



MISS TOURISM UGANDA

12th Edition

"Tourism and Peace"

2024 - 2025



Queen Ruokaya Nabukonde

MISS TOURISM UGANDA 2023-2024
from Eastern Uganda





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Foreword

Join us in celebrating Uganda



MRS. MARIANNE MUTAGAMBA-E
Board Chair | Miss Tourism Uganda

Welcome to the vibrant world of Uganda, a country where nature's beauty and cultural diversity converge in harmony and peace. As we embark on this journey through the pages of the Miss Tourism Uganda Pageant Magazine, we invite you to immerse yourself in the rich tapestry of experiences that this remarkable nation has to offer.

From the towering peaks of the Rwenzori Mountains to the serene shores of Lake Victoria, Uganda's landscapes are as diverse as they are breathtaking. Wildlife enthusiasts will marvel at the opportunity to encounter majestic elephants, graceful giraffes, and elusive leopards in their natural habitats. Birdwatchers will be enchanted by the melodious calls of the numerous avian species that call Uganda home.

Yet, Uganda's allure extends beyond its natural wonders. Its people, with their warmth and hospitality, welcome visitors with open arms, eager to share their traditions and stories. The Miss Tourism Uganda Pageant not only celebrates the beauty of its contestants but also serves as a testament to the country's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

As you peruse the pages ahead, filled with stunning photography, insightful articles, useful contacts and captivating stories, we hope you will be inspired to explore Uganda for yourself, and also reflect on what peace means for Tourism. Whether you are planning your first visit or returning to discover more, Uganda promises an unforgettable journey that will leave a lasting impression on your heart.

Join us in celebrating Uganda – where adventure meets authenticity, and every corner reveals a new story waiting to be told from the peace that reigns in our beloved Pearl. Warm regards,

[Mrs. Marianne Mutagamba-E]
[Board Chair]
[26th August 2024]

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Security: Immaculate Kyasimire

President's Speech

AT THE GRAND FINALE OF THE ANNUAL MISS TOURISM UGANDA 2024



H.E. YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



HON. LUMUMBA JUSTINE
Delivered the president's speech

I want to thank Ms. Marianne Mutagamba, for inviting me to attend this year's grand finale of the Miss Tourism Uganda beauty pageant. I have not been able to attend the crowning event of the beauty pageant, due to other national engagements. I have asked Rt. Hon. Justine Lumumba Kasule to represent me and deliver my congratulatory message to the participants of the 11th Edition of Miss Tourism Uganda. I commend you for your courage, confidence and commitment to showcasing the beauty and rich heritage of Uganda. I thank the organizers and all the stakeholders, that have contributed to the success of this event. Government recognises your relentless efforts to promote Uganda's tourism both locally and internationally. I was informed that the theme for this year's edition is:

"Tourism and Peace." This is a good theme, because peace is a prerequisite for all development and socio-economic transformation. Tourism connects people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The NRM government remains committed to providing a conducive environment for the tourism sector to flourish. This is through ensuring peace and stability across the country; and especially around the tourist attractions. Additionally, government continues to prioritise development of the economic infrastructure i.e. roads, electricity, upgrading airports, the internet, etc. to boost access to the tourist sites.

Uganda is blessed with a rich tapestry of natural wonders and cultural treasures i.e. the majestic landscapes of the Rwenzori Mountains; the vibrant wildlife of our national parks; the serene shores of Lake Victoria, the

warm hospitality of our people and unique cultures, etc. Uganda offers a unique experience that captivates and inspires.

The Miss Tourism Uganda beauty pageant is a great step towards reviving pride and confidence in the beauty of the African people. Historically, the Africans, especially the women, developed an inferiority complex on account of the colonial trauma. They developed a dislike for the dark skin. God gave us the dark skin because we possess melanin that acts as a sieve to filter out the harmful ultra-violet rays of the sun that can damage the human body. It is, therefore, psychologic sickness to resent the dark color. The Psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon, analyzed that mental sickness in the book: **"Black Skin, White Mask."** The craze of African women wanting to denature their hair to look like Europeans or Asians, is pathetic. All our body parts are scientifically designed to suit our environment.

The long hair of the Whites and Asians, men or women, is to cope with their climate of coldness by the trapping of more warm air around the head to help warm the whole body. The needs of the tropics are to cool the body most of the time and filter out the ultra-violet rays of the sun. Therefore, the dark skin is as a result of God's design, which is beautiful and perfectly suited for us. You should embrace it with pride.

Our tourism must reflect our values, culture and diversity. I wish all the contestants success and as we await the final announcement of Miss Tourism Uganda, I thank you all.

Main Sponsors Message

FROM DARLING UGANDA



A team of Hairstylists from Darling Uganda Working on the Miss Tourism Queens.

Darling Uganda is a hair extensions manufacturing company located in Namanve industrial area along Jinja road. We manufacture a variety of hair extensions including Braids, crochets and weaves.

The Miss Tourism Uganda 2024 journey has been one full of splendor, Enlightenment, Excitement and very inspirational at the same time.

The queens rocked our latest collection of hair additions that include; Enigma crochet, Miami crochet, Tamara weave, Zanzi braids, New pony curls during bootcamp and Barbra weave for the Grand finals.

Besides enjoying the beautiful cultures, The dance from the Eastern and Northern region, One of our mission statements is to empower women in our society to become the best versions of themselves through our various hair innovations. This year we got the opportunity to interact with the beautiful queens from all 10 regions as we plaited their hair and prepared them for regional finals. During saloon talk, we witnessed these girls mature from stubborn young girls to strong creative and innovative women you see on this platform today. It is such a joy as we get to be part of this team that help in shapping and mentoring these young women's future and truly that is what Darling brand is all about.

It is always our pleasure working with Miss Tourism Uganda as they are not only dedicated to improving our environment but also enhance our well-being through their various campaigns aimed at protecting our motherland Uganda.

Darling find your beautiful.

Editorial



Steven Odeke

Award-winning Tourism, Conservation and Travel multi-media journalist.
Chief Editor

Dear Reader,
I am delighted and honored to present you with this edition of Miss Tourism Uganda -The Pearl of Africa (MTU) magazine of what has been an extraordinary year for the tourism sector. As you go through the pages of this tourism magazine, let's take a moment to pause, reflect, and collectively contribute to making tourism sector a safer place to live in underscoring this year's global theme "Tourism and Peace".

Adhering to the core ethics of tourism, MTU started off the year making the environment a cleaner space through their cleaning programs around some major cities and towns of the country, raising the bar for sustainable tourism. In this issue, we also give you profiles of the finalists and whence they hail. Some are places you have visited a number of times in your adventure quests while some are untapped, never heard of places. Take time and find out.

Countrywide searches were exciting as has been the case in the past editions and all the 29 girls are finalists today. We always tell contestants at this stage of the competition that they are winners and queens already. So, may the best girl win tonight. In a bid to develop more tourism products that can make the country more money, is Religious tourism worth the try? Find out what we think in our pages.
Enjoy a happy read!

Warm regards,
Steven Odeke
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Peace & Tourism

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS





1. Who is Nabukonde Roukaya?

I am a student at Das Aviation school doing airline cabin crew ,am passionate about tourism and travel and am also an environmentalist who likes to see women take up spaces.

2. What did the title Miss Tourism Uganda mean to you?

This title comes with a lot of exposure and opportunities that have given me chance to establish my self and projects as well promoting Uganda's tourism industry both domestically and internationally

3. Did you ever dream of becoming a queen or a model?

Yes I always wanted to be a model growing but when I was 16 I was introduced to the idea of becoming a beauty queen by my family

4. Tell us on how your journey to the crown?

It was such an experience filled with challenges,learning new things,being exposed to new groups of people and above all it was a series of self discovery that pushed me to become the queen iam now

5.What made you stand out to beat other girls at the finale?

My level of confidence,unique ability of speech and my tourism knowledge about my country the pearl of Africa and above all God

6. Who do you attribute your win to in the journey of Miss Tourism Uganda?

I attribute my win to every single person that supported me most importantly my family because they instilled in me the courage to believe in my abilities,my regional clusters ,the

Queen's Questions and Answers

6. Who do you attribute your win to in the journey of Miss Tourism Uganda?

I attribute my win to every single person that supported me most importantly my family because they instilled in me the courage to believe in my abilities,my regional clusters ,the trainers at the national boot camp and of course everything is nothing without God

7. Tourism in Uganda is growing, what is your thought on that?

Yes I believe Uganda is one of the countries in Africa whose tourism sector is growing rapidly and as a national tourism ambassador I give the thanks back to all tourism organizations both private and government sectors for promoting our tourism industry worldwide

8. There is a lot of political insecurities in Uganda now and this affects our tourism sector. What could be your take on that as Ugandan Tourism Queen?

As a tourism queen together with the country's security forces I can assure you that currently the security in Uganda has been enhanced both for locals and at tourist destinations to endeavor our country is safe for everyone

9.Tell us what responsibilities does your crown Miss Tourism Uganda come with?

The crown makes me a tourism ambassador in Uganda which is my role to uplift,promote and expose Uganda's abilities in the tourism sector both domestically and internationally.

10. Who are some of your inspirational figures?

Am inspired by all women in power, every woman who has the ability to use her voice to create a positive change and impact to the world is my daily inspiration

11. How have you managed to balance Miss Tourism Uganda work and school?

I believe we all have different responsibilities but how you schedule our selves and create a timetable of how to manage everything in its best time

12. What have you accomplished so far as the Out going Miss Tourism Uganda?

I have been able to represent my country in Malaysia where I marketed Uganda to the world,am currently working on an environmental conservation project with the 1st runner up and 2nd runner up .

13.Tell us about some of the challenges you face?

As human beings we are faced with many and different challenges but how we handle ourselves through out our challenges is what matters.And I've been able to overcome each challenge which makes them inferior to me.

14. You as the out going queen. What is your best animal and why?

A lion because it's brave,the king of the jungle and personally being brave is the reason for who I am and I learn this from a lion

15. Tell us about your Educational Background?

I completed my Primary Leaving Education at St.Augustine primary school then I later joined Royal College Namugongo and Seeta Hill college where I completed my UCE . I joined Paul Mukasa Secondary School where I completed my UACE .Am currently a student at Das aviation school doing airline cabin crew

16. Any advance to the young girls who are inspired by you?

Personal belief is key to achieving every thing,learn to believe in every ability you have because success starts with you

Ankole

LONG-HORNED CATTLE:

The treasured jewel of Ankole seemingly under threat

Word has it that, the iconic Ankole long-horned cattle were the first cattle in Uganda, before all the exotics followed suit. Ankole Kingdom, also known as Nkore, is one of the oldest traditional dynasties in Uganda. At this year's Miss Tourism Uganda – The Pearl Of Africa grand finale to be held at Kampala Serena Hotel, the region will be represented by beauty queens Shanne Birungi, Abigail Abaho and Shadia Banny who beat off competition from 12 girls in a fiercely contested regional search that was held at the Western Meridian Hotel in Bushenyi district.

They represent a region that has given us Miss Tourism Uganda queens in the past and good luck to them, if they go past the national hurdle tonight that is running under the theme "Tourism and Peace".

The region these three girls represent is said to have been created way back in 1500 century by the Bacwezi. The Ankole society was divided into two stratified castes -the Bahima (nobility/pastoralists) and the Bairu (agriculturalists/peasants), who lived together and depended on each other. But with modern times, those divides seem to be blurring by each passing times as both castes seem to practice both agricultural practices freely. With a population census of 3,600,747 according to the latest census report from Uganda Bureau Of Statistics (UBOS), Ankole occupies districts of Mbarara City, Bushenyi, Ntungamo, Ibanda, Isingiro, Kiruhura, Buhweju, Mitooma, Rubirizi, Sheema, Kazo and Rwampara.

For so long, the long-horned cattle are deeply ingrained in the lives and culture of the people of Ankole.

This is cattle with long-white horns, smaller eyes, ears and a relatively small nose, tall with long legs, long navels and small humps, quite dissimilar from the other cattle breeds

of Uganda are like Small East African Shorthorn Zebu (SEAZ) and Nganda.

Most times the Ankole cattle have beautiful hair colour, unique colour patterns such as a few small dots on both sides of the belly "Mayenje" and deep brown colour "Bihogo" which are said to produce good quality hides. This type of cattle is known to resist any kind of suffering, as in, they are hardy, and eat little grass. Generally, the cattle can survive well in low lying and sparsely populated areas.

For societal and cultural context, the Banyankore believe the cattle was brought in Ankole by the Abacwezi (founders of the Ankole kingdom). That the long-horned descended from "Bihogo" who was the first Chwezi.

Another legend says it is Omugabe (King) Nyabugarobwera Ntare I who brought the cow in Ankole using unusual circumstances. In a 2009 documentation by the Pastoral and Environment Network in the Horn of Africa, Elizabeth Katushabe wrote, "We also have another legend that says that during the reign of King Omugabe Nyabugarobwera Ntare I, cattle became extinct and people paid "enyonza" fruits as dowry. The King's men used to roast plantains "ebitookye" for him. And that one day he saw one of the men stealthily eating one of the roasted plantains and he felt guilty on the man's behalf. He got hold of his bow and arrow which was known as "Enfumura Iguru", shot at the sky, it rained for four days and on the fifth day when people woke up they found each home full of cattle. Since then they have grazed them in the beautiful land of "Nkore". According to writer G.N.Kirindi, the name "Ankole" is wrong and the correct one is "Nkore". He says that it was the colonialists who named their land "Ankole" because they could not correctly pronounce the name "Nkore".

The Ankole long-horned cattle is not only bred because they are beautiful animals, for prestige and or, for cultural contexts, other than for food (they are known to give tasty milk that has high fat content and good low cholesterol beef) and ghee that is served as a special local delicacy among the Ankole people known as eshabwe

Long-horned cattle as medical doctors

The urine from these beautiful cattle can be used to treat stomach problems and cough. For example, a mixture of milk and urine known as us

"Kashumba" is known to treat fever and cough.

The cattle's dung is also used to fix broken bones in form of making casts. It is also known to reduce an infant's stomach problem. As in, the cow's dung would be mixed with water and boiled and then administered to the baby. It was also used to treat measles and given to a woman that had just lost a baby to stop lactation.

Other purposes of these long-horned Ankole cattle include paying dowry to get a wife, using hides to make cloths/dressing, mats or carpets and bedding; horns while appealing to the eye are also used for making beads, buttons, trumpets and violins. As for agricultural uses, the dung is used as manure for grass and plantations.

The future of the iconic Ankole long-horned cattle

While the Ankole long-horned cattle is a domestic animal that has been bred for thousands of years for food and other beneficial purposes for man, and may not require intense conservation efforts, one can say that, reduction in grazing spaces of land in the last few years could be affecting this type of cattle. Since they cannot move long distances to graze freely regardless of the conditions, the reduction in the value of Ankole long-horned cattle might become bare for all to see.

Also the spread of exotics and crossbreeding them with Ankole is leading to the reduction of Ankole cattle numbers. Friesians are today being considered more "useful" than the Ankole cattle because the former brings higher income.

The Penha adds, "We are selling off the Ankole cattle because they have lost value in terms of sales. Government has programmes of prosperity for all and National Agriculture and Development Services (NAADS) which aim to increase household income to 20 million per year. These programmes

have promoted the rearing of exotic cattle and crossing them with the Ankole cattle.

Visit cultural villages to know more about Ankole

Nshenyi Cultural Village located on a farm near Kitwe Town on the edge of Ntungamo District, visiting this farm will have you immerse deeply in the Ankole culture. It is a 30- minute drive from Ntungamo Town centre, or an hour's drive from Mbarara City. Traditionally, Nshenyi is a pastoralist area. The terrain is characterised by endless rolling hills, savanna grass and acacia trees, an environment that is ideal for rearing cattle. The home and adjoining land extends close to the border with Rwanda and Tanzania. While there, participate in the milking of long horned Ankole cows and see how it is processed.

Kamihingo Agro tourism farm

Located just next to Nshara entrance gate of Lake Mburo national park is the Kamihingo Ankole cattle farm. The family-owned venture mainly offers a cultural experience relating to the traditional life of the Ankole longhorn cattle community. There you can engage in milking the cows, see how milk is processed to obtain butter and yogurt, which you can even taste. The nonprofit farm is on a mission to safeguard Ankole longhorn cows through inspiration and education. Visits to the farm are done during the day given that there's no accommodation. cultural experience relating to the traditional life of the Ankole longhorn cattle community. There you can engage in milking the cows, see how milk is processed to obtain butter and yogurt, which you can even taste. The nonprofit farm is on a mission to safeguard Ankole longhorn cows through inspiration and education. Visits to the farm are done during the day given that there's no accommodation.



Ankole Region Delegates



Barungi Ann | Age: 25 |
Occupation: Accountant
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Hobbies: traveling, socializing, exercising, knitting
Role model and why: Parents they demonstrate unwavering love and Support for their children's dreams especially the girl child.
Reason for contesting: I intend to use this platform to serve as a tourism Ambassador for ankole and uganda on both national and international stages.



Abaho abigail jackie | Age: 21 |
District: Bushenyi
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Education: student at makerere university pursuing a bachelors of arts in academic music
Hobbies: Singing, acting, and dancing
Role model: My mother is my role model because she has worked effortlessly to Achieve her goals.
Advocacy: Tourism doesn't only stop at the beautiful sceneries I find it a necessity to promote the heritage of the different regions around uganda through music and dance



Ampuriire bany shadiah | Age: 21
District: Mbarara
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Education: enrolled midwife
Hobbies: traveling, dancing, singing, modelling, baking, knitting, reading and writing.
Role model: My mother. Why? She has been a source of my inspiration in every step of my life and has pushed me hard with all she can not forgetting to teach me how to pray at anytime.
Advocacy: To promote ugandan tourism both nationally and internationally by putting the local ingredients to use through bakery. 2. To promote and uplift ankores' hidden gems



Enock Rutaaza
Cluster Head Ankole Region
Miss Tourism Uganda.

Bunyoro - Kitara's gems

HOT SPRINGS AND SALT PRODUCING VILLAGES

By Steven Odeke

When the Miss Tourism Uganda – Pearl Of Africa scouts decided to dig deep in Bunyoro sub-region in western Uganda this year in Masindi, we knew we were in for a treat. Bunyoro sub-region belongs to the kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara, Western Uganda, on the eastern end of Lake Albert. The kingdom lies in the districts of Hoima, Masindi and Kibale.

The Miss Tourism Uganda - Bunyoro contestants heaped praise on their area of origin during the fun-filled search before Victoria Ndamurani



emerged winner and followed by Immaculate Mbabazi and Daphine Ayesiga in the first and second runner up positions respectively. The three joined the other Miss Tourism Uganda – The Pearl Of Africa finalists to be contested today at Kampala Serena Hotel.

Bunyoro sub-region is marvellous for any leisure traveler or even adventure seekers. Legend has it that the history of Uganda is never complete without Bunyoro-Kitara in it. Since the region is today popularly dubbed as the "land of Oil" for its potential to serve petroleum in Uganda, we also found other untapped gems that need to be explored more by tourists.

For the uninitiated, the oil area known as the Albertine Graben was discovered as the most prospective area for petroleum in Uganda. It straddles the western arm of the East African Rift Valley System.

However, as the government continues its search for oil, it is evident more protected areas will be affected by the non-sustainable tourism activities that take place here. These activities have a high potential to cause negative impacts including fragmentation of habitats due to infrastructure development, disturbance of wildlife due to vibrations, emissions, noise and light, environmental contamination and damage due to waste, produced water and oil spills.

All these will have a big impact on tourism which is one of the biggest



revenue earners for the country.

Aside from the oil wells in Bunyoro, there is Kibiro village found by the Lake Albert shores in Kigorobya sub-county in Hoima District. The site is rich with cultural and heritage Bunyoro stories.

For over 900 years, the sandy salt producing village has been mined by mostly women and will perhaps continue doing so in the future if the area's eco-system is protected well. On the day the author visited this village, the issue of climate change was plain going by the sweltering temperatures we encountered there. We found women in their mines labouring to produce salt that they use to season the foods we devour with relish.

In this village rich with cultural foibles we are told, for all those centuries, salt production was and is a female hereditary occupation. The men focus on fishing on the Albert and maybe help in taking the salt produce to the market.

The hot springs found in the village are such a marvel for tourists who visit the place for adventure and healing. The water at the springs is always boiling at 100 degrees and is often used by locals

more tourists here and visit this gem. It is one of a kind that shows you how we make salt from soil.

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The hot springs found in the village are such a marvel for tourists who visit the place for adventure and healing. The water at the springs is always boiling at 100 degrees and is often used by locals to boil eggs, potatoes and all.

It has also been found to contain varying amounts of minerals and chemicals with medicinal value, among them, sodium chloride, potassium chloride, lithium sulphate, calcium sulphate, calcium phosphate, and magnesium chloride.

There were plans by Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom to develop the place and elevate the springs to a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) heritage site.

Godfrey Abigaba, the area's Kibiro Parish LC 1 said, "This place has been here for so many years and we thank you for coming here to put it on the world map. Here the main tourist attraction are the salt gardens. If you go back in time, you find that this salt mining process has been there for centuries."

Noeline Asimwe, a salt miner, says "Most of the women you find here are engaged in salt mining. We harvest the salt every day and go through a rigorous process to produce the salt and take to the market. This keeps us busy for a whole month.

Veronica Mbanzireki, tourism officer Hoima district, "we want to welcome

rigorous process to produce the salt and take to the market. This keeps us busy for a whole month.

Veronica Mbanzireki, tourism officer Hoima district, "we want to welcome more tourists here and visit this gem. It is one of a kind that shows you how we make salt from soil.

Other tourism attractions:

Mparo Royal Tombs

Mparo Royal Tombs is the final resting ground of King Kabalega II who was exiled in Seychelles by the British Empire in 1899. It is also the burial ground for Tito Winyi plus several other royals of Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom. Each tomb is covered with a bark-cloth. Next to the cloth are the royal regalia and other cultural tools and belongings that respective kings used during their rule. The most immense tomb at Mparo Tombs holds the remains of the greatest king, Omukama Kabalega. Omukama Kabalega is remembered for his exceptional endeavors to protect Bunyoro-Kitara empire from the British rule that was taking over Buganda by then. He is referred to as a brilliant fighter who always made the right decisions. Omukama Kabalega is still admired for his courage, exceptional achievements, and noble qualities. A number of roads, schools and buildings have been named after him. Mparo Tombs is situated about 4 kilometers from Hoima town on the Hoima - Masindi highway.

Budongo Forest

It is well documented that Uganda's tourism is nature-based with the majority of leisure tourists visiting the country to enjoy the exceptional vast array of landscapes of stunning beauty, wildlife diversity and good climate. Budongo forest offers one of the best sites to track over 600 Chimpanzees and about 360 wide-range of bird species that can give you an amazing birding experience. In addition there are 290 butterflies' species, 130 Mochs species, 465 tree species, as well as 24 mammals nine of which are actually primates. This is the biggest Mahogany forest found in the whole of East Africa as well as habitat to the largest number of chimpanzees throughout Uganda.

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The Royal Mile – Budongo Forest

The Royal Mile is found in the 793 km² Budongo Forest Reserve, within Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom that lies at the edge of the Albertine Rift and is attached to Kabalega (renamed Murchison) Falls National Park in the south. Known for its popularity as a traditional leisure stop-over for Uganda's royalty, the Royal Mile is a superb birding spot with many west and central African species, as well as a variety of sought-after key species. The Royal Mile gets its name from Omukama of Bunyoro, Kabalega. It is a spectacular one-mile-long forest road that was made by Omukama Kabalega as military training ground for his Abarusura Army. It is reported that it is this very road that he used to escape from the colonialists, before he was arrested in Dokolo and exiled in the Seychelles Islands.

Katashiha Fort and Caves

Katashiha Fort and Caves are located in Hoima District about 3km on Hoima –Biso-Butiaba Road in Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom. The Fort and Caves were constructed by King Kabalega in 1894 as a hide out and defence line during the war with the British. The river before you reach the site provided the first line of defence for the King's army. He extensively used the fort and caves to fight the war after he abandoned his palace at Mparo.

Battles fought around the Fort

King Kabalega fought many battles

against the British around the fort and caves. The manner in which Kabalega set up his battlefield and the seven years it took the combined forces of the British, and other adversaries to defeat him made Kabalega one of the toughest opponents to be faced by the colonialists. He later abandoned site and retreated northwards from where he waged a guerrilla war.

Musaijamukuru Hill

Musaijamukuru hill is found in Musaijamukuru village, Buhimba Sub County, about 15 kilometers away from Hoima town on the Buhimba-Kakumiro-Mubende road. The hill may not be any far different from other hills but is of great cultural and historical importance to Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom. It's at Musaijamukuru hill that Bunyoro's great King Kabalega would stop to get a vantage point and track his enemies from during his wars of resistance. Kabalega's warriors are believed to have rolled stone boulders from the top of the hill to hit and kill the advancing British forces. Musaijamukuru hill is believed to be a source of blessings or curses depending on the way one treats it. To this effect, the hill has got a caretaker referred to as Mukama w'orusozi (owner of the hill) Mukama w'orusozi is a title assumed on a hereditary basis. He is the person charged with appeasing ancestors believed to be on the hill by performing rituals periodically.



Dragon Boat Festival

A PLATFORM TO ENHANCE DESTINATION UGANDA TO CHINA

Bunyoro Region Delegates



Victoria Ndamurani | Age: 22
District: Kiryandongo
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Education: Student at makerere university, pursuing a bachelor of laws degree.
Hobbies: Reading and playing woodball
Role model: My mother, because she goes over and above her abilities to make sure that the world is a better place for everyone around her.
Advocacy: To promote the cultural heritage, natural beauty, and unique attractions of Uganda and to serve as an ambassador, advocating for tourism growth, environmental conservation, and development.



Ayesiga Daphine Abwooli | Age: 21
District: Masindi
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Education: Certificate in hotel management and institutional catering from ymca.
Hobbies: Reading literature, watching movies, singing and dancing
Role model: Toni Zozibini, because of her confidence, composure and determination to achieve her goals.
Advocacy: To support empower and provide worldwide exposure to not only my region but also Uganda at large and also celebrates peaceful coexistence through tourism



Mbabazi Immaculate Hope | Age: 24
District: Masindi
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: Physical planner
Hobbies: watching movies, travelling and exploring.
Role model: My mother because of her ability to navigate challenges and stay focused on her goals
Advocacy: My desire to create tourism awareness as well as showcase Uganda's beauty



Rita Abwooli
Cluster Head
Miss Tourism Bunyoro Region

As a way of fostering more tourism investments and tours by the Chinese community to Uganda, the Chinese community in Uganda returned the annual Dragon Boat race festival on the fresh waters of Lake Victoria on June 9th, and it turned out a fun-filled and competitive event. Graced by the Chinese dignitaries to Uganda, the state Minister of Tourism Martin Barugahara, a host of the Chinese community and their Ugandan counterparts, this is one event that should be embraced by all and sundry in Uganda. This historical and cultural event is held throughout China at the beginning of the fifth day of the lunar month where people of several ethnic groups celebrate a local hero with a sporting event such as dragon races, dragon boating and willow shooting. The hero who is celebrated varies by region: the romantic poet Qu Yuan is venerated in Hubei and Hunan Provinces, Wu Zixu (an old man said to have died while slaying a dragon in Guizhou Province) in South China, and Yan Hongwo in Yunnan Province among the Dai community. The Dragon Boat festival strengthens bonds within families and establishes a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature. It also encourages the expression of imagination and creativity, contributing to a vivid sense of cultural identity. The Chinese community in Uganda has grown exponentially, thanks in

part to the tourism potential of Uganda and the peace in the country. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, China is today the second largest tourism source market for Uganda in the whole of Asia, after India. In 2023, tourist arrivals from China grew by 69.1% from 5,881 in 2022 to 9,944 in 2023. Embracing and celebrating diverse cultures and such festivities serves as a catalyst for enduring collaborations between nations, promoting peace and understanding, travel and tourism and enhancing the economic benefits. The Chinese expenditure on travel abroad reached USD 196.5 billion in 2023, ahead of the United States (USD 150 billion), Germany (USD 112 billion) and it is clear Uganda wants a share of that market.

The Uganda-China Tourism and Cultural Symposium which is in the pipeline will foster more tourism investment and tours by the Chinese community in Uganda as well as ignite more interest for Destination Uganda back home in China.

About the races, Mugarra said, "I joined the Chinese Community in Uganda to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival and as we watched the races, a curious

individual asked me a question "What exactly are we promoting here?" I would like to respond to that individual and others who are curious like him that, China is first of all a good friend that has supported Uganda's growth in various field of infrastructure, capacity building, financing and tourism

Mugarra adds, "A strong part of the Chinese cultural heritage, the core of the dragon boat festival is the boat racing competition - a water sport component that is not foreign to Uganda. This festival further reinforces the spirit of multiculturalism in Uganda, a country known for its own colorful tapestry of cultures and traditions."

The Chinese Deputy in Uganda Fan Xuecheng said, "China-Uganda cultural and tourism collaboration has a huge credential and broad prospects. We want to take this opportunity to promote Uganda in China and make Uganda more popular in China so that they get to be known by more Chinese. You know Chinese history is more than 5000 years. Dragon Boat is one of the most successful festivals in China and it is good Ugandans are embracing it.

A participant from China, Giu Wenxiu "It is really amazing game today, we saw Ugandans and Chinese together in one boat. We all enjoyed this and we were faster.

This was the first edition and the legendary dragons were decorated with fiery eyes Over 6 boats participated

Eastern Region:

The region with the world's largest caldera, Imbalu and the source of the Nile:

The Eastern region is to be represented by Celestine Nyabonyo Mariah, Deborah Wayabire Logose and Rebecca Nabirye at the Miss Tourism Uganda national grand finale today. The three emerge from a region that is straddled by over 16 districts that include Jinja City, Mbale City, Kapchorwa and Tororo, boastful of a number of tourism attractions, diverse cultural heritage and historical sites. For a travel enthusiast keen on adventure, the Eastern region is home to some of the most adrenaline-pumping activities such as white water rafting, Kayaking, Tubing the Nile, Ziplining, Abseiling, Bungee jumping, boat rides, fishing and hiking the Mountain Elgon.

Jinja City, dubbed as the Adventure Capital of Uganda, is home to the Source of the Nile, the world's historical and longest river on earth. The site has been such a top tourism magnet for the surrounding communities and Uganda as well. Recent reports suggest visitations to the Source Of The Nile in Jinja continue to soar and by December 2023, the numbers had surpassed the pre-COVID 19 entries by 21%. The ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities partly attributed the success to "the various supplementary activities tourists enjoy around Jinja in addition to visiting the source of the Nile."

To adventure travelers, knowing that The Source of the Nile is one of the tourist destinations around the country that are up for redevelopment, makes for a good reading. The redevelopment plan includes the construction of a modern pier, world-class recreational and convenience facilities. All these are geared towards enhancing the tourist experience at the Source of the Nile. The other significant tourism attraction is hiking the Mount Elgon, an extinct volcano believed to have first erupted around 24 million years ago and home to the World's largest Mountain Caldera.

Legend has it that Mt Elgon was at some point once Africa's highest mountain, far exceeding Kilimanjaro's current 5,895m. Millennia of erosion have reduced its height to 4,321m, relegating it to the 4th highest peak in East Africa and 8th on the continent. Located on the Uganda-Kenya border, Mt Elgon is home to two tribes, the Bagisu and the Sabiny, with the

marginalized Ndorobos forced to dwell deep within the forest of Benet. The Bagisu, also known as the BaMasaba, consider Mount Elgon to be the embodiment of their founding father Masaba and refer to the mountain by this name.

To most hikers of the mountain, while being home to over 300 species of birds including the endangered Lammergeyer, the ultimate goal of summiting this iconic feature is to descend into the vast 40 km2 caldera, as travel enthusiasts who joined the MTWA and Uganda Tourism Board's Explore Uganda campaign can attest. The higher slopes are protected by national parks in Uganda and Kenya, creating an extensive trans-boundary conservation area which has been declared a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve.

The mountain has been a victim of land fragmentation on its slopes over the years reducing on its mammalian fauna. Today, the most common species or at least the most visible to hikers, are blue monkeys and black and white colobus. A small number of forest elephants, (a different species form the common African Savannah forest) still dwell in the forests. A number of waterfalls can also be found in Eastern Uganda that are good for activities such as abseiling, cave exploration, bird watching, hiking and coffee and cultural tours. Sites such as Sipi falls on the foothills of Mountain Elgon have been a must-visit for adventure seekers.

Other cultural and tourism attractions in Eastern Uganda:

Kagulu rock

Made popular by the annual Kagulu Rock Climbing challenge spearheaded by the Busoga Kingdom, this rock found in Kagulu sub-county, Buyende District has become a must-visit by hikers and history enthusiasts. Today, the rock, which stands at 3,600ft, is believed to be receiving over 700 hikers every weekend and for the year, so far, over 33,600 have hiked the rock. Hikers can expect to do cave explorations and immerse themselves in the Busoga cultural identity just by standing by the statue of Prince Namutukukia, the great grand ancestor of Busoga. Busoga Kingdom is one of the oldest



traditional kingdoms in Ugandan folklore led by Busoga King (Kyabazinga) William Gabula Nadirope IV.

Imbalu, a centuries-old circumcision ritual.

This is an age-old circumcision ritual organised every August of an even year where hundreds of Bagisu boys between the ages of 16 to 22 undergo this initiation into manhood. Imbalu means sharp knife in the Lugisu dialect and is a very important product for the Eastern region cluster. These celebrations are usually held in the eastern districts of Uganda on the slopes of Mountain Elgon. During this initiation practice, there is a lot of music, dance and drama, and are not only staged in homes, but also in public spaces where a broader audience witness the special dance and music performances. This is once in a lifetime cultural experiences that needs attending when chance prevails you. The recent meeting of the Bureau of the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage that took place on June 4/2024 approved a request for possible inscription of Imbalu ceremonies on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.



Eastern Region Delegates



Maria Celestine Nyabonyo | Age: 24
District: Mbale
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Education: Student, Kyambogo University, bachelor's of arts with education.
Hobbies: Singing, dancing, adventuring
Role model: my grandmother (Mrs mutonyi mary nakishero), she is a teacher her confidence, passion, association with people, and love for culture inspires me every day to keep my head up
Advocacy: To promote cultural heritage in my region, educating youths and children on how to embrace their culture.



Wayabire Deborah Logose | Age: 20
District: Budaka
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Education: Student from kampala university (cert in nursing 2yr)
Hobbies: Dancing, singing, love movies
Role model: My mother, because i have seen from her how a woman can be strong and make a difference in the society plus being focused on what you decide to do
Advocacy: To enable the youth, embrace their culture and be proud of speaking, practicing and representing it wherever they be



Nabirye Rebecca | Age: 23
Region: Eastern
District: Mayuge
Title: Miss tourism eastern
Occupation: Teacher
Hobbies: traveling, adventuring, reading
Role model: Hon. Rebecca kadaga, she is god fearing, woman of self respect, calm, determined on whatever she does and also an inspiration.
Advocacy: To identify and market tourism sites in my region and uganda at large.



Sharon Yeko
 Coordinator
 Miss Tourism Eastern Region



Tooro Region

THE JEWEL OF
UGANDA'S TOURISM

Tooro Kingdom is to be represented by Racheal Akankunda and Ketra Akiiki Akankwasa at the grand finale to be held at Kampala Serena Hotel under the theme "Tourism and Peace – Greening Investment."

Tooro Kingdom is one of the traditional five kingdoms of Uganda found within the borders of Uganda and ruled by the Omukama (King) of Tooro Oyo Nyimba Kabamba Iguru Rukidi IV. King Oyo ascended to the throne in 1995 at the age of just three years, after the death of his father Omukama Patrick David Matthew Kaboyo Rwamuhokya Olini III on August 26, 1995, at the age of 50, making him the youngest monarch to rule in the world at the time.

The people native to the kingdom are the Batooro, and their language is likewise called Rutooro who mainly live on Uganda's western border, south of Lake Albert. There are about 20 clans considered to be active within the Tooro Kingdom. These clans include the; Abalisa, Abibiito, Abagweri, Ababbopi and Abasumbi clans among many others.

The Batooro people are proud of their kingdom. Like the Banyoro, Batooro are also known for practicing a naming system known as Empaako. Inscribed in 2013 on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, Empaako is whereby children are given one of 12 names shared across the communities in addition to their given and family names. Addressing a person by her or his Empaako name is a positive affirmation of social ties. It can be used as a greeting or a declaration of affection, respect, honour or love.

An attractive, growing city, close to the Rwenzori mountain range, Fort Portal (The Tourism capital of Uganda) is the seat of Tooro Kingdom for its magnificent sceneries and cleanliness. Fort Portal is steeped in history.

Its first known structure was one of a series of forts built by the British colonialist Lord Lugard in 1891-93 to help defend his ally the Tooro King, Daudi Kyebambe Kasagama, against incursions by the British arch-foe, King Kabalega of neighbouring Bunyoro.

The Fort Portal fortress was then known as Fort Gerry, named after a colonial official at the time, Sir Gerald Portal. Fort Portal began acquiring a familiar colonial pattern: the European administrative center and quarters on one hill (the Boma), with the King's palace on another (Kabarole) and the commercial center in-between.

The town can be accessed via two routes from Kampala Capital City; one via Mityana-Fort Portal, approximately 5-hour drive or via-Mbarara City, the largest town in western Uganda, through Kasese and then finally Fort Portal (about 8-hour drive).

Tourist sites in Tooro to explore:

Kibale Forest National Park

Found in Kabarole district in western Uganda, 348km (5 hrs drive) from Kampala and about 26km south-east of the beautiful Fort Portal town – this is one of Uganda's most lovely places to explore. This tropical rainforest boasts of a number of wildlife species that have attracted many tourists over the years. Kibale's premier attraction is the Kanyanchu Primate Walk, offering the opportunity to seek out 13 different primate species, with a variety of diurnal monkeys frequently observed. Guided walks are available at 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM, typically lasting around three hours, subject to various conditions. This consistently popular primate walk allows visitors to observe chimpanzees in their natural habitat. Over 1,500 chimpanzees are in Kibale. Kibale is also a biologically rich region that hosts over 120 other mammal species, including baboons, elephants,

and antelopes. The forest is home to approximately 370 bird species, including 23 Albertine Rift endemics such as Nahan's francolin, Cassin's spinetail, blue-headed bee-eater, and lowland masked apalis.

The Karuzika – the Royal Palace

King Kyebambe first built a two-storey palace on Kabarole Hill overlooking the town in 1910. The hill was said to be infested by spirits. The recently baptised King showed victory over these spirits by establishing his palace there (Kabarole means "let them see"). The current circular structure was built in 1964 for Kyebambe's son and successor, Rukidi III, and was opened by Britain's Princess Margaret in 1965. The palace or Karuzika was ransacked when Uganda's traditional kingdoms were abolished in 1966, then rebuilt after their restoration in 1993.

Crater Lakes totaling 50 of various sizes

Fort Portal is home to the highest number of crater lakes in Uganda, totaling 50 in number. Crater lakes are bodies of water that were formed as a consequence of volcanic eruptions, where the top of the volcano was

blown off, resulting in a depression that took the shape of a crater. About 30km to the south of Fort Portal city, between the main Fort Portal-Kasese road and Kibale Forest National Park, you will find a cluster of these crater lakes. Exploring these lakes is an exciting and captivating experience cherished by many tourists.

These crater lakes offer a range of activities, including swimming, fishing, nature walks, cycling, and birdwatching. The lakeshores and the surrounding areas are home to over 300 bird species and various primate species.

Biking safaris are a popular way to explore this area, where you will encounter crater lakes that reach depths of over 400 meters. There are eco-friendly accommodation facilities in the area.

Lake Kigere

The Fort Portal area is associated with sites that have long had a spiritual importance for its people. Near Lake Kigere is a large footprint believed to belong to one of the last kings of the ancient Batembuzi dynasty, thought to be giants. Open to the public, by appointment with the local community.

Amabere ga Nyinamwiru cave and stalactites

The Amabere site, with its breast-like stalactites in a cave and its magnificent water fall, is named after King Bukuku's daughter and translates as Nyinamwiru's breasts. King Bukuku belonged to the ancient Batembuzi dynasty, believed to be demi-gods by their subjects, often disappearing underground. The princess was a beautiful young woman with a strong personality. She refused to marry the man her father had chosen. An infuriated King ordered that her breasts be cut off because of her disobedience, thus precluding her marriage and nurturing children. It is believed that the stalactites are her breasts oozing milk.

Karambi Tombs

The Royal Tombs comprise of three main mausoleums for Kings Kasagama Kyebambe III (+1928), George Kamurasi Rukidi III (+1965) and Olini Kaboyo VII (+ 1995) that also contain the kings' regalia. Across the pathway are the tombs of various members of the royal family. Open to the public – contact the caretaker on site.



Tooro Region Delegates



Akankunda Racheal | Age: 22
District: Kabarole
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Education: Student at kampala university pursuing a bachelor of science in education
Hobbies: Poetry, reading novels, traveling and music
Role model: Wangari Mathai, for her unwavering efforts towards empowerment of women and protection of the environment
Advocacy: To have a platform through which I can make a positive change in the community in regards to responsible and sustainable tourism, culture and heritage.



Akankwasa Ketra Akiki | Age: 22
District: Kabarole
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Education: Student at uganda christian university pursuing a bachelor of education
Hobbies: Photography, poetry, adventure, and environmental conservation
Role model: Maggie Kigozi for her passion about entrepreneurship and diversification of agriculture is incredible
Advocacy: To have a powerful platform to amplify environmental advocacy, raise public awareness, and promote sustainable tourism practices essential for preserving uganda's natural heritage.



Ngonzi Doreen | Age: 25
Tribe: Mutooro
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Education: Certificate graduate in journalism UMCAAT school of journalism
Hobbies: Traveling & touring, Making new friends
Role model: Mum



Khasifa Khasifa
Cluster Head
Miss Tourism Tooro Region



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Wavy Curls



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Rwenzori Miss Tourism:

One incredible area in urgent need of conservation

When on May 14, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) announced a temporary suspension of hiking activities to Margherita Peak in Rwenzori Mountains National Park, Western Uganda, a sense of uneasiness was palpable among adventure seekers. The decision had come as a precautionary measure after a comprehensive assessment conducted by the team in response to reports of a crevasse formation in the Margherita glacier. That has since been sorted and hiking activities have since resumed on this iconic snow-capped mountain. This year's Rwenzori region will be represented by **Fortunate Muhindo, Beatrice, Masika Byakutaga** and **Shivon Muganda** at the Miss Tourism Uganda - The Pearl Of Africa grand finale to be held at Kampala Serena Hotel on September 14. Among many things, the three girls will let us and the judges know what plans they have in their conservation efforts to prevent the looming issue of climate change that is melting the glaciers. The Rwenzori Mountains National park is known for having glaciers on the equator. With global warming, however, the snows are receding, glaciers are melting and crevasses are appearing. Climate change is also resulting in

changes in vegetation zones, shifting species, changes in rainfall patterns and in an increase in flood incidences. Just recently, River Nyamwamba on Rwenzori burst its banks resulting in the death of two people, affecting 596 households and displacing 144 from the households, according to Senior Environment officer, Kasese district local government, Eveline Mugume. Situated in western Uganda, the Rwenzori Mountains National Park was gazetted as a national park in 1991 and forms a 120 km long and 65 km wide chain of mountains that traverses the four districts of Kasese, Bundibugyo, Bunyangabo and Kabarole, along the boundary with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Over 75% of the range is found in Uganda with the rest falling in the DRC, where it is part of the Parc National des Virunga (PNV). Among the renown mountains is Mt. Stanley, with its highest peak -Margherita - standing at 5109m above sea level and ranking as Africa's third highest point. The other mountains are Mt. Speke (4890m), Mt. Baker (4843m), Mt. Emin (4798m) and Mt. Gessi (4715m). The mountains are reported to have been formed about three million years ago by the uplifting of rocks due to forces within the earth's crust. According to the park's general

management plan for 2016-2025, research carried out in the Rwenzori in the 1950s by Menziel, in the 1990s by Kaser and in 2006 by Tailor indicate that the area covered by alpine glacier has reduced from 75km² in 1906 to less than 1km² in 2003. Glaciers currently occur on three mountains: Mt. Stanley, Mt. Speke and Mt. Baker and could disappear at the current rate of recession of approximately 0.7km² per decade within the next 20 years. The receding snow, according to UWA, has resulted in the creation of up to 20 lakes on the mountains. These lakes supply and sustain several rivers running down the mountains. In recent years and just like recently, these have led to disastrous flooding, affecting the surrounding communities (and the country at large) as the waters have carried huge boulders that razed almost the entire Kilembe town, destroyed 15 schools, swept away homes and farms, cut off bridges, shattered the Nyamwamba small hydro-power project camp and domestic water supply systems such as boreholes, protected springs and water treatment plants.

The effects of climate change have directly affected people's lives, tangible and intangible cultural heritage

Rwenzori Region Delegates

After summiting Mount Rwenzori's peak, Tooro Kingdom's King Oyo decried the looming issue of climate change and asked everyone to take the issue seriously. He said "Climate change is not only a distant threat. It is affecting our environment, right here and now. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme adverse weather events such as storms, droughts and floods are clear indicators of the impact we are facing. Our rivers are drying up, biodiversity is declining and eco-systems are under immense pressure. Tourism not only brings

economic prosperity but also plays a vital role in raising awareness about the importance of preserving our natural heritage. I believe that through responsible tourism, we can inspire visitors to become active participants in conservation efforts and sustainable practices. Preserving our natural resources is paramount to ensure a thriving environment for generations to come.

Mt. Rwenzori's cultural significance

The Bakonzo form the majority ethnic group in Kasese district. Culturally, the district comprises four chiefdoms (Kambasa, Muyina, Bukangama Buthale and Katswabwemi) of the nine that form the Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu (OBR) cultural institution. The other 5 are: Bunyangabo chiefdom, Buhira chiefdom, Beghendera chiefdom in Bunyangabo district, Bughonga chiefdom and Bunyangalha chiefdom in Bundibugyo district.

In 1994, in further recognition of its

value to the international community, the Park was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site and, in 2009, as a Ramsar (convention on wetlands of international importance) site.

In the face of climate change, the flooding rivers have negatively impacted on the heritage valued by the park's surrounding communities and which connects them with the park.

The Rwenzori mountains indeed comprise a wide range of cultural heritage sites. They include outstanding example of human settlement and migrations, sacred trees and herbal medicine, shrines and ritual sites, burial grounds, etc.

Other than the Bakonzo and Bamba, we have other diverse ethnicities settled around the Rwenzori national park like the Basongora and the Babwisi.

The Bakonzo and Bamba have a particularly strong cultural/ spiritual attachment to the Park. The Bakonzo people say that, since time immemorial, they have regarded the Rwenzori Mountains as a repository of many blessings for their socioeconomic well-being. As such, the mountains constituted a form of reserve even before the colonial period.

The cultural significance of the mountains is still today demonstrated by the traditional rituals performed within the park, including the construction of hunters' shrines for animal sacrifices, ceremonies involving the exorcism of evil spirits, and human burials. There is a belief that if a person dies in the mountains his body is not to be brought home but must be buried where he died, for the spirits have claimed them.

The cosmology of the Bakonzo places Nyamuhanga, the creator who made the snow (nzururu) at its apex.

Legend has it that Nzururu is the father of the spirits Kithasamba and Nyabibuya who are responsible for human life, well-being and continuity. Kithasamba, who is believed to live in the glaciated mountain peaks, is a giant force controlling the natural environment and the lives of all of mountain people.

The Bakonzo interpret the snow as the frozen sperm of Kithasamba, who carries out the fertilisation of earth and Bakonzo society by the yearly snowmelt, which sustains the rivers flowing down the mountains.

With such a strong connection to the park, it is important to sensitise the communities about the need to safeguard the world heritage site, using conservation-friendly cultural beliefs, values and norms.



Muhindo Fortunate | Age: 22 years
District: Kasese
Occupation: Student at uganda christian university, pursuing a bachelor's of law degree
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Hobbies: Travelling, adventure, listening to podcasts
Role model: The former Tourism Queen of rwenzori 2022 queen Kenya Sarah Ilusoke because of her passion to create positive impact in uganda and her commitment to environmental



Masika Beatrice Byakutaga | Age: 23
District: Bundibugyo
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: A bachelor of laws student at the uganda pentecostal university
Hobbies: Dancing, traveling, nature photography, baking
Role model: The reigning queen of rwenzururu kingdom, queen Ithungi agnes due to her advocacy to peace and reconciliation and her dedication to environmental conservation in our region rwenzori.



Muganda Shivon | Age: 22
District: Bundibugyo
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: Student at kampala international university western campus pursuing a diploma in clinical medicine
Hobbies: Photography, traveling, listening to music
Role model: Oprah Winfrey because she has impacted many people's lives especially women by building schools in different countries and also advocates for women emancipation.



Bismarck Amumpaire Moses,
Cluster Head
Miss Tourism Rwenzori



WHAT THE Mt Rwenzori Marathon MEANS TO UGANDA'S TOURISM

By Tony Mushoborozi

At 5am on August 24 this year, if you listened really carefully, you could hear the doors of every hotel Kasese town opening as over 3000 marathoners emerged to warm up for the big race. Two days earlier, every hotel room in Kasese had been booked and tents pitched in the town's empty lots. The night before, these visitors had descended on Kasese, eating all the street food they could find and drinking every beverage available. Walking in Kasese town the night of August 23, one could literally feel the vibrations of joy in the air.

Now the day that everyone had waited for for a whole year had come. This would be the first ever race since the Mt Rwenzori Marathon was internationally certified in April this year, making it the first ever Ugandan marathon that is internationally recognized and the only one in the country where winners could qualify for international races. The excitement was literally tangible.

At 5am, as the marathoners jumped onto their buses to travel to the starting point at the equator crossing 21 kilometers away, the PA system crackled to life at the finish line in Kasese Town as organizers prepared to receive

the first marathoners to cross the finish line. Emergency services polished up their first aid kits at the finish line and trucks of bottled water were dispatched to different points on the track.

By 6am that morning, the streets of Kasese were lined with the towns people ready to cheer their visitors on. Kasese lies in the center of a tourist hot spot. To the south is Queen Elizabeth National Park that is famous for the tree climbing lions among other attractions. To the North is the Rwenzori Mountains and to the East Kibale National Park. The towns people are used to seeing visitors but the marathon brings a different kind of aura to the town. And so when you walked around the town that morning, you saw joy on people's faces. And as the first marathoners started arriving at the finish line around 8am, they cheered them like they knew them personally. Because Kasese people are very welcoming people.

Why

UGANDA SHOULD TARGET RELIGIOUS TOURISM.

Every year on June 3, Uganda attracts over 25million faith-based tourists, or simply known as pilgrims, from all walks of life who come to commemorate the Martyrs Day at the Namugongo shrine found in Wakiso district, in central Uganda.

This massive event, the biggest in East Africa, leaves many spirituals always reflecting on the complex relationship between the origins of civilisation and religion. The success of this year's religious event that went unhitched underscored Uganda's commitment to promote UN Tourism's theme of "Tourism and Peace" as spirituals from across the divide thronged Namugongo Shrine, headlined by the President of Uganda Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

Uganda has been a religious country right from the time her natives believed in their diverse traditional beliefs before the 19th century Pre-independence introduction of different religious forms were brought by the Arab traders, Christian Missionaries and European explorers on our soils.

One can ably argue that the introduced religious forms continue to shape Uganda today and some native religions have since gone extinct.

Today in Uganda, 99.8% of the population is Christian. The largest Christian group is Roman Catholic at 39.3%, followed by Anglican at 32%, and Pentecostal Christians at 11.1%. The census reports Muslims constitute 14% of the population, 1.5% Seventh-Day Adventists, 0.1% Orthodox, 0.1% native religions and 0.2% non-believer.

Hence the need for growing religious tourism as a niche product among the

Today in Uganda, 99.8% of the population is Christian. The largest Christian group is Roman Catholic at 39.3%, followed by Anglican at 32%, and Pentecostal Christians at 11.1%. The census reports Muslims constitute 14% of the population, 1.5% Seventh-Day Adventists, 0.1% Orthodox, 0.1% native religions and 0.2% non-believer.

Hence the need for growing religious tourism as a niche product among the successful wildlife-based tourism industry, including biodiversity, quintessential landscapes, and a cultural history.

The evolution of religious tourism in Uganda is typically centered on the natives' resistance to foreign religions that birthed the Uganda Martyrs infamous slaughtering.

Where Religious tourism comes in

From the very beginning of human settlement, pilgrimage has been a fundamental element of society.

On the international scene, most of the world's great religious centers, past and present, have been destinations for pilgrimages - think of the Vatican, Mecca, Jerusalem, Bodh Gaya (where Buddha was enlightened), or Cahokia (the enormous Native American complex near St. Louis).

They are monuments for spiritual travelers, who often travelled great distances, to gawk at and be stirred by such sites. What it suggests is that the human sense of the sacred - and the human love of a good spectacle - may have given rise to civilization itself. By developing pilgrimage tourism, the numbers of tourists coming in Uganda might increase.

The 2023 Tourism performance report indicated that, among other areas, international/inbound tourism in Uganda recovered by 82.6% of the pre-pandemic levels. Since the increase in arrivals were from mainland Africa (1,136,216 at 89.2%) and growth in the country's traditional overseas source markets such as UK, USA and India, Ugandan tourism sector can tap into that age-old travel product that requires a powerful touch by increasing its focus on marketing religious events and improving on the infrastructure.

According to the Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Hon Tom

Butime, Uganda has set an ambitious plan to increase tourism sector's earning to sh5bn for the next four years. This can be as well be achieved through developing new tourism products, conserving and diversifying product range as per the National Development Plan III 2020/21 and 2024/25.

That is why it was exciting when the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda launched the Martyrs Trail that starts from Munyonyo Shrine where the Uganda Martyrs Catholic Minor Basilica sits and heads all the way to the two major shrines at Namugongo.

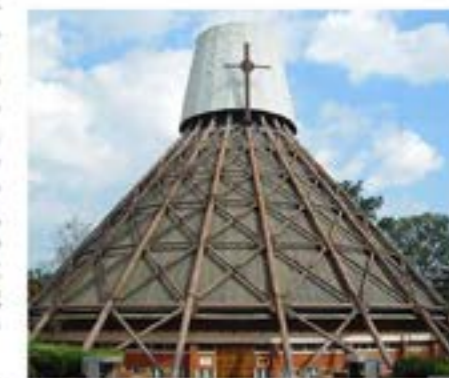
This year, the Minor Basilica at the shrine received quite good attention from foreign pilgrims who came all the way from DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Burundi. It is here that Kabaka Mwanga II stood and passed a judgment to execute of 23 Christian converts' between 1865 and 1887.

This historic place, where Kabaka Mwanga II's palace sat, was the starting point of an arduous and tormentuous journey.

In a bid to boost religious tourism in the country, Tourism consultant Herbert Byaruhanga, said at the launch that they have trained over 50 religious guides and over 200 were to be trained to carry tourism-leisure based activities such as cycling and guided walks on the trail, so as to dive deep in the journeys of the various martyrs and how they met their deaths.

This can enable visiting tourists to stay longer hence increasing the economic impact on the communities around the monuments and sites on the trails.

Uganda's rich cultural heritage, diverse wildlife, and unique natural landscapes, which have positioned the country as a premier destination worldwide, can also make use of religious tourism.



Northern Region:

The vibrant and scenic region that has seen it all.

The northern region is to be represented by Lakaraber Giovanna, Shalom Aloba and Lucky Bianca Alino at the Miss Tourism Uganda to be held at Kampala Serena Hotel. The northern region is home to a rich cultural heritage and history. It was also the region that was beset by a decade-long civil war orchestrated by the Lord's Resistance Army that claimed thousands of lives and displaced many from their homesteads. It is why today, stakeholders have asked for immediate investment in tourism infrastructure across key sites in Northern Uganda.

Last month, the Parliamentary Committee on Tourism, Trade, and Industry called for immediate investment in tourism infrastructure across key sites in Northern Uganda. In their report presented during plenary sitting in Gulu City on Friday, August 30, the Committee Deputy Chairperson who doubles as the Northern Uganda Youth Representative, Hon. Boniface Okot highlighted that many of the sites like the Barlonyo Massacre Site in Lira District, Abok Massacre Site in Oyam District, and Sir Samuel Baker's Fort in Gulu are in dire need of development to attract both domestic and international tourists.

Okot said, "The state of infrastructure at these sites is concerning. Roads leading to the sites are almost

impassable, and the lack of basic facilities such as electricity, water, and sanitation is a major deterrent to visitors."

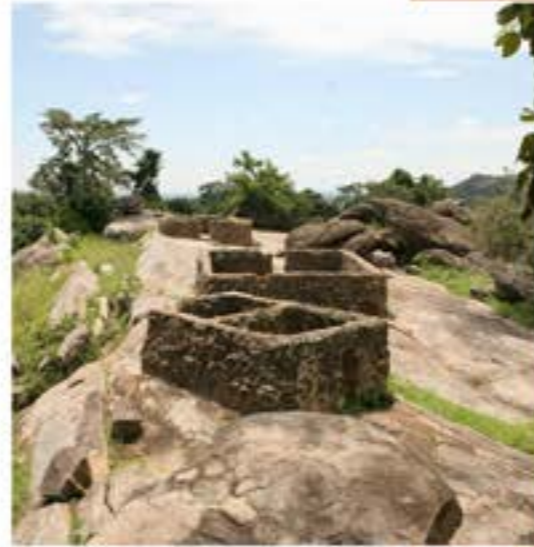
One of the key recommendations of the report is the collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities and other stakeholders to ensure that critical infrastructure is developed. This includes improving road networks and providing essential utilities at the sites.

The committee also underscored the importance of enhancing the visitor experience by introducing captivating features at the sites.

"For sites like the Barlonyo Massacre Site and Abok Massacre Site, the absence of graphic images and artefacts that depict the tragic events makes it difficult for visitors to connect with the history," the report noted. In addition to infrastructure development, the committee urged the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities to expedite the process of collecting and documenting the rich verbal history associated with these sites.

The report warns that the loss of individuals who possess this knowledge will be a significant blow to the preservation of Uganda's cultural heritage.

"We cannot afford to lose this invaluable history. It is imperative that the ministry acts swiftly to document



and preserve the stories and memories associated with these sites," Okot added.

The committee's findings also revealed a lack of legal ownership of land on which some of the tourist sites are situated posing a risk of third-party interests.

The report recommends that the ministry partners with relevant government institutions to expedite the processing of land titles to secure the sites for future generations. The committee also emphasised that with the right investments, Northern Uganda's tourism sector has the potential to significantly contribute to the country's economic growth.

Following the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency in Northern Uganda, several massacre places have been turned into memorials where relatives, friends, the community of the deceased go to honour those that were killed by the LRA. The LRA war that lasted for over two decades saw thousands killed and millions displaced.

Some of the other sites in Acholi include, Lukodi Memorial in Gulu and Odek Massacre.

Oyam District Woman Representative, Hon. Santa Alum stated that at Barlonyo, the site is poorly managed with very poor roads and sanitation facilities.

"When you reach there, there are no pictures to depict what happened. The minister is here; I hope you have ever gone to the genocide memorial in Rwanda, we can start from there. There is no fence and people are vandalising the place," she said.

Northern Region Delegates



Lakaraber Giovanna | Age: 20
Title: Miss Tourism Uganda 2024 Finalist
Occupation: Student for law in Karamoja University
Hobbies: Making new friends, adventures, traveling, playing games, shopping, watching
Role Model: My mother is my role model. She is loving, caring, supportive and selfless above all she has always been and still is a stepping stone for many people in their quest to achieve their life goals.
Advocacy: To inspire people to explore and appreciate diversity of cultures and destinations world wide through creating awareness and promoting advocating for sustainable tourism practices to ensure positive impact on local economies and environment.



Aloba Shalom | Age: 25 years
Education: Student Makerere University Pursuing Bachelor's of science in Tourism and Hospitality Management.
Title: Miss Tourism Uganda 2024 Finalist
Hobbies: Travelling, singing, staying around children
Role Model: My mum is my role model, she is a model woman who taught me humility and how to keep positive in every situation but forgetting about God in everything.
Advocacy: Need to advocate for sustainable tourism in Northern Uganda, Uganda and in Africa as a whole is my reason for contesting.



Alino Lucky Bianca | Age: 22
Occupation: A student at Lira university pursuing Bachelor's of Information Technology (IT)
Title: Miss Tourism Uganda 2024 Finalist
Hobbies: Singing, dancing, content creation and Playing Golf.
Role Model: Justice Tinti. The second black woman to win Miss Universe which is inspiring and her passage towards inspiring women take up leadership spaces in the community because each woman is amazing in her own way.
Reason for contesting: To promote Sustainable Agotourism through integration of emerging technology trends.



Gloria Alele
 Cluster Head
 Miss Tourism Northern Region



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West Nile Region:

Enjoying Nang Nang fish as you explore West Nile's untapped tourism gems

Show me someone who doesn't love some crispy fried fish, and I will show you someone who doesn't like fish, period. But not all fried fish are equal. The delicacy that is Nang-Nang fish found only along Albert Nile River in Pakwach district, West Nile, has no match for a tasty snack on the road soon after crossing the Pakwach Bridge. Crisp and crunchy, tiny in size but matured, most times a blend of remarkable golden and silverfish in colour, step out of the vehicle and buy some fingerlings from the roadside vendors you will meet as soon after you have crossed the bridge. Served on the move. The Nang-nang fish is only found along the White Nile possibly because it is less saline than the Victoria Nile. Albert Nile is the upper Nile River in north-western Uganda. The fish is deep fried from silver-grey to golden brown and is consumed a lot among the Alur people. Unique and tasty, that is what West Nile offers when it comes to potential tourism sites. West Nile sub-region is one of the three regions in Northern Uganda, lying mainly to the west of the River Nile and comprises nine districts which

include Arua, Adjumani, Koboko, Maracha, Moyo, Pakwach, Nebbi, Yumbe, and Zambo. This year West Nile will be represented by queens **Patricia Faith Aseru, Shamirah Awekonimungu** and **Sandra Munduru Anati** at the Miss Tourism Uganda-The Pearl Of Africa Grand Finale at Kampala Serena Hotel (on September 14). The theme this year is "Tourism and Peace". West Nile sub-region is bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo to the south and west, South Sudan to the North, and Albert Nile to the East. West Nile has various tourist attractions in the mentioned districts and different wildlife species in the region. The region is blessed with tourist attractions like the Ajai game reserve, Miridua falls, Barifa Forest, Biku the smallest chapel, places of worship, and mountains, among others.

Attractions and activities:

Ajai Game Reserve

Is a small conservation protected area that, in the past, had a large number of Rhinos in Northeast Uganda dominated by a large island surrounded by seasonally flooded swamps and wooded savanna. It is located on the western



bank of the White Nile approximately 40km east of Arua. The reserve was gazetted in 1965. The reserve harbors wildlife species like the Uganda kobs, Sitalunga, Hippos, Black and White colobus, Warthog, Buffaloes, Dikdik, Monitor Lizards, Olive Baboons, Zebras, Puff adders, Foxes, Pythons, and Green Snakes. Most of the swamp is flooded during the rainy months (June to January) but dries out from February to May.

Biku, one of the tiniest church in the world

This is the smallest church in Uganda that accommodates 3 Christians including the priest. The chapel measures a width of 2.5 meters, and a height of 8ft. The church was founded by the retired Archbishop His Lordship Henry Luke Orombi with a Korean pastor called Song in 1996 and discovered by two United Nations workers Solomon and Miburu while driving up the Biku Hill.

It is believed that those who come here are able to meet with God, especially by having a vision for their future and strengthening their faith. The chapel has nine prayer points that the founders thought would create a comfortable atmosphere for the congregation to pray and meditate on God's word.

There is a custodian at the chapel who also acts as a guide and takes visitors around the different prayer points.



Miridua falls:

Located on River Oluffe 20km on Arua-Koboko road and 20 minutes out of Arua town. It is said that the falls were named after one Chief made a declaration in 1956 following a village assembly that was held at Amibidrio parish. He had asked the locals to come up with a name for the falls and they decided on Iyi kuru which means "rough flowing water" going by the magnificent and roaring water that flows out of the rocks. Today the place is picturesque and attractive. A visit to the falls is so memorable.



Barifa forest.

This large forest with a cool breeze was gazetted in 1948 and situated at the southeast of Arua hill, near Arua City. For those with a knack for forest therapy, this large features compact grass formations, and a large number of tree species typical of the area; it also the potential to be birder's paradise what with a number of bird species.

MOUNTAIN WATI: Found in the Terigo district known as the tallest in West Nile though it lies in a lower area above sea level. According to Mythology, that is where the Lugbara origin started. Mt.Wati was inhabited by big snakes/serpents with Mysterious snake lights for trapping prey at night. Dribidu was the first Lugbara to take his leprous wife to be healed at the mountain. Wildlife species found there include the porcupines and tourists who go there can take the opportunity for mount climbing and also sightseeing because on the top of the mountain you can able to view the various homesteads around the mountain.

MOUNTAIN LIRU: Is found on the border between Koboko and Maracha and it has a customized view when you sit on the Komendaku rock. On top of Liru there is a crater lake believed to connect to the River Nile underground, sometimes when it rains heavily you see the mountain overflowing into the green forest around its foot. Mt. Liru is the third mountain of the West Nile and the panoramic view on Arua Hill could give you a glimpse of two of the Big tree and the circle that binds the watershed plateau. Tourists who climb write their names on the rocks while they take them as souvenirs and for research. Wildlife species found at Mt. Liru include Red monkeys, Rock badges, and

porcupines.

Physical Features

This area of rivers and riverine swamp borders the River Nile and two tributaries, the Ala and Acha. The reserve includes a number of swamp islands including Ajai island formed by gradual deposition of soil from the hills by the Ala River Vegetation

Wooded savanna and grassland communities of Loudetia-Eragrostis and Hyparrhenia. There is a variety of vegetation on the island due to its gradual formation. The older eastern sector has a mosaic of savanna forest and sandy plains, areas of thick forest, rain forest, and open grass plains with Imperata (a grass occurring elsewhere only in the highlands which are the source of the Ala River). The western sector is covered in dense elephant grass Pennisetum with clumps of wild date plum Phoenix.

Fauna

The migration of animals onto the island during the dry season is necessitated by a lack of forage in the surrounding dry scrubland. Mammals include Hippopotamus Hippopotamus amphibius along the Nile, Uganda Kob Kobus kob thomasi, hartebeest Aelaphus buselaphus, bushbuck Tragelaphus scriptus, and waterbuck Kobus elipsiprymus. Black and white colobus Colobus guereza and baboon Papio sp. have been recorded.

Conservation Management

There are guard posts at Ogoko, Iriemve and Inde. Iriemve and Inde were not in use in 1980. Zoning None

Disturbances or Deficiencies The small size of the reserve results in many animals continually moving in and out into open areas in the vicinity where they are subject to poaching. The threatened northern white rhinoceros Ceratotherium simum cottoni has not been seen here since the war in 1979 and is assumed to have been wiped out.

Tourism Facilities
The reserve is managed by Uganda Wildlife Safaris Ltd who offer sport hunting photographic safari



West Nile Region Delegates



Aseru Faith Patricia | Age: 22
District: Terigo
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: Student at makerere university business school pursuing a degree in tourism
Hobbies: playing basketball, traveling, cooking, making new friends.
Role model: Katie George (Miss Kentucky and a legendary sports personality) her ability to multitask in sports activity and efficiently in pageantry.
Advocacy: The opportunity and platform to show my talent, empower ladies, and promote environmental sustainability



Awekonimungu Shamirah | Age: 21
District: Pakwach
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: student at international university of east africa, pursuing a bachelor's degree in architecture
Hobbies: dancing, fashion modelling, reading, traveling
Role model: Aletch Mariam because she has exclusively used her skills of motor mechanics to fend for her family and inspire many women not to be limited by their gender they are just as capable as men
Advocacy: I want incorporate technology in nature and cultural experiences



Anati Sandra Munduru | Age: 20
District: Terigo
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: student at uganda christian university kampala campus pursuing a bachelor of laws
Hobbies: Watching series, playing basketball, singing, photography
Role model: My mom because she is hardworking and resilient.
Advocacy: My passion for travel and tourism and inspiring young girls to find their leadership abilities.



Sam Akwaka
Cluster Head
Miss Tourism West Nile Region



MISS TOURISM GALLERY

A snap if events and moments with Miss Tourism Uganda.



Karamoja Region:

Karamoja's airport will connect the sub-region to the world the more

The Karamoja sub-region in northeastern Uganda is one interesting region for any adventure and cultural enthusiast. For adventure seekers, hiking mountains such as Moroto, Napak, Morungole and Kadam has been such a bucket-list fulfilling experience.

For culture, well Karamojong are people who are renown to still their ancient beliefs. You only need to visit the region to immerse yourself in their culture in the districts of Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Kaabong, Kotido, Amudat, Abim and Napak. At the Miss Tourism Uganda - The Pearl of Africa grand finale on Saturday 14, to be held at Kampala Serena Hotel, the region will be represented by Rachel Akidi, Jacinta Lokeris and Anastasia Nattyang. Will one of them get the National tiara? We will find out. The theme of the show is "Tourism and Peace", the girls will have to highlight to everyone that Karamoja is safe to and secure to visit at anytime during the finale.

We all know the Karamoja sub-region

is one of the most remote parts of the country. That is why it was heralded as a bigger boost to the tourism sector when the government of Uganda signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United Arab Emirates' Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry to construct an international airport near the popular Kidepo Valley National Park. At the ceremony, presided over by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the Chairman of the Chamber Abdallah Sultan Al Owais promised to deliver excellent work, much to everyone's delight.

The state minister of tourism Martin Mugarra posted, "To host this project in the Karenga Community Conservation Area. The airport will create access and transformation of Karamoja and her communities". For years the major attraction to this area was Kidepo Valley National Park which has some of the most stunning landscapes and the only place to see Cheetahs and Wild Dogs in Uganda. Most tourists would fly in and out only spending time in the environs of the Park. But this has now changed.

There are plenty of activities and experiences to do of varying durations and exertion levels, all you need is an



open mind and sense of adventure.

Kidepo Valley is home to one of Africa's most scenic safari parks.

The local communities around the park include pastoral Karamojong people, similar to the Maasai of Kenya, and the IK, a hunter-gatherer tribe whose survival is threatened.

Kidepo is Uganda's most isolated national park, but the few who make the long journey north through the wild

frontier region of Karamoja would agree that it is also the most magnificent, for Kidepo ranks among Africa's finest wildernesses.

From Apoka, in the heart of the park, a savannah landscape extends far beyond the gazetted area, towards horizons outlined by distant mountain ranges.

During the dry season, the only permanent water in the park is found in wetlands and remnant pools in the broad Narus Valley near Apoka. These seasonal oases, combined with the open, savannah terrain, make the Narus Valley the park's prime game viewing location especially with its dense populations of Lion, Buffalo, Elephant and many similar ungulates.

Kidepo's elephant population has surged from around 200 in the mid 1990's to between 650 and 1000 today. The African Buffalo population is now estimated at 10,000-15,000. The Rothschild Giraffe is very notable, breeding more than 50 individuals from the bottleneck of the mid 1990's population of three and supplemented several from translocation.

The bird checklist of over 476 species with the common Ostrich, secretary bird, northern carmine bee eater, little green bee eater, Abyssinian scimitar bill and many more colorful and visible species.

Other activities to be done in Karamoja

Mount Moroto hiking and trekking.

The mountains of Karamoja are an exciting alternative to the more strenuous climbs in East Africa with many of the same attractions, a milder climate, lower elevation and requires no special equipment or technical experience. The expeditions are always a mix of rich encounters with Uganda's highland people, breathtaking views and unique sights along the trails and unique campsites where you can enjoy the sunset, the stars and sunrise over the planes of Karamoja.

Mount Moroto is an ancient volcano raising out of the semi-arid planes of Karamoja forming the highest mountain in the region with numerous peaks offering days of adventure.

The night before the hike is spent in Moroto town and is guided by experienced local guides. Porters are available on request. Food, water, snacks and camping gear included. The Karamojong highlands in eastern Uganda is an area of historical volcanic activity that has left region of rugged savannah and mountains as a result. Other mountains one can also dare conquer include Mount Kadam (3,063m), Morungole (2,749m) and Napak (2,538m).

For Karamoja culture Experience, one has to depart in the early morning for a scenic and cultural walks through the valley of Mt Moroto, the highest mountain of Karamoja. The mountain is inhabited by one of Uganda's smallest tribe, the Tepeth. They are the indigenous inhabitants of the Karamoja planes that escaped into the mountains when the Karimojong settled on their lands. A visitor can get to participate in the daily life of their hosts, the Manyatta (village) to immerse themselves in Karamojong culture or spend the night with the Karamojong warriors/herders guarding their cattle.



Karamoja Region Delegates



Retyang Anastasia | Age: 23
District: Kotido
Title: Miss Tourism Uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: student pursuing bachelor's degree in procurement and logistics management at Makerere University business school.
Hobbies: travelling, reading, cooking
Role model: Agnes Ineza Louisa (sister) this is because she is so hardworking, resilient and a compassionate lady.
Advocacy: I am passionate about tourism, I am going to use this platform to advocate for gender equality. The need to network with different individuals and meet importantly I was inspired by the theme tourism and peace.



Akidi Rachel | Age: 25
District: Abim
Title: Miss Tourism Uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: Community manager and trainer, youth for tourism africa.
Hobbies: traveling, reading, making new friends.
Role model: CEO JTB, Ms. Lily Abarwa because she is enthusiastic about sustainable tourism development, destination marketing and wildlife conservation.
Advocacy: I am inspired by the cultural diversity of my region and Uganda, I want to be an informed tourism ambassador for destination Uganda. For my personal development and growth.



Lokeris Jacinta | Age: 22
District: Moroto
Title: Miss Tourism Uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: Student diploma in procurement and logistics for year 1a semester at Kampala university.
Hobbies: Read, making, traveling, making new friends, dancing and reading.
Role model: Mr. Luyis Ivan, he empowers and celebrates the role of women in promoting Uganda's tourism industry through pagantry.
Advocacy: I want to be a role model for young girls and inspire them to make their pursue their dreams. I want to be an ambassador of tourism and showcase Uganda's beautiful nature.



Assumpta Ojar
District: Head
Miss Tourism Karamoja Region

Nyero Rock Paintings

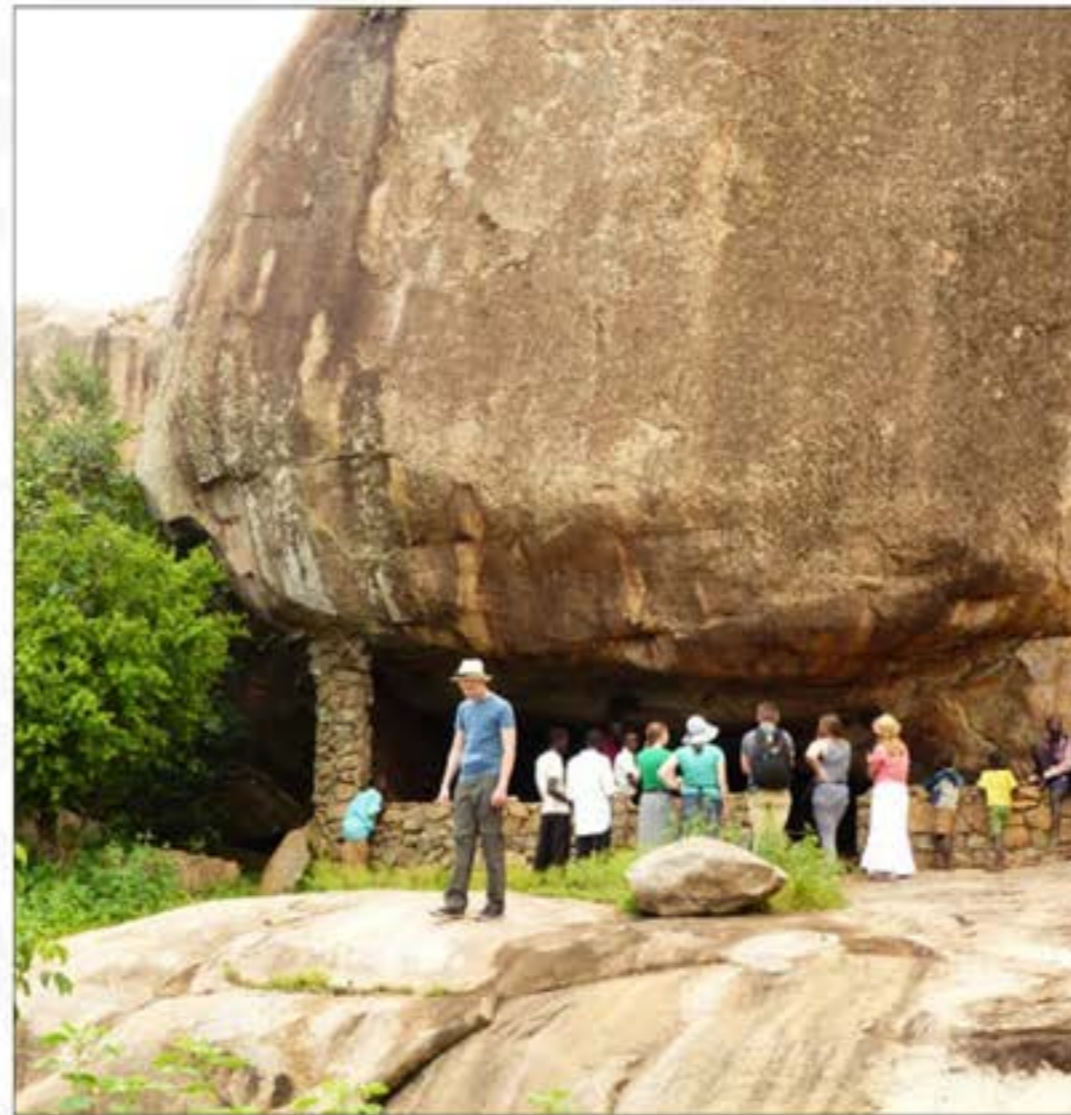
The majestic museum of prehistoric art in Teso sub-region

There is every reason to get on the road and visit the Nyero rocks paintings found in Kumi District, Eastern Uganda, about 250 kms from Kampala that date back to the iron age.

These rock sites are such a marvel and geological wonderland of uncanny rock formations lapped by lush vegetation. They comprise the three tiered rock shelter with primitive paintings on their inner surfaces, and since this year's eventual winner promised to promote Teso sites in her reign to the international world, we should brace for a smooth ride.

The Miss Tourism Uganda contestants 2024/25 representing Teso in the grand finale are Betty Acam Okello (winner) from Ngora district, Tirzah Georgina Amuge (1st runner up) also from Ngora and Lisa Tino Aleni (2nd runner up) from Katakwi. The event was held at Cloud9 in Soroti City under the theme "Tourism and Peace."

We are definitely sure they will be the first to urge a traveler visit this iconic sight. Nyero rock Paintings are unique pre-historic pictographs (paintings) and petroglyphs



Nyero 1 has a series of geometric and abstract paintings which may have been used for sacred rituals such as rain-making and or fertility. The art is believed to be of Twa hunter-gatherers who may be of who may have made those images between 1000-2000 years ago.

The other rock art sites found in Teso include Mukongoro rock art site in Kumi district, Kapir rock art site in Ngora district, Kamuge rock art site in Bukedia district and Kakoro rock art site in Butebo district. Here, the first storytellers painted the most ancient visual stories ever found in Uganda. The pictographs include fauna and flora, people, and geometric patterns.

Tour guide William Opio says, "Most of these paintings were made by a group of people known as the Batwa before the Iteso migrated here and took over. All these drawings have different meanings. You can see the circles representing the sun. As you know different tribes have different beliefs which are based on nature. So it is believed long before the Christians brought religion, they were worshiping the sun and this was their god of the sun. The other painting symbol is of a crocodile. Remember this whole place was a big swamp that had crocodiles that used to be a problem to the early dwellers, who used to be hunter-gatherers and fishermen."

Francis Okerenya, an elder says goes ahead to say the paintings indicate that God was here. People still visit these sites and and pray from there. Because they say God rested here.

Opio says "These sites have attracted people over the years to learn about history. This is Teso's cultural site where Iteso have performed rituals for a long time and still do today.

The site is recognized under UNESCO and also under the department of Uganda Museum in the Ministry Of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities.

Access: all sites can be access by road from capital city. The sites are open to the public (at a fee) from 8:00am to 5:00pm (East African Time) every day. Nyero rock paintings has a Resource Centre with a Canteen, gift shop, ample parking space, safe camping grounds, clean tap water and electricity.



(engravings) mostly geometric which date back to 3000 years and are among the oldest most extensive records of human imagination on earth. They are awesome and have been a source of attraction in Teso sub-region since their discovery by a researcher in 1945.

While Uganda is home to more than 20 rock art site, legend in Teso has it that the Iteso from the Igoria clan, who were known to be expert architects, engineers and painters can be attributed to the paintings.

A statement from einositesokopiten.org, a Teso group that documents Teso's history and culture says, "These were 4th generation wave of Iteso who were talented at crafts. Their leader Otikiri was known to be an expert architect and engineering. Otikiri would later transform his entire clan into builders and crafts men and painters. Nyero Rock paintings is attributed to his descendants; the aditai, stools, slings and bead-neck decoration for women is attributed to his genius. Their women were particularly known for thatching houses well."

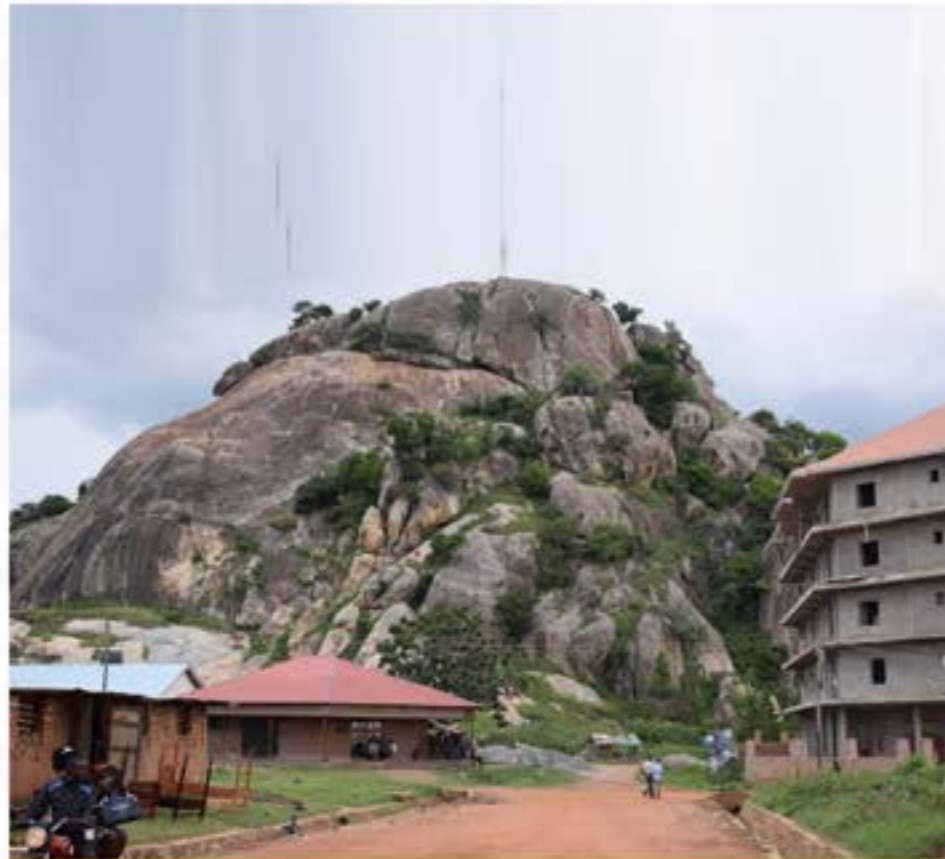


Other Tourism sites to visit in Teso sub-region include:

Teso is blessed to have a range of historical and heritage sites. Some of them include:

Soroti Rock

This is an iconic granite stone that serves as the face of Soroti City (eastern Uganda). It stands 1730 metres tall above sea level. And can be accessed anytime. For hiking enthusiasts, better move along with your camera as the rock has as a stunning panoramic view of the surrounding area.



Kumi Hospital cave.

It has an underground chamber which were once used as shelters during times of war. It is also intriguing to know that it has connection to WWII where people sought refuge



Lake Opeta and Bisina

Lake Bisina obtains its name from Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia state) from where the Iteso are believed to have migrated from. It is a freshwater lake located 15kms from Kumi and Kumi-Soroti highway in eastern Uganda, endowed with wide-range of flora and fauna that earned it a spot at a Ramsar World Heritage Site. It is also a narrow and shallow lake which is fringed by a swamp with a big supporting number of localized bird species including the legendary shoebill (Esukusuk) and rare papyrus Gonolek, white-winged warbler, pygmy goose, lesser Jacana and fox weaver, and White-backed Duck making the place a great Birding destination. Lake Bisina is also connected upstream via a wetland to Lake Opeta and drains into Lake Kyoga.

Teso Region Delegates



Acam Betty Okello Mary | Age: 20
District: Ngora
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: Student of public administration and community development at umi second year
Hobbies: Travelling, dancing and reading
Role model: Speaker of uganda Anita Anette Among due to her determination, confidence and resilience as a leader
Advocacy: To advocate for inclusion in domestic tourism, tourism for all for the better of uganda.



Aleni Lisa Tino | Age: 23
District: Katakwi
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: Student at kyambogo university perusing a bachelors in adult and community education
Hobbies: Dancing and listening to music.
Role model: Angiro betty the probation officer katakwi district, her zeal and hard work towards reducing gender based violence in our community inspires me
Advocacy: I want to use this platform to share my story as a girl that once dropped out of school to inspire the girl child that might be in the same situation to believe in themselves and work hard to build a bright future for themselves.



Amuge Georgina Tirzah | Age: 20
District: Ngora
Title: Miss tourism uganda 2024 finalist
Occupation: Student of information technology at isbat university title
Hobbies: Singing and dancing swimming, traveling and reading novels
Role model: Omale Caroline because she never let's any situation bring her down and her entrepreneurial skills that she has used to help people in our community by providing jobs for them



Mr Oguena & Mrs Jessica Aanyu Oguena
 Cluster Head
 Miss Tourism Teso Region



#SavorTheTaste

BELLA
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