

TRAVEL UGANDA SUMMER 2024

CULTURAL IMMERSION TRIP

SCHOOLS

- Community workshops
- School celebrations
- Cross-cultural education

SAFARI

- National Park Tour
- Game drives
- Bird watching
- Pool-side relaxing
- Team building

CITY LIFE


- Cultural tour
- Explore downtown Kampala and Gulu
- Art & craft market day

Approximate Price:

\$1,500/PERSON

*excluding flight
*space is limited

More Information:

 303-718-7053

 devaki@mwebaza.org

 @mwebazafoundation



COLLABORATION > CHARITY

WE WANT YOU TO COME ALONG IF:

You Align With Our Mission

We are an educational organization that embraces decolonizing practices in order to build alternative structures in the nonprofit space. Our practices are centered on understanding, solidarity, and liberation.

You Value Cross-Cultural Education

Like in the U.S., Ugandans live, work, and play in ways specific to their respective regions, tribes, and cultures. If you have a desire to learn more about Ugandan ways of life and build upon your skillsets by collaborating with Ugandan professionals, this is the trip for you.

You Have a Skill to Share

We invite people to share their unique set of skills or knowledge with our Ugandan partner communities in a number of ways. Contribute your expertise to a specific project, host a community class, or co-teach alongside Ugandan educators.





ARE YOU A GOOD FIT?

We seek to partner with collaborative people who want to share their skills and areas of expertise while being open to learning new ways of doing things. If you have a desire to visit Uganda and are interested in learning from and sharing with Ugandans, keep on reading!

We're looking for partners with experience in:

- entrepreneurship
- coaching
- early childhood/elementary education
- IT
- finance
- general maintenance (plumbing, electric, landscaping, etc.)
- construction
- renewable energy
- environmental science
- farming
- gardening
- beekeeping
- ethical animal husbandry
- research
- mental health counseling
- physical education
- nutrition
- art
- family medicine
- dental health
- women's health and sanitation
- business management
- communication
- sales
- cooperative initiatives
- community organizing
- middle/ high school education
- marketing
- monitoring and evaluation

During trips to Uganda, Mwebaza's staff works with Ugandan partner communities to achieve goals related to equitable education, safe learning environments, and financial self-sufficiency.

Don't see your area of expertise on the list?

We still want to chat with you! It's very likely that your skills and knowledge could support our mission, cross-cultural education, small business development, and more. Email devaki@mwebaza.org.



A MIND STRETCHED BY NEW EXPERIENCES CAN NEVER GO BACK TO ITS OLD DIMENSIONS

Cost Breakdown*:

- Flight: \$1,500-2,500
 - Travel Insurance: \$80-150
 - Entry Visa: \$50
 - Food: \$10/day
 - Transport: \$200
 - Lodging: \$35/day
 - Safari/Excursion: \$200 - 300
 - Tips t/ Guides, etc.: \$50
 - Gifts/Drinks/Miscellaneous: \$50 - 150
- *estimated for 10 day trip



Travel Fee*:

We created a sliding-scale travel fee to cover Mwebaza staff members' time in planning, coordinating, and running these multi-week trips. They are not only acting as travel agents before the trip but as the trip leads each day of your travels!

*These are suggested contributions according to household income. We do not want the travel fee to prohibit someone from this experience. Please contact us and we would love to talk more, devaki@mwebaza.org.

annual household income	suggested fee
Under \$50,000/year	\$250
\$50-85,000/year	\$500
\$85-120,000/year	\$750
\$120-200,000/year	\$1000
\$200,000+/year	\$1500

A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE

Break Bread with Locals

Our friends in Uganda are warm and welcoming. Their personal insight and knowledge of their neighborhoods and cities allow us to experience Uganda without all the trappings of the tourism industry.

You'll eat with host families in their living rooms or dine on local cuisine when staying in big cities. Explore neighborhood markets with someone who speaks the language and can introduce you directly to the growers, makers, and artisans behind the products.

New Friends

People we have brought to Uganda have formed friendships that last. They have made multiple trips back and now feel like the country is a home away from home. Friendships that span cultures and worlds are some of the most important as they continuously open our minds to new ways of living.



Travel Assistance

Mwebaza's staff will take care of booking your flights, getting your visa, and coordinating drivers, lodging, and meals. Flying into Entebbe, Uganda is different than flying into another big city as taxis, lodging, and amenities aren't readily accessible. Most people have to coordinate with a travel agency of some sort to even start planning a trip to Uganda.

New Stories

Traveling around Uganda isn't for the faint of heart. In big cities, energy and life emanate from every corner. In rural neighborhoods, the natural scenery is unmatched. You will come back with countless stories to tell and likely some inspiration to visit again.





TRAVELING IN UGANDA WITH MWEBAZA

Accommodations

Due to the remote location of St. Paul School in Nkokonjeru, we stay at a close friend's house in the local trading center. There is one large room where we all stay together, with individual mattresses and mosquito nets. There is one indoor bathroom with a cold water shower and one outdoor bathroom.

During our time spent at our other partner schools, we will be staying at local Inns with opportunities to share a bedroom and bathroom or reserve a private room as an individual. Oftentimes, hot water and power are inconsistent.

Food + Water

We will ensure there is plenty of filtered bottled water for everyone's needs throughout the trip. It is recommended to brush with bottled water.

Traditional Ugandan food is typically cooked for many hours, with little risk of food born illnesses. Avoid ice and raw foods that may be washed in contaminated water.

Staple foods in Uganda are starch-based, with a side of vegetables and beans or lentils. Fish, beef, chicken, and goat are also common proteins. While visiting our schools, we will typically be served a lunch of cornmeal "grits" (posho) and beans.

*Bring digestive aids if you are prone to constipation due to heavy starches.

Connectivity

There are opportunities to connect to wifi in the evenings wherever we stay, however, spotty connection and power outages can affect this. If you would be more comfortable maintaining a consistent connection throughout your stay, consider looking into an individual international phone plan with your provider. U.S. to Type G power adapter is needed to charge devices.


Electricity can be limited at certain schools or host homes, so bring a portable power bank if your device needs recharging throughout the day.

Transport

Oftentimes we will have a large van to transport our luggage and group members. Motorcycle taxis (boda bodas) are a common mode of transport that one can use if you are comfortable getting around the local area. Helmets are not provided. Pro tip: mount and dismount from the lefthand side to avoid the exhaust pipe.

Vaccinations

Visit the [CDC guidelines](#) for recommended vaccinations. Yellow Fever is the only vaccination that is required for entry. If you do not have a COVID vaccination card, then a negative PCR test within 72 hours of travel is required upon entry and exit. Malaria medication is suggested. Talk to your doctor for more information.



"[Because I was] traveling with members of the foundation that have done this trip numerous times, everything was taken care of.

Mwebaza's Ugandan community made me feel like family and I am forever grateful for their hospitality and love."

-Lulu Buck, volunteer, July 2023 trip

Personal Care + Hygiene

Pharmacies and supermarkets are very common where you can easily find medicine, soaps, and snacks. However, tampons are difficult to find and are to dispose of, while pads are commonplace. For ease, one may consider a menstrual cup. Shampoo, conditioner, lotion, etc. are not typically provided at hotels or host homes. Carry some toilet paper or wipes into public bathrooms as toilet paper isn't always available.

Security

In Uganda, violent crime is rare. Theft can be a risk as foreigners might be more of a target. We have built long-term relationships with our school contacts and close partners and feel very safe. Based on your personal comfort level, feel free to travel with a lockable carry-on suitcase or bring a small lock for your luggage to keep valuables secure during the day.

Money

As American travelers, we consciously try to reject the perception that everyone from the U.S. is wealthy and maintains a luxurious lifestyle. While things are much more affordable in Uganda, it's best practice to be frugal with any money we spend.

Tipping 10% at restaurants and services is appropriate, but don't overtip or overpay for items. This can have unintended consequences with the local population being marginalized because they cannot afford to overtip and overpay.

Notify your bank of travel if carrying a travel credit card. Keep in mind, credit cards aren't widely accepted outside the airport. Most businesses deal in cash only. The exchange rate is best with \$100 notes newer than 2008, unmarked and unturned.

Bargaining

While bargaining at public markets is part of Ugandan culture, financial literacy isn't always part of shop owners' educations. Out of respect, we recommend that visitors pay reasonable asking prices for goods they wish to purchase. Avoid haggling for the sake of haggling.

For context, a dress might cost 40,000 UGS, a pair of leather sandals 30,000 UGS, a bag of mangos 5,000 UGS, and a bag of popcorn 500 UGS.



Toilets

We will have access to sitting flush toilets where we stay. Outside the hotel, you will most often find squat toilets that may or may not flush. At our partner schools, they have squatting, waste-composting waterless toilets that cannot accept pads, tampons, or trash.

Laundry

Laundry services are available but are usually done by hand and air dried, so it may take a couple of days for your clothes to be returned to you. For more timely items, one might want to handwash delicates and other lightweight items.

Climate

Uganda is on the equator and has a very moderate climate. The rainy season is typically from April-June and October-December, while the dry season is January-March and July-September. Throughout the year, the temperature remains moderate between 65-85 degrees.

Clothing

Modest dress applies equally to men and women. Women should avoid wearing clothes above the knee. Men do not typically wear shorts, but children of all genders do. Lightweight clothing is recommended. There is no specific dress code during excursions.





CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Norms

As a visitor, in-person or virtually, to Uganda, be cognisant of cultural perspectives that may differ from your own. Many Ugandans are quite conservative with faith-based values and traditions. These values and principles may be viewed as near-sacred and unchangeable.

It is always best to shake hands when meeting. Oftentimes, a handshake starts as a regular handshake, and will then flow into an upward handshake, and then down into a regular handshake again. This may repeat as you exchange greetings.

If someone approaches you with a hug, expect to hug on one side and then again on the other. As a sign of respect, you will find that Ugandans may grasp their right forearm with their left hand when shaking hands. A nod or a slight bow of the head is also an accepted welcome greeting. Women and children may kneel upon your arrival. This is a cultural sign of respect and can be accepted graciously.

You might also receive greetings from Ugandans in soft voices, no higher than a whisper. This is a sign of respect. As your relationships deepen, you may find yourself assuming nicknames of an auntie or uncle, or if you are older, mama or baba.

"Muzungu" + Compliments

You will be sure to hear the word "muzungu" in the Southern region of Uganda or the word "munu" in the Northern region of Uganda. This means "foreigner" or "white person." It is not intended as an insult, but rather an observation or even used in an affectionate way.

Furthermore, in Uganda, being regarded as fat is a good thing. It means you've been eating well and life has been good to you. Oftentimes, upon returning after a couple of days, or a couple of years, people will comment on how fat you are. This should be understood as a sincere compliment, and should not be taken as a personal offense.

Elders

Elders have a special place in Ugandan culture; they are honored citizens and are sought out for counsel and advice. When visiting a home of an elderly person, a few practical gifts should be given, such as bread, sugar, or oil.

Entering a Home

If you are invited to a Ugandan home, leave your shoes outside of the home. Though your host might assure you that you do not have to take off your shoes, you will have more respect from the host for honoring the Ugandan tradition.

Conversation

Engage in meaningful conversation while visiting someone. Do not be too quick to state the reason for your visit. Always inquire about the person, their family, and their well-being. Listening is one of the most important aspects of conversation in Uganda. Avoid lecturing them on what you know.

Concept of Time

Many Ugandans do not share our Western perception of time as linear and finite. Time is understood as cyclical and relationship based. Schedules are often flexible to accommodate all parties, and activities are not generally perceived with a hard start and end time. It is not unusual for events to start 1-5 hours after the scheduled time. If you need a Ugandan to call or meet you at an exact time, be sure to express this.

Uganda is Relational

Family relationships and family events are highly valued by most Ugandans. During the holidays, everyone returns to his or her family home. Generally, Westerners are seen as independent and solitary, so if you bring some family pictures or some pictures of how and where you live, Ugandans will see you in a different light.

Picture Taking

If you are taking a picture of a specific person, permission should be sought first, but you do not have to ask permission to take pictures of streets, markets, or events. Avoid taking pictures of police or military personnel.

Public Affection

Kissing in public or showing other signs of romantic affection, even with your spouse, is frowned upon. A friendship between people of the same sex is often expressed by lightly holding hands.

Eating Meals in Uganda

It is customary to wash your hands prior to eating a meal and afterward, since many Ugandans eat with their hands. You will most likely be given a chair and a fork and a knife to eat, but it is common for others to sit on the floor. If sitting on the floor, sit in a modest fashion. Some Ugandans consider it rude to hold a conversation during a meal. It is considered repugnant for someone to see food in the mouth of another.

Gestures

Pointing at things with your finger can be seen as rude. You will find Ugandans pointing by pursing their lips and using their chin to point at something. If you want to gain someone's attention like a waiter, do not raise your hand. Face your palm to the ground and make a scratching motion. The soles of your feet should not be shown. Do not point with the sole of your foot since it is considered offensive.

Another way Ugandans may get your attention is by making a short hissing or quick kissing sound. Ugandans might acknowledge you by raising their eyebrows. This is also a non-verbal way of saying "yes".



OUR PERSPECTIVE

American Culture in Uganda

In its simplest understanding, the term “white savior” is defined as a white person who offers assistance to a non-white person in a self-serving manner. A deeper dive into this term reveals that the term “White Savior” is in fact an industrial complex with impact that spans the globe.

Africa’s history is wrought with colonialism and exploitation at the hands of the Global North. This history has led to inequitable existences that have stripped the power, culture, and traditions away from some while transferring that control to the hands of the powerful few. This system has left many African communities with an uphill battle to secure resources necessary to survival and healthy, thriving existences.

Because of the continent’s history of colonization and continued racism, corruption, and exploitation, our Ugandan partner communities have struggled to secure access to education, clean water, consistent income, healthy food, and job opportunities.





WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US

Equal Partnership

As a U.S. nonprofit that works in Uganda, we have a responsibility to refute tendencies that perpetuate the White Savior Complex. We are committed to challenging the assumption that we know what is best and how to tell the story. We are committed to upholding the agency of our Ugandan partners while developing partnership programs that benefit everyone involved.

Our work puts us in a position to equitably partner with communities because we recognize that those we serve are the experts on the challenges that they face. Our Ugandan partners do not need saving or rescuing. We can instead work together to achieve sustainable goals that allow our partner students, parents, and staff to gain access to what they need for a healthy life.

Honoring Experiences

Building respectful relationships with each of our partner schools is fundamental to the Mwebaza Foundation's success. To that end, we must listen from a place of love and acknowledge that we are not the experts. We must first honor the stories, experiences, and emotions of the people who share their lives with us so that we may better understand how we can appropriately contribute to cultivating a just, equitable existence for all. We will continue to collaborate on solutions with our friends rather than for our friends.

A photograph of two young women with dark skin and short hair, smiling warmly at the camera. They are outdoors in a natural, slightly blurred background of trees and foliage. The woman on the left is wearing a bright blue t-shirt, and the woman on the right is wearing a red t-shirt with a decorative pattern on the shoulder. The text 'FIELDING REQUESTS + MAKING PROMISES' is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

FIELDING REQUESTS + MAKING PROMISES

We have experienced how personally transformative a trip to Uganda can be. It is easy to get excited about sharing new opportunities and ideas when making connections with our Ugandan partner communities.

With that in mind, Mwebaza has spent over a decade creating projects and programs that are community-driven, long-term, and financially sustainable. Our methods are non-traditional and thus, are delicate and time-intensive to maintain.

To safeguard this approach, we ask that all travelers be conscious of the impact their words might have. If you see a need or are asked to remedy a situation and you believe you have the ability, connections, or skills to do so, please bring this request to Mwebaza's staff, first. This allows us to ensure that the solution proposed is community-driven, long-term, and financially sustainable.

Try not to make promises:

Here are some responses you can use when fielding requests:

"I'm a volunteer with the Foundation and my financial support goes through them. They decide where my individual support goes."

"I'm volunteering with the foundation and cannot make that decision. I'll talk to our trip lead."

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

- Phone and charger
- USB portable charger power block
- Type G power adapter (works in England and Africa)
- Laptop/tablet/iPad (optional)
- Batteries for any devices you are bringing
- Small first aid kit (optional)
- Travel pillow (pillows are provided, but may be very stiff)
- Cash
- Passport
- Printed Ugandan visa
- WHO card for Yellow Fever
- COVID vaccination card
- Copy of itinerary
- Copy of travel insurance information
- Medic-Alert bracelet for serious conditions
- Under-clothes wallet (optional)
- Backpack for day trips
- Lightweight pants/skirts/dresses
- Lightweight button-down shirts or t-shirts
- Sneakers/socks or Sandals
- Lightweight sleeping clothes
- Travel clothesline (may be quicker and easier to wash some items in the sink or shower in your room)
- Travel laundry detergent/soap
- Some snacks (recommend high-protein snacks like peanut butter packets and jerky as the Baganda diet is heavy in starches)
- Toiletries
- Medications
- Antibiotics (just in case)
- Roll of toilet paper (may need at schools, although is usually provided for guests)
- Towel (recommend small, quick-dry towel)
- Wipes/ Small bottles of hand sanitizer
- Mosquito repellent
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Raincoat/Lightweight Jacket
- Headlamp



LEAVE THESE ITEMS AT HOME:

- Hairdryer (never managed to keep from burning up, even with a converter)
- Water sterilizer (clean, bottled water is readily available)
- Too many clothes (Ugandans may wear clothes multiple days in a row and won't be alarmed if you do too)
- Sleeping bag (too hot, and there will be mattresses and sheets everywhere we are staying)
- Gifts to hand out to individuals. This can cause jealousy and create a culture where kids expect guests to bring gifts. We may have items for all students to be given out by teachers and will bring some small gifts to our hosts to share with the school staff.
- Jewelry. Don't bring anything that you would be heartbroken to lose. During these trips, we stay in many different places and it can be easy to misplace or leave items behind.





ARE YOU IN
FOR THE
ADVENTURE
OF A
LIFETIME?



For next steps, contact:
devaki@mwebaza.org