



Additional Information about Uganda

CLIMATE

Even though Uganda is situated on the equator, it has numerous climate zones depending on elevation. The mountains are generally cool, while the lowland regions remain warm throughout the year. Temperatures average about 26°C/79°F during the day and 16°C/61°F at night. The hottest months are from December to February. There are two rainy seasons, one from March to May and the other from October to November.

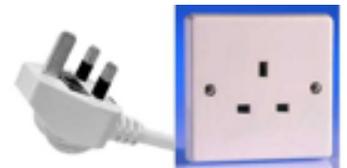
HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS



For most of our trip, we will be staying at Wingate Guesthouse in Kawanda. Wingate is owned and operated by our Field Director, George Nsamba. The guesthouse is quite comfortable with western style toilets, showers, mosquito nets, wireless internet, a dining area and a courtyard. The rooms do not have AC, but every room has a fan. Rooms are set up for double or triple occupancy. Wingate is a walled compound with a security guard. This will be your “home” away from home!

ELECTRIC CURRENT

Uganda’s electrical power is distributed at 220 volts cycling at 50 Hz with flat plugs. Check over the electrical devices you’re planning to bring. Many of them can handle both 120/60 and 220/50 and do not need voltage converters. Hair dryers are usually not adaptable and require a converter that can provide sufficient wattage. Even better, go au naturale and leave your hair dryer at home!!!



Note that there are “adaptors” and “converters.” Adaptors are passive devices that allow your plug to fit into the local outlets. Converters are active devices that transform voltage levels. This plug and receptacle is technically known as the BS 1363 (British 13 A/230-240 V 50 Hz earthed and fused).

LANGUAGE

English is the official language in Uganda. Luganda (in the south) and Acholi (in the north) are widely spoken, and we will mostly likely be using translators when we travel into smaller and more remote places.

UGANDAN FOOD



The local diet consists mainly of starch, grains and vegetables--rice, beans, posho (millet mash), potatoes, matoke, etc. – starch, starch and more starch! The guesthouse will serve mainly local cuisine. When eating in the villages, it is recommended to be polite and eat what you can; however, some of the food is of noticeably poor quality. We depend on our bodies to carry us through our tasks, but we also need to respect those whom we have come to serve.

IN-COUNTRY TRAVEL

We typically travel by taxi van or small bus (locally referred to as a coaster). These vehicles tend to be more cramped than what we are used to and are not air-conditioned. Be prepared for extended time riding bumpy roads, waiting in traffic, driving in very crowded conditions (inside the van and outside), as well as unexpected problems with the vehicles (maintenance is poor). Our drivers have served us well over the years and have become our friends--we are traveling in good hands!

ETIQUETTE

Shaking hands is the normal form of greeting in Uganda. When visitors arrive, it is often expected that a beverage of some sort (often bottled soda) will be offered and received. Etiquette is extremely important at mealtime. When a meal is ready, all those partaking wash their hands with a jug/bowl, and usually a prayer will be said prior to the meal. It is considered impolite to leave the room while others are eating. Often a bowl of water is available after the meal to wash hands again. When the meal is finished, it is polite to compliment the cook.



SECURITY

Tips for carrying cash and valuables: only carry what is necessary for the day and carry your money on the front side of your body. It is required that you have a money belt, which is worn around your neck or under your clothing to store your money and copy of passport and itinerary/contact info. Bring a lock to secure your suitcase in transit.

COMMUNICATION

Phone Calls: You will receive a *Family Information Packet* prior to departure with contact numbers, trip itinerary and flight details. Team leaders will be carrying cell phones that will be available in the event of an emergency or if you just need to connect with home. It is easy to purchase minutes to make calls to the USA. Texting is a good way to set up a time to connect by phone.

Internet: Internet is free at the guesthouse, but it can be sporadic. Team members will have time to email and update Facebook in the evenings once team/UWP communication is complete.

REQUESTS FOR MONEY, GIFTS OR PERSONAL INFORMATION

It is culturally normal in most developing nations for the locals to request donations of money and seek sponsorship from foreigners. Often, they will request your personal contact information (telephone and email) so they can continue to request donations. As a team member, how you handle these requests affects the whole team and other teams that may be coming in the future, so we ask you to adhere to the following policies:

- Please refrain from giving out money/gifts. The team will have opportunities to give to specific communities, projects or people through the Opportunity Fund included in your trip fee, which will be administered by the local leadership. Occasionally, the team leader will take an offering to bless those who have served the team faithfully, such as drivers, translators and guesthouse staff. All other wishes to give should be approved by the Team Leader before any answer is given to the person asking.
- If a team member is moved with compassion to make a donation to an individual or a specific cause, we ask that he/she discuss this with the UWP team leader, who will in turn consult with the local leadership.
- When asked for personal contact information, you can provide our Ugandan Water Project email (info@ugandanwaterproject.com) or if they have a Facebook account, you may choose to accept their friend request.
- It is important to understand that the tendency to ask for support is culturally normal and should not be viewed as wrong or bad behavior. However, the reality is that in the long term, these individual gifts can hinder our greater goal of empowering the Ugandan people and equipping their communities to be self-sustaining.