

UGANDA

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Uganda is a landlocked, developing republic in central eastern Africa. Tourist facilities abound, but while infrastructure is adequate in Kampala, the capital, it is limited in other areas. Read the Department of State Background Notes on Uganda for additional information.

SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)/EMBASSY

LOCATION: If you are going to live in or visit Uganda, please take the time to tell our Embassy about your trip. If you enroll, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. It will also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. Here's the link to the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#).

Embassy of the United States of America

1577 Ggaba Road, Kampala □ Telephone: 256-414-259-791 or 256-414-306-001 □ Facsimile: 256-414-258-451

ENTRY / EXIT REQUIREMENTS: A passport valid for six months beyond the date of entry, visa, evidence of yellow fever vaccination, as well as polio vaccination for children under five are required. Visas are available at Entebbe Airport upon arrival or may be obtained from the Embassy of the Republic of Uganda.

Note: The current fee for a three month tourist visa obtained upon arrival at Entebbe Airport is \$50.00.

Travelers should be aware that a visa does not determine how long a person may remain in Uganda. The Ugandan immigration officer at the port of entry will determine the length of authorized stay, which is generally from one to three months as a tourist.

Note: For visitors who remain in Uganda on a visa that is no longer valid, Ugandan immigration has been known to impose a fine of up to \$30 per day for each day the traveler is out of status, or they may be detained until the fine is paid.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: Potential for terrorist activity from extremist organizations such as al-Shabaab remains high and U.S. citizens are advised to avoid high-density public gatherings. The July 11, 2010 bombings of the rugby club and an Ethiopian restaurant in Kampala resulted in the deaths of 76 people, including one U.S. citizen, with six other U.S. citizens among the injured. More recently, terrorists in Nairobi attacked a bus bound for Kampala on December 20, 2010. U.S. citizens residing in or planning to visit Uganda should also be aware of threats to their safety posed by insurgent groups operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and southern Sudan, and the potential of cross border attacks carried out by these armed groups. In addition, U.S. citizens traveling to the area commonly known as Karamoja in northeastern Uganda should also be aware of ongoing conflict and armed banditry in this region.

CRIME: Crimes such as pick pocketing, purse snatching, and thefts from hotels and parked vehicles or vehicles stalled in traffic jams are common. The Embassy receives frequent reports of theft of items from locked vehicles, even when the stolen items were secured out of sight and the vehicle was parked in an area patrolled by uniformed security personnel.

Women traveling alone are particularly susceptible to crime. In November 2009, there were two reported violent sexual assaults against expatriate females. The victims were single passengers on one of the common modes of public transport known as "boda boda" motorcycle taxis. Due to inherent traffic and crime risks associated with boda bodas, U.S. Mission employees and their dependents are strongly discouraged from using them during daylight hours and prohibited from doing so after dark. If the victim of a sexual assault, seek medical assistance and counseling immediately regarding prophylactic treatment to help prevent the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. A [list of local medical providers](#) can be found on the U.S. Embassy website.

Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal in the United States, if you purchase them you may also be breaking local law.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While you are traveling in Uganda, you are subject to its laws even if you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different than our own. Persons violating Ugandan laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. In Uganda, you may be taken in for questioning if you don't have your passport, or a copy of it, together with your Ugandan visa.

Photography in tourist locations is permitted, however, taking pictures of military/police installations or personnel is prohibited. Military and police officers have detained tourists for taking photographs of Entebbe Airport and of the area around Owen Falls Dam, near Jinja, although the prohibition on taking photographs is not publicly displayed on signs.

Uganda does not have a bilateral agreement with the United States requiring mandatory notification to the U.S. Embassy in the event of the arrest of a U.S. citizen. Notification is only required if the arrested U.S. citizen requests it.

Based on the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, bilateral agreements with certain countries, and customary international law, if you are arrested in Uganda, you have the option to request that the police, prison officials, or other authorities alert the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate of your arrest, and to have communications from you forwarded to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Please note that U.S. currency notes in \$20 and \$50 denominations are exchanged at a lower rate than \$100 currency notes. In addition, travelers often find that they cannot exchange or use U.S. currency printed before the year 2000. Travelers who find they cannot pay for accommodation or expenses often must request that friends or family wire money to them in Uganda. There are offices that facilitate Western Union, MoneyGram, and other types of money transfers in Kampala and other cities throughout the country. ATMs are available in Uganda, particularly in downtown Kampala, but usually only customers who have an account with a specific Ugandan bank may use them. A few machines function with overseas accounts.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: Medical facilities in Uganda, including Kampala, are limited and not equipped to handle most emergencies, especially those requiring surgery. Outside Kampala, hospitals are scarce and offer only basic services. Recently, U.S. citizens involved in automobile accidents required immediate evacuation from Uganda as surgery could not be performed due to insufficient blood supplies at the hospital where they sought treatment. Equipment and medicines are also often in short supply or unavailable. Travelers should carry their own supplies of prescription drugs and preventive medicines. [A list of medical providers](#) is available at the U.S. Embassy website.

Malaria is prevalent in Uganda. Travelers who become ill with a fever or flu-like illness while traveling in a malaria-risk area and up to one year after returning home should seek prompt medical attention and tell the physician

their travel history and what antimalarials they have been taking. For additional information on malaria, including protective measures, see [the CDC Travelers' Health website](#).

Due to a polio outbreak, children under the age of five crossing from endemic neighboring countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Kenya (as well as Nigeria, India, and Pakistan, where the disease is also prevalent), may be required to receive an oral polio drop vaccination upon entry if not already vaccinated.

In December 2010, as many as seven districts in northern Uganda reported occurrences of yellow fever - including two possible cases from southern Sudan. Almost all of the reported severe cases (characterized by fever, vomiting, and bleeding) continue to be concentrated in three districts, namely Abim (specifically Morulem sub-county), Agago (Omiya P'Chua, Adilang and Paimoi sub-counties), and Kitgum (Orum, Namokora, and Kitgum Town Council). □□ In light of these findings, the U.S. Mission in Kampala recommends that U.S. citizens residing and traveling in Uganda avoid travel to these areas of northern Uganda unless they have been vaccinated against Yellow Fever within the past 10 years. If vaccinated recently, do not travel to northern Uganda for at least 10 days after receiving the vaccination. (Yellow Fever vaccinations do not take effect for 10 days.) U.S. government officials who have not been vaccinated for Yellow Fever are not permitted to travel to the affected areas. You can find good information on vaccinations and other health precautions on the [CDC website](#). For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#). The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#).

Tuberculosis is an increasingly serious health concern in Uganda. For further information, please [consult the CDC's information on TB](#).

Uganda has experienced recent outbreaks of Marburg Hemorrhagic Fever, Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever, Pneumonic Plague, Meningitis, Yellow Fever and other types of infectious diseases.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: You can't assume your insurance will go with you when you travel. It's very important to find out BEFORE you leave whether or not your medical insurance will cover you overseas. You need to ask your insurance company two questions:

- Does my policy apply when I'm out of the United States?
- Will it cover emergencies, like a trip to a foreign hospital or a medical evacuation?

In many places, doctors and hospitals still expect payment in cash at the time of service. Your regular U.S. health insurance may not cover doctors' and hospital visits in other countries. If your policy doesn't go with you when you travel, it's a very good idea to take out another one for your trip. For more information, please see our [medical insurance overseas page](#).

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in Uganda, you may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States.

Most inter-city transportation in Uganda is by small van or large bus. Many drivers of these vehicles have little training, and some are reckless. Small vans and large buses are often poorly maintained, travel at high speeds, and are the principal vehicles involved in the many deadly single and multi-vehicle accidents along Ugandan roads. Accident victims have included U.S. citizens traveling in small vans and personal cars, passengers on motorcycle taxis locally known as "boda bodas" (see Crime above), and pedestrians. Large trucks on the highways are often overloaded, with inadequately secured cargo and poor braking systems. Alcohol frequently is a contributing factor in road accidents, particularly at night. Drivers are advised to take extra care when driving. Nighttime driving and road transportation should be avoided whenever possible. Pedestrians often walk in the roads and may not be visible to motorists. Large branches or rocks in the road sometimes indicate an upcoming obstruction or other hazard. Highway travel at night is particularly dangerous, including the road between Entebbe Airport and Kampala. The Embassy recommends caution on this road and use of a reliable taxi service to and from the airport.

Traffic accidents draw crowds. Ugandan law requires that the drivers stop, and exchange information, and assist any injured persons. In some cases where serious injury has occurred, there is the possibility of mob anger. In these instances, Ugandans often do not get out of their cars, but drive to the nearest police station to report the accident.

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This replaces the Country Specific Information for Uganda dated March 16, 2010, to update sections on Special Circumstances and Medical Facilities and Health Information.