

An Overview of Uganda

Uganda is an East African landlocked country with common border with the Congo, Sudan, Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania. Uganda includes a large part of Lake Victoria in its borders. It takes its name from the kingdom of Buganda.

Some basic facts:

- Uganda has a population of 23,000,000
- Life expectancy is 42 years
- 1 in 12 Ugandans is an orphan
- 44% of Ugandans make less than 60,000 shillings about \$34.00 per month
- Uganda exports coffee, tea, copper, cotton, and flowers
- English is the official language and all signs, etc. are in English there are however 16 different languages spoken in Uganda
- 33% are Protestants, 33% Roman Catholic, 19% Indigenous, and 15% Muslim

Here is a basic time line history:

- 1600s - First evidence of the intermixture of the Luo speakers from modern day Sudan moving south and meeting Bantu speakers from the south to form Buganda
- 1700s - Buganda begins to dominate the area over the Bunyoro and Ankoles
- 1800s - Buganda gains control over the western shores of Lake Victoria
- 1840s - Muslim traders from the Indian Ocean trade firearms, cloth, and items for ivory and slaves
- 1862 - John Hanning Speke, a British explorer, is the first European visitor to the area
- 1870s - The search for the source of the Nile found the people of this region to be friendly and this led to Protestant missionaries from England (first of which was Alexander MacKay) and Catholic missionaries from France to begin work in Uganda
- 1888 - Beginning of a four year period with a three-way struggle (Protestant, Catholic, and Muslim) within Uganda which the Protestants won in 1892
- 1890 - A treaty is signed by Britain and Germany giving Britain rights to what was to become Uganda
- 1892 - British East India Company agent Frederick Lugard extends the company's control to southern Uganda and helps the Protestant missionaries defeat their Catholic counterparts, who had been competing with them, in Buganda
- 1893 - The British Union Jack is raised over the Kingdom of Buganda. The British mistakenly drop

the letter "B" from the name and calls its newest addition to the British Empire "Uganda."

- 1894 (April 11) - Uganda was declared a British protectorate largely to protect the source of the Nile. Winston Churchill would subsequently visit the area and call it "The Pearl of Africa." The town of Entebbe was the capital of the protectorate until 1962
- 1900 - Britain signs agreement with Buganda giving it autonomy and turning it into a constitutional monarchy controlled mostly by Protestants
- 1904 - Cultivation of cotton for export begins.
- 1921 - Legislative council is established, but no African member admitted until 1945
- 1954 - Introduction of hydroelectric power with construction of Owen Falls Dam at present day Jinja, where Lake Victoria is the source of the Nile
- 1958 - Internal self-government is allowed
- 1962 (March 1) - Self-government begins in Uganda with Benedicto Kiwanuka as prime minister
- 1962 (October 9) - Uganda gains independence after nearly 70 years of British rule
- 1962 (October 25) - Uganda is admitted as a member State to the United Nations
- 1967 (September 8) - A new constitution came into effect which made Uganda a republic
- 1971 (January 25) - A former private in the Ugandan army, Idi Amin, seizes power in a military coup and overthrows Milton Obote. Eventually he declares himself President for life. Slowly but surely, Uganda slips into an abyss as Amin expels the Asian population, many of whom had been born in Uganda, and kills anyone and everyone who opposes him or who is even perceived as a threat. Estimates of over 300,000 people, mostly Christians, were killed
- 1972 (August 4) President Idi Amin begins a three month long process to expel from Uganda 50,000 Asians with British passports. Many left almost everything they owned behind to be pilfered by Amin's henchmen and handpicked supporters. People without one day's experience in running a business were made business owners by Amin. Their lack of experience and understanding in business only led to further decline of the economy of Uganda. (note: It has been observed that the economies of Uganda and South Korea were nearly equal at this period in history. Today, even after fifteen years of relative stability in Uganda, the gap between the economies of South Korea and Uganda is astounding). The movie Mississippi Masala begins and ends in Uganda and partially deals with the issue of the Asian expulsion
- 1972 (September 17) It was announced in Uganda that Tanzanian forces (later reported to be Ugandan exiles who opposed Idi Amin's government) had

- crossed the border and captured three Ugandan towns before being driven out by Amin's troops
- 1972 (December 18) - Idi Amin nationalized forty-one foreign-owned farms and tea estates, of which thirty-four were British. This eventually led to the expulsion of all foreign business interests from Uganda, the effects of which are still felt today
 - 1976 (June 27) - Palestinian extremists hijacked Air France flight 139 in Greece with 246 passengers and 12 crew. The flight eventually landed at Entebbe Airport, as Idi Amin's government alone offered them safe passage
 - 1976 (July 3/4) - Operation Jonathan took place. Originally known as Operation Thunderbolt, this was the Israeli Commando raid on Entebbe Airport led by Jonathan Netanyahu (the only Commando who was killed and for whom the operation was later renamed) to free Israeli highjack victims from Air France Flight 139. (You may wish to visit Entebbe Diary, the running daily commentary on the raid by Major Louis Williams of the Israeli Army. It also includes some photographs. If a pop up screen prompts you to download Hebrew characters in order to view the site, just hit "Cancel" as all the text is in English)
 - 1976 (July 27) After four years of tension with the government of Idi Amin, Britain broke off diplomatic relations with Uganda. It had been 30 years since the British government had taken such a drastic step against another country
 - 1979 (April) - Tanzania invades Uganda, unifying the various anti-Amin forces under the Uganda National Liberation Front and forcing Amin to flee the country; Yusufu Lule installed as president, but is quickly replaced by Godfrey Binaisa.
 - 1980 - Godfrey Binaisa overthrown by the army and Milton Obote becomes president
 - 1985 - Obote deposed in military coup and is replaced by Tito Okello
 - 1986 (January 26) - After years of civil war in which hundreds of thousands are either killed or are displaced; Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army takes power. Under his leadership, Uganda has steadily achieved economic growth, the rebuilding of the shattered infrastructure, a free press and judiciary, and peace in most part of the country
 - 1989 - Joseph Kony, began to lead an armed struggle in the north against the Museveni government which had alienated many in that area. Kony's group is known as the "LRA" (Lord's Resistance Army) but his brutality eventually led to the loss of local support. There is much written about this today and the very well known The Invisible Children is about this issue
 - 1993 - President Museveni restored traditional

- kings, but with no political power
- 1995 - New constitution adopted but maintains ban on political activity
 - 1996 (May 9) - Uganda held its first presidential election in sixteen years and President Yoweri Museveni won in excess of 78% of the vote, a testimony to his 10 year effort to restore peace and democracy since the 1986 end of the civil war
 - 1997 (June 20) - Death of John Akii-Bua, Uganda's only Olympic gold medallist. He won the 400-metre hurdles at the 1972 Munich Olympics.
 - 1997 - Ugandan Peoples Defense Force (UPDF = army) helps depose Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, who is replaced by Laurent Kabila
 - 1998 - UDPF again intervene in Zaire (newly named Democratic republic of Congo) to help rebels seeking to overthrow Kabila
 - 1999 (March 2) - Rwandan Hutu rebels killed eight foreign tourists (gorilla trackers at Bwindi Impenetrable Forest) they had kidnaped the day before. The U.S. Government arrested three rebels for this crime in March of 2003
 - 2000 (March 17) - Nearly 500 members of the cult Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments died as a result of fire at Kanungu in South Western Uganda. It was later discovered that as many as 500 others had been previously murdered
 - 2000 - Ugandans reject multiparty politics favouring a continuation of President Museveni's "no-party" system
 - 2001 (March) - Uganda classifies Rwanda, a former ally in the war in the Congo, a hostile nation due to fighting in 2000 between the two countries' armies in the Democratic Republic of Congo
 - 2001 - President Museveni wins another term, over rival Kizza Besigye by 69% to 28%
 - 2002 March - Uganda signs agreement with Sudan seeking to contain the rebel group, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), active along their common border. (The LRA wants to run Uganda along lines of biblical Ten Commandments. Led by "prophet" Joseph Kony they have kidnapped thousands of children and displaced many civilians)
 - 2003 (May) - Uganda pulls last of its troops from eastern Democratic Republic of Congo and tens of thousands of civilians seek safety in Uganda
 - 2003 (August) - Former Ugandan Dictator Idi Amin dies in Saudi Arabia
 - 2004 (February) - LRA rebels slaughter more than 200 displaced people in the north
 - 2004 (December) - Government and LRA rebels hold their first face-to-face talks, but there is no breakthrough in ending the insurgency