

4 Western Uganda

by James Sturz



THE PRIDE OF AFRICA

Hulking mountain gorillas. Tree-climbing lions. Screeching chimpanzees. The wildlife you see on a western Ugandan safari makes other countries' lazing antelope seem like the cold pasta salad of the savanna buffet. Tour the region's five key national parks and you'll find that even the roadside cattle—with horns up to 12 feet across—are more interesting here.



Akaboozi might be the juiciest word in Uganda. Roughly translated as “gossip,” it can also be put to more, ahem, carnal use. The phrase *akaboozi k'abakulu* (adult talk) might refer to people talking intimately or having sex. The word comes from Luganda, the most common of some 40 indigenous languages in Uganda. The Luganda-language radio broadcasts of Akaboozi 87.9 FM sometimes rile President Yoweri Museveni's government.

Listen online at radiouganda.net/kaboozi



Gorilla My Dreams

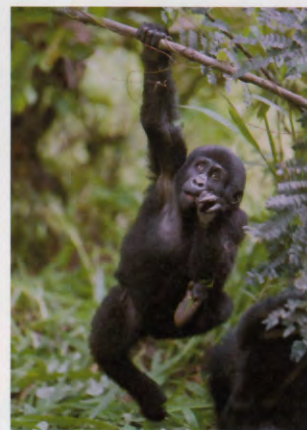
At the Bwindi Safari Lodge, stay in one of eight bandas (classic Ugandan thatched-roof huts). Trek through tree ferns, red stinkwoods, and tangled vines on a guided nature walk or enjoy the jungle view from your room's broad veranda. Bwindi's Rushegura gorilla family frequently visits the lodge, which means the apes might just come to you.

From \$400 per person, including meals, drinks, laundry, and massage. (866) 599-APES (2737), volcanoessafaris.com



HOMESPUN WHEELS

In Kampala, Uganda's capital, and other cities, *boda-boda* motorcycle taxis are among the most popular forms of transportation. But away from the industrialized centers, makeshift—brakeless—bicycles and scooters built out of wood hurtle down hills with a few hundred pounds of charcoal or fruit strapped to their frames.



Safari Circuit

Sign up with a safari company (below) to take you on a counter-clockwise tour of western Uganda's national parks. Starting in Kampala, here's where to go.

Murchison Falls National Park
The Uganda Wildlife Authority's riverboat gets up close to hippos and crocodiles.

Kibale National Park
Thirteen primate species live here, including blue monkeys, gray-cheeked mangabeys, and 1,450 chimpanzees.

Rwenzori Mountains National Park
The Rwenzoris are Africa's highest mountains, with multiple 15,000-foot peaks.

Queen Elizabeth National Park
Hike past crater lakes to the Ishasha sector and see lions lounging in fig trees.

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
This park is home to about half of the world's 750 remaining mountain gorillas.

Abacus African Vacations, 256/312-261-930, abacusvacations.com

The Uganda Safari Company, 256/414-251-182, safariuganda.com

Wild Frontiers, 256/414-321-479, wildfrontiers.co.ug