



KIT LIST

ACTION SITARU PRE-DEPARTURE HANDBOOK 2016

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 Little Big Africa

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Welcome to the LBA Action Sitaru Kit List.

The kit list is made based on our own experience and the input from previous volunteers. Sometimes the advice seems to be conflicting as people have different opinions but we include it all so you can get a better feel for what you should consider bringing with you. A lot of advice from volunteers at the end of placement is covered in here, so do use the list to help you pack.

Transport and your houses will not have a lot of extra space so aim to have just one big bag and a day rucksack. It is also safer when you only have one bag to think about. There is a lot of rough & uneven terrain in Uganda, including the pavements, so if you're moving with your bag, expect to be carrying it rather than wheeling it. Bear this in mind with regards to its weight and how easy it is to carry your bag.

Manafwa is a very hilly. You may have a placement high in the mountains (i.e. colder at night) or on the flatter plains at the bottom of the hills so you need to be prepared for both. Also, the weather can be very unpredictable, it could be raining everyday, or it may rain very little. It varies from year to year so it is impossible to say it will be rainy or it will be sunny the whole time. Most likely, a mixture of both.

Whilst some things on this list will make your life easier in the village, it is by no means an essential kit list. It is important to remember 10 years ago lots of these things were not available, and volunteers both survived and had a great time on placement. Life in rural Uganda is very different to the UK but we strongly recommend whilst in Uganda to embrace the Ugandan culture and way of life, and not try to live like you would in the UK.

We're often asked what would be our top items not to leave behind. The unanimous answer is always a head torch, followed by a decent pair of closed shoes, a penknife, a day bag/rucksack, some form of radio/music & speaker within your group, and a sense of humour!

When travelling for a long period of time, it is easy for items to get lost or go missing, as is the case the world over. For that reason we would recommend that you do not bring valuable items or items of sentimental value.

We have tried to make it a bit easier by colour coding the list - green for what we consider essentials, orange for the not so essentials, and red for the only if there's space. Some things are red because they are easily available in Uganda, as opposed to their lack of usefulness. (U) beside an item shows it is readily available in Uganda. Remember anything you leave for buying in Uganda, you will need to budget for in your spending money.

If you have any questions, feel free to message us or post a question on the Facebook page.

CLOTHES

We'll start with dress as this is always a tricky one. How you dress is really important in earning (and keeping) respect of both men and women in the community where you will be working. Primary school pupils will also see you as role models, and both parents and teachers will expect you to dress decently to set a good example.

Ugandans take a lot of pride in their clothes and are always very clean so it will be important for you to wash your clothes regularly and ensure they are not torn.

You'll find white is difficult to keep clean as the soil is bright orangey brown, so bring lots of colourful/dark coloured clothes. You will also find Ugandans love to wear bright colours and patterns.

Many travellers feel that because they are in Africa it is okay not to wash (themselves and their clothes), to grow their hair & beard long and free (we're talking boys here) and generally relax their overall personal grooming. But this won't help to earn you any respect and people will take you less seriously.

Similarly, it is very frowned upon for either boys or girls to show their underwear out the top of their trousers, including your stomach, so avoid your lowest cut trousers/skirts and styles which show off your underwear, or bring (and use!) a belt.

Girls First

In the village - All women in the village will be wearing skirts & it is strongly recommended that you also wear skirts whilst you are in the village, even for construction work. Whilst this may not be common in your own culture, it will greatly help you integrate in the community & increase your productivity.

Things you need to consider:

-skirts/dresses should come at least halfway down your calves, without long splits. When you sit down, your knees should easily be covered by your skirt.

-skirts/dresses that go right down to your ankles can get in the way a bit and get muddy etc so aim for mid calf as much as possible.

-some skirts are see through. It's amazing how sunlight can make the most decent skirt be not so innocent so buy one with a lining (i.e. 2 layers). Ugandan women commonly wear a petticoat, which whilst is not common in UK culture (especially among young people) may help you be more modest when in the village.

-Shoulders need to be covered, as well as your cleavage and belly button/mid-drift (even when you're stretching up for manual work/writing on the blackboard etc), so avoid strappy tops as well as tops that are too short and show your belly. Also ensure that your skirts pull up to your waist without showing off your underwear.

-Avoid clothes that are tight (for cultural reasons & because they make you hot & sweaty)

Do a fashion parade for your mum/sibling/flat mate to check if your clothes tick all the boxes above. We'll also help guide you during training but you don't want to carry a backpack of unsuitable clothes over to Uganda to have to go and buy some new ones!

Don't panic if you don't feel your wardrobe fits this match or if it seems very different. Whilst it is definitely easier to sort your wardrobe before you leave (have a look in charity shops), you can always buy some material in the market in Mbale to get made into a skirt or dress during training. Lots of girls dress in Primark skirts and dresses (just remember to go for darker colours as they're less see-through especially from shops that aren't known for using the most expensive material!)

Community members always comment to us on girls' skirts AFTER vols have left (they don't want to upset you!) so please try and ensure skirts really do come below the knee even when sitting down.

In the town & on Safari (and this includes for training) - Dress codes can be relaxed more although this can - and will - affect the way people perceive you. Still aim to keep your knees covered though you can wear trousers or 3/4 lengths. You can also get away with sleeveless and spaghetti tops, but just try to ensure they don't show any cleavage and aren't too tight. The tighter or shorter your clothes, the more attention you will receive (guaranteed) and this may not always be wanted attention!! Thighs and tummies are not okay anywhere in Uganda unless you are swimming. Remember training /town/safari is only a small part of your time in Uganda so don't pack too many of these types of clothes.

Boys Have It Slightly Easier

In the village & training - You should wear trousers all the time in the village. In the Mbale region, tradition is that only the uncircumcised “boys” wear shorts, (not the real men!) so the boys in your group who wear shorts may be considered younger and more immature than the other boys wearing longer trousers, and accorded less respect. We have had people asking us why male volunteers (who were wearing above the knee shorts) were working in their pants.

-You can wear 3/4 length trousers (as opposed to shorts) but make sure they come down to your calves and instead of hanging around your knees, including when you sit down. You should not wear shorts that come above the knees or sleeveless T-shirts, although long shorts are fine for playing football.

- When you're teaching you will be expected to look smart so you need to bring a couple of shirts or collared tshirts to wear with long trousers.

-Long trousers are best for community meetings, teaching and official engagements (weddings, meeting important people etc). Whatever type of trousers, they need to worn around your waist without showing off your underwear.

-If you are deciding between a collared T-shirt and collarless T-shirt, go for the collared one – it is considered smarter and it offers extra protection from the sun. You can find Ugandans working out in the fields in shirts and smart trousers.

- You must always wear something on your top half when in the village.

-Avoid army fatigue prints (even if they are fake) so people cannot mis-represent your good intentions.

In the town & on safari, and in touristy places, we would still recommend 3/4 length trousers or at least shorts below the knees. You can wear vests/sleeveless tshirts in touristy places (though not during training).

FOOTWEAR

We recommend:

- A pair of walking shoes/trainers or **sturdy** open walking sandals for when you're in the village. The terrain can be rough. Walking boots would also be fine although they are heavier to carry in your bag.
- If you have walking boots, consider bringing a pair of sandals - for wearing out and about, don't go for the plain rubber flip-flops (Havaianas style) as in Uganda as they are seen as shoes that you only wear to the toilet. The best ones are those with canvas straps.
- You will be using some sharp tools for various aspects of the project so it is also definitely worth considering bringing a pair of closed shoes (for example trainers, walking shoes or walking boots) to protect your feet.
- A pair of cheap flipflops (**U**) to wear inside the house. It helps keep your house clean when you have muddy feet, and some people don't like walking on the cold/mud floor.
- You can buy wellies (**U**) in Mbale (to save space in your luggage) but bring several pairs of thicker/longer socks to stop them rubbing.

Clothes You Should Bring With You

- Footwear - see the separate page.
- Raincoat/Waterproof light weight jacket
- One warm jumper/fleece/hoody for evenings
- At least one long sleeved top and long trousers for covering up from mosquitoes in the evening
- More than 1 pair of work clothes
- Something smart you can wear for visiting families and going to church
- Girls – more long skirts than you think you'll need (**U**)
- Girls - one or two pairs of light/comfy trousers for training/travelling
- Boys – at least one smart shirt (collared)
- Boys - Lightweight trousers (expect to be in trousers every day in the village)
- Brown clothes – and/or clothes you don't mind getting dirty/clothes you can throw away after construction.
- Underwear - bring more than you think you'll need (whilst in the village you don't want your best ones and certainly not sparkling white).
- Lots of socks
- Cap/hat for working in (especially if you are prone to sunburn)
- Sunglasses
- One nice(ish) outfit for going out dancing in. But don't go mad and definitely not too risqué.
- Swimming kit (for girls, both bikinis and one piece swimming costumes are fine)
- Hairbands

You will be hand washing your clothes and leaving them out on the line to dry, so it is worth bringing clothes which you think will dry easily.

We also recommend you don't bring your favourite clothes as clothes can get very grubby and worn after repeated hand washing.

Other Items To Consider Bringing With You

- **Head Torch** - one per person (leaves both hands free - especially useful when cooking or using the pit latrine at night!). Wind-up ones are useful as a back up if batteries run out but they're not as powerful as other torches (Argos/Robert Dyas) although Maglites break easily.
- **Batteries** - cheap ones in Uganda don't last long, Duracell **(U)** are available in town so if you have space, you can bring some spare ones from the UK, if not buy them in Uganda.
- **Small day sack/bag** which is not open (i.e. has a zip or clasp) and easy to carry around for day trips/mid-placement break
- **Small padlock** to safeguard your bag whilst travelling
- **Penknife**
- **Money pouch** to hide under clothing.
- **Camera**
- **Spare camera batteries** – the Lithium batteries can be difficult and expensive to buy in Uganda and Ugandan AA batteries have a short lifespan).
- **Very large memory card/additional memory card** – if you enjoy taking photos it will be worth having a spare memory card or a very large memory card to store all your photos
- **Camera cable** – so you can download photos (either to backup or email home or put on the LBA website)
- **USB memory stick** – to back up your camera. We have had previous volunteers who have lost their camera and used memory cards (and therefore all their photos) without backing them up. CDs are commonly available in Uganda to store photos on instead of a memory stick if you prefer.
- **A good water bottle** - minimum 1 litre **(U)**
- **Watch**
- **Umbrella (U)**
- **A wifi device** for mid placement/debrief when you can get wifi.
- **Power Bank**
- **A cheap ring** (to wear on your wedding finger to warn off potential admirers!) **(U)**
- **Gardening gloves** (to prevent blisters during manual work)
- **Money** (see the LBA Money Guide)

- **2 bed sheets for sleeping in or a duvet cover to sleep inside** (a duvet cover is convenient for travelling with)
- **Sleeping bag** (the hills of Mbale can get cold at night)
- **Travel Pillow** (about the size of an aeroplane one)
- **Microfibre/Travel towel/sarong/thin towel** (instead of a big towel)

- **Photos of family, friends and life in the UK.** People will be really interested and photos are excellent to explain strange concepts (i.e. snow, gardens, house style). People will also be excited to be given such photos so bring extra.
- **Photocopies of all your important documents** i.e. passport, insurance, bank cards & numbers for lost bank cards.
- **At least 1 passport photo.**
- **Addresses of friends and family in the UK**

- **Anti-malarials** (these are ESSENTIAL)
- **Water purification tablets** - you can also get 20 litre ones which can go straight into your 20 litre water container (**U**) or **Water Purification Bottle or Lifestraw**.
- **Mosquito repellent** (Jungle Formula roll on is recommended) - more than 1 bottle
- **Sun cream** – you will need it. Minimum factor 15 for darker skin, factor 25-40 for fairer skin. One big pot is enough as you'll have lots of parts covered by your appropriate clothes. [though if you are travelling after project and tend to burn quite easily, sunscreen is difficult to get hold of in Uganda]
- **Toiletries (U)**
- **Sanitary products for girls**
- **Contact lense solutions** (if you wear contact lenses, you are likely to find the dust irritates your eyes.)
- **Glasses** (if you wear them/contacts!) To give your eyes a break from contact lenses when they're tired, or have simply had enough dust for one day.
- **Antibacterial hand gel** (a big one and a small one to decant into for carrying around)
- **Anti-bacterial wipes**
- **Dry Shampoo & Leave-in conditioner** - saves on precious water - though it doesn't get the dust and dirt out
- **Any medication you are on/tend to need every now and then.**
- **Baby/wet wipes (U)**
- **A nailbrush and nail clippers (U)**
- **Flannel, sponge & loofah (U)**
- **Ziplock bags** for all your lotions & potions

Things To Consider Bringing Out Per Group

- **Radio or Ipod -**

Music helps to entertain you in the village but ensure that it can run from batteries. You should be able to receive a fairly decent local radio station on FM (in English) from your placement as well as the BBC World Service (on FM). A good idea is a wind-up radio as it doesn't need loads of batteries.

- **Speakers**
- **Solar charger** - research this well as some are better than others, and it may be working overtime as you are very unlikely to have power.
- **Solar lanterns** ie Luchi or stick on **LED lights/Spotlights**.
- **Solar shower** for washing hair

- **Books**

Don't weigh yourself down with too many - plan within the group and swap books with each other. There are several good reading books related to Uganda which include: "The Last King of Scotland" by Giles Foden (about Idi Amin's reign); "Aboke Girls" by Els De Temmerman (about some school girls who were abducted in the war); "Abyssinian Chronicles" by Moses Isegawa (a semi auto-biographical book about the history of Uganda since Independence).

- **Guide Book.**

Volunteers all debate as to which is the best book: Uganda Footprint Guide, Uganda Bradt Guide, or the Lonely Planet East Africa Guide (not as much information on Uganda as the other two but useful if you're planning on travelling in Kenya or Tanzania afterwards). If you're planning on travelling with friends afterwards, why not consider sharing one to keep costs down? If several team members want to buy their own guidebook, try to ensure a mix within your team.

- **A can opener & potato peeler(s);**
- **Good knives & a decent chopping board (U)**
- **Pepper mill**
- **3 Padlocks** (for doors. Not too big!) Combination ones are great as you don't have to worry about who has gone off with the key. You could use ones off your luggage if your luggage is locked. And if choose padlocks with keys, bring a couple of **decent sized key rings** for your house keys too (padlock keys can be very small!).
- **Washing line and pegs (U)**
- **Gaffer/Duct Tape**
- **Tea towels**
- **Lighter/long handled stove lighter/long matches** (matches are cheap & easy to buy in Uganda)
- **Games for yourselves** for those dark evenings including cards/UNO etc and/or board games.
- **Recipes** for using simple/a few ingredients
- **Large ziplock bags** to store food safely
- **Tupperware (U)**
- **Clothes brush**
- **Silicon mitt/oven gloves** to hold hot pans with.
- **Aftersun**

- Games for Kids - footballs, netballs, frisbees, skipping ropes, long skipping rope, bubbles, face paints, beach balls, medals etc. and a PUMP! Team up and get these donated before you come out.
- Maps/inflatable globe
- Thin paint brushes for painting tank
- Stationery - glitter, pens, stickers, scissors, paper, colours, pencil sharpeners, sellotape, blue tak, crayons, markers (there is limited stationery available in Mbale)
- British gifts

Even though you will not yet know the people they are for such as small souvenirs (e.g. postcards/pin badges/ blanket badges/key rings/pencils/rubbers/rulers etc of London/UK/Union Jack etc.) that can be used as prizes and gifts. Try and get things donated.

- Magazines/brochures of the UK, even holiday brochures, (not FHM/Cosmo!)
- At least 2 mobile phones per group and charger/solar charger

It is very difficult to get the small iPhone sim cards in Mbale. You also need to make sure your phone is unlocked (this is really hard to do in Mbale). Alternatively you can buy cheap handsets for about £15 in Mbale. It's better to bring an old handset than your favourite handset as it is likely to get several knocks/drops. Be prepared to use your phone for calling and sms only. Ugandan sim cards are cheap (about £0.50) and tariffs are much cheaper than UK roaming rates. See the LBA Money Guide for costs of texts & calls home & the LBA Communication Guide for more about staying in touch with home.

Food To Consider Bringing Out Per Group

It is possible to cook with foods & herbs/spices available in Uganda but sometimes a little something from home makes life a) easier b) more comforting c) tastier d) less monotonous.

- **Oxo cubes** (Beef, Chicken, Vegetable, Mexican, Italian, Chinese, Indian) brightens up any meal – especially if you are eating it for the seventh time that week. Herbs are very widely available and cheap in Uganda.
- **Other flavourings & spices** such as Italian herbs, Jamaican Jerk, Fajita mix etc. You can get a lot of herbs & single spices in Mbale i.e. cumin, tumeric, mixed herbs, oregano, (just make sure you budget for buying them) but you can't get the themed/mixed flavourings.
- **Packet sauces** - anything to add flavour or packets of dried food i.e. pasta in sauce etc
- **Chocolate** [in plastic wrappers, not foil as very very likely to melt before it gets anyway near your mouth!] **(U)**
- **Bags of sweets** (though you can buy simple sweets cheaply in Uganda)
- **Sauces and condiments** [you can buy ketchup, chilli sauce, salt & pepper in Mbale before you go to placement]
- **Tinned food (U)**
- **Hot chocolate and Cup-a-Soups**
- **Cereal bars**
- **Junk/comfort food**

Things you can buy cheaply in Uganda

(Remember that you may not be able to buy these on your first day in Uganda)

- Flip flops (though for use in and around the house only)
- Mosquito net (LBA can buy these for you [large, box nets that are treated] to be ready for your first night and you can reimburse LBA in Uganda here (approx £5) – your project coordinator will ask you in advance if you want one]. If you want to buy a net in the UK/US, you will probably find ones that fold up smaller, but will probably give you less breathing space inside.
- Sarongs/material
- Herbs & spices of all varieties
- Matches
- Hand-washing powder for clothes
- Key padlocks
- Paracetamol/Aspirin
- Mosquito coils
- Ruled paper, biros and some stationery materials
- Oral Rehydration Sachets/Imodium
- 20 litre Water purification tablets
- Shampoo, conditioner, mosituriser, soap
- Wellies
- Washing line & pegs

First Aid Kit Check-list To Bring Collectively As A Group

Get a really good first aid kit amongst the team instead of lots of small cheap ones.

Items to consider including:

- Liquid iodine or another antiseptic (essential - put on mosquito bites to stop them getting septic)
- Plasters
- Gauze and tape
- Rehydration sachets (U)
- Diarrhoea tablets/Immodium (U)
- Plenty of ibuprofen/ paracetamol
- Alcohol hand gel
- Tummy settlers e.g. Rennie rapeze
- Scissors & tweezers
- Needles (for injections)
- Antiseptic wipes
- Bite/sting cream
- Surgical gloves

Things NOT to bother bringing

- White Clothes
- Shorts
- Girls – no more than one or two pairs of trousers - only for travelling after [and can be worn in training].
- Girls – no low cut tops.
- White socks.
- Short tops that reveal your stomach or back when bending or stretching
- Very long maxi dresses (get caught in the mud)
- Going out clothes
- Nice shoes
- Wellies
- Walking boots - they weigh down your bag and walking trainers are fine.
- Toms - they get wet and smell
- Any clothes you want to wear in the UK again.

- A normal towel (they take too long to dry).
- Mosquito net - get one through LBA when you're here

- Too much suncream - one big pot is enough as you'll have lots of parts covered by your appropriate clothes. [though if you are travelling after project and tend to burn quite easily, suncream is difficult to get hold of in Uganda]
- Go easy on the toiletries - you can get them in Mbale if you're not too fussy.
- Talcum powder
- Too much Imodium
- Don't go over the top on medicine
- Hairdryer/straighteners/electric razor
- Make up

- Collapsible water bottle
- Water purification tablets - Water Guard is cheap and readily available in Mbale, including for 20 litres.
- Washing powder (cheap & readily available in Mbale)

- Too many books
- Don't bring too many treats - you can buy them in Mbale
- Jewellery

If you think you may need it and it fits in your bag, bring it.

Mbale Shopping

The following list is given to you in training as a guide shopping list before placement. All items are easily available in Mbale, but if you have space in your bag, there is no harm in bringing some items with you. You will not need all these items, the list is a reference for you to consider as a group.

Essential to Buy in Town

Food

- Spices
 - curry powder
 - chilli powder
 - herbs
 - etc.
- Salt and Pepper
- Tomato Puree
- Pasta
- Chappati flour (Nga wa Ngano)
- Breakfast things including options for if you don't want to light sigiri: e.g. porridge, long life milk, cereal
- Oil
- Butter
- Tea/Coffee/Hot Chocolate
- Sugar
- Squash
- First four meals
- Emergency water

Household Items

- Soap (Blue Bar is great)
- Washing up sponges
- Axiom (for washing pots and pans)
- Scourer
- Nail Brush (amazing for getting mud of clothes)
- Washing Powder (for clothes)
- Matches/lighter
- String (for mosquito nets, washing line etc)
- Underwear hanger (this is a life saver as you CAN NOT hang underwear outside)
- Wet wipes (amazing to quickly clean surfaces)
- Paraffin for lantern
- Toilet Paper
- Cloth to mop floor
- Handful of nails

Project Items

- Sacks
- Masking tape
- Markers
- Newsprint
- Manilla
- Colours - pencils and pens
- 2 padlocks (2 inch)

Miscellaneous

- Stamps
- ORS

Essential Items You Can Buy In Village but Good To Buy In Bulk In Town

- Eggs (though hard to travel with)
- Potatoes
- Rice
- Garlic
- Gnut paste
- Gnuts

Other Items (luxuries) To Be Considered

- Treats (lollipops, biscuits etc.)
- Snacks (crisps, gnuts etc)
- Canned Tomatoes
- Noodles
- Cake Ingredients
- Tupperware
- Jam
- Peanut Butter
- Tuna /Sardine Cans
- Corned Beef/ Canned Meat
- Cous cous
- Raisins/stuff for porridge
- Baked Beans/other canned beans
- Lentils
- Chickpeas
- Chocolate