

Kampala in Uganda: One of the most beautiful cities in Africa



Within splitting distance to Lake Victoria Kampala lies at an **altitude of 1,155 meters**. With approximately **1.5 million inhabitants**, and the seat of government it is the undisputed center of Uganda. An impressive skyline, streets with a **European flair**, **friendly people** and a vanishingly **low crime rate** make a visit to the capital to a real highlight of your trip to Uganda.

Kampala was **founded in the 19th Century**, when the king of Buganda had his seat here in the hills. The name "Kampala" originated from the British envoy Lord Captain Frederick Lugard. There were numerous **Impala-Antelopes** found here at that time. From the Luganda translation for "**hill of the Impala**", Kasozi ka Impala, the short form "Kampala" was developed. This term referred to the hills of present-day Old Kampala, on which the Capt Lugard built his fort.

Once the fort was established more and more people were attracted to the city. The town grew rapidly and expanded to **7 hills**. Today, referred to as the historical origins of Kampala: Mulago, Kololo, Kibuli, Rubaga, (Old) Kampala, Namirembe (Mulago), Makerere.

Each of the seven hills represents a predominant feature: On the hills Rubaga, Namirembe and Kibuli settled the central bodies of the three leading religious communities (Catholics, Protestants and Islam). Kololo / Nakasero form the Center for Public Administration and were the preferred residential areas of their employees. Makerere became the university campus and in Mulago settled health facilities. Interestingly, these identities remained until today.

Capital 1962



In 1906 Kampala was declared a town under UK law and it advanced into an **administrative municipality in 1949**. However it was in **1962** when it received the official status of a city. The British originally had their administrative headquarters in Entebbe and Kampala was only after an election to the capital of the free Uganda.

In the first decades the city grew steadily, had the **best University in East Africa** (Makerere University) and was an appeal to all the other African cities which was hard to surpass. During the civil war years under Obote and Amin, however, Kampala suffered heavily. Many buildings were

destroyed and the infrastructure completely broke down.

Back to the old beauty



But it has got back to its feet and began experiencing a renaissance since the beginning of the 90s. Today Kampala is **one of the most modern African cities** and awakens in many areas the European feeling: many **allees** and parks, **shops** and **hotels**, **bars** and **international restaurants**. And Kampala is also **one of the safest cities in Africa**.

The attractiveness, however also shows its dark side, because the **population is growing rapidly** and the **infrastructure is reaching its limits**. This particularly applies to the streets, which were initially designed for only one third of the current population, that traffic always breaks down during the peak hours.

Kampala and its surroundings offer sightseeing, city walks and day trips opportunities.

Related Links

- Who was [Captain Frederick Lord Lugard](#)
- Background information on the [Makerere University](#)
- The website of the [Makerere University](#)
- Who was [Milton Obote](#)?
- Who was [Idi Amin](#)?
- [Hotels and accomodation in Kampala, Uganda](#)

Some sightseeing opportunities



Bahai Temple

The only temple of this religion in Africa. A beautiful, peaceful place with a fantastic view over the city.

Related links

- More information on the [Bahai religion](#)



Kasubi Tombs

The Royal tombs of the Buganda kings Mutesa I, Mwanga II, Daudi Chwa II and Mutesa II in a huge tent built out of wood and straw. It is a [World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO](#)

Update 16th March 2010: This night the kasubi tombs burnt down. Uganda has lost one of its most important attractions.

Related links

- Background information about [Kasubi Tombs in Uganda](#)
- [Website about Kasubi Tombs](#)
- See photos from [burning Kasubi Tombs on "The Monitor"](#)



Kibuli Hill

This is an Islamic mosque, whose minaret offers a magnificent view of Kampala. One of the largest Islamic worship Uganda.

Nakasero Hill

All Saints Cathedral, the Anglican Cathedral Church

Related links

- See the [website of All Saints Cathedral](#)



Nakasero Market

The largest market in Kampala city, where mainly African foods are sold. But also Mediterranean products can be found here.



Namirembe Cathedral

Also known under the name of St. Paul's Cathedral, it is the oldest (Protestant) church in the whole of Africa, whose construction began in 1890.



Namugongo: Martyrs shrine

Martyrs' Shrine - just as the Kasubi Tombs - a structure with cultural and historical significance for the Baganda; Memorial of the massacre in 1886 of a group of about 20 people who had converted to Christianity; Meeting point of an annual commemoration on 3 June.

Related links

- Find more information about the [Martyrs' Shrine](#)



National Museum

Exhibitions on Geography, Culture and History of Uganda. It is the oldest museum of its kind in Africa.

Related links

- Find pictures of the [National museum](#)



National Theatre

Wide program from traditional to modern theatre, concerts, dance ensembles



Ndere-Troup

A well known dance and music group on the African continent, whose members are from the many Ugandan ethnic groups; accordingly, is their varied dance and music program. A Must see!

Related links

- Website of the [Ndere Troup](#)
- Pictures of a [performance of the Ndere-Troup](#)



Old Taxi Park

The central place for collecting passengers for the mini buses. Comparable to an anthill is the pulsating African life.



Buganda parliament building

Even during the colonial times meetings were held here, and today it serves as a meeting place for the Buganda Parliament. Usually this building is not public. But the very friendly doorman sometimes invites you for guided tour through the building. Sometime you are even allowed to enter parliament conference hall.

Related links

- Find more information on the [Buganda website](#)



Rubaga Cathedral

Catholic cathedral, which was once visited by Pope John Paul II.

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