



RESPONSIBLE SOUVENIR GUIDE

Moments Beyond Borders is dedicated to promoting responsible and sustainable tourism in Uganda. In line with this commitment, we encourage our guests to make informed, ethical, and legally compliant choices when purchasing souvenirs. While shopping for crafts and gifts is an enjoyable part of travel, not all items available in markets or roadside stalls are legal, ethical, or sustainable.

Some products originate from threatened wildlife, rare plants, or protected cultural artefacts, while others may be associated with child labour, controlled substances, or illegal trade. The purchase of such items can have serious consequences, including environmental degradation, harm to local communities, and legal repercussions such as seizure at airports, fines, or prosecution under national and international law.

This guide draws on the Uganda National Red List of Threatened Species (2016), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and other relevant Ugandan legislation to identify items that should be avoided. It also recommends safe and ethical alternatives that support local communities while conserving Uganda's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage. By following these guidelines, visitors help protect wildlife, cultural traditions, and the people who depend on them.

Discouraged Souvenirs in Uganda

Item	Region(s)	CITES / Legal Reference	Why Avoid
Ivory carvings, rhino horn powder, lion/leopard skins, crocodile leather, pangolin scales, bushmeat	Murchison Falls, Queen Elizabeth, Kidepo Valley, Bwindi, other wildlife reserves	CITES Appendix I & II, Uganda National Red List	Fuels poaching; species threatened with extinction; illegal trade; carrying can lead to arrest/fines
Crested crane feathers, stuffed owls/parrots, butterfly wings in jewellery	Mabira Forest, Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary, Entebbe Botanical Gardens, birdwatching sites	CITES Appendix II, Uganda Wildlife Act	Threatens survival of endangered species; disrupts ecosystems; illegal
Cycads, orchids, Prunus Africana bark, carvings from endangered hardwoods (African Blackwood)	Rwenzori Mountains, Kibale Forest, Mount Elgon, other protected forests	CITES Appendix I & II, Uganda Forest Act	Rare, slow-growing plants; overharvesting threatens forests; illegal removal from protected areas
Ancient pottery, tribal masks, sacred ritual objects, Buganda royal items, Acholi artefacts	Buganda Kingdom (Central), Acholi (Northern), Toro (Western)	UNESCO Convention on Cultural Property, Uganda Museums & Monuments Act	Part of cultural heritage; buying disrespects communities; may be fake or stolen

Bracelets, toys, crafts sold by children	Kampala, Entebbe, Jinja, Gulu, tourist hotspots	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Uganda Children Act	Encourages child labour; keeps children out of school; exposes them to exploitation
Marijuana/cannabis products, khat, crocodile oil, pangolin fat, unsealed alcohol sachets	Nationwide	Uganda Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances Act; CITES (pangolin derivatives)	Illegal; heavy penalties; animal products exploit endangered species; unregulated alcohol unsafe
Coral, starfish, shells, live parrots, turtles, chameleons, insect collections, fake antique coins	Lake Victoria, Sese Islands, Lake Bunyonyi, coastal/river areas	CITES Appendix I & II, Uganda Wildlife Act, Uganda Antiquities & Monuments Act	Disrupts aquatic ecosystems; trade in live wild animals' illegal/cruel; fake items mislead buyers

Recommended Sustainable Souvenir Alternatives

Discouraged / Avoid	Recommended / Safe Alternative
Ivory & Rhino Horn Products 🐘	Hand-carved soapstone, wood, or recycled crafts
Lion, Leopard, or Big Cat Skins 🐆	Animal-print fabrics or locally made textiles
Crocodile Leather Items 🐊	Leather from farmed livestock or recycled leather goods
Pangolin Scales / Meat 🐉	Crafts from banana fibre, sisal, papyrus, or clay
Bushmeat 🍖	Locally produced vegetarian snacks or packaged treats
Rare or Wild Plants 🌿	Potted plants or seeds from certified nurseries
Cultural Artefacts / Human Remains 🗿	Locally made crafts or replicas by artisan communities
Child Labour Products ⚠️	Souvenirs from adult artisan cooperatives or fair-trade shops
Illegal Substances (e.g., Cannabis) 🚫	Herbal teas, spices, or legal natural products
Counterfeit or Illegally Imported Goods ⚠️	Authentic crafts from recognized cooperatives or fair-trade stores
	Additional Recommended Souvenirs:
	Handwoven baskets & mats 🧺 (banana fibres, papyrus, raffia)
	Barkcloth products 📁 (wallets, purses, artwork – UNESCO craft)
	Bead jewellery & accessories 🧵 (recycled paper, glass, seeds)
	Hand-carved wooden crafts 🪵 (sustainably sourced/reclaimed wood)
	Textiles 🧥 (kitenge clothing, scarves, bags from local cooperatives)
	Coffee, tea, & cocoa ☕ (grown by smallholder farmers)
	Ugandan music, literature & art 🎨 (celebrates culture without harm)

These alternatives not only make meaningful gifts, but also directly support Ugandan families and communities, helping to build a tourism industry that truly benefits people and nature.