

# National Day of Uganda

PUBLICITY

## Visit, explore Uganda's nature, culture, food

By Kaahwa Tophace  
Ambassador of Uganda

How long is a flight from Japan to Uganda? What is your weather like? What kind of food do you eat? These are some of the most frequent questions I receive from different people I meet in diverse settings as ambassador of Uganda to Japan.



Kaahwa Tophace

A trip to Uganda at any time of the year is guaranteed to be a fruitful and rewarding one. A quick online search reveals that Uganda has a tropical climate all year round. The Equator crosses through the country at 0 C, guaranteeing pleasant weather and temperatures that range from 10 C to 30 C. But Uganda's greatest strength or attraction is actually its people. With a population of 48 million, Uganda has been known as the country with the happiest people. Ugandans are known for striking up conversations with total strangers. The other attraction is the food. Famed for its tasty array of matooke, ugali, sweet potatoes and cassava, a trip to a typical Ugandan market will reveal an abundance of organic fresh vegetables and fruits that have no equal anywhere in the world. I invite you to explore Uganda — I guarantee that pleasure and delight await you.

This year, as part of our 62nd independence anniversary celebrations, I would like to welcome more people and cultural exchanges between Uganda and Japan. For both the seasoned Japanese traveller and the



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Golden monkeys, which are an endangered species with a global population of 2,000 to 4,000, can only be found around the Virunga volcanoes in Mgahinga National Park.

first-time traveller, or non-Japanese residents: plan to visit and explore Uganda.

The Uganda Embassy in Tokyo participated in the recently concluded Tourism Expo Japan 2024 held at Tokyo Big Sight on Sept. 26-29 under the theme "Travel, An Encounter with New Value Awaits." The Uganda Booth featured an exhibition from Buganda Kingdom, one of the ancient kingdoms of Uganda, which is also host to the famed Tombs of the Kings of Buganda, locally known as Kasubi Tombs, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Kasubi Tombs, as it is popularly known, is a cultural burial ground with immense historical, traditional and spiritual value that portrays the richness of the people of Buganda (one of the many Ugandan tribes), with a display of traditional architecture in its structures.

A walk around the Kasubi Tombs grounds reveals a tree species locally known as the mutuba tree, whose

bark is harvested to produce bark cloth. Widely regarded as one of the oldest textiles in history, the Baganda used bark cloth to make garments, beddings and burial sheets to wrap the dead. The skill of bark cloth's ecologically friendly production has since been internationally recognised by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity. A visit to Uganda will offer you a deeper, worthwhile, firsthand insight into this ancient cultural craft, which Uganda has committed to preserve and conserve for sharing with the world for generations to come.

The Uganda Booth also featured a model of the mountain gorilla. Home to more than half of the world's mountain gorilla population, these primates can be found in Mgahinga National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, located in southwestern Uganda, is also listed as a UNESCO World Heritage



Courtesy of Uganda Tourism Board

This is a shoebill. These birds, standing at between 110 and 140 centimeters, can be sighted at a number of spots in Uganda, including Mabamba swamp near Kampala, the nation's capital.

Site. It is worth mentioning that the allure of this heritage site is in the following key attractions or activities, guaranteed to make a memorable holiday destination: gorilla tracking and gorilla habitation; bird watching with over 300 bird species that include endangered species like the African Green broadbill and Grauer's swamp warbler; nature walks, forest walking safaris and community tours.

In order to ensure that this heritage site is protected for generations to come, conservation efforts that co-opt the local communities for sustainability have been employed to preserve its renowned biodiverse tree species and fern species, flora and fauna, and mammals that include mountain gorillas, the African elephant, black and white colobus monkeys, and L'Hoest's monkeys.

Although admittedly Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park is more famous for its mountain gorilla population, did you know that this heritage

site is home and host to over 200 butterfly species? Yes! Butterflies! Did you know that the following butterfly species are uniquely found in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest? For butterfly lovers, the endangered African giant swallowtail and the cream banded swallowtail are a must see.

It is impossible for me to mention Uganda's UNESCO World Heritage Sites without mentioning Rwenzori Mountains National Park. Located in western Uganda, the Rwenzori Mountains are a nature artist's dream with a cascading mountain-ous forest landscape featuring tropical forests, alpine meadows, glaciers, rivers, waterfalls and unique alpine flora that includes giant heathers and lobelias, guaranteed to soothe any weary traveller.

The role of community involvement in conservation efforts through ecotourism has boosted conservation awareness efforts, facilitated sharing of indigenous cultures, greatly miti-

gated poaching and led to community infrastructure development.

For the avid health and wellness and sports fan, the Rwenzori Marathon that occurs every year in August/September beautifully combines nature and sports in one package. This event that began in 2022 has since registered over 3,000 runners from 33 countries all over the world. I invite you to plan to attend the 2025 Rwenzori Marathon, which is scheduled for Sept. 6, 2025.

Finally, as ambassador of Uganda to Japan, I would like to say that living in Japan has given me an appreciation of the joy of travelling beyond one's borders. Travel opens up new friendships, new relationships, new opportunities, broadens the mind, and brings joy and contentment. Plan to visit Uganda. Plan to explore Uganda. An encounter with new value awaits.

Happy independence anniversary to all Ugandans!



Courtesy of the Buganda Heritage & Tourism Board

The Tombs of the Kings of Buganda, locally known as the Kasubi Tombs, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site within the Kampala district and the major spiritual center for the people of the Buganda kingdom, the Baganda, one of the many Ugandan tribes.

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to the People of the Republic of Uganda  
on the 62nd Anniversary of Their Independence

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Izumisano City and Gulu City in the Republic of Uganda signed a Friendship City Agreement on the 18th of July, 2017 for friendship and mutual development and have since carried out a variety of exchange activities.

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