

UGANDA CONSERVATION PROJECT: RWENZORI, MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON

- Volunteer in the breathtaking wilderness of the Rwenzori Mountains
- Help preserve a World Heritage Site - Africa's most beautiful alpine area
- Undertake conservation work and environmental surveys with the Rwenzori Trekking Service
- Construct education facilities, board walks and lodges needed to prevent further destruction
- Sleep in a cave, unlike anywhere you've lived before!
- Trek to the beautiful Mutinda lookout at 3,975m

The Rwenzori Mountains National Park covers nearly 100,000 hectares in western Uganda and includes Africa's third highest peak, Mount Stanley at over five kilometres altitude. The region's glaciers, waterfalls and lakes make it one of Africa's most beautiful alpine areas. The park contains many different natural habitats of endangered species and a rich and unusual flora including the giant heather. Unfortunately, the Rwenzori face gradual destruction through overuse and unthinking hikers and tourism.

Four weeks on this project working with the Rwenzori Trekking Service will give you a fascinating insight into the unique way of life of the communities. Your project work will be helping to protect thousands of acres of wilderness, living and working with those who rely most on its survival, and offering much needed support to settlers in the region. Your time will be spent on different conservation projects including the construction of board walks and paths, the building of an educational facility and lodges which have been specially designed to prevent further destruction of this unique environment. You will spend your days working hard and your nights relaxing at your accommodation - at one point even staying in the caves that undercut the mountains.

Having worked in the shadows of the massive peaks it makes no sense not to conquer some of the peaks, as your hard work is rewarded by trekking your way up to the Mutinda Lookout at 3,975m. This five day-trek will see you climbing up through the Nyamwamba Valley, sleeping in the Mutinda Rock Shelter, and reflecting on the stunning views of the Rwenzori foothills and lakes found in this beautiful corner of Africa.

Activities: Conservation work; Environmental surveys; Wildlife spotting; Construction of board walks & eco-friendly accommodation; Experiencing life in the Rwenzori and getting to know the communities there; Getting muddy.

Team size: 8 -16 people

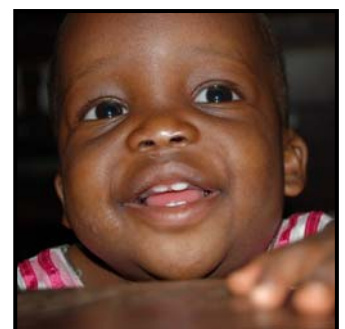
For: Gap Year and University students

Duration: 5 weeks

Departs: July each year

Cost: £1050 + £850 project donation

Includes all accommodation, food, activities, in-country travel, local tipping, airport transfers, full time Quest leader and personal travel insurance. Also includes £850 contribution to your project to cover short-term costs and long-term ongoing support. Excludes international flights.



What to Expect:

The backdrop:

Rwenzori National Park contains 6 snow-capped peaks, covering nearly a thousand square km, providing a great environment for mountaineers. These legendary mountains are spectacularly beautiful and provide a unique habitat for many rare indigenous plants and animals. The main attraction is the endemic vegetation found above 3000m which includes the giant forms of Lobelia, Heather and Groundsel. Rwenzori Mountains National Park is also home to the hyrax (a small guinea-pig like animal), blue monkey, chimpanzee, giant forest hog and many unique bird species.

This Project gives you a fascinating insight into a unique ecosystem. You will be helping to protect five distinct vegetation zones, several endangered species and a very unusual cloud forest flora, characterized as 'Africa's botanic big game'.

Work encompasses conservation and construction: digging, carrying rocks and wood, carpentry, animal and plant surveys. You may also get involved in informal environmental education with local community members. The work is hard but rewarding and there are plenty of tea breaks and a big lunch to keep energy levels high.

A Typical Day:

06:00 Wake up and breakfast.
07:00 Leave for worksite.
08:00 Start Work.
11:00 Morning tea break, chai (sweet tea) with mandazi (doughnut)
13:00 Lunch break. Either taken on site or back at accommodation.
14:00 Back to work.
16:30 Finish work, wash tools, clean up and return to accommodation.
18:30 Evening meal prepared by volunteers.
20:00 Evening relaxing, playing cards etc then early to bed.

Food & Drink:

You will be eating food that you and your team will cook such as rice or potato-based dishes with vegetable stew and/or chicken with salad.

Accommodation:

You will experience an eclectic mix – from a separate volunteer accommodation block, living with the community, spending some nights camping, and even sleeping in a cave at one point! No joke, this will be an experience never forgotten, as you help develop the cave into a comfortable eco-shelter.

Weather:

The dry season in Uganda lasts from mid-June to mid-August. Most of the time the weather will be mild with little rain, but towards the end of the Project it will get gradually hotter with rainfall and storms more likely. You are provided with a detailed kit list to ensure that you are suitably prepared and have the correct kit with you. The higher you are in the mountains, the wetter it will be, as you enter cloud forest. During the trek at the end of the project, the temperatures will fall below freezing at night.

Leaders

You will have one leader with you throughout the Project. They are there to make sure everything runs smoothly, safely and to give maximum reward to all those involved. We are incredibly picky about

selecting our leaders and you can guarantee that they will be some of the most experienced, passionate and enthusiastic people you will ever meet. They are also a good laugh and have heaps of knowledge that you can tap into. Leaders receive Quest training every year. All leaders are Wilderness First Aid trained and our Expedition Leaders have a minimum of Summer Mountain Leader Training (England).

Weekend Activities:

You will relax with the community you are living in, and experience normal Ugandan rural life with a home stay, subject to community approval. At the end of the project, you will go on a fantastic 5 day trek up to the summit one of the peaks you've come to know and love!

Preparation:

Quest provides Pre-Departure Training in the UK for all team members. This is in addition to the in-country Orientation Days you will receive when you arrive in Africa. Our UK Pre-Departure Training covers Responsible Travel, Cultural Awareness, Health & Hygiene, Risk Assessment, Teamwork and Onward Travel. It also provides you with the opportunity to meet the rest of your team and your leaders before going overseas.

Vaccinations:

Quest Overseas keeps up to date with the latest recommendations on all medical considerations relating to your time with us. We will pass these on to you in good time before your departure overseas. You will be required to take malarial prophylaxis during the project and again information will be provided.

Fitness:

You will be working long days and using muscles that you never knew existed. It is important to have a good level of fitness to begin with so that you can acclimatise to the work and warmer temperatures faster.

How much does it cost, and where does my money go?

Project: £1050

60% - payment for your trip, spent overseas during your trip.

25% - staff, both UK and overseas.

15% - office costs, project and expedition research, boring admin.

Donation: £850

This goes straight to the Rwenzori Trekking Service and every penny gets spent overseas on the project.

Responsible Travel:

Responsible Travel is an ethos that should be at the heart of all travel. For all of us at Quest Overseas it is about making a tangible 'positive impact' on both man and the environment with everything that we and our volunteers do. Quest was highly commended in the 2008 Responsible Tourism Awards sponsored by Virgin.

Recommended reading

Africa: Altered States, Ordinary Miracles by Richard Dowden

I Dreamed of Africa by Kuki Gallman

Uganda, Tarnished Pearl of Africa by Thomas P. Ofcansky

Rwenzori: Africa's Mountain Wilderness by Martin Zwick, available online at: http://www.zwick-naturfoto.de/books_and_publications/rwenzoribook/lang/en/index.html



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