



# UGANDA, RWANDA, & BURUNDI THE PEARL AND HEART OF AFRICA

August 14 - August 28, 2024

Led by Professional Tour Lecturer Michel Behar

Travel to some of the least explored parts of East Africa on this two-week journey through three beautiful countries: Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. Begin in Uganda, located on the East African Plateau, to explore bustling Kampala city and learn about the history of "Buganda." See Lake Victoria, one of the world's largest lakes. Experience the thundering waterfalls at Murchison Falls National Park, and glide along the world's longest river - the Nile. Discover rhinos, giraffes, elephants, and a variety of monkey species on exciting wildlife safaris. A highlight of your visit will be the opportunity for rare, up-close encounters with the endangered mountain gorillas. From here, the journey crosses into Rwanda, "Land of a Thousand Hills," home to threatened wildlife species and many endemic birds.

On a trekking expedition, see the golden monkey - one of the rarest primates in the world and experience Rwandan culture firsthand at a traditional village. As heart-rending as it is, no tour of Rwanda would be complete without a stop at the Genocide Museum in Kigali. From here, it is just a short flight to Burundi to learn about a culture based on local traditions and the influence of neighboring countries. Visit the disputed "Source of the Nile" and the impressive Karera Waterfalls. The finale of this fantastic adventure will be a lively ritual drum performance by the famous Royal Drummers, a mesmerizing technique passed down from generation to generation.

**Ihab Zaki**  
Managing Director

**Wednesday, August 14**

**Arrive in Entebbe (UGANDA)**



Upon arrival in **Entebbe**, meet the local guide and transfer to the *Papyrus Guesthouse or similar* for check-in and overnight. The guesthouse is only a few minutes from the airport in a quiet residential area of Entebbe with views of Lake Victoria.

*Note: Those arriving early can visit the Entebbe Botanical Gardens to learn about indigenous plants and see the African Grey parrot and monkeys.*

**Thursday, August 15**

**Entebbe - Kampala (1-2 hrs)**



After a leisurely breakfast, begin the drive to **Kampala**, Uganda's capital, and largest city. There is much to see and do in Kampala, and sites will depend on the interests of the group, traffic, and site closures. Visit the **King's Palace (Twekobe)**, the former royal home of the King (Kabaka) of Buganda, to learn the history of the Buganda monarchy and tribes and the Lugandan language. See **Kabaka's Lake**, the largest artificial lake in Uganda, dug out in 1880 by order of the king as an escape route. At the **Uganda Museum**, the oldest in East Africa, learn about Uganda's cultural heritage and see impressive ethnological displays. There is a cultural village illustrating the traditional lifestyles of the people of Uganda located behind the museum. See the UNESCO **Kasubi Tombs**, the burial ground of the four previous Kabakas and their families. Other places of interest may include the **Baha'i Temple, Namugongo Martyrs Shrine, Independence Monument, Uganda National Mosque** (formerly Gaddafi National Mosque), and a few of the city's **Cathedrals**. If time allows, explore the bustling **craft market** to see various beautiful, handcrafted items made by the locals. Transfer to *Cassia Lodge or similar*, a charming lodge on **Buziga Hill** overlooking **Lake Victoria** and the city, for check-in and overnight. **(B)**

*Note: The visit to the craft market should be discussed with the guide before starting the tour, so there is time allotted for this activity.*

**Friday, August 16**

**Kampala - Murchison Falls N.P. (5-6 hrs)**



After breakfast, begin the drive to **Murchison Falls National Park**, stopping en route at the **Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary** and home to endangered southern white rhinos. This sanctuary, protected from poachers 24 hours a day, sits on a large section of privately owned land. After lunch at the sanctuary, continue the drive to Murchison Falls. Bisected by the **Victoria Nile** from east to west, Murchison is Uganda's most significant national Park, a haven for many mammals, including four of the "Big Five" and three-quarters of the world's Rothschild giraffes. Birders will delight in spotting birdlife, such as the shoebill stork, goliath heron, African jacana, swamp flycatcher, and others. Upon arrival at the Park, visit the top of Murchison Falls - an excellent spot to watch the waters of the Nile spilling down into a thunderous roar and then transfer to the attractive *Kabalegaa Wilderness Lodge or similar* for check-in, dinner, and overnight. The lodge within the Park offers spectacular views of the **Victoria Nile**. At night, hippos often come to the banks of the river to feed. **(B,L,D)**

**Saturday, August 17**

**Murchison National Falls Park**



After an early breakfast, begin exploring the northern part of the park with its high concentration of savannah wildlife. From the vehicle, there will be excellent photo opportunities of elephants, buffalos, waterbucks, hippos, giraffes, Uganda kobs, lions, possibly leopards, and various bird species. Return to the *Lodge* for lunch and a chance to relax. In the afternoon, embark on a three-hour cruise to the bottom of the mighty Murchison Falls to spot more mammals and birds in great numbers that come here to cool off from the afternoon sun. Return to the *Lodge* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Sunday, August 18**

**Murchison Falls - Kibale N.P. (7-8 hrs.)**



Today is a long but scenic drive southwest along a mostly paved road to **Kibale National Park** via the **Albertine Great Rift Valley**, a continuous 3,280-mile-long

geographic trench that runs from Lebanon's Beqaa Valley in Asia to Mozambique in Southeastern Africa. Observe traditional homesteads and farms along the verdant countryside. There will be plenty of stops to stretch our legs and photograph birds and wildlife. Enjoy a boxed lunch or stop at a local restaurant before arriving in **Kibale**, a popular habitat for 13 primate species, including Chimpanzees. It is also one of the last remaining areas to contain lowland and montane forests. Transfer to *Chimpanzee Forest Lodge* or similar for check-in, dinner, and overnight. Enjoy the panoramic views of Kibale National Park, ancient crater lakes, and the Rwenzori Mountains from the Lodge. **(B,L,D)**

**Monday, August 19**

**Kibale N.P. - Queen Elizabeth N.P. (2 hrs.)**



Early in the morning, head out to the **Kibale National Park headquarters** for a briefing by the senior park ranger guide on the day's activity. The Park has the highest number and diversity of primates in East Africa, and there is a 95% chance of seeing chimpanzees here. Other primate encounters may include the L'Hoests, red colobus, red-tailed monkeys, and olive baboons. Return to the lodge for lunch, then head on a drive to **Queen Elizabeth National Park**, with possible views of the **Mountains of the Moon** if the sky is clear. The Park is home to diverse bird species, including the harlequin quail, red-capped lark, and African skimmer. There will be a chance to spot multiple monkey species on a wildlife safari before transferring to *Buffalo Safari Lodge* or similar for check-in and overnight. The lodge is near the Kazinga Channel, connecting Lakes Edward and George. **(B,L,D)**

**Tuesday, August 20**

**Queen Elizabeth N.P.**



Begin the day very early with a hot cup of coffee or tea before heading out on a morning **game drive** or take this opportunity to relax and enjoy the scenery. The safari takes us over different trails in the park to see various animals such as waterbucks, Uganda kobs, Cape buffalo, lions, warthogs, and many species of birds. Occasionally, leopards can be seen in the cacti that dot the vast savannahs. Return to the *Lodge* for breakfast and a free morning at leisure. After lunch, board a boat for a two-hour **safari** along the **Kazinga Channel**. This tranquil cruise will produce many wildlife sightings, including hippos, buffaloes, warthogs, elephants, and antelopes. Bird sightings may include kingfishers, pink-backed pelicans, and many waders that litter the riverbank. Return to the *Lodge* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Wednesday, August 21**

**Queen Elizabeth N.P. - Bwindi N.P. (6 hrs.)**

After an early breakfast, drive to **Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park**, passing through the southern section of Queen Elizabeth National Park and past grassy plains, tropical forests, rivers, swamps, lakes, and volcanic craters that are home to an incredible profusion

of wildlife. Along the way, stop for a safari, hoping to spot the infamous tree-climbing lions of **Ishasha** and have a picnic lunch in a comfortable setting at the Park. The massive **Rwenzori Mountains** provide a picturesque backdrop to this diverse ecosystem. Arrive in Bwindi, a sanctuary for colobus monkeys, chimpanzees, and many birds endemic to the Albertine Rift. The Park is Africa's number one birding spot but is perhaps best known for the estimated 400 critically endangered mountain gorillas. Transfer to *Bakinga Lodge* or similar, a lovely eco-lodge overlooking a stunning green valley for check-in and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

*Note: The road from Queen Elizabeth to Bwindi is in poor shape and very bumpy, but there will be frequent stops along the way.*

**Thursday, August 22**

**Bwindi N.P. (Gorilla Trekking)**



Rise early today for an exciting day of **gorilla trekking**, which can take anywhere between 30 minutes to 3 hours to get to them, depending on their location. It is a short drive from the *Lodge* to the park headquarters for a briefing and then to the trailhead. Game scouts will likely pre-locate the gorillas to make the trekking easier. We will be allowed to stay in the presence of these magnificent apes for an hour, enjoying close-up views of the adults feeding, grooming, and resting while the young ones frolic and swing from vines in a delightful, playful display. Since it cannot be determined how long it will take to encounter the gorillas, the *Lodge* will prepare a boxed lunch for us to enjoy in the wild. If time permits, there may be a chance to visit a **community village** to learn about the way of life of the people living among the gorillas. Return to the *Lodge* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

*Note: This trek can be challenging, especially if the trail is wet and muddy. Hiring a personal porter is highly recommended (about \$15.00 +tip). For those with physical limitations, it is still possible to see the gorillas by hiring porters to carry you in a specially made chair for an additional cost (approx. \$300-500 +tip). Walking sticks are available at no charge.*

**Friday, August 23**

**Bwindi N.P. - Volcanoes N.P. (RWANDA) (4-5 hrs.)**



Begin the morning with a drive, leaving the lower forest biome to the higher forest of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, enjoying spectacular views as we cross into **Rwanda** at the **Cyanika Border**. After border formalities, continue the drive to **Volcanoes National Park**. This park shelters the most endangered mountain gorillas in the **Virunga Conservation** area. Arrive at *Five Volcanoes Boutique Hotel* or similar for check-in. Beautiful gardens surround this delightful *Hotel* with incredible views of the rolling hills. If time permits, stop to pick up some local crafts at the **Musanze market** or visit the **Dian Fossey Museum** to learn more about the primatologist and conservationist and her role in saving

the mountain gorillas. Dinner, and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B,L,D)**

**Saturday, August 24**  
**Volcanoes N.P.**



After breakfast, report to the park headquarters with our trekking gear for a briefing about the **Golden Monkey Trek** and seek out these rare, majestic monkeys. These endangered primates are known for their unique and playful characters and golden-orange patches that cover their upper flanks and back. After the trek, return to the *Hotel*, where there may be some free time to relax by the pool or enjoy a massage. In the afternoon, visit **Iby'iwacu Village** for a closer look at Rwandan culture. See a traditional **king's house**, watch a medicine man prepare potions, and enjoy a lively cultural dance. This organization has educated and helped many former poachers appreciate the conservation of gorillas. Return to the *Hotel* for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

*Note: For those interested, it is possible to do another Gorilla Trekking expedition instead of the Golden Monkey Trekking. Currently, the Rwanda gorilla trekking permit is an additional \$1,500 pp.*

**Sunday, August 25**

**Volcanoes - Kigali (2.5 hrs.) - Bujumbura (BURUNDI)**



After an early breakfast, begin the drive to **Kigali** to visit the **Genocide Memorial**, commemorating the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Time permitting, see the presidential Palace Museum, once home to Rwanda's last president, Juvenal Habyarimana, before the genocide, and stop at the **Franco-Rwandan Cultural Centre**. On our way to the airport, drive past the **Hotel des Mille Collines**, known as "Hotel Rwanda," from the 2004 film, and then continue to the airport for the flight to **Bujumbura**, Burundi's largest city and main port. Upon arrival, transfer to *Club Du Lac Tanganyika Hotel or similar*, located on the shores of beautiful **Lake Tanganyika**, for check-in, enjoy a colorful **cultural performance** from traditional Burundian dancers, and overnight. **(B,L)**

**Monday, August 26**

**Bujumbura - Gitega (2.5 hrs.)**



Begin the day with a drive to **Gitega**, stopping en route to visit the **pygmy village** of **Busekera**, located on the southern edge of Kibira National Park. They will greet us with a song and dance while we learn more about how they live and get a close-up look into their lives. Please be aware that this community is impoverished, and our visit helps contribute to their livelihood. Upon arrival in Gitega, visit the **Burundi Gitega National Museum** to see its small collection of artifacts from Burundian folk culture. There will be an opportunity to watch the famous **Drummers of Gishora**, a highlight of our visit to Burundi in the evening. The Burundian drum originated in the Gitega Province and symbolized power and fertility; this unique drumming style is a spectacular and memorable experience. Transfer to *Tropitel Hotel or*

*similar*, the best available in town, for check-in, dinner, and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

**Tuesday, August 27**

**Gitega - Karera Waterfalls - Bujumbura**



After breakfast, head south to see **Karera Waterfalls**, a spectacular series of falls, passing magnificent tea plantations and rolling hills. On the way back to **Bujumbura**, stop to see **Source du Nil**, the southernmost disputed source of the Nile. Transfer to *Club Du Lac Tanganyika Hotel or similar* for check-in, free afternoon at leisure, and overnight. **(B,L)**

*Note: The falls depend on the season.*

**Wednesday, August 28**

**Bujumbura - USA**



Begin the day with a short visit through the **old colonial** section of the city, including the **market**, **mosque**, and **cathedral**. Continue the drive to **Rusizi National Park** and embark on a **boat safari** to see wildlife such as crocodiles, hippos, and migratory birds. Return to the city for a tapas lunch, then transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B,L)**

*We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".*

**Special trip remarks:**

- Tourist infrastructure and facilities outside the cities are limited. Lodges may be basic, with few amenities and possible equipment failures.
- Hotels and lodges may change at the last minute without prior notice due to reasons beyond our control.
- Air-conditioners in this part of the world do not cool a room to American standards of comfort.
- Brownouts or blackouts may occur, or there may be limited electricity available.
- This trip involves long drives over poorly maintained and bumpy roads in hot weather.
- Documentation of yellow fever immunization is required for travelers before arrival in Uganda.
- There is a lack of modern medical facilities in this part of the world, and those with chronic health problems should discuss this with their physician before joining this tour.
- A high level of flexibility, tolerance, respect, open-mindedness, a sense of adventure, and willingness to go with the flow if things change is expected while visiting these countries.

**Tour Cost (Land Only): \$8,995.00**

*Per person sharing in double occupancy*

**Single Supplement: \$795.00**

*Price based on group size minimum of 8 participants and maximum of 12 participants*

**Trip Grade: III Lodging Level: \*\*\***

He has traveled extensively throughout the world and led tours to all 21 Arab countries and for the last 20 years has turned his passion for photography into a second career. He also led tours to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Touring has afforded him the opportunity to capture stirring images from out of the way places in Iran, Pakistan, and Mongolia just to name a few. His work has been exhibited in museums in the Netherlands and New York. During this same period he has dabbled in journalism writing for several European newspapers on topics as varied as technology and economics. He writes travel blogs and has done freelance work for travel guides and likes of course World Music. He is a lecturer specialized in leading tours to Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. He has led many tours to West, Central & Southern Africa, and all countries in North-Africa, the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa.

*About your Lecturer, Michel Behar... boasts an impressive list of credentials and just reading through it makes you want to meet this person and share the road with him. A Dutch citizen, after his studies of Russian and Arabic in the Netherlands he took a course of advanced Arabic at the University of Khartoum in Sudan. Fluent in 12 languages including Farsi, English, Turkish, and French, he has an understanding of 7 others. He has been a tour manager since 1987 leading groups for US, Dutch, Swiss, German, and British companies. He has led custom tours as a leader/ photographer/ lecturer for many prestigious museums, universities, and other institutions.*



**Tour Includes:**

- Airport / Hotel / Airport transfers.
- Accommodation in standard first-class hotels and lodges (3-4\*) mentioned or best available.
- Kigali - Bujumbura flight.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Bottled water while on tours and safaris.
- English-speaking guide/assistant during all tours.
- Transportation by 4WD Land cruiser.
- All entrance fees to mentioned sites.
- Bwindi National Park Gorilla, Kibale Chimp, and Volcanoes Golden Monkey permits.
- Visa support documents (if required).
- Escort of lecturer (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).
- Tips and gratuities to rangers, porters, hotel staff, etc. (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

**Tour does not include:**

- International airfare - Entebbe and Bujumbura - USA.
- Rwanda visa (\$50.00), Uganda visa (\$50.00), & Burundi visa (\$70.00) - **all subject to change.**
- Drinks with or without meals & meals not mentioned in the itinerary.
- Personal gorilla trekking porters (\$15 +tip) or carriers (\$300-500 +tips).
- Rwanda Gorilla permits - if interested (currently \$1,500 pp - subject to change).
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Tips to Tour Lecturer and personal porters during primate trekking.
- Any price increase imposed by local suppliers.
- Trip surcharge to operate below minimum required.
- Travel protection insurance (HIGHLY recommended).

**Trip Grade:**

**III Challenging:** parts of the trip are physically challenging, involve hiking on rough terrain or muddy trails, or dense forests at high altitudes. There may be very long drives on rough, bumpy roads, weather conditions with high heat or humidity, and presence of insects. You may have simple picnic lunches, primitive bathroom facilities along the road and remoteness from modern towns or cities.

**Lodging Level:**

**\*\*\* Superior:** Hotels and safari lodges or permanent tents with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards (3-4 stars).

