Sacred Connections ~ Journeys to Feed Your Soul
With Joan Ranquet

UGANDA, AFRICA
Connecting With All Life
“GORILLAS IN THE MIST”
May 12 - 24, 2013
Wildlife, gorillas/primate and cultural safari

Uganda, the Mountains of the Moon, the Great Rift Valley and Lake Victoria the source of the Nile, romantic features of an incredible landscape that Winston Churchill called, "The Pearl of Africa". Uganda is also the only place on the planet where you can sit face to face and have a mystical encounter of the heart with the “gentle giants”, the mountain gorillas.

SAFARI PROGRAM: Friday May 11, 2013 – Depart for Uganda

UGANDA TOUR PROGRAM:

Day 1: Sat May 12, 2013: Airport pick up and transfer to Cassia Lodge
Arrival into Entebbe Airport, Uganda. We will be met by a driver and transferred to Kampala the capital city of Uganda and our accommodations at Cassia Lodge on Lake Victoria.

The lodge has cozy safari style furnished rooms, equipped with satellite TV, fridge, mini bar, telephone, fan, balcony with lake-view and comfortable private bath.

Journey time: 1 hour
Accommodation: Cassia Lodge: http://www.cassialodge.com
Meal plan: Bed & Breakfast

Day 2: Sun May 13: Kampala City optional activities
Today is free to sleep in and rest up after the long flight. There are optional activities to explore the area, visit the Wildlife Sanctuary, Botanical Gardens, shop at the craft markets or relax by the pool. We can also change money into Ugandan shillings in the city. The services of our driver/guide from Matoke Tours is available for the day. Cost for optional activities today is on your own.

Journey time: 1 hour
Accommodation: Cassia Lodge
Meal plan: Bed & Breakfast

Day 3: Mon May 14: To Kibale Forest
This morning you will begin the drive to Kibale Forest; stopping for lunch in the friendly town of Fort Portal (inclusive). The drive is incredibly scenic, passing through tea plantations and the lush green
countryside which characterizes so much of Uganda.

From Fort Portal to the forest is only one more hour. On arrival at the forest, you will enter a completely different world... some serious monkey business! Although you are here specifically to track Chimps, the forest is home to at least 12 other primate species including: the Red Tailed Monkey, Olive Baboon, Black and White Colobus Monkey, and the Blue Monkey. The bird life in the forest is also prolific and includes the beautiful Great Blue Turaco. If you are very lucky, you may even catch a glimpse of a meandering herd of Forest Elephant.

You spend the late afternoon relaxing at the lodge, from which there is a lovely view of the forest and its wildlife.

**Journey time:** 5 hours to Fort Portal + 1 hour to the lodge  
**Meal plan:** Full Board (lunch Fort Portal, dinner at the lodge)

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**Day 4: Tues May 15: Chimp tracking and swamp walk.**  
Kibale Forest boasts the highest number of primate species in the world, including our delightful cousins, the chimpanzees. Today, in Uganda, there are approximately 5,000 chimpanzees left in the wild, which gives us a great opportunity to spot them!

The experienced ranger takes you chimp tracking in the morning or afternoon; and along the way helps you spot the many other monkey species that live in this tropical forest. A wonderful jungle trip is the result, finishing in an hour of eye to eye contact with the chimpanzees. But please remember, we can never guarantee that you will see them. They are still wild animals and we have no control over when or where they might show up! But the guides are expert trackers and have a great success rate!

Your swamp walk (2-3 hours) will take you through grassland, small communities and some beautiful scenery, where the locals are likely to greet you with enthusiastic smiles. It is usual to spot 3 or 4 different primate species during this walk, though the highlight is catching a glimpse of the Great Blue Turaco!

**Accommodation:** Primate Lodge, deluxe tents  
**Meal plan:** Full Board (breakfast, lunch, dinner)
**Day 5: Wed May 16: Cultural walk in Ruboni**

Today after an early breakfast you will depart for a 2 hour drive to the village of Ruboni. This is the perfect opportunity to see the Mountains of the Moon (the Rwenzori Mountains), which is the tallest mountain range in Africa and they are simply magnificent!

You will be warmly welcomed by the Bakonzo community who have inhabited the foothills of the Mountains for over 300 years. In the afternoon you will take a guided village walk; visiting a traditional healer, a blacksmith, a story teller and the medicinal garden. Later that day there will be time to watch local tribal dancing.

Our tourism revenue goes toward supporting the community projects benefitting the people of Ruboni. Visitors fall in love with Ruboni, the village people and its scenic surroundings. Some folks just don't want to leave so soon!

Accommodations are very basic in self-contained bandas but by staying here we help support the people of Ruboni and give ourselves a truly unique experience in Uganda.

**Journey time:** 2 hours  
**Accommodation:** Ruboni community camp:  
**Meal plan:** Breakfast & packed lunch inclusive, dinner at Ruboni exclusive

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**Day 6: Thurs May 17; To Queen Elizabeth National Park.**

In the morning, after a relaxed breakfast you continue your journey to Queen Elizabeth National Park and your safari lodge.

Katara Lodge is situated on the Great Rift Valley escarpment with uninterrupted views of the savannah, Lake Edward and the Virunga and Rwenzori mountain ranges beyond and is only a 30 minute drive from the main entrance of Queen Elizabeth National Park. The lodge has five luxurious thatched cottages on a beautiful stretch of hills in a serene and relaxing atmosphere making this a very private and personal safari lodge experience.

In the late afternoon you go for your first game drive. Welcome to the great outdoors!!!

Queen Elizabeth N.P. is Uganda’s second largest park and is located at the base of the majestic Rwenzori Mountain range, adjacent to Lake Edward and Lake George. The park has prolific game, including Gazelle, Uganda Kob, Warthog and Waterbuck; Lions are often sighted both in and at the entrance to the park. Be prepared for huge numbers of Hippo and Elephant, and keep your eyes peeled for a Leopard lazing in the sunshine.

**Journey:** 2 hours  
**Accommodation:** Katara Lodge cottages: http://www.kataralodge.com/  
**Meal-plan:** Full Board (Lunch, Dinner, breakfast)
Day 7: Friday May 18: Queen Elizabeth National Park (Kazinga Channel)

Today you wake up early. At 6.15 a.m. coffee, tea and donuts are served in the lounge. At 6.30 a.m., you go for an early morning game drive in time to see the sun rise. You will search for all the wildlife in the park; Elephant, Buffalo, Lion, Waterbuck, Leopard, Uganda Kob, Warthog, etc.

After lunch (at 3 p.m.), you will take a boat safari along the Kazinga Channel. Here, you will see more Hippo’s than you can possibly imagine as well as a variety of other animals which come to the waterhole to drink or bathe. You can expect to see: Buffalo, Crocodile, bathing Elephant, and a range of beautiful birds. This will undoubtedly be one of the highlights of your tour.

Accommodation:  Katara Lodge cottages
Meal plan: Full Board (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 8: Sat May 19; Ishasha and Bwindi

After a relaxed breakfast, you pick up your packed lunch from the lodge and proceed to the southern part of Queen Elizabeth N.P. This area is called Ishasha and is famous for its tree-climbing lions.

To escape from the heat during the day, the lions learned how to climb the fig trees. So keep your eyes on the trees in order to spot a few during your game drive.

After the game drive in Ishasha, you continue on to Bwindi: Home of the mountain gorillas.

You will enjoy your stay at a luxurious lodge with views over the forest.

Journey time: 2½ hours to Ishasha + 2½ hours to Buhoma
Accommodation: Mahogany Springs Lodge: http://mahoganysprings.com/
Meal plan: Full Board (breakfast, lunch on the road, dinner at the lodge)
Day 9: Sun May 20: Gorilla Tracking
Today is the big day... Prepare yourself for an encounter with one of Bwindi’s gentle giants: the rare Mountain Gorilla. For most people this is the main reason they have come to Uganda.

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest boasts both Mountain Gorillas and Chimpanzees - the only forest in Africa which can make this claim. In fact, it also hosts five other species of primate, 113 species of mammal, over 200 butterflies and 360 birds.

The Gorillas you will track belong to one of nine habituated family groups who can tolerate the presence of humans for a brief period every day. Your trek will be an exciting journey along forested slopes, entwined vines, bushes and bamboo before you eventually reach the Gorillas’ habitat. En-route, your guide will point out signs of previous Gorilla activity, including dung, nests and chewed bamboo shoots.

The time taken to track the Gorillas can take as little as 2 hours to as much as 7 hours! Once the Gorillas have been located, your group will be allowed a maximum of one hour with them. Coming face-to-face with a Mountain Gorilla is a truly humbling and emotional experience. This is a fantastic and privileged opportunity to get up close and personal with Uganda’s very own ‘Gorillas in the Mist’.

Accommodation: Mahogany Springs Lodge
Meal plan: Full Board (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 10: Mon May 21: Cultural Village Walk Buhoma & To Ruhija
In the morning you will have a guided village walk (about 3-4 hours).

Any money earned by selling their local crafts is used to develop the standards of living of the community members. The walk introduces you to a number of interesting sites such as typical rural homesteads, a banana beer brewing site, a local traditional healer ‘witch-doctor’, a school and/or the Batwa-pigmy people, and many other interesting experiences. Every walk is different and may include different sites and encounters with the local people.

After the cultural walk you return to the lodge for your lunch. Then you continue to Gorilla Mist Camp in Ruhija. Privately operated and locally owned, it welcomes you with the breath taking scenery of the forest. Blue monkeys are commonly seen in this area. It’s a home away from home and a very quiet, peaceful
environment. You are entertained by the different melodies of beautiful birds which make the atmosphere extremely charming and friendly. If you are lucky you might get a surprise visit by the mountain gorillas in camp! Although rare, it does occasionally happen.

**Journey time:** 1½ - 2 hours  
**Accommodation:** Gorilla Mist Camp: http://www.gorillamistcamp.com/  
**Meal plan:** Full Board (breakfast & lunch at Mahogany, dinner at GMC)

### Day 11: Tues May 22; Gorilla Tracking
Today after yet another early start, you go for your second Gorilla tracking!

This time the tracking shall be with another Gorilla family in a different part of Bwindi known as Ruhija. This is the gorilla family seen on the video....Touched By a Mountain Gorilla! This area has two resident Gorilla families. I'm sure your 2nd day with the gorillas will be as thrilling as the first encounter.

**Accommodation:** Gorilla Mist Camp  
**Meal plan:** Full board (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

### Day 12: Wed May 23; Visit to the Equator – Return to Kampala
After breakfast you begin the drive back to Kampala. Of course you stop at the equator, the best place for souvenir shopping. We arrive back at Cassia Lodge after an amazing journey through Uganda and settle into our comfortable rooms

**Journey time:** 10-11 hours  
**Accommodation:** Cassia Lodge  
**Meal plan:** Lunch box from Gorilla Mist Camp, dinner not inclusive

### Day 13: Thurs May 24; Airport transfer
Today we can sleep in and rest. We have the day free before our evening flight so you can squeeze in some last minute shopping or just relax at the lodge by the pool. We have day rooms available and a late afternoon check-out for our evening flight to our home city.
Your driver/guide will transfer you to the airport for your flight home. Although we must say good-by to Uganda after a fabulous adventure, we leave with hearts full of the beauty of this country and unforgettable memories of our time with the Gentle Giants, the mountain gorillas.  

_Webale nyo, Thank you_

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**Accommodation**

Accommodation is based on standard twin/double rooms (shared) in semi-luxurious lodges. With the exception of the accommodation at Ruboni Village which is very basic.

**Meals:**

The cost of the tour includes most meals. Please review the program itinerary to note where meals are not included.

**Journey times:**

All travel times are close approximations, as you can never quite guarantee what will happen on the African roads... We could be in for a bumpy ride on parts of the route (which adds to the excitement of being on safari!); we may encounter road-works and of course, there are the photo stops. Either way, you can be certain that although you may be seated for long periods at times during the trip, you will be passing some spectacular countryside and there will always be something of interest to see along the way!

**Guide:**

Your guide will be a professional and experienced English speaking Ugandan guide.

**Transport:**

We provide transport in a 4 wheel drive mini bus with pop up roof. Of course all car costs like park fees, driver/guide, washing, fuel, etc. is included. There is no air-conditioning. This car is suitable for a maximum of 7 persons.

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**Uganda Tour Cost: $5,420.00 per person**

based on a group of 7 travelers

**Inclusions:**

- Transport in a 4wd mini bus with pop-up roof for excellent safari viewing;
- All fuel for the tour;
- English speaking Ugandan driver/guide;
- Accommodation in a double/twin rooms (shared) or single room;
- Meals as indicated;
- 1½L of mineral water per person per day;
- Entrance fees for Kibale National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest;
- All activities described in the itinerary;
- Day rooms at Cassia Lodge on the 13th day
- 2 Gorilla permit(s) per person
- 1 Chimp permit per person

**Exclusions:**

- International air fares;
- Entry visa Uganda; $50.00 at the airport
- Personal (medical/travel) insurance; strongly recommended
- All drinks, besides 1½L of mineral water p.p.p.d.;
- Meals and snacks which are not inclusive in the accommodation;
- A porter during the gorilla trackings (someone who carries your daypack);
- All activities that are not mentioned in the program or activities listed as optional activity;
- Tips and gratuities to rangers, driver/guide, porter, hotel staff, etc;
- All expenses of a personal nature (e.g. drinks, laundry, souvenirs etc.).