



PEARLS OF UGANDA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact in Uganda:

Chi Lo, Pearls of Uganda

chi@pearlsofuganda.org

Office phone: +256 (0) 312-266-653/4

Contact in USA:

Matt Guttentag, The Undiscovered Travel Collection

m.guttentag@solimarinternational.com

+1 (202) 518-6192

NEW WEBSITE BRINGS FRESH LOOK AT AFRICAN HOLIDAYS BEYOND WILDLIFE

Pearls of Uganda discovers cultural community attractions in Uganda

KAMPALA, Uganda 31 May 2011 – This month, the Uganda Community Tourism Association, in partnership with the USAID-Sustainable Tourism in the Albertine Rift project, has unveiled a new website, [Pearls of Uganda](http://www.pearlsofuganda.org). The website features a collection of unique and socially responsible travel experiences throughout Uganda and its culturally diverse communities.

Edwin Muzahura, Head of Marketing and PR for the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) says "The Pearls of Uganda marketing program is an exciting addition to the niche tourism product offerings in Uganda. Offering authentic cultural tourism packages helps differentiate our destination from neighboring Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda. When visitors come for a safari, birdwatching or to see our famous mountain gorillas, they can stay a few extra days and become immersed in local cultural experiences as well."

Pearls are authentic cultural community tourism attractions and experiences located throughout Uganda, the country described by Winston Churchill as the "Pearl of Africa." Through the website, tour operators and travelers alike may design their own cultural vacation packages. With information made easy, they can be sure to visit these pearls to for real cultural encounters that will be an inspiring and memorable addition to any Ugandan wildlife safari.

Travelers can browse through the myriad of Pearls in the [directory](#), or they can search by the type of experience they are seeking, from accommodation to tours to activities, or they may search by specific UCOTA-recognized destinations within Uganda. Among the options for these community encounters are drumming performances and lessons, medicinal plant demonstrations, handcraft workshops and shopping, community-run accommodations and restaurants; travelers can seek out authentic Ugandan experiences, from cultural performances, village walks, and

even unique birding opportunities in the UNESCO World Heritage Listed Site of the Rwenzori Mountains.

Samples of some Pearls:

- [Buhoma Village Walk](#): The walk starts at a handcraft shop with handcraft demonstration, run by the community's women's group, followed by a performance by the Batwa, a former forest people. The next stop on the tour is with a traditional healer, who not only treats the sick, but also uses his knowledge to educate about and conserve various medicinal plants. The tour then stops by the primary school to see what life is like as a rural child in Buhoma, ending with a tasting of the various types of bananas seen on the tour!
- [Boomu Women's Group Bandas](#): For an authentic community experience, spend a night in the grass-thatched bandas built in traditional Ugandan style, sample some delicious Ugandan cuisine prepared by local women, or relax by the open-air bar under the stars. Set amongst beautiful tropical gardens filled with butterflies and weaverbirds, this community project began as a craft group and has since grown to over 40 women from nearby villages who aim to provide an education for their children, and to reduce poverty and malnutrition in their communities.
- [Nyundo King Bakyrara's Waterfall Trail](#): Join the Nyundo Community on a hike along the Congolese border and enjoy spectacular scenery surrounding the King's bath, a waterfall where only kings may bathe. Along the way, the tour passes a blacksmith, a waragi (a local, homemade banana beer) distillery, a cattle farm and many other gems within the community. Hear stories about life in the Nyundo Community from village elders, set in the backdrop of the spectacular Munyaga River.

The Pearls of Uganda is a standard designed for community based tourism enterprises throughout Uganda. The following community enterprises and lodges have been recognized by the [USAID-STAR](#) program and UCOTA, and will continue to grow as more communities join the program.

Cultural experiences and nearby lodges and operators that can be combined into itineraries:

Murchison Falls National Park

1. [Boomu Women's Group Nature Walk](#)
2. [Boomu Women's Group Bandas](#)
3. [Budongo Eco Lodge](#)
4. [GeoLodges Nile Safari Lodge](#)
5. [Mubako Cultural Campfire Performances](#)
6. [Paraa Safari Lodge](#)
7. [Red Chilli Rest Camp](#)
8. [Sambiya Lodge](#)
9. [Shoebill Campsite](#)
10. [Yebo Safari Camp](#)Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary

Queen Elizabeth National Park

11. [Katwe Salt Lake Tour](#)
12. [Katwe Village Tour](#)

13. [Kikorongo African ArtCraft Workshop](#)
14. [Kikorongo Equator Cultural Performers](#)
15. [GeoLodges Jacana Safari Lodge](#)
16. [Mweya Safari Lodge](#)
17. [Queen's Pavillion](#)
18. [Simba Safari Camp](#)

Rwenzori Mountains National Park

19. [Ruboni Community Camp](#)
20. [Ruboni Hill Walk](#)
21. [Ruboni Village Walk](#)
22. [Rwenzori Turaco View Nature Walk](#)
23. [Rwenzori Turaco View Village Walk](#)

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

24. [Buhoma Community Rest Camp](#)
25. [Buhoma Lodge](#)
26. [Buhoma Village Walk](#)
27. [Clouds Mountain Gorilla Lodge](#)
28. [Gorilla Safari Lodge](#)
29. [Nkuringo Cultural Centre Sessions \(NCC\)](#)
30. [Nkuringo Gorilla Camp](#)
31. [Nkuringo Village Walk \(NCDF\)](#)
32. [Nyundo Community Bandas](#)
33. [Nyundo King Bakyrara's Waterfall Trail](#)
34. [Nyundo Traditional Skills Trail](#)
35. [Rubuguri Village Walk \(NCC\)](#)
36. [Silverback Safari Lodge](#)
37. [Volcanoes Sarafis Bwindi Lodge](#)
38. [Wagtail Eco-Safari Camp](#)

Mgahinga Gorilla National Park:

39. [The Batwa Trail](#)
40. [Travelers Rest Hotel](#)
41. [Volcanoes Mount Gahinga Safari Lodge](#)

Other Destinations

42. [GeoLodges Rainforest Lodge, Mabira](#)
43. [Kibale Safari Lodge, Kibale National Park](#)
44. [Primate Lodge, Kibale National Park](#)

“Building on UCOTA’s 10 years of experience in working with these communities, we are very excited to have a comprehensive program that can help us strengthen and market the ‘Pearls.’ Pearls of Uganda is a fantastic way of connecting holidaymakers and independent travelers with these culturally rich community encounters,” says Executive Director Helen Lubowa.

About Pearls of Uganda

Pearls of Uganda are authentic cultural community attractions and experiences located throughout Uganda, the country described by Winston Churchill as the “Pearl of Africa”! No trip to Uganda is complete without a visit to these ‘pearls’ to experience real cultural encounters that will be an inspiring and memorable addition to your Ugandan wildlife safari. Cultural and community experiences include drumming performances and lessons, village walks, medicinal plant demonstrations, handcraft workshops and shopping, community-run accommodations, restaurants and more. Pearls of Uganda is supported by UCOTA, USAID-STAR and [leading tour operators and lodges](#) in Uganda. Visit: www.pearlsofuganda.org.

About the Uganda Community Tourism Association (UCOTA)

A finalist in the category of Best Initiative in Facilitating Small and Medium Enterprise Tourism Investment in the [2011 Africa Investor Awards](#), UCOTA exists to empower poor communities to improve their lives through community based tourism products (accommodations, guiding, and cultural performances). It spearheads community-based tourism development in Uganda in an attempt to ensure that the benefits of tourism stay as much as possible in the local community. UCOTA supports its members through capacity building and marketing of community tourism products. Visit: www.pearlsofuganda.org

About Uganda

Uganda is a land-locked country in East Africa that enjoys mild temperatures all year round. The country has long been a cultural melting pot, as evidenced by the existence of more than 30 different indigenous languages belonging to 5 distinct linguistic groups, and an equally diverse cultural mosaic of music, art and handicrafts. It is a country with fantastic natural scenery and a rich mosaic of tribes and cultures. The beauty of its landscapes and the friendliness of its people is what makes Uganda the Pearl of Africa.

###

For more details about Pearls of Uganda

E-mail:

Chi Lo: chi@pearlsofuganda.org

Matt Guttentag: info@undiscovered.travel

Call:

Chi Lo: +256 (0) 312-266-653/4 (Uganda)

Matt Guttentag: +1 (202) 518-6192 (USA)

Or visit our websites:

Pearls of Uganda: www.pearlsofuganda.org

Uganda Community Tourism Association: www.ucota.or.ug

USAID-STAR: www.star-uganda.org