

TRAVEL ADVICE FOR UGANDA

ENTEBBE

Arrival at the Airport

At Entebbe International Airport, you will need to acquire your entry visa if you do not already have one. Entries visas available at the airport are good for a maximum of 3 months and cost US \$30 or £20. It is always more convenient to have the exact amount because change is most often unavailable. If you already have your entry visa, then you may queue in the resident line instead of the line for all other passports, which will save time. Please see above for more details on obtaining visas.

Once you have your visa, you will then proceed to the luggage claim area. It is not uncommon for bags not to arrive. If your bags have not arrived, then you will be directed how to proceed by the officials at the airport. British Airways has in the past issued compensation for hotel stays if your bags are lost but this is not guaranteed. Late bags usually arrive in Entebbe within 2-3 days and you should bring some supplies in your carry-on in case of lost luggage.

There is a small foreign exchange bureau (Forex) as you exit the airport building where you can exchange currency. You will not be able to obtain Ugandan shillings before arriving in the country, so it is best to get a small amount at the airport to pay for taxis until you can get to a Forex in Kampala where the rates will probably be better.

Staying in Entebbe

Depending on your schedule, you may choose to spend a night in Entebbe rather than heading to Kampala. Many people also prefer staying in Entebbe than Kampala because it is quieter. There are quite a number of hotels in Entebbe of differing price ranges. Please see Appendix G for a list of hotels with contact information.

Restaurants

There are very few restaurant and bars in Entebbe. There is one Chinese restaurant on the main street and a pub called *Four Turkeys* nearby. There is also excellent food available on Airport Rd. at *The Four Points*. Most people eat meals in the many hotels around Entebbe. The food at the Windsor Lake Victoria hotel is quite good.

Transport to Kampala

From Entebbe Airport, you can reach Kampala (approximately 30km) either by private or public means. Special hire taxis are available at the airport. Prices are negotiable but you should expect to pay between 30,000 and 45,000 USH for a journey to Kampala. Please agree on a price before departure with the driver. Depending on traffic, the trip into the center of Kampala may take up to one hour. Public taxis (also called matatus or minibuses) run from Entebbe town and you'll need to reach there using a special hire from the airport (5,000 to 10,000 USH). Matatus leave Entebbe when they are full and run to either the old or new taxi park in Kampala for a fixed charge of 1,500 USH.

KAMPALA

When arriving in Kampala, look out for a free copy of "*The Eye*". This tourist booklet contains a lot of useful information about Uganda as well as a map of central Kampala and a directory of stores and services.

Moving around Kampala

Matatus operate all over Kampala and are easy and cheap for getting around (between 200 and 600 USH) for a journey. They leave from the old and new taxi park and other pre-determined points around the city and will also stop to put down or pick up regularly along the way. You can ask people your area or destination and most will be able to point you to the correct place to board your taxi and others, once on board, will tell you when to get off. Similarly there are taxi points to get special hire taxi around the city. These will cost between 2,000 and 10,000 USH depending on where you are going. There are also motorcycles, which you can hire to take you around the city for between 500 and 3,000 USH. Although they can get you places faster, they can be dangerous. Some universities and insurance providers will not allow you to use these motorbikes and you should check before leaving.

Staying in Kampala

There are a number of hotels all over the city ranging from backpacker hostels to 5 star hotels. Please see Appendix G for a list of hotels in Kampala with their contact information. There are always a number of backpacker tourists in Uganda and the cheaper hostels are often booked in advance.

Restaurants

There are a number of nice restaurants all over Kampala. Good Indian food is widely available in the city namely at *The Clay Oven* in the Equatoria Hotel, *Khana Khazana* (20 Acacia Ave, Kololo), *Haandi* (Commercial Plaza), and *Masala Chaat House* (3b Dewinton Road). The Speke Hotel's *Pizzeria Mammamia* serves excellent pizza and salads as does *Mambo Point* (22 Akii Bua Rd.). For Chinese food, try *Fang Fang* (Communications House or 9 Ssezibwa Rd.) or *Great Wall* (21 Kampala Rd.) which is a slightly cheaper option. For these meals expect to pay between 30,000 and 40,000 for a meal for two people. If you are looking for a quicker fast-food option, try *Nandos* (Kampala Rd.) which serves ice cream, burgers, pizza etc. Across the street you will also find *Steers* another fast food option. You will pay between 5,000 and 12,000 USH for one meal. If you are looking for a fancier meal, try *Fez Brasserie* at the Emin Pasha Hotel or *The Pearl* located in the Serena Kampala Hotel. Expect to pay between 50,000 and 100,000 per person.

Other Activities

There are two cinemas in Kampala, one at Garden City Mall (Yusef Lule Rd., tel: 031261416) and the other at 10 Wilson Rd. (tel: 0347713). The movies are relatively recent and you can check details of showtimes in either the New Vision or Daily Monitor newspapers. Garden City Mall also has a variety of shops and amenities including a health club, bowling alley, arcade, coffee shop, food court, internet café, and

If you are looking for crafts of other souvenirs from Uganda, you can try the Craft Village located by the National Theatre on Dewington Rd. There is a smaller craft shop on Bombo Road called *Uganda Crafts 2000* or *Banana Boat* located at Lugogo Mall or Garden City Mall.

If you wish to visit a supermarket while you are in Kampala, you can try the *Uchumi* located in Garden City or one of the two *Shoprites* (one is at Lugogo Mall and the other is on Entebbe Rd. near the clocktower). If you do go to one of these markets please call camp in advance to see if there might be anything that they need from Kampala.

There are also several markets in Kampala. You can find a number of goods at Oweeno market including new and used clothes, but be on guard for pickpockets if you go. Also, you can find a number of fresh fruits and vegetables at Nakasero market.

Forex Bureaus and Money Exchange

There are a number of Forex Bureaus and banks all over the city where you can exchange money but please be aware that they may all have different rates and you should look around for the best one. Also note that rates will differ depending on the value of the note being exchange. For example, you will get a better exchange rate for \$100 and \$50 than for \$20. Also bills must be clean, undamaged and no older than 2001. This is important since older bills will be given a poor exchange rate due to counterfeit problems they have had in Uganda. Bills older than 1990 will not be accepted at all. Travellers cheques may also be exchanged in Kampala but note that you will not get as favourable an exchange rate as you would changing cash. If you have large amounts of bills to exchange, you can always ask to speak to the manager of a forex or a bank so no one will see how much cash you are carrying on you. Theft is common in Kampala so please keep track of your money.

As of January 2007, the exchange rates were as follows:

- 1 USD = 1775.50 USH
- 1 GBP = 3481.10 USH
- 1 EUR = 1501.15 USH

Money can also be obtained through debit of Visa cards all over the city, although you may have to try a few ATMs before finding one that will work with your card. Please check with your bank at home to

determine if and how much you will be charged for using a debit card in Uganda. In addition, you should contact your bank before leaving and let them know that you may be using your card outside of the country since some cards may be frozen if they are used in unusual places.

Some restaurants and hotels will accept Visa (but not usually Mastercard) as payment but this is unusual and there is usually at least a 5% surcharge for this.

MASINDI

Masindi is the closest town nearest to camp approximately 40 km away. There are several amenities available in town and this is where most of the shopping is done for the project.

Getting to Masindi

To get to Masindi you can either travel by post bus, matatu or regular bus:

The post bus leaves from the main Post Office in Kampala on Kampala Rd. at 8am. In order to purchase your ticket and ensure your space on the bus, you must be at the post office no later than 7:30. The cost is 8,000 USH and it takes between 4 and 5 hours to reach Masindi. The post bus is one of the safest ways of traveling between Kampala and Masindi since it travels much slower than either matatus or buses. In addition, the post bus can be convenient because it leaves at a set time regardless if it is full. However, there has been some theft reported on the post bus, so please keep an eye on your luggage.

Matatus for Masindi leave from the **New Taxi Park**. This is next to the bus station by Nakivubo Place. Once you enter the taxi park, ask directions to the Masindi stage and you will see signposts in front of all the taxis for the various destinations. Matatus only leave once they are full which could mean waiting 5 minutes or 3 hours. Taxis leaving in the morning generally fill faster than those leaving late in the afternoon. The cost for a taxi to Masindi is 10,000 USH and it usually takes between 3 and 4 hours.

The bus station is found just outside the new taxi park. Buses for Masindi are clearly labeled and like matatus leave throughout the day but only when they are full. They are cheaper than matatus but are usually in poor condition, are full of animals and other goods and travel extremely fast. The cost is 9,000 USH and it usually takes 3 hours to get to Masindi.

Regardless of your mode of transportation, please be aware that your bags can easily be stolen if they are not watched. If you are traveling with expensive equipment, you can always purchase 2 or 3 seats and sit with your bags next to you.

Before leaving Kampala, call ahead to the project to see if a vehicle might be in town and if there is room for you. Arrangements for going to Kampala are not made well in advance, but just before arriving in Kampala you should liaise with the Director to see what is possible.

Banks

The Stanbic bank in Masindi will do foreign exchange for fairly competitive rates compared to Kampala. In addition, several researchers have been able to use their bank cards to get shillings from the ATM. However, Stanbic will not change travellers cheques and you will have to change those in Kampala. In addition, if you are going to be at camp for several months and do not wish to keep dollars

Shopping

There are a few stores and restaurants in Masindi. If you wish to eat something before heading to camp, you can try *Travellers Corner*, *Courtview Hotel*, *Masindi Hotel* or the café at the Shell Station. These are all located on the main road. There are also two small grocery stores in Masindi, one called *Lucky 7* and the other called *Wat* which sell snacks, packaged foods, toiletries and other miscellaneous items. There is also a main market in Masindi where you can purchase fresh fruit and vegetables as well as used clothes.

Reaching Sonso from Masindi

Budongo Conservation Field Station is located at the site of the old Sonso sawmill in the Budongo Forest Reserve. Departing from Masindi you take Butiaba Rd. towards Nyabyeya Forestry College. Once you reach the fork in the road, you head right (left takes you towards the College) and that road will eventually end at camp after approximately 5 km.

From Masindi, you can hire a special hire taxi and the price will range between 30,000 and 40,000 USH. If you do not have a lot of luggage, you can also take a boda boda motorbike for which you should expect to pay between 8,000 and 12,000 USH. The journey time is approximately 1 hour.

If it is your first trip to Sonso, then the Project will try to send a vehicle to Masindi to pick you up especially since many taxis and boda drivers do not know where we are located.