



# Looking Good in Uganda

The essential Capstone Projects information guide

## Introduction:

Imagine a hole in the ground and surround it with walls, a tin roof and two bricks to place your feet on and then compare it to your standard flush loo back home. Now if you're the type of girl who's visualising this now and can't see what all the fuss is about, then maybe this guide will hold little interest for you....



However, if you are now curious as to how you could maintain a modicum of dignity in such circumstances then please read this guide on how to look good in Uganda.

The authors (5 women) spent more than two weeks in Uganda during September 2008. Out of the five, two were self confessed make-up addicts, two preferred the natural look and one was a bit in between i.e. could abstain from make-up and daily hair washes if required but actually would rather not!

In the name of research the authors endeavoured to look good during their stay in Uganda even in the following circumstances:

- On safari with no electricity after 10pm until 8am– that's no lighting, no hair dryers or hair straighteners and even if you had a mirror there's no light to see yourself in it!

- In Lugazi in the absence of showers, baths, hot running water and a queue to the wash house that started at 5.30am
- Going to church via public transport
- Going to a Ugandan wedding
- Spending all day cooped up in a taxi and still looking good
- Working at the different capstone projects in the heat of the day

We're happy to share all of this with you in the hope that you will benefit from our experiences and be prepared for your trip – that is, should you want to look good. Please note, the very spiritual among you may find this guide a trifle frivolous; for this we make no apologies, its meant to be a light hearted account as well as being factual and informative. We extend the readership of this guide to all males who remain steadfastly determined not to descend to hog level during their stay. And it is not without a certain amount of pride that we share how our esteemed director Derek took advantage of the home waxing and eye brow shaping session during his recent trip and has now rid himself of his mono-brow.



Finally before we get started, remember this. Ugandan women look fab! In the absence of pavements they wear stilettos or kitten heels for social occasions. In the heat of the day or during a down pour they dress up in wonderfully coloured dresses and headgear. Ladies we cannot let the side down by refusing the take up the gauntlet and letting minor incidentals such as no running hot water or a lack of electricity beat us – We're here to help you meet that challenge – Go Girl!!



**Before you leave - What to pack**

It's important to know that during your stay in Uganda most of your laundry (that's washing **and** ironing) will be done for you. When we stayed at Pastor Tom and Edith's there seemed to be set laundry days that were never more than four days apart. This means that you don't have to take a skirt for every day. We found that about four to five skirts were all that was required with the same amount of T-shirts/tops etc. Please note that while you are in Lugazi you must wear skirts rather than trousers when you go out. Casual trousers seem to be acceptable in and around the house but its skirts as soon as you leave the complex. Skirts must be modest – no skirts posing as belts will do here, young lady – the length must be on or below the knee and because it's hot a style which is flared (dare we say A-line) may be more comfortable.



The red dust (if it's hot) or red mud (if it's wet) seems to get everywhere so white as a colour scheme is probably best avoided. Patterns and prints can be bright and bold though to match the colourful clothes the Uganda women wear. Take enough tops and t-shirts to mix and match with the skirts you have chosen to bring. Again exercise a degree of modesty when choosing what tops to bring. T-shirts around Lugazi must be relatively high necked (not plunging) and no vests tops with spaghetti straps. These rules are relaxed somewhat when we get to Safari but we'll come to that later. Although we didn't come across loads of mosquitoes, they are about, especially at night, and long sleeves can protect your arms from being bitten.

In addition to skirts and tops, bring at least 2 dresses which you can use for church or if you're lucky another social event. The Ugandan women dress up for church and other social occasions and this left us girls feeling underdressed and positively casual. Appropriate dresses to bring would be a simple but sophisticated shift dress, patterned or plain – worn with heels and Ugandan jewellery (don't worry about not having any Ugandan jewellery you'll have more than enough after your first week there) and seeing as we're not used to walking on streets without pavements lets impose a limit of 4 inch heels to avoid the occurrence of sprained ankles etc. Other footwear to bring along would include at least 2 pairs of flip flops, trainers or such like for when it's raining or your on safari. We all turned up with walking boots after being told we would need them if the rain set in, but the mud grips to the soles of the boots so much you end up looking like you have platform heels on and that makes it as hard to walk than if you're wearing less sturdy shoes!

We'll leave underwear choices to you – NB: The laundry arrangements (although fab) may mean that your whites may not come back whiter than white though!

Finally night attire – if you're the type of girl (or guy) who likes to get up at regular intervals during the night, it might be prudent to pack a light dressing gown and flip flops. We all used flip flops around the house – leaving our street flip flops by the door and changing to the house one's to prevent the dust and mud being carried through Edith's spotless home.

We've taken the liberty of suggesting a perfect capsule wardrobe for your trip based on our experience. Please see below:

5 skirts and blouses/T-shirts to mix and match

2 x dresses

1 jumper – amazingly you sometimes get cold or feel a bit under the weather

3 pairs of trousers, combats or similar for safari plus vest tops should the weather be glorious. Small rucksack to use to pack clothes/toiletries when on safari.

2 x pairs flip flops

1 x pair of heels or kitten mules (they seem to be popular over in Uganda)

1 x pair of trainers or similar sturdier shoes

Your choice of underwear and socks

Nightwear/Dressing gown

Hat if you are prone to catching the sun plus a good sunscreen

Shades (designer preferably if you can make the investment but hey ho its credit crunch time so a suitable alternative will do – please take some of this tongue in cheek)

Also and just as a little tip – if you go to Jinja prior to the safari invest in one of the colourful Stetsons they sell on the high street (we use the term high street loosely you understand) – they would look fab on safari with shades when you're in the four wheel drives.

And in addition other essential items:

Mirror – At Edith and Tom's there's only one in the hallway next to the 'shower' room, so it pays to take your own. One of our group took a groovy mirror complete with detachable stand which saw lots of use. NB if anybody can find a mirror complete with battery lighting for the safari so that they can apply make-up when the electricity goes out then fair play to them.

Makeup – that's really essential for most of us – in fact the word essential doesn't do make-up and how much it means, justice!

Toiletries – shampoo, conditioner, shower gel, baby wipes (for the loo and quick freshen ups), facial wipes (invaluable!) toothpaste, deodorant, face creams, etc

Hair dryer and straighteners if required – there's one socket in each bedroom (each bedroom sleeps about 3) which doesn't require an adaptor! This one socket however gets plenty of use so if a couple of the team takes a mains adapter it can help it go a lot further

Medical items such as pain killers, laxatives (to make you go), Imodium (to stop you going), simple dressings, mosquito repellent and an anti-histamine soothing cream should you get bitten. Antibiotics can be purchased at the medical centre, which is one of the Capstone projects

Mosquito net – best play on the safe side about this. Although Tom and Edith supplied nets and they were also at the safari lodge – the condition of the net is important; no big holes for the pesky critters to get through. So take your own as a stand by just in case.

2 towels

Tomato ketchup/HP sauce as the meals are pretty bland (Heinz, if only that will do)

Chocolate and other snacks (refreshers seemed to go down well)

Good tea and coffee – speciality teas go down rather well as gifts to Edith and Tom (esp peppermint)

Sensodyne as a gift for Tom - he has sensitive teeth and we tempt him with chocolate and sweets so he needs it to offset the pain

Lots of 'blingy' type stuff – the girls at Edith's are crazy for it

Mobile charger

Camera



### **First night rules:**

You'll get there late. Probably about 11pm. The welcome you'll receive as you arrive is wonderful. You will be blown away that everyone is so glad that you have made the trip. Even at that late hour you will be given food and then shown to your rooms. We were allocated 2 rooms, one with three beds and the other two. The beds have sheets but no blanket and only one pillow so if you like two you should bring your own. N.B. massive insider tip: the airline supply fleecy blankets and one small but adequate pillow for the flight. If you're having difficulties fitting a blanket and a pillow into your case make sure that you take these with you when you land.



As a rite of passage those who have been there before you will want to show you the loos as soon as you arrive. Scottish folk call loos shunkies and there's lots of talk about 'jobbies' and how your doing in relation to them (Do we need to say more?). Actually, the smell in the toilet cubicles aren't too bad. At Tom and Edith's the hole is quite deep so smells are kept to a minimum. This isn't always the case though so keeping some perfume (not expensive stuff just brands like Impulse) in your bag to give you a quick spritz can help. We've included pictures of the shunkies in the guide so that you are completely prepared even before you get there.

Our advice; get the first trip to the loo over with. Make sure you go again before you go to bed to reduce the chance of having to go again in the night (they are situated in the courtyard outside of the house) and then get into bed under your mossi net (which feels safe and is strangely comforting). You're bound to feel weird and maybe a little tearful and apprehensive on your first night. This is a big step and a good night's sleep will help.

### **First morning:**

If you're with Derek he'll get you up early (about 8am and it will probably be a Saturday) while he's having a shave saying you've got half an hour before the bus goes. Your first thoughts will be 'what bus?' followed quickly by 'what does he mean, half an hour?' Panic not, a Ugandan half hour is about 45 minutes if you're unlucky, but more likely to be more like an hour.

In truth you will probably have heard the house stirring since about 5am as people get up and take it in turns to wash in the only wash room (called a shower room but that's a cruel joke!) in the house. It's important that you get accustomed to taking it in turns and if you're the type that takes longer than most, negotiate with your team where you would like to be place in 'the line'

### **Establishing a bathing routine:**



That first morning can completely floor you in terms of washing and dressing. You will be disorientated, jet lagged and on top of it Derek will keep on reminding you how long you have before the bus arrives (Note: At this point you might not know why a bus is arriving let alone where its taking you) . Keep calm. Remember breakfast (as is indeed any meal) is extremely important to Derek so he's always up and dressed in time to

make sure he's one of the first at the table. N.B. another massive tip. If you're somebody that enjoys their food too, make sure you stick close to Derek around meal times. That way you can be 100% sure you will not go hungry.

Anyway we digress. Washing – take into the shower all your usual bathing requirements. On entering the shower room you will be confronted with a shelf with one bucket full of cold water with a mug in it and one empty bowl. On a shelf above the bowls will be flasks full of hot water – you are allocated about half a flask of water per wash so make sure it's used carefully. Pour some of the hot water into empty bowl and top up with cold water to preferred temperature. If it's a hair wash day (which for most of us was everyday – you do get sweaty or should we say glow), then use the first bowl of water to wash and rinse hair. There's a hole in the floor where you empty the water into, so do that and refill bowl. The next bowl of water will rinse out the conditioner and serve as water to wash the rest of you. You may want to use your facial wipes now to clean your face rather than use the water in the bowl but that's up to you. One way of washing your body is to put the bowl on the floor and stand in it washing and rinsing all of you in one go. Alternatively you can wash and rinse parts of your body with the bowl left on the shelf, it's up to you. There is a small consolation in washing in this way – its not only the hair on your head that feels luxurious and soft !!

After washing, clean out bowl and leave shower room tidy. Its not etiquette to vacate the room half naked but a full length towel wrapped around you seems to provide the required level of modesty. It's also important that on entering the shower room you make sure that there's enough hot water for the next person too as this prevents queues forming. There's nothing more irritating than finally getting your turn only to find the flask empty. Its makes sense to check at the beginning and it's such a little thing to do.



Most of us clean teeth in the courtyard by the drain – use bottled water to rinse out your mouth though, not tap!



## **A word about food:**

You will eat a lot of carbohydrates. Ugandan's (many of which have manual jobs) use carbs to fill up on and they're less expensive than meat. Below are typical menus:

### **Breakfast:**

Bread with jam or peanut butter or honey and spread (its more like marg than butter)

Bananas

Tea/coffee

Edith sometimes hard boils eggs and this can be eaten with the bread. Edith also makes omelettes that taste a little spicy. Once we were treated to Edith's scotch eggs.

Anything savoury is covered in tomato sauce or a hot chilli sauce – yes even at breakfast!

### **Lunch:**

There will be a selection of carbs on the table that you can help yourself to, which include, rice, matoke (plantain – this is a bit like marmite; you either love or hate it), 'normal' spuds boiled, spaghetti. To flavour the carbs Edith prepares a soup which can include beans (like the kidney variety). This is poured over the carbs. Again copious amounts of tomato ketchup (Ugandan - which looks more orange than red - if you don't bring your own Heinz) and chilli sauce are used to spice it up.

After the savoury part of the meal, you usually finish with pineapple which is juicy and delicious.

### **Dinner:**

More of the same type of food as lunch sometimes interspersed with a vegetable dish like aubergine, a braised cabbage dish, sometimes a small salad again with white cabbage rather than lettuce. One night we were treated to a goat stew or Edith's version of KFC. But in the main the protein part of the dish was minimal with a high emphasis on carbohydrate.

All the carbs really make you hungry – you will be surprised at how much you can eat. Not sure why but it may be all the carbs make your insulin production go into overdrive. We were all expecting to drop a dress size but actually ended gaining – however, this gain was generally offset by the no alcohol rule – calories lost by not drinking alcohol for over two weeks were made up by eating tons!

NB: Derek will make sure that you all take your turn to say the Grace at the beginning of each meal.

### **First Sunday**

So that first Saturday is over and the day dawns on your first Sunday. You're expected to get up early and go to Church which is a fab experience. Church starts about 8am in the morning with singing and testimonies but we arrived at about 9.30am and stayed until about 12.30pm. That first Sunday you will be expected to say a few words (wearing of course your best frock and heels, shades optional extra) i.e. offer a word of encouragement and greetings from the UK (or your church if you have been sponsored). It's good to mention what you hope to experience too and which projects you are going to be working on. Then there's singing and prayer and Derek will preach (from laminated sermon sheets!!). Derek is a great preacher and you will enjoy his sermons. He has a wonderful way of encouraging people to come forward for prayer – sometimes it feels as if the whole church is 'at the front'. You may be asked to pray for people – it doesn't matter that you can't speak Ugandan. Most people understand some English and there are always people who can interpret. On following Sundays you may be asked to visit other local churches affiliated to the Lugazi Pentecostal Church to offer encouragement.

### **Sample working day:**

Your first week is mainly dedicated to working on the projects, which include the Children's Development Centre, the Clinic and dispensary and the skills centre. A rough programme of work will have been developed prior to your departure and you will know who the project leader is for your particular area.

A sample working day begins about 8am with the queue to the shower room and then breakfast at about 9am. A mini bus arrives to take people to the various projects if the project is outside walking distance. The clinic is fairly local so people tend to walk there. Lunch is served at 12.30 back at the ranch and then you return to your project at 1.30pm and work until about 4.30pm.



The heat and altitude can take it out of you at first and you may find yourself having a little snooze after work and before your evening meal. Dinner is around 6.30pm and then after, you read, talk and play cards with the family. The girls and Edith enjoyed our pampering session and jewellery night (as did Derek!) so that might be something to consider doing again.

**The second week:**

You'll probably feel more at home now and able to deal with the poverty and everyday images you see. You'll be settled into a routine and hopefully really pleased with how you're first week has gone and that you've contributed positively to it.



The second week is more about R&R. You'll go on safari where the rules about what to wear are more relaxed, eat at several hotels as you travel about the country (try not to rave too much about the availability of meat at mealtimes or flush loos in the hotels or shopping malls as it could offend your hosts who have worked so hard on your behalf) and see the most amazing sights – The Nile, animals in their own habitat and up close, magnificent waterfalls. You will begin to appreciate maybe for the first time the beauty of Uganda and why Winston Churchill labelled it the Pearl of Africa! Derek and the team try and make sure the safari completes the trip as returning back to Lugazi is a definite culture shock after it i.e. getting used to the absence of loos again almost seems worse than the first time when you didn't know what to expect.



As you approach your last Sunday which is in fact your last day you have very mixed feelings. Saying goodbye to your new friends is heart wrenching and there will be many tears, but already your mind will be switching to family and friends back home and there's a feeling of excitement that you'll be seeing them soon.

It's good to swap email addresses as a way of keeping in touch as you'll probably already know whether this is a charity and these are people you want to stay close to and support for the rest of your life.



**Conclusion:**

Derek talks about the Charity's ethos a lot and you can't help but become enthusiastic when you listen to him. That is, the importance of saving one person at a time or helping make small but significant changes within communities. Its not everyday you get the chance of being part of something like that while at the same time being able to look after 'your own' back home; working and paying the mortgage etc.

It's like you take Uganda and its people back with you. You remember them and your time there and take every opportunity to tell others about it so Uganda is included in their thoughts and prayers as well.

You max every occasion to raise funds knowing that it will make a difference to people in Lugazi. For example we bought loads of lovely home made jewellery while we were in Uganda to share with our girlfriends back home but didn't realise, until the trip drew to a close that our purchases paid for school fees. These were children who wouldn't have been able to go to school but then could, all because a Ugandan women was determined to work hard to support her kids by making necklaces and bracelets and then prayed that her efforts would be rewarded. And then God brought a group of women from the UK who visited her in Lugazi, women who were determined to look good and determined to do their part during their stay in Uganda !!

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this account of our time in Uganda. We sincerely hope it helps you stay looking good during your trip and helps in some way to physically prepare for it. The spiritual side of it we leave up to you but pray that:

- a) You'll get out of it what you put in – God always promises that when we do good in His name that He'll honour that
- b) You'll take back with you fond memories and even better, the desire to continue to work and pray for this important ministry that supports the people in Lugazi
- c) You'll return some day if that is God's plan – not only looking good but bringing love, support and hope to our brothers and sisters in Uganda

From your 5 sisters in Scotland and England. Lots of Love and God Bless  
Gail, Sheona, Heather, Anne-Marie and Ellie xxxx

