



### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the left.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid driving license in English (or a certified translation), up-to-date vehicle inspection certificate, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. Carrying an International Driving Permit (IDP) and passport photocopy is recommended.
- ❑ Attacks on motorists occur. Drive with windows up and doors locked.
- ❑ Avoid driving at night. Road lighting is inadequate or non-existent.
- ❑ Pedestrians make up 34 percent of all road user deaths.
- ❑ Pedestrians should avoid walking after dark.
- ❑ Riders of motorized two- and three-wheeled vehicles make up 31 percent of all traffic deaths.
- ❑ Overloaded trucks are an ongoing road risk.
- ❑ Consider hiring a driver/vehicle from a reputable agency prior to travel.
- ❑ Road safety amendments made in 2020 to the Traffic and Road Safety Act, 1998 seek to educate drivers and pedestrians through lectures, demonstrations, campaigns and other means.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is below 0.08 g/dl. Enforcement and compliance are moderate. Alcohol use remains a concern in traffic fatalities, particularly at night.
- ❑ There are 29 road deaths per 100,000 people in Uganda, compared to 2.8 in Sweden and 3.1 in the UK.



Source: CIA Factbook

### ROAD CULTURE

- **Driving standards** are poor. Drivers of buses, matatus (minibuses and vans), boda-bodas (motorbike, moped and scooter taxis) often have no training; drivers disregard traffic rules and behave recklessly.
- **Many motorists** engage in distracted driving practices including the use of mobile devices.
- **Speeding** is common among private drivers and those who operate buses and other forms of public transport.
- **Bus and matatus** drivers may attempt to overtake slower vehicles by crossing into lanes of oncoming traffic.
- **Pedestrians** frequently walk in roads. Poor road lighting conditions contribute to lack of visibility of pedestrians.
- **Women drivers** and women traveling alone may be subject to harassment and verbal abuse.
- **Many vehicles** are poorly maintained and lack standard safety features including functional seat belts, working brakes, adequate tires, turn signals, headlights, taillights, turn signals and windshield wipers.
- **Drivers may** mark roadways with branches or rocks to indicate an obstacle or disabled vehicle ahead.

### ROAD CONDITIONS

- **There are** approximately 130,000 km (80,778 miles) of roads; about 5,591 km (3,293 miles) are paved.
- **Many roads** are under construction. A large number of roads and bridges have recently been upgraded.
- **The Kampala-Entebbe Expressway** is a toll road. Tolls are paid in cash at plazas or by Upesi transport cards; cash payments are being phased out. Upesi cards may be purchased at plazas located along the expressway.
- **Rural roads** are generally in poor condition. Use a four-wheel drive vehicle for travel beyond urban areas.
- **Few traffic signs** exist beyond urban centers.
- **Large transport** trucks are commonly overloaded, have inadequately secured cargo, and are poorly maintained; braking systems may not be functional.
- **There are** many pedestrians. Safety infrastructure for pedestrians is inadequate.
- **Pedestrians may** step without warning into traffic.
- **Large numbers** of people travel by bicycle. Cycling lanes are lacking.
- **Bicyclists** may behave unpredictably.
- **Demonstrations** and public protests are common, particularly near elections. Peaceful demonstrations may become violent. Avoid wearing red and yellow, which are strongly associated with opposing political parties and which may incite confrontation.
- **There are many** loose animals and livestock on and near roads.
- **Land borders** with Rwanda are subject to closure without notice due to ongoing political tensions.
- **Some** areas carry high risks of cross-border attacks, banditry and inter-communal violence. Avoid all travel to the Karamoja Province, to borders with the provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and within 50 km (31 miles) of the South Sudan border.



## Road Conditions, continued

- **The following roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
  - » **Roads linking Kampala** and the airport at Entebbe, including the Kampala-Entebbe Expressway, are particularly dangerous between midnight and dawn.
  - » **The Kampala–Masaka Highway** is regarded as one of the most dangerous roads in the world, with a high incidence of head-on crashes. Road sections between Jinja and Kampala, and between Kampala and Masaka have a high rate of fatal crashes. Other high-risk areas along the highway are found at Mpugwe, Kkingo, Mukoko and Bisanje. Risk factors include large potholes, blind curves, unsafe passing and speeding drivers.
  - » **Roads around Fort Portal’s crater** lakes have unstable dirt surfaces that become impassable during the rainy seasons. Roads may wash out. Four wheel drive is essential. Wildlife including large animals may step into roadways or wander into traffic.
  - » **Roads near Bwindi National Park** are subject to flooding and landslides, particularly after heavy rains. A four-wheel drive vehicle is necessary. Large animals may suddenly wander into roads.
  - » **The two-lane road linking the towns of Hoima to Kampala** in a southeasterly direction was upgraded from gravel to tarmac but has severely deteriorated. Surfaces contain deep potholes. The road is often congested. Crashes are common. A 33.4-km (20.7-mile) section running north from Hoima to Butiaba to Wanseko has recently been repaired and upgraded. Further construction is planned for the section between Namungoona and Busunju, eventually slated to become the Kampala-Busunju Expressway.
  - » **Roads through Queen Elizabeth National Park** are paved. Potholes are common. A four-wheel drive vehicle is recommended. Avoid driving at night due to elephants and other large animals crossing roads.

## REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **Uganda is subject to** torrential monsoon rains, seasonal flooding, landslides and earthquakes.
- **Official** rainy seasons are March to May, and mid-October to November; heavy rains may occur beyond these dates.
- **Standing water** may obscure deep potholes or other road hazards.
- **Uganda** is located within an earthquake zone. Landslides may occur during or after tremors or after strong rains.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

## TRANSPORTATION










- **Private** and public transportation includes cars, taxis, buses, matatus, boda-bodas, rideshare services, boats and ferries.
- **Public transportation** and taxi service is limited to matatus and boda-bodas except in major cities.
- **All forms** of public transportation are regarded as high-risk. Matatus and boda-bodas have poor safety records, and are the most common vehicles involved in fatal crashes.
- **Inter-city buses** are available in large cities. Buses are run by multiple companies; operating standards and physical condition of buses vary.
- **Bus routes** include night services.
- **Long distance** buses linking Kampala to other cities in Uganda and with international destinations have been involved in serious crashes.

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	50 kph (31 mph)
Paved rural roads	100 kph (62 mph)
Gravel rural roads	80 kph (50 mph)
Highways	100 kph (62 mph)

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

								
No through road	Road work ahead	Sharp change of direction to the left	Priority over approaching vehicles	No entry for motorized vehicles	Bump in road ahead	Hairpin curve to left	Road lane ends ahead	Traffic must go straight or turn left



## Transportation, continued

- **Buses and matatus** may not depart until full. Vehicles may be overloaded and standing may be required.
- **Matatus and boda-bodas** are not metered. Agree on fare prior to entering vehicle.
- **Matatus** and boda-bodas are generally in poor condition, badly driven and without proper insurance.
- **Matatus may** lack basic safety features including seatbelts, turn signals, adequate tires, headlights, taillights, turn signals or functioning brakes.
- **Matatus follow** preset routes. Drivers may wait until vehicle is filled before departing; matatus generally carry unsafe numbers of people.
- **Matatus drivers** commonly travel at high speeds and often overtake in the face of oncoming traffic.
- **Matatus use both** drivers and conductors. Conductors call out the destinations of their vehicles.
- **Matatus** may be hailed from the roadside. Calling out “stage” to the driver or conductor signals them to stop.
- **Boda-boda** drivers often drive through groups of pedestrians, against traffic, and onto sidewalks.
- **Drivers** for the Safe Boda collective are professionally trained and provide safety helmets for passengers.
- **Safe Boda** drivers wear orange vests.
- **Bicycle taxis** are used in some areas; passengers sit behind the cyclist.
- **Yellow taxis** called “special hires” are available in Kampala and some larger towns. Yellow taxi vehicles are generally newer.
- **Few yellow taxis** have meters. Agree on rate prior to travel.
- **Rideshare services** are available in many areas. Use only rideshare services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- **Ferries** and tour boats have a poor safety record. Multiple fatalities have occurred on Lake Albert and Lake Victoria; overcrowding of boats is a factor.

- **Ferries and tour boats** may lack adequate life preservers and safety equipment. If traveling by ferry, bring your own life preserver.

## TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Drivers must** be a minimum of 18 years of age.
- **To rent** a vehicle, drivers must be at least 23 years of age and have held a valid driving license for a minimum of two years. Individual rental car agencies may have other requirements.
- **Seat belt use** is compulsory for drivers and all passengers.
- **Helmet use** is mandatory for drivers and passengers of motorcycles and mopeds. Laws do not require helmets to be fastened. For safety, helmets should be fastened.
- **Compliance** with helmet laws is low; an estimated 49% of drivers and 1% of passengers use helmets.
- **Children** are not restricted from being motorcycle passengers. If possible, children should not be passengers on motorcycles.
- **Highway code** prohibits children from being passengers on boda-bodas.
- **Children may not** ride in the front seats of vehicles. Child seats must be placed in the rear seat of any vehicle fitted with an airbag.
- **Child restraints** are mandatory; restraints should be appropriate to child’s height, weight and age.
- **Vehicle doors** must be fitted with child safety locks.
- **Drivers must** check beneath vehicles for the presence of children prior to starting engine.
- **At intersections** without traffic lights, drivers must yield to vehicles approaching from the right.
- **Speed limits** in urban areas near schools and public places is reduced to 30 kph (18 mph) around holidays.
- **Government motorcades** are common on roads between Entebbe Airport and Kampala. Motorcades occupy the center of roadways and may force other traffic off roads. Pull over if a motorcade approaches.
- **Police may** conduct random breath tests for alcohol use.

### Kampala (Capital)

- » Transportation options include cars, matatus, boda-bodas, long distance buses, rideshare services, yellow taxis called “special hires,” trains and boats.
- » There is no organized public transportation network.
- » Traffic gridlock is common, particularly during twice-daily commuter rush hours. The number of passenger vehicles on city roads is increasing.
- » Main roads have been upgraded to include new pavement, traffic lights, street lighting, road signs and walkways.
- » Many secondary city streets are poorly maintained. Paved surfaces may be uneven and have large potholes.

**Kampala, continued**

- » Beyond main roads, streets are poorly marked and pedestrian infrastructure is underdeveloped or entirely lacking.
- » Drivers may ignore zebra crossings and pedestrian lights.
- » Both matatus and boda-bodas are considered generally unsafe, and are involved in the majority of traffic fatalities.
- » Matatus carry multiple fares and are generally overcrowded.
- » Matatus may be referred to as “taxis” by local people.
- » Drivers of many boda-bodas behave recklessly.
- » Safe Boda offers boda-boda service provided by trained drivers.
- » Yellow taxis are available in city center and to and from the airport. Not all taxis are metered; prices are fixed according to route.
- » Yellow taxis may be booked for sightseeing. Agree on fare before entering taxi.
- » Long distance bus service to other areas of Uganda and some international destinations is operated by multiple companies.
- » New solar/electric buses called Kayoola Solar Bus are being introduced on a limited basis. Buses seat 90 passengers (49 seated, 41 standing).
- » Rideshare services are available. Use only rideshare services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- » Limited commuter train service is available from Kampala City to Namanve and Port Bell. Service is intermittent.
- » Rail passengers may be required to stand.
- » Kampala is located on Lake Victoria. Ferries and tour boats are available, but have poor safety records and are typically overcrowded.
- » Ferry boats may lack adequate life preservers and safety equipment. Bring your own life preserver.
- » Entebbe International Airport is located approximately 40 km (25 miles) from city center.
- » There are no public transportation options to the city from the airport.
- » Official airport taxis provide service to city center; vehicles are identifiable by a yellow horizontal stripe and the words “airport taxi” visible on the side.
- » Airport taxis are unmetered. Agree on fare prior to travel. Few taxis accept credit cards; cash is generally required.
- » Arrange for an airport taxi from a reputable company or book a private transfer prior to travel.
- » Some higher end hotels may offer pre-arranged airport shuttle service.
- » Rental car agencies are located in the arrivals hall.

**Gulu**

- » Economic center of Northern Uganda. Located 336.4 km (209 miles) from Kampala.
- » Transportation options include cars, matatus, boda-bodas, long distance buses and trains.
- » There is no organized public transportation network.
- » Many streets are poorly maintained. Paved surfaces may be uneven and have large potholes.
- » Streets may be unlit.
- » Pedestrian infrastructure is underdeveloped or entirely lacking.
- » Drivers may ignore pedestrians.
- » Both matatus and boda-bodas are considered generally unsafe.
- » Matatus are minibuses or vans that carry multiple fares and are generally overcrowded.
- » Drivers of many boda-bodas behave recklessly.
- » Long distance bus service is available to other destinations throughout Uganda.
- » Gulu is connected by rail to Pakwach in the north, and also to Lira, Soroti, Aloi, Kumi, Mbale and Tororo in other parts of Uganda. A railway line to Juba is planned.
- » Gulu Airport has regional flights weekly to nearby towns, with connections to Entebbe International Airport.



## Kira

- » Second-largest city by population. The municipality of Kira borders the capital city of Kampala.
- » Transportation options include cars, matatus, boda-bodas, long distance buses, yellow taxis called “special hires” and rideshare services.
- » There is no organized public transportation network.
- » Many streets are in poor condition. Paved surfaces may be uneven and have large potholes.
- » Pedestrian infrastructure is underdeveloped or entirely lacking. Drivers may ignore pedestrians.
- » Both matatus and boda-bodas are considered generally unsafe.
- » Matatus are minibuses or vans that carry multiple fares and are generally overcrowded.
- » Drivers of many boda-bodas behave recklessly.
- » Long distance bus service is available to other destinations throughout Uganda.
- » Yellow taxis are available. Not all taxis are metered; prices are fixed according to route.
- » Yellow taxis may be booked for sightseeing. Agree on fare before entering taxi.
- » Rideshare services are available. Use only rideshare services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.

## ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **There are few** services or facilities for persons with mobility challenges. There are no free or reduced taxi fares or other accommodations in communication, lodging, medical facilities, restaurants, cafes, bars, or other tourist spots for mobility-challenged persons.
- **Accessibility** to public transportation may be difficult for those with physical or sensory challenges. There are few accommodations for wheelchairs on public transport.
- **Sidewalks**, foot paths and road crossings are not designed to accommodate persons with mobility challenges.
- **Some private** tour companies and gorilla trekking outfitters can provide assistance and appropriate accommodations and transportation services.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Responders to emergency numbers** in remote areas may not speak English.
- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
  - » Police, ambulance and fire: 999
- **Ambulance services** are not widely available. Training and availability of responders may be below western standards. Responses may be slow or non-existent. Medical help in the event of a crash may not be available.
- **Medical facilities** are limited. There are few hospitals beyond Kampala. Outside of the capital, only basic services are available. Hospitals and clinics are only equipped to deal with minor medical emergencies. Surgical capabilities are regarded as inadequate. In the event of serious illness or injury, medical evacuation may be required.
- **If involved in a crash:**
  - » Call police.
  - » Ugandan law requires that injured persons be assisted.
  - » Onlookers may react with mob violence at crash scenes. If angry onlookers are present, drive to nearest police station to report crash.
  - » If no threat is present, drivers should exchange contact information with other driver(s), including vehicle registration, license plate number and description of vehicle. If possible, take pictures of crash scene and all vehicles involved.



**ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)**

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

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