Virtuoso's 2026 Luxe Report Reveals What Tomorrow's Luxury Traveller Wants — Uganda Already Has It

New Virtuoso data reveals what luxury travellers want in 2026 — space, wildlife, authenticity and conservation. Uganda already delivers all four.


Endangered Gorilla in Uganda

KAMPALA, CLA, UGANDA, September 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Luxury travel is no longer defined only by where someone stays. Increasingly, it is being shaped by what they experience, who they meet and how closely they connect with a destination.

That is one of the clearest messages from Virtuoso's 2026 Luxe Report. Drawing on insights and client requests from more than 2,400 Virtuoso-affiliated travel advisors across over 50 countries, the annual report provides a valuable look at the changing priorities of affluent travellers.

Demand remains strong. Sixty-seven percent of advisors expect travel demand to increase, while 55 percent anticipate at least a modest rise in spending per trip. Yet travellers are becoming more thoughtful about where that money goes and what they receive in return.

Virtuoso says they are "no longer satisfied with luxury for its own sake." Active and adventure travel ranks third among the report's leading trends, followed by cultural immersion in fourth place and authenticity in sixth. Travellers are also seeking privacy, personalisation, conservation and experiences that feel connected to local people and places.

For Uganda, this changing definition of luxury presents a timely opportunity.

"Luxury has not disappeared; it has become more personal," said Lorraine Simpson, a tourism strategist and national television travel expert with over 30 years' industry experience. "Travellers

still want beautiful lodges and excellent service, but they also want to feel that the journey mattered. They want experiences they could not simply reproduce somewhere else."

Uganda can deliver those experiences in many different ways.

Exceptional luxury lodges provide a base for trekking mountain gorillas in Bwindi, tracking chimpanzees in Kibale, exploring the Nile and viewing wildlife across national parks including Queen Elizabeth, Murchison Falls and Kidepo Valley.



Uganda Safari

Beyond the traditional safari, Uganda is home to more than 1,000 recorded bird species, making it one of the world's outstanding birdwatching destinations. Visitors can trek in the Rwenzori Mountains, meet coffee farmers, taste some of Uganda's finest coffee at its source and experience the country's food, music and cultural diversity.

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>
> *Lorraine Simpson, CEO Nia Global Strategies*

Sport tourism is adding another dimension. The Tusker Lite Rwenzori Marathon recently became Uganda's first World Athletics Label Road Race. Beginning at the Equator in Queen Elizabeth National Park and finishing near the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains, it brings together international sport, spectacular scenery and the communities of the Kasese region.

Uganda will also join Kenya and Tanzania in hosting the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations. The first AFCON to be jointly hosted by three countries will bring international fans to East Africa and create opportunities for visitors to combine football with wider cultural, wildlife and adventure experiences.

Space Becomes Part of the Luxury

Avoiding over-touristed destinations is the leading sustainable tourism priority identified in the Luxe Report. This gives Uganda another clear advantage.

Its national parks and attractions remain comparatively uncrowded, allowing experiences to feel

more personal and less hurried.

“In Uganda, you are far less likely to find yourself in a convoy of 50 safari vehicles chasing one lion family,” Simpson said. “There is remarkable wildlife to see, but fewer vehicles competing for each encounter. You have more time, more space and a much more natural connection with what you are watching.”That advantage must be protected. Uganda has an opportunity to increase tourism without allowing its parks and attractions to become overcrowded, ensuring that growth supports conservation, local employment and Ugandan-owned businesses.

Africa is already gaining ground in Virtuoso’s findings. South Africa ranks third for adventure travel, while Kenya is fifth and also appears among the destinations “on the rise.”

This increased interest in Kenya can benefit the whole region. Uganda will join Kenya and Tanzania in hosting AFCON 2027, bringing international attention and visitors to East Africa. It also creates an opportunity to encourage fans to stay longer and combine football with wildlife, culture, food and adventure across the three host countries.

Uganda does not currently appear in Virtuoso’s destination rankings. But the traveller described throughout the report is looking for much of what Uganda already offers: adventure, authenticity, conservation, culture, space and experiences that still feel personal.

“Uganda does not need to invent a new tourism product to follow these trends,” Simpson said. “It needs to make sure travellers and travel advisors understand how much is already here.”

Virtuoso’s report shows where luxury travel is heading. For Uganda, that direction is full of promise.

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