



10 DAYS RWENZORI MYSTICAL CHALLENGE.

The 10 days adventure safari combines the famous Ruwenzori mountains (Rain maker) with Queen Elizabeth national park. This trip is made for adventure hikers who would love to a few extra days after the mountains and immerse themselves in wildlife.

Safari Highlights

- Equator of Uganda
- Gorilla tracking
- Scenic Road Trip
- Carnival Tracking Queen Elizabeth National Park

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1. Pick up and transfer to Queen Elizabeth National Park (Kasese)

After your early breakfast, we will drive to the southern part of Uganda, the drive is about 8 hours so we recommend that you plan your departure times as early as 7:00am so that you will have enough time for short breaks and quick stopovers. Hot lunch en route or late lunch at the lodge. Dinner overnight at the edge of the park

Accommodation: Aardvark Safari lodge/Bush Lodge

Meal Plan: Fullboard



After this night, we drive to Rwenzori national park for the 8 days Margherita Summit

THE 8DAYS MARGHERITA PEAK TREK 5109 METERS.

Margherita Peak Africa's third highest peak however the real beauty is in the climb up the Kilembe route, the forests and valleys the flora is diverse with trees and valleys of ferns. The trees are alive with many species of birds and primates and as you walk up the trail you will see chimp nests high up in the tall trees, if you are lucky you may catch a glimpse of the resident chimpanzee as they scamper away. Climbing Margherita Peak is more of a hard scramble than a climb except for a few difficult moves and when it snows it is more difficult however the rewards and exhilaration of reaching the top is enormous as you look across Albert Peak to the DRC (Congo) then east across the spectra of the Rwenzori Mountains.

We provide all the equipment necessary for the climb like crampons, ropes, harnesses, carabinas, helmets, ice axes, ice screws, ascenders etc you need to bring good hiking boots, warm clothing warm sleeping bag, crampons, warm gear and rain gear.

Note climbing to Margherita peak is now technical and knowledge of ropes and use of crampons, ascenders and figure 8s to belay, and knowledge of how to use an ice axe is advisable with ice sections of 60% steepness and changing rapidly due to climate change and melting of the glacier. All our guides are trained in ice climbing and rescue and can guide you up with little experience however you must be prepared to learn on the way up and to be able to fit your own crampons and at least tie basic knots and use of ascenders and figure 8s. Mt baker and mt speke are also technical we advise that clients bring their own crampons as due to the mix of hard ice and rocks we are struggling to maintain our crampons

Day 2. Hike to Sine Camp 2596 meters.

Start at Trekkers at 1,450 meters and sleep at Sine Hut at 2,596 meters being a height gain of 1,146 meters, or those who are fit and want to proceed to Kalalama Camp at 3,134 meters may do so and apart from the fantastic views gives you more time at Mutinda Camp where you may climb up to Mutinda Lookout at 3,975 meters.

We start by walking up the valley floor through tall forest trees of the Afro Montane Forest Zone. This is a steady climb with multitudes of birds and a chance of seeing blue monkeys scampering off through the forest. At times visitors may see troupes of 15 to 20 black and white Colobus monkeys as they swing through the tree tops. There are rare sightings of the L'Hoest monkey which are part of the Bukonzo cultural emblems and are protected by the virtue of the King or Omusinga or you may hear wild chimpanzee in the distance. There is wide variety of plant species from forest trees to bamboos thickets, low shrubs, flowers, fungi, and with many moss



and lichen covered vines hanging from the tall trees creating an awesome appeal. Enock's Falls are just 200 meters from Sine Hut and offer a splendid opportunity to capture a great screensaver for your memories.

At Sine Camp 2,596 meters we have wooden huts set between tall forest trees on a narrow ridge where you may sit and enjoy the beauty of the Afro Mountain forest while you look down at a fantastic waterfall crashing over the rocks far below. Some clients prefer to sit outside enjoying the warmth of the campfire and chat to the guides about the mountains and life in their community. Sine is just below the bamboo zone and the area around has many different bird species. 150 meters from the camp is Enock falls which is set in livid green vegetation and hanging vine. Truly beautiful. Sleep at Sine, or those who are fit and want to proceed to Kalalama Camp at 3,134 metres may do so and apart from the fantastic views gives you more time at Mutinda Camp where you may climb up to Mutinda Lookout at 3,975 meters.

Day 3. Hike to Mutinda Camp 3588 meters.

Trekking starts at 8.30am and almost immediately you enter the Bamboo-Mimulopsis Zone which is steep climb with many high steps. In the wet season the bamboo zone is rather muddy and slippery making the going slow. However, the atmosphere and the forest is beautiful as you climb 551 meters altitude and a distance of 1.8km to Kalalama Camp at 3,147 meters which is in the Heather-Rapanea Zone where you can take a rest and a quick cup of tea or coffee before heading on to Mutinda Camp. The trail meanders up and over several small knolls along a ridge top then drops down the side of the valley before climbing again, and in doing so cross several small streams and pass close to moss covered waterfalls. You then climb steadily along the side of a beautiful mossy river which tumbles down over the rocks under the Giant Heather trees whose trunks are covered in green moss with old man beards (Usnea lichen) hanging from the branches. The trail twists and turns as you climb up the deep valley, which has an enormous variety of plants and flowers. This valley is unique with many Giant Heather trees creating a beautiful atmosphere often shrouded in mist.

In the afternoon, you may wish to climb up to the top of the Mutinda Lookout (one to two hours up and one hour down) The views are amazing as you stand on moss covered rocks at 3,925 meters with views across the Rwenzori Mountains and down to Kasese town and Lake George. For those clients who are climbing to Margherita or any of the main peaks climbing Mutinda 3,975 meters is also an excellent way to acclimatise and reduce the risk of high altitude sickness

Sleep at Mutinda Camp at 3.582 meters

Day 4. Hike to Bugata Camp 4100 meters.

The trail to Bugata Camp is boggy particularly in the wet season but with a little skill you can step from tussock to tussock to make the going easier. First you cross the Mutinda valley through the



tussock grass and everlasting flowers interspersed with many Giant Lobelias before climbing a steep section up to the Namusangi Valley (3,840 meters), with sheer waterfalls and looking back you get fantastic views of Mutinda Peaks. The Namusangi Valley is wide, with many ups and downs as the trail climbs steadily to Bugata Camp at 4,100 meters.

Day 5. Hike to Hunwicks Camp 3974 meters.

Trek to Hunwick's Camp via Bamwanjarra Pass. As you leave Bugata Camp you pass up a ridge then drop down slightly before ascending to Bamwanjarra Pass at 4,450 meters where we have a hut should the weather turn bad. From the pass on a clear day you get excellent views of the three main peaks. The trail passes down the valley and around the edge of some bogs and thick ever green vegetation, moss, giant groundsel and lobelia. Here is possibly the best place in all the Rwenzori to observe the Malachite Sunbird as it feeds on the many lobelia flowers and a known breeding site. Farther on there is some steep sections before a steady climb up and over a ridge to Hunwick's Camp which is situated on the top of a deep valley and has good views of Mt Stanley, Mt Baker, Weismanns Peak and McConnell's Prong.

Day 6. Hike to Margherita camp 4485 meters.

From Hunwick's we pass down and across the valley floor to Lake Kitendara which is very stunning with deep water and beautiful vegetation. From here you climb up Scott Elliott's pass then up the ridge to Margherita Camp 4,485 meters which is situated between some huge rocks and offering some shelter from the strong winds. This is the very spot where the Duke of Abruzzi camped when making his climb to Margherita Peak in 1906.

Day 7. Summit Margherita peak 5109 meters.

Wake up at 2am and catch an early breakfast before heading off to climb Mt Stanley at 2.30am. This is necessary as the weather has changed a lot and often even during the dryer season the mountain is closed in with heavy clouds and snow falls from 1 pm to 4pm and this happens within a short period of 10 to 15 minutes as the clouds rise up from the extensive Congo rainforests. During January and February 2017 clients were closed in and unable to walk during heavy snow storms which previously were not heard of during the dryer season and arrived back at Margherita camp well after dark with one group arriving back at 11pm totally exhausted. Due to this change in weather we have set a strict turn around time of 10am so if you do not reach the peak before then you must turn around regardless of the disappointment in the interests of safety. Margherita glacier has also suffered with global warming and as the outer edges of the glacier recede the ice is becoming steeper with one section of about 200 meters more than 60% grade. Combined with this much of the blacker has melted underneath causing caves under the ice and as it get thinner eventually caves in. So is necessary that clients understand and take advice of where the guides suggest to pass.



For those clients with less mountaineering experience we suggest that you stay on Stanley glacier and climb up to a good vantage point on a rocky outcrop on the southern edge of Alexandra Peak to enjoy fantastic views over Congo and the lower mountain ridges

After ascending the peak at 5,109 meters you then pass directly down to Hunwick's Camp at 3,874 meters.

Day 8. Descend down to Kiharo Camp 3640 meters.

Distance to Kiharo Camp 11km Time taken to walk 4 to 7 hours.

From Hunwick's Camp we start the day by climbing up a ridge towards McConnell's Prong where you get the best views of all three peaks and Scott Elliott's Pass before reaching Oliver's Pass at 4,505 meters. The distance from Hunwick's Camp to the top of Olivers Pass is 3km. The trail then cuts across below Weismann's Peak to the confluence of the Nyamwamba River which flows down through Kilembe and Kasese to Lake George in Queen Elisabeth National Park.

If you wish to climb Weismann's Peak 4,620 meters from Olivers pass you may do so at an extra cost of \$20 each. On a clear day you get fantastic views of Margherita and Mt Stanley, Mt Speke and Mt Baker.

After crossing the confluence the trail meanders down the valley to Kiharo Camp at which is situated in a deep valley with high cliffs and dense vegetation. On the way down the valley after each bog you will climb over a ridge of stones and earth which seems out of place but actually was pushed there by slow moving glaciers which eventually stopped moving, melted and left a pile of rocks and debris in front of where the glacier once stood.

Day 9. Descend down to the Basecamp 1450 meters.

Distance Kiharo Camp to the park gate 12.2km and another 2.8km down to Trekkers Hostel Time to walk 5 to 8 hours so those who need to connect to flights back to Kampala or travel on to other activities need to leave Kiharo early.

The trail down the Nyamwamba Valley is mostly downhill and absolutely stunning with beautiful views, moss covered rocks along the river, cascading waterfalls, deep valleys and forests are possibly the best in the Rwenzori Mountains. This part of the trail took us six years to find a way through and a route which is easy enough for tourists to use. In 1937 the explorer and geologist McConnell tried to find a way up this valley but failed and have to turn back and search for another route up the mountain but now you can experience this truly beautiful valley.

A few kilometers from Kiharo Camp the path turns off to the right to pass along the river. In the clear areas you may catch a glimpse of a Duiker quietly feeding in small clearings as you pass along the river. If you wish you may prefer to walk down the river itself hopping across the rocks



as you pass down. A few kilometers down the river it becomes very steep with multitudes of waterfalls so we have to move away from the river and follow a narrow ridge to bypass steep sections. At the bottom we again meet the river where there is a huge rock shelter and a place to rest for a while. After crossing a small stream, you climb up a gentle slope before turning back down to the river to avoid another set of waterfalls which are impassable. The forest along this section is magnificent and full of life with many birds, primates, dikers and hyrax. A great experience and ending to a fantastic trek.

Accommodation: **Aardvark Safari Lodge/Bush Lodge**

Meal Plan: **Full Board**

Day 10: Optional Lion/Carnival tracking and then transfer back to Entebbe for your evening flight

After your early breakfast, you will drive to Kasenyi gate to meet with the lion monitoring team to start your quest of searching for lions and leopards. Queen Elizabeth national park is second largest and oldest national with over 600 bird species and with over 90 species of mammals, which makes it ideal for the big game. This park is blessed with big numbers of kobs and other antelopes, which sustain good numbers of predators such as lions, leopards, spotted hyenas among others. After your morning game drive or lion monitoring (optional) you will drive back to Entebbe with several interesting stops such a hot lunch at local restaurant in Mbarara or at the equator! Later we will drop you at the airport for your international flight.

Accommodation: None

Meal Plan: Lunch en route

Included in these costs

- 2 Nights at Aardvark Safari Lodge or Bush lodge.
- 7 Nights in the mountains
- Entrance fees and tax involved
- 4x4 Safari customized vehicle with an English-speaking guide
- Drinking water
- Lunch en route

Excluded

- Optional activities
- Tips and gratuity
- International tickets
- Visa entry fees
- Anything not mentioned in this itinerary

Photo Safaris, Tel: +256 753029341 | +256 782835157 | Website: www.photosafarisuganda.com

Emails: info@photosafarisuganda.com Location: Nkumba | Entebbe | Uganda