

# UNCOVERING UGANDA

A Brit's Journey into the Untapped Pearl of Africa

Jason Hathaway

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# DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Uganda—a place that doesn't try to impress, yet leaves a mark you don't quite expect.

To the people who welcomed me without hesitation, who shared what they had without question, and who reminded me, in the simplest ways, what it means to be human.

And to Grace—for letting me see Uganda through your world, and for turning a journey into something far more meaningful than I ever expected.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book wouldn't exist without the people who made Uganda feel like home.

To Grace, for her patience, her guidance, and for showing me a side of life I didn't know I was missing. You didn't just share your country with me, you helped me understand it.

To the team behind Everything Uganda, thank you for the work you do every day in shaping how this country is experienced. For your commitment to doing things properly—for keeping it real, for working with local communities, and for making sure people don't just visit Uganda, but truly experience it.

And to everyone who shared their time, their stories, and their spaces with me; you are the reason this book feels real.

And to those reading this from afar, especially from the UK—thank you for being open enough to explore something different.



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# INTRODUCTION

## Uganda Saved Me

Ever landed somewhere thinking, “*Right, this is just another trip,*” and ended up completely wrong?

Yeah! That was me with Uganda.

I came for work. I expected emails, meetings, maybe a nice hotel, maybe some decent food. That was it. And then—bam—the country just got under my skin.

In a way, I didn’t see it coming. I arrived exhausted—not physically, but that life-tired kind of exhaustion, when everything ticks along but you feel like you’re missing the point.

But Uganda didn’t just welcome me, it made me feel alive. People smiled without expectation, asked how I was and actually cared about the answer.

Strangers treated me like I belonged. Not with a handshake or a business card, just humanity.

And that was when I realized, this is much better than what I

planned for.

I've been to over 90 countries. I've seen the "beautiful" stuff; the iconic landmarks, the stunning landscapes, the tourist traps, everything!

But Uganda? It's way more than that. It's a loving country that's warm and welcomes everyone irrespective of where you're coming from. It's real where others try to impress. And it creates a positive and lasting impact on you.

There's a rhythm to life here that makes you notice things again; the colours, the sounds, the way a street full of people can feel like home. It makes you breathe properly. It makes you feel... human again.

At some point, without even realising it, I said out loud:

***"I love Uganda."***

Not in the dramatic way, but in the simple, honest, human way that actually matters.

This isn't a guidebook, and it's not a glossy travel story with a checklist of things to do.

This is a story about a country that opens its arms to you, shows up in small ways, and quietly changes you to become better and live better.

In these pages, you'll meet the people who made me stay, the ordinary moments that felt extraordinary, and the adventures

that shook my soul in the best possible way.

You'll see why Uganda isn't just a

place; it's a feeling.

And I'm sure that by the end, if you're brave enough, you might just want to come and see it for yourself. I promise you: it's nothing like you've expected. It's the best!

And if you're wondering why I decided to write this book.

I did, simply to express Uganda's beauty, and warmth; as she doesn't really get to tell her own story. Too often, what people hear are headlines, stereotypes, or the usual tourist spots everyone talks about. I wanted to show something different.

I wanted to show what it's actually like to be here; to stroll the streets, meet the people, breathe in the air, and discover a country that quietly, but completely, stays with you long after you leave.

For my fellow Brits, this is your chance to see Uganda the way I did, not just like another country on the map, but a living, breathing place full of colour, stories, and heart.

Come meet her, feel her energy, and maybe, just maybe, let her change you the way she changed me.



## CHAPTER 1

# I Came for Work. I Stayed for the People

*“Uganda didn’t win me over with buildings or streets—it was the people.”*



**LANDED IN UGANDA** on the 29th of April, 2024, thinking it would be one of those trips you don’t attach much meaning to. Fly in, sort out work, maybe enjoy a decent meal if you’re

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lucky, then head back home.

At the time, Uganda was simply the place I needed to be to get some work done. Nothing more.

The plan was straightforward. I was here to hire software developers. Interviews, meetings, conversations around skills, timelines, and expectations.

I had my laptop, my notes, and my schedule neatly planned out. I wasn't looking for adventure, for a connection, or for anything emotional.

I'd travelled enough to know how these things usually went. But almost immediately, Uganda began to rewrite the script.

From the drive through the streets after landing, I noticed it first in the little things. The city felt alive, busy, yet somehow calm. There was a rhythm to it, a pace that didn't demand anything from you.

Then came the greetings. People didn't just pass by, they acknowledged me. They asked how I was, not out of politeness, but genuine interest.

It caught me off guard more than once, because I wasn't used to it. Back home, "*How are you?*" is often just between conversations. Here, it is totally different.

The first few workdays went by quickly. Meetings flowed easily. Conversations felt open and relaxed.

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The developers I met were smart, thoughtful, and deeply committed to their craft. But what stood out wasn't just their technical ability, it was their attitude.

They spoke about work with pride, but not obsession. Success wasn't framed as something you chased alone; it was something you shared.

You could feel the ambition in the room, yes, but it didn't feel stressful. No one was pushing or elbowing their way forward. Everyone simply belonged.

Back home, ambition feels like a race. Everyone rushing, everyone focused on their own lane, hardly anyone stopping to notice the people around them. But here, ambition feels human.

There was laughter during serious conversations and jokes were shared freely. Even disagreements felt respectful. It felt like work could exist without stripping people of their joy.

One evening, after a full day of meetings, I decided to walk instead of heading straight back. I had no destination in mind, I just wanted to move.

During my walk, I observed many things: the streets pulsed with life: music drifting from shops, vendors calling cheerfully, people greeted each other like this was exactly where they were meant to be.

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Strangers nodded as I passed, some smiled, some said hello. And in that moment, it felt like I was part of it too.



For the first time in what felt like forever, I wasn't thinking about my schedule. I wasn't replaying meetings in my head, planning

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the next task, or counting down the days until I had to leave. I was just present.

That realization stopped me in my tracks. I stood there for a moment, watching life unfold around me, and thought, *When was the last time I felt this calm?*

Uganda wasn't trying to impress me. She wasn't performing or showing off. She was simply herself; warm, kind, full of energy.

I didn't feel like an outsider or like a visitor being tolerated. I felt a deep sense of belonging. Like I could just exist here without explanation. As there was no need for me to prove anything.

As the days passed, something shifted quietly inside me. I stopped rushing. I stopped replaying meetings in my head. I stopped counting down the days until I had to leave. I was just present.

Every time the thought of leaving crossed my mind, it felt wrong. Almost unnatural. Like walking away from a conversation you didn't want to end.

Work still mattered; it always would—but it had quietly slipped into the background. What stayed front and centre were the people; their warmth, their openness, the way they made space for you without asking who you were or where you came from.

They made life feel brighter, fuller, somehow lighter, just by being themselves. And that's exactly how life should feel. Simple, genuine, and priceless.

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Uganda didn't ask me to stay. She didn't persuade me. Somehow, I was drawn in by the way she welcomed me, the way life here felt simple, warm, and completely alive.

And somehow, that was enough to make staying feel like the most natural choice I could have made.

By the end of that first week, the trip I thought would be all work had already become something unforgettable and transformative. And in that moment, I realised something: home isn't a place on a map. It isn't a street, a building, or even a city. It's that feeling of being seen, understood, and welcomed without having to prove anything.

This is where the story truly begins, not just for me, but for anyone ready to experience Uganda for themselves. A country that doesn't just host you, it welcomes you and makes you feel like you belong.

So, if you've ever longed for a place that's fun, shakes you out of routine, and reminds you what it feels like to be alive, Uganda is waiting.

In the next chapter, you'll see how this country slowly transforms from a destination on a map into a place that feels like home, so much that leaving might feel impossible.

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## CHAPTER 2

# The First Time a Country Felt Like Home

*“Uganda didn’t feel new to me. It felt familiar, in a way I couldn’t explain.”*



**M**OST OF US grow up thinking home is always the place where we were born. But I quickly learned that home isn't tied to a street, a house, or even a city.

Home is where you feel safe, appreciated, and truly seen. Home is where your heart stops racing just to fit in. And, for me, that place turned out to be **UGANDA**.

The moment I stepped into this world, something shifted. The air felt lighter, the streets warmer, and even the rhythm of daily life carried a heartbeat I instinctively understood.



It wasn't just the hustle of the city, or the laughter spilling from small roadside cafés, it was the sense that life here had space. I mean, a space to breathe. It was Grace who helped me notice it.

I met her through her work as a real estate agent—she was the agent helping me find a house. At first, our interactions were purely professional, but there was something in the way she carried herself that lingered long after the meetings ended.

She had this quiet presence that made even the busiest streets feel like a sanctuary. After the house was sorted, we decided to take things slowly.

At first, I wasn't sure what to make of it, because we'd both been through difficult experiences, and rushing didn't feel like an option. There was a mutual understanding: no pressure, no pretence, just letting life unfold naturally.

And then, a few weeks later, it clicked. Not in words, but in everything else—our laughter, our conversations, the way we enjoy each other's presence without feeling awkward. It was unspoken, but it was real.

I knew at that moment that we'd give this—us—a real chance, and meeting her changed how I felt about the world around me.

With Grace by my side, Uganda began to reveal herself in ways I hadn't noticed before. It wasn't simply the streets or the people, it was the feeling of finding your own person. Life became about what was happening here, now, right in front of me. And the people!

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There was a quiet honesty in the way they moved through life. A smile exchanged on a street corner, a greeting from a stranger, a nod of recognition—it wasn't performative, It was genuine. And in those small, simple gestures, I felt part of something larger than myself. Something human, something whole.

Grace amplified all of that. She taught me to look deeper, to

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notice the heart behind each greeting, the warmth behind each smile, the sincerity in every interaction. She didn't just show me Uganda, she helped me feel it. Through her, I felt connected not just to one person, but to an entire community that lived openly, cared deeply, and celebrated life in its simplest moments.

Uganda didn't just feel like a country, it felt like home to me. Not a home measured by walls or doors, but one measured by heart, by soul, and by the peace of knowing that you are exactly where you are supposed to be.

As the days went by, I realized something profound: home isn't about location. It's a feeling; a space for your mind to rest, your heart to open, and your spirit to breathe. Here, in Uganda, that feeling had room to grow.

I could be myself, unguarded, unafraid. The world didn't demand perfection. It demanded presence.

And that presence changed me. I began to notice what I had overlooked before: the joy tucked in simple gestures, the warmth of genuine human connection, the calm in moments of stillness.

Uganda, with Grace guiding me, taught me that life didn't need to be complicated to feel full. Every corner of this country held lessons. I watched people smile at each other on the streets, share what little they had with neighbors, and greet strangers with the same warmth they gave friends.

The sense of community, the way they cared for each other, it was contagious. Living here reshaped my understanding of

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what it means to be human—to be generous, kind, and loving. By the end of those early weeks, Uganda had done something extraordinary: it shifted my perception of home, of connection, and of joy. What I once thought could only exist in fleeting moments back in the UK was now a rhythm of everyday life here. It's a rhythm I wanted to be part of, to breathe in, and to carry forward.

If you've ever wondered what it would feel like to step into a place that immediately embraces you, where life slows just enough for you to notice its beauty, then Uganda is waiting for you. Trust me, the streets, the laughter, the people won't just greet you; but draw you in.

And if you come with an open heart, it will leave a mark on you that you didn't even know you were missing.

As I looked ahead, I knew the next stage of my journey wouldn't just be about discovering more of this country, it would be about understanding how her people live, love, and care. How their values reshaped my own, making me want to live with more generosity, more warmth, and more humanity.

In the next chapter, you'll see how Uganda's family-first culture and generosity—the small, everyday acts of kindness that seem so natural here, left an imprint on me that I hadn't expected, and how they challenged everything I thought I knew about living fully.

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## CHAPTER 3

# What Uganda Taught Me About Being Human

*“When people can’t rely on systems, they rely on each other—and that is where true humanity lives.”*



**I**N UGANDA, FAMILY isn't something you visit occasionally or schedule into a weekend. Family is life itself. And “family” doesn't stop at blood. It stretches to neighbours, friends,

distant relatives, and sometimes people you've only just met.

I started noticing it almost immediately and then I couldn't stop noticing it. People checking in on each other casually, Someone sharing food without hesitation, help arriving before it was asked for, and support given without keeping score.

What really surprised me the most was that none of this came from abundance. It came from people who had very little, and yet gave anyway, as though giving was simply part of breathing.

Time, space, food, care, money; whatever was available was shared. This quiet generosity is woven into the rhythm of everyday life, and somehow, it makes life feel easier and more fun.

At some point, it clicked for me. Ugandans look out for each other. The government doesn't support them in the way I was used to back home, so the only real support they truly have is each other.

Somewhere along the way, I learned something profound without anyone ever needing to explain it. When systems don't show up, people do. That's the power of real community.

Here, community isn't just a nice idea people talk about, it's how life actually works. When systems fail, people step up. They become the safety net, quietly holding each other up with care, presence, and an unspoken sense of responsibility.

And instead of creating bitterness or isolation, it does something unexpected: it creates closeness.

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Coming from the UK, this felt like stepping into a different emotional climate. Back home, we're taught —subtly but firmly —to be independent. Handle your own problems, don't inconvenience anyone, and keep things tidy.

There's pride in self-sufficiency, and comfort in structure. And to be fair, those systems work. Things are organised, there's predictability. You know where to go, who to call, what form to fill, but there's also distance.

In the UK, support often comes through systems first, people second. Everything has its place and processes, including emotion.

People care, yes, but it's often wrapped in professionalism and personal boundaries.

In Uganda, support feels warmer and more human.

There's no need for permission to be helped, it happens naturally. Struggles aren't hidden away behind closed doors; they're shared, talked about, and softened by the community.

Living here made me realise how much I'd unknowingly learned to rely on systems instead of people, and how much connection I'd quietly traded for convenience.

And slowly, without anyone teaching me these things, I began to change and started slowing down. I caught myself appreciating things I used to overlook.

The comfort of knowing that if something went wrong, someone

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would step in, not because it was their job, but because it was human.

It made me reflect on my own life.

I became more grateful, and noticed how much I already had. How much I'd taken for granted. I felt a growing desire to be kinder, more generous, more open.

What really blew me away was; these ways of living were so quietly woven into daily life that people hardly noticed their own power. To them, it felt normal. To me... that was extraordinary!

This chapter isn't really about Uganda alone. It's about what becomes possible when people lead with humanity. When connection matters more than convenience. When care steps in and fills the spaces systems leave behind.

You can't spend time in a place like this and walk away unchanged. You slow down and stop racing through life and start noticing what actually matters.

Uganda has a way of doing that. It reminds you how good life can feel when it's shared.

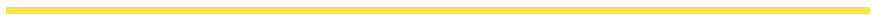
So, If you've ever felt tired of distance, of constant striving, of living beside people rather than with them, Uganda doesn't just offer somewhere to visit. It offers a quiet reminder of what being human is supposed to feel like.

And just when I thought that sense of connection had already given me everything it could, the country gently showed me

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there was more.

The land herself. The wildlife! It's something that makes you hold your breath, laugh, and simply exist. I won't say more for now, I'll share the story in the next CHAPTER, and you'll see for yourself why it's something everyone should witness.





## CHAPTER 4

# When Adventure Meets the Soul

*“I was with the woman I love, looking at the animal I love most, floating on that river —it couldn’t have been better.”*



**W**HEN I THINK about the most exciting moment I’ve had in Uganda, my mind goes straight to the river. Grace and I were on a boat heading toward Murchison Falls.

For a stretch of the journey, it was just the two of us, our guide, and the river stretching ahead like it had all the time in the world.

The water moved steadily. The sky felt wide. For a while, the only soundtrack was the engine's hum and the soft lapping of the Nile against the boat. I remember feeling calm before anything even happened.

Then we started seeing them.

Crocodiles resting along the edge of the water. I won't lie—they scare me. There's something unsettling about how still they are, lying half in, half out of the water, like they're pretending to be part of the bank. One shifts slightly, just enough to remind you it's very much real. And yet, watching them there, in their space, wasn't terrifying. It was humbling.

Then the hippos surfaced. Huge. Close. At one point, it genuinely felt like we almost went over one. My heart jumped. Grace laughed. The guide stayed unmoved. And somehow, it was thrilling without chaos. Strange how something can feel exciting and peaceful at the same time.

And then the moment I'd been waiting for; the elephants.

If anyone knows me, they know I love elephants. Always have. I've seen them in documentaries and photos, all from a distance. But you don't expect them to just step out from the trees beside the water. Yet that's exactly what happened. They appeared like they'd been there the whole time, just waiting for us to notice.

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We were close. Closer than I imagined we'd be. I looked at

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them. Then I looked at Grace. And I realised something I didn't have the words for: I was with the woman I love, looking at the animal I love most, floating on water in the middle of Uganda. It genuinely couldn't have gotten better for me.

The river shimmered under the sun. The trees framed the moment like nature had carefully arranged the scene. The air felt so clean it made you breathe deeper without thinking. It wasn't just pretty, it was overwhelming in the best way.

It's something everyone should experience at least once; not just the wildlife, but the feeling of being completely present. A moment you couldn't manufacture if you tried. The kind that makes you forget your phone, your plans, your next step. The kind that reminds you you're alive in a much bigger world than your routine.

Back home, adventure often feels scheduled. It is something you book and complete. It works and it is efficient. But this wasn't like that. This was unfiltered. Nature doing what it does, whether we were there or not.

Uganda had already taught me about humanity through its people. Now it was teaching me something else through its land: **Presence.**

I felt small in the best way possible. Not insignificant, just aware. Aware that the world is bigger than my plans, my worries, and my deadlines. Aware that moments like this need to be noticed and enjoyed, and being there felt like a privilege. On that river, I didn't feel fear. I felt safe, welcomed, and part of something bigger.

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Seeing the wildlife was incredible, but what struck me most was the calm underneath it all. The quiet understanding that some of the most powerful experiences in life aren't loud, they unfold naturally.

By the time we turned back, I knew this wasn't just an adventurous afternoon. It was one of those moments that settles into you and refuses to leave, because it was honest, and it was real. Sometimes, that's more than enough.

That even made me realise something else. For all the stories people tell about Uganda from the outside; the assumptions, the hesitations, the cautious questions, the reality feels very different when you're actually here.

There's a quiet peace in this country that I honestly can't describe. It's woven into the rhythm of life, the coexistence of wildlife, and the way people move through their day. And I could feel it, even in the middle of an adventure.

That feeling isn't something I could fully explain, only something you have to witness. And that's a story for the next chapter, because sometimes, it's the quiet moments that end up changing everything.

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## CHAPTER 5

# The Most Peaceful Country You've Never Considered

*“Before I came to Uganda, peace was just a word. But the more time I spent here, the more I realised this country carries a kind of peace you can't truly understand until you're living inside it.”*



**O**NE OF THE many misconceptions people have about Uganda is that it is not a peaceful country, but I'd always bring them to an understanding as someone who is

living in Uganda. It is the most peaceful country based on my experience, having traveled to over 90 countries.

That statement usually surprises people. Some raise their eyebrows. Others politely challenge it. And I understand why.

For many outside Africa, perception is shaped more by headlines than by lived reality.

When Uganda is mentioned abroad, it is often framed through politics, poverty statistics, or its geographic proximity to nations that have experienced conflict. Rarely is it described through the quiet rhythm of its daily life.

And maybe that's why it still feels undiscovered. The kind of place you don't fully understand until you step into it yourself with a backpack on and curiosity leading the way.

And if you're the kind of person who loves to discover places for yourself, not just through what you've heard, Uganda is exactly the kind of country that rewards that curiosity.

When we talk about peace, the type that Uganda gives – it is calm and surreal. You can walk through Kampala and feel it. The traffic moves, boda bodas weave between cars, vendors call out to customers, yet underneath it all, there is no sharp tension in the air or collective anxiety humming beneath the surface.

Peace is not something you measure only by the absence of war. Peace is something you feel when you wake up in the morning, in the way strangers greet you, and in how people

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from different backgrounds move around each other without suspicion.

The beautiful thing is, you don't have to rush through it. You can slow down, take it in, and actually experience the place rather than just passing through it.

I've lived in cities across Europe and visited countries in Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East. Many of them are wealthier. Many have more polished infrastructure. But wealth does not always translate to peace.

In some of those places, people live with invisible pressure; deadlines, isolation, competition, quiet stress that never quite switches off. In Uganda, even with its economic challenges, there is a softness to daily life.

And for someone who loves to explore, that changes everything. You're not just visiting, you're moving through the country at your own pace, actually feeling it as you go.

Peace here is a lived culture, not a policy.

Uganda is home to over 50 tribes —each with its own language, customs, and traditions. In many parts of the world, such diversity can create fragmentation. Here, it creates harmony.

From the Baganda in the central region to the Acholi in the north, from the Banyankole in the west to the Basoga in the east, identities remain strong, but they coexist within a shared national identity.

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As you move from one region to another, you don't feel division—you feel layers of culture unfolding, each one adding something new to your experience.

Religiously, the country is predominantly Christian with a significant Muslim minority. Mosques and churches often sit within walking distance of one another.

It is common to hear the call to prayer echo through a neighborhood while church music rises nearby on a Sunday morning. Yet, large-scale religious conflict is not a defining feature of Ugandan life. Interfaith marriages exist. Communities attend one another's celebrations and respect is embedded in social behavior.

Uganda also hosts one of the largest refugee populations in Africa, welcoming people fleeing conflict from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and beyond.

Its refugee policy has been internationally recognized for allowing refugees access to land, employment, and freedom of movement rather than isolating them in closed camps.

This doesn't mean the system is perfect, resources are stretched, but the willingness to absorb and coexist with displaced communities speaks to a deeper social resilience.

Peace here is visible in smaller ways too.

It's in the fact that children walk to school laughing in groups, in the way people say "*you are most welcome*" without it sounding rehearsed, and in neighborhoods where doors are open and

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neighbors know each other by name. It's in the instinct to share.

And as a traveller, these are the moments you don't plan for—the ones that end up meaning the most.

In some developed countries, governments provide robust welfare systems. In Uganda, where state support can be limited, community becomes the support system. And community fosters accountability, empathy, and shared survival. That shared survival builds peace, not through force, but through interdependence.

Even politically, while Uganda has faced criticism internationally and has its own internal debates, the country has not experienced nationwide civil war in decades. Urban centers function normally and businesses operate peacefully.

Tourism continues to grow steadily. National parks remain open and secure. You don't feel restricted to one kind of experience. One day you're in the city, the next you're somewhere completely different, and getting there is part of the story.

It means you can explore with confidence; not in a rigid, controlled way, but with the kind of freedom that makes travel feel exciting again.

And then there is the natural world; the quiet, grounding force that shapes the national psyche. When you travel to Murchison Falls and watch the Nile crash through a narrow gorge, or stand beneath the mist of Sipi Falls, or see elephants step slowly out of forest cover, you are reminded of scale, of stillness, and of perspective.

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Uganda doesn't perform peace.

It doesn't stand on a stage trying to convince you that it's calm, untouched, or extraordinary. There are no loud declarations, no exaggerated promises. If anything, it undersells itself. And for travellers who like discovering places before the rest of the world catches on, that's a big part of the appeal.

One thing I noticed that visitors often overlook is that peace does not require perfection. Roads may have potholes, power may flicker, systems may be evolving, but safety, warmth, and coexistence remain intact.

You can walk home at dusk and feel secure. You can sit in a café and strike up a conversation without guardedness. You can attend church on Sunday and see Muslim friends drop by later for tea.

This is not to romanticize. Uganda has challenges, but peace is not the **absence of challenges**. It is the **presence of cohesion** despite them.

And perhaps that is why I chose to stay in Uganda.

I had seen skyscrapers, pristine transport systems, and high-speed living. Yet here, in a street in Kampala where the sun seems to hang warmly above the rooftops, I found something I hadn't found elsewhere —PEACE and a SENSE OF BELONGING.

That is why this chapter exists, not to argue statistics, but to invite you to experience peace. Not just to see it, but to move

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through it, to explore it in your own way, at your own pace.



**Grab your backpack, come and walk the streets. You don't even need much planning.**

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You might find yourself at the Nile without meaning to, just following the rhythm of the city and asking a question or two. You stop, stare, take it in—and then you keep going, or you don't. Both are fine.

Grab a small plate of food from a street stall, sit where the locals sit, and let a conversation happen. Don't rush. Stay longer than you thought you would. Watch the day stretch around you.

Listen to the blending of prayers drifting across neighborhoods at dusk, different voices, different rhythms, rising into the same sky.

And slowly, you realize—you're not just passing through. You're part of it, because Uganda doesn't need to perform its peace or charm. You show up, you stay open, and it unfolds around you.

This makes you notice something powerful, that here, diversity does not fracture the nation, it colors it.

You may arrive with assumptions.

But if you stay long enough, you might leave with something far more valuable; the understanding that real peace is not loud. It is alive. And in Uganda, it lives well.

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## CHAPTER 6

# The Places That Take Your Breath Away

*“You don’t come to Uganda to see things. You come to feel them... and somehow, they stay with you.”*



## Sipi Falls

**M**OST OF THE spots we ended up at weren't on any itinerary. No big map or checklist. Just someone saying, "*Have you been to Sipi Falls?*" and suddenly you're jumping on a boda, helmet strapped, ready to experience it.



If you're the kind of tourist—or biker—who loves a little unpredictability, this is how you do it here: don't overplan.

Pack light, grab a local SIM card for directions (sometimes the locals have the best shortcuts), keep a small first-aid kit and a refillable water bottle in your backpack; you'll be grateful you did after a long, bumpy ride.

Leaving Kampala on your bike, the city fades. The roads open

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up and you start noticing things you never would in a car: I remember that morning clearly—leaving Kampala with Grace, no real destination locked in. Just a direction, a few names I'd heard, and that quiet excitement that comes when you know the day is going to take you somewhere you didn't fully map out or have experienced before.

The roads stretched out ahead, and the further we went, the more the city loosened its grip.



By the time we got there, I could feel it in my body; that slight

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tiredness from the ride. Dust on my clothes, wind still lingering in my ears.

And then the walk.

It's not just a "*show up and see*" kind of place. You move towards it. Step by step. The ground is uneven enough to remind you you're not in control of the terrain.

Then you hear it even before you see anything. That constant rush of water that pulls you forward, like it's whispering secrets to anyone willing to listen.

The climb isn't extreme, but it makes your legs work. By the time you get there, stand there and take it all in—don't just snap a picture.

Really breathe it in. Let your legs rest for a minute, and if you want a real experience, hike the smaller trails around it too; Fewer people, more mist, more moments you can actually call yours.

## Mount Elgon

Next stop: Mount Elgon.

It sits out in eastern Uganda, right along the border with Kenya. An old volcano, but not in a way that feels dramatic.

Once you get there, everything slows down.

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If you're biking or trekking, don't rush it. Give yourself a full day, or more if you can, because this isn't the kind of place you tick off and move on from.

The roads aren't perfect and some trails aren't marked. In fact, at some point, you'll need to stop and ask someone for directions. You're learning the terrain, tasting the air, seeing Uganda unfold in its own time.

Imagine not following a fixed plan; figuring it out as you go, riding through small villages, passing people who wave as you go by, feeling the air shift as you climb higher.

It's the kind of place where you start noticing things without even trying. You stop, not because you have to, but because something catches your eye:

Find a good spot, it might be a ridge, a rock, anywhere with a view—just sit for a bit and experience it. Somehow, that's what makes it unforgettable.

Watch the valleys stretch below you. Snap photos of anything that surprises you—but when it comes to wildlife, keep your flash off.

A sudden burst of light can startle animals. For some, it feels like a threat. It can disrupt their natural behaviour; cause them to move suddenly, become defensive, or retreat from an area altogether. And in places like this, where you're stepping into their environment, the goal isn't to interrupt the moment, it's to blend into it as much as you can.

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## Wildlife



Queen Elizabeth and other national parks bring you closer to wildlife than you might expect.

Out in western Uganda, Queen Elizabeth National Park stretches between lakes and open savannah, with the Rwenzori Mountains sitting quietly in the distance. It's wide, a bit rugged in places, and the kind of place where you don't always know what's coming next; which is part of the draw.

If you're biking, slow down and do it right. Link up with a guide or join a small park drive, they know where the elephants roam, where the hippos hang out along the water, and exactly when it's worth pausing a little longer.

And then it stops feeling like you're just watching. You're in it, living it. Engine off, eyes scanning without even thinking—just

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soaking in the beauty of Uganda.

You're not thinking about where you came from or where you're going next. Just you, the land, and whatever decides to show itself; that alone heals!

## Murchison Falls National Park



Murchison felt different from the start.

We got on a boat—just me and Grace—moving slowly along the Nile. No rush or noise, just the current carrying us forward.

At first, it's calm. Almost too calm. Then we start noticing things along the banks. Crocodiles lying still near the edges. Hippos in the water, barely moving, just eyes and ears above the surface.

I remember at some point realising we'd both gone quiet. Just watching and enjoying the view. That was it.



The Nile begins to narrow, forcing its way through a tight gap ahead. And by the time you reach it, you can hear it properly now—constant and strong.

Don't rush that moment, experience it and take some pictures. I and Grace also took a few photos, of course. But mostly, we experienced it, because it's not about trying to capture everything. It's about being there while it happens.

Then, there are the mountains—the **Rwenzori Mountains**.

I didn't expect that part, if I'm being honest. Snow-capped peaks... near the equator. It doesn't quite register at first. You kind of pause and look again, just to be sure you're not imagining it.

At some point, you'll probably stop without even planning to. Helmet off. Hands a bit dusty. Taking a long drink of water after a stretch that felt longer than it looked on the map. You just stand there for a minute or maybe longer.

That's the thing I've noticed here. Uganda has a way of letting you figure things out as you go without any fixed script or pressure to do things a certain way.

## A Quick Hack

I want you to look at this less like advice and more like something that just makes the whole experience better.

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If you want your trip to be more than just ticking off sights, it helps to move with people who really understand the place.

That's where the **Everything Uganda guides come in**. They know the terrain, the history, and the best times to see wildlife.

If you're on a motorbike, check your bike before long rides. Roads aren't perfect, but the freedom of navigating them on two wheels is part of the experience.

By the end of the day, you'll understand why people like me fall for this country. Every bend, every climb, every unplanned stop feels like it's happening just for you, because ***Adventure here isn't just what you see, it's how you experience it.***

So as a tourist who wants to feel a place, or a biker chasing the next adrenaline hit: pack your bag, hop on that boda or motorbike, and ask questions.

Somewhere along the way; maybe halfway through a dusty trail, with the sun dropping slowly behind distant peaks, you'll feel it. That quiet moment where everything just clicks. And you realise, Uganda isn't just a place you visit. It's a place that stays with you.

This changes the way you see adventure. And the next morning? You won't be thinking about heading home just yet, you'll be thinking about the next road, and the next surprise waiting just around the bend.

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## CHAPTER 7

# Uganda is a Rough Diamond

*“We’re a diamond that isn’t gleaming quite yet, but we are going to gleam massively.”*



**H**AVE YOU EVER seen a rough diamond before? I'm not talking about the one sitting neatly in a jewellery store under bright lights, but the one straight out of the ground.

Still uncut, unpolished, and wrapped in its natural form. At first glance, it doesn't look like something of value. There's no sparkle or shine that immediately pulls you in—just a stone. Easy to walk past if you didn't know what it could become. Right?

But a rough diamond isn't defined by how it looks at that moment. It's defined by what's already inside it; the clarity, the strength, the brilliance waiting to be revealed. It hasn't been shaped yet, but the potential is undeniable.

With the right care, the right cutting, and the right environment, it transforms into something remarkable; something that reflects light in ways that can't be ignored. And that's exactly how I've come to see Uganda.

The more time I've spent here, the more Uganda has started to feel like that: **a rough diamond.**

Uganda isn't a finished destination. You feel that the moment you begin to move through it.

Things don't always follow a perfectly mapped-out structure. Roads can shift in quality from one stretch to another. Directions sometimes involve asking more than once. Plans don't always unfold exactly the way you expect. But nothing about that feels like a limitation once you understand how to move with it.

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It's not overly packaged or over-polished for tourists. It hasn't been fully refined into a global hotspot driven by predictability and mass tourism. What it has... is raw potential.

You see it in the land first.



The mountains rise quietly in the distance without needing to announce themselves. Places like Sipi Falls, where the water doesn't just fall—it commands your attention. Around Mount Elgon, the air shifts as you go higher, and the views open up in a way that reminds you how much of this country is still untouched.

Then you notice the wildlife. Not confined in a way that feels artificial, but present in a natural rhythm. National parks like Queen Elizabeth give you a glimpse of what Uganda already

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holds; elephants moving across open plains, hippos along the water, and moments where you're not just observing from a distance... you're right there in it.

This still isn't the full expression of what Uganda can offer.

Uganda has the resources. It has landscapes, climate, biodiversity, accessibility across regions, and a growing structure around tourism that is still evolving.

What's happening right now feels like the early stage of something much bigger. And when you look at destinations that have become global tourism hubs—places like Thailand—you realise they didn't start as what they are today. They grew into it.

They developed infrastructure, refined their tourism experience, and opened up their culture in a way that made people feel welcome, safe, and curious enough to return.

Uganda is currently on that path.

If you've ever watched a destination rise, you'll understand this: the earlier you experience it, the more authentic it feels. You're not just ticking places off a list, you're discovering them.

I once described Uganda to someone in a discussion as a rough diamond.

I wasn't talking about perfection. I wasn't comparing it to other places competing on the same level. What I had in mind was growth.

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A place that's still learning how to present itself to the world, still figuring out how to structure its strengths, still putting together the pieces that will connect it more fully to a global audience.

And what stood out to me is that it doesn't try to hide any of that. No attempt to appear like something it's not. It's honest, properly so.

That doesn't mean the value is missing. It's already there. It's just not fully shaped yet. And if you're the kind of traveller who enjoys something a bit different from the usual; something that feels real rather than overly packaged—Uganda quietly delivers.

It might not look the most "sorted" at first glance, but once you take time to explore, you begin to realise you've stepped into something special—something with depth, and a sense of discovery that doesn't feel forced.

And that, in itself, makes the experience well worth it.

For a traveller, especially coming from somewhere like the UK where structure, predictability, and efficiency are the norm, Uganda offers something refreshingly different.

You don't arrive and follow a checklist. You explore, adjust, and engage. In doing that, the experience becomes more personal—more your own—rather than something pre-packaged and handed to you.

There's also a kind of freedom here that's hard to describe until you've felt it. You can move from a city environment into

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nature within hours. From structured spaces into wide, open landscapes. From planned routes into spontaneous moments, and those moments often become the ones you remember most.

Uganda has the potential to become one of those destinations people talk about in the same way they talk about Thailand today, not because it copies anything, but because it has its own foundation: its culture, natural beauty, people, and pace of life. All of this is still being developed, refined, and introduced to the world in a more structured way.

Uganda doesn't hand you a packaged experience. It invites you into one. And when you engage with it that way, you begin to see the value in the journey itself; not just the destination.

The landscapes are diverse and naturally striking. From open savannahs to highland regions, waterfalls, lakes, and forested areas, the country offers a wide range of environments within a relatively accessible distance, and that matters, because it means you don't have to go far to experience something completely different.

Tourism here is still developing, but that's where the opportunity sits. It hasn't been overbuilt, overrun, or shaped into something overly commercial.

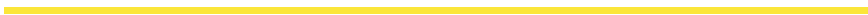
For you, that means space. Room to explore at your own pace. Room to stay longer where it resonates and to move without feeling like everything is already decided for you.

Uganda, in its current form, isn't asking to be compared or

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trying to compete. It's simply offering what it has, in its current form, while continuing to grow.

And if you step into it with the right mindset; open, curious, and willing to move with it—combining that freedom with the natural variety Uganda already offers, the experience becomes more than just a visit, it becomes something you can genuinely experience while it's still unfolding.





## CHAPTER 8

# An Innocent Child in the World of Tourism

*Uganda isn't trying to be something it's not. It's still learning, still growing—and in a world that's already polished itself to perfection, that innocence is its greatest strength.”*



**I F YOU PICTURE** the world of tourism like a room full of adults—places that are polished, experienced, structured, and completely sure of how to present themselves, then Uganda is the child in that room.

Not naïve in a careless way. Just open, unfiltered, and still figuring things out. And the longer I've been here, the more I've realised that it doesn't try to hide that. There's no pressure to look like something it isn't. It simply exists as it is, and for some reason, that lands in a way most places don't anymore.

I've travelled enough to notice how things tend to work. After a while, destinations begin to feel familiar, because the experience is.

You get there, everything is organised, routes are fixed, expectations are clear. You're guided from one highlight to the next. It's efficient and it works, but it can feel distant. Because you see everything, but you don't always feel anything.

Uganda is the opposite of that.

Here, tourism isn't something that's been overly engineered. It's still growing into itself. And because of that, your experience isn't handed to you, it's something you shape as you go.

That might sound uncertain at first, especially if you're used to structure. But in practice, it's where the real value sits. Because Uganda offers something a lot of established destinations have slowly lost; **space**.

Space to explore without crowds pressing in on you, space

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to pause without being rushed along, and space to actually take in what's in front of you without feeling like you're part of a system moving people through.

You can stand at a waterfall and not feel like you're queuing for a photo. You can sit by the river and hear yourself think. You can drive for hours and feel like you've got the landscape to yourself. That is really rare now.

And then there's the variety.

For a country that isn't massive, Uganda carries an unusual range of experiences within relatively short distances. You can move from a city environment into open countryside in a matter of hours. From there into mountains, forests, or national parks without it feeling like a major expedition.

You've got places where the land stretches wide and flat—like the savannahs in Queen Elizabeth National Park and others where it rises quietly into highlands, around Mount Elgon or the slopes near Sipi Falls.

Waterfalls that feel tucked away rather than staged; like Sipi Falls or even the powerful rush at Murchison Falls, where the Nile forces its way through a narrow gorge.

Lakes that don't feel crowded, like Lake Bunyonyi; quiet, almost still, the kind of place you don't feel rushed to leave.

And wildlife that isn't framed as a show, but something you encounter—in places like Murchison Falls National Park, where elephants appear without announcement, or Bwindi

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Impenetrable Forest, where the experience feels less like observation and more like stepping into something that already exists without you. And that's the key difference.

You're not being presented with Uganda, you're experiencing it as it truly is.

Even the wildlife experiences carry that feeling. It's not overly controlled. There's structure, yes—guides, routes, parks—but it still feels natural. You're aware that you're in their environment, not the other way round. That changes how you experience it.

Things don't always run to the minute here. Plans shift, timing stretches, and something you thought would take an hour might quietly turn into two or three. And to be sincere, at first, it feels a bit off to me. You catch yourself checking the time, trying to adjust, wondering what's going on.

But as time goes on, you start to settle into it. You stop watching the clock so much and begin to notice more. And after a while, it just makes sense. It's not inefficiency, it's simply the way of life here. Nothing is rushed, and that's where the beauty of it really sits.

It doesn't hurry you through things. It lets you actually be there while it's happening. You're not being pushed from one moment to the next, you're given the space to have the experience properly. And of course, it's not perfect. It would be wrong to pretend it is.

Here in Uganda, things are still developing. Some roads are a bit rough, signage isn't always clear, and every now and then

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you'll find yourself asking for directions more than once.

Planning takes a bit more flexibility than you might be used to, but that's part of it. It's where Uganda is right now—a country still finding its rhythm, still growing, still in motion.

Tourism here isn't quite finished like I mentioned earlier; It's still being shaped, still finding its feet. And if you arrive expecting everything to run like any fully polished tourist destination, you might miss what actually makes this place special.

Because Uganda isn't trying to win you over with perfection. It wins you over in a different way. In how it feels, the moments you don't plan, the connections you didn't see coming.

And for me, it always comes back to the people. Because everything else—the landscapes, the space, the sense of movement; it's all held together by how you're received.

You're not treated like a transaction here. People acknowledge you, they speak to you, and they bring you in.

When I first arrived, I came with the mindset most of us carry. Thinking I understood how places work, what matters and what to expect. Though, Uganda didn't challenge that directly. It just showed me something else; a slower pace and a more connected way of living, and gradually, I changed with it. I became more present, and less concerned with things that used to feel urgent.

And then there's Grace; my partner. Meeting her changed everything for me. I remember a friend saying to me, quite

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simply, that I have a beautiful life—my wife, my surroundings, everything about it. And of course, he was right.



Uganda has a way of showing you that a beautiful life isn't just something you only imagine, it's something you can actually

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live, here, in the everyday moments. It's a place where that kind of life doesn't feel out of reach; it feels present. And in the same way it's been for me, it can be that kind of place for someone else too.

For me personally, Uganda has been healing in ways I didn't expect. In the quiet, gradual way it helps me slow down, breathe, and realign with what actually matters.

If you're reading this and you want to experience Uganda in a way that stays with you, but you're wondering whether it's worth it. You need to have the right guidance, as it makes all the difference.

That's why I founded [Everything Uganda](#), to create something that goes beyond simply pointing you to locations.

It's about helping you experience them properly, to understand the rhythm of the place, the people, the timing, and the flow, without unnecessary stress or wasted time.

So you don't just visit Uganda, but experience it in a way that lingers in your heart forever. Because that's the difference. It's not about everything running exactly as expected. It's about how it feels while you're there, and what you take away from it.

I also didn't arrive with any big realisation. I just found myself settling into it, slowly. And over time, without making a big deal of it, it started to feel like home.

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## FINAL CHAPTER

# Uncover Uganda Yourself

**I F YOU'VE MADE** it this far, then you already have a sense of what this place is. You've seen it through my eyes as a British entrepreneur who found something unexpected in Uganda and ended up building a life here.



Through the roads, the conversations, the moments that weren't planned but somehow became the ones that mattered most.

But the truth is, Uganda isn't something you can fully understand from a book.

You can read about the landscapes, the wildlife, the people. You can picture it, imagine it, even feel close to it for a moment.

But it's not the same. Because Uganda is something you have to step into.

It's in the way someone greets you in the morning, like they've known you longer than they have. It's in the conversations that start without effort. The way time stretches just enough for you to actually be present in it.

It's in the unexpected moments; the ones you didn't plan for, didn't see coming, but end up remembering long after everything else fades.

I didn't come here expecting any of this. I came with the usual mindset—thinking I understood how places worked, how travel should feel, what to expect.

But Uganda doesn't meet you with expectations. It meets you as you are. And over time, without forcing anything, it begins to show you something else.

A different pace, a different way of relating to people, and a different sense of what actually matters.

And if you allow it—without trying to control every part of it, you start to feel it properly. That's when it becomes more than a trip. It becomes an experience you carry with you.

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So if you're reading this from the UK, wondering whether it's worth it, I'll keep it simple: Come and see for yourself.

Give yourself a few days to settle in, explore the country, and speak to people. That's where Uganda starts to make sense.

Uganda may not be the most polished place you'll ever visit, but it might be one of the most real, and sometimes, that's exactly what you didn't realise you needed.

In a world where so much feels refined, packaged, and predictable, there's something rare about a place that is still open, still honest, and still becoming.

So don't just read about it. Come and experience it for yourself. And when you do, you'll understand why I stayed.

If this book stirred something in you, whether curiosity, questions, or even the urge to pack a bag, we'd love to help you experience Uganda for yourself.

You don't need to overthink it. You don't need the perfect plan. Just start the journey with [Everything Uganda](#). If you need guidance or want things to feel a bit easier, we can help you find your way.

You can find Everything Uganda here:

Instagram: [@every\\_thing\\_uganda](#)

LinkedIn: [Everything Uganda](#)

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TikTok: [@every\\_thing\\_uganda](https://www.tiktok.com/@every_thing_uganda)

Email: [reservations@everythinguganda.co.uk](mailto:reservations@everythinguganda.co.uk)

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jason is a British entrepreneur and traveller who has visited over 90 countries around the world.

What began as a trip to Uganda became something far more personal. Through the people, the pace of life, and the everyday experiences, he found a place that felt different—and chose to stay, building a life there after meeting his Ugandan partner,

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Grace.

Now based in Kampala, he is the founder of Everything Uganda, helping others experience the country in a way that feels real and connected. He is also building a wider ecosystem of ventures, including Tekjuice, Gem Pay, Social Gems, and Hustle In.

This book reflects his journey; not just of travel, but of finding a place that feels like home.



## ABOUT THE BOOK

This book is not a guide to Uganda.

It doesn't attempt to map every destination or organise your journey into neat, predictable steps.

Instead, it offers something far more personal.

Told through lived experience, it follows the perspective of a British traveller who arrived in Uganda with a clear sense of how the world works, and slowly realised there was another way to see it.

What unfolds across these pages is not just a series of places, but a series of moments. Conversations that begin without effort. Journeys that don't always go to plan. Encounters that feel ordinary at first, but stay with you long after.

Uganda is not presented here as polished or perfected. It is shown as it is; open, evolving, and grounded in something deeply human.

A place where life is less structured, but more felt. Where connection matters more than convenience. Where the experience is not something you move through quickly, but something you gradually settle into.

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This book doesn't ask you to see Uganda the way the author does. It invites you to come and see it for yourself. Because some places are understood through description.

Others—like this—are only understood once you've stepped into them.



