
- Klatic: 3 Cooper Road, Kisementi
- Webcity café: 5 Kimanathi Avenue

Videos, Books and Picture Taking

There are video libraries where for a small fee a reasonable selection of DVDs for rent could be accessed. English language books and paper backs, current magazines, newspapers, periodicals and journals are available in Kampala where there are a number of shops as opposed to areas outside Kampala. Regarding photography you must exercise caution when taking photos in public when on your own.

Water, Food and Personal Toiletries

There are several brands of bottled mineral waters on the market sold in the various supermarkets. Avoid local water because it is not properly treated and therefore unsafe to drink. Dairy products purchased outside major supermarkets should also be avoided as these are not pasteurized.

Fruits and vegetables sold on the street or in local markets may be cheaper than those in the supermarket. They are usually fresh but require a thorough wash before preparation and consumption. Although most standard/international brands of food items and snacks are available in local supermarkets in most of the larger towns, they are costly as most of them are imported from Europe. The same applies to personal toiletries. You can carry your favorite toiletries although several brand names are readily available on the market.



Furniture and Appliances

You may want or need to purchase the normal household items such as a fridge, microwave, toaster, coffee maker, television, bed, wardrobe, etc. so as to make you life more comfortable. Occasionally these items come for sale on the UNDP bulletin board, but in general, all these items are available in shops around Kampala. Depending on one's taste and preference furniture and household appliances could be range from the top-end branded imported items to the cheaper, locally manufactured sets. Remember to keep all receipts for insurance purposes in case of theft and record them to be included in your file within one month of your arrival.

Contact Details

The UNV/UNDP Country Office is located at 15B Clement Hill Road, P.O. Box 7184, Kampala, Uganda.
Correspondence and parcels for the UNV could be sent to the said address.

You can call the UNV Programme Officer and the UNV Country Operations Assistant for queries and assistance.

Mwangi Mathenge, Patrick

UNV Programme Officer

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