



Responsible Souvenir Guide – Uganda & Rwanda

Churchill Safaris is dedicated to promoting responsible and sustainable tourism across Uganda and Rwanda. In line with our commitment to conservation, community well-being, and ethical travel, we encourage all guests to make informed, legal, and sustainable choices when purchasing souvenirs.

Shopping for crafts and gifts is one of the joys of travel, but not every item sold in markets or along roadsides is ethical, legal, or environmentally friendly. Some may come from endangered wildlife, rare plants, or protected cultural artefacts, while others may involve child labour or illegal substances. Purchasing such items can harm local communities, fuel illegal trade, and lead to serious consequences such as fines, confiscation, or prosecution under national or international law.

This guide draws on the Uganda National Red List of Threatened Species (2016), Rwanda's Biodiversity Policy, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and relevant national laws including the Uganda Wildlife Act (2019) and the Rwanda Environment and Wildlife Laws (2018–2020) to help visitors make responsible souvenir choices. By following these guidelines, you help protect wildlife, preserve cultural heritage, and support local artisans in both Uganda and Rwanda.

Discouraged Souvenirs in Uganda and Rwanda

Item	Region(s)	CITES / Legal Reference	Why Avoid
Ivory carvings, rhino horn, lion/leopard skins, crocodile leather, pangolin scales, bushmeat	National parks and wildlife reserves in both countries (e.g., Murchison Falls, Queen Elizabeth, Akagera, Volcanoes)	CITES Appendix I & II; Uganda Wildlife Act; Rwanda Wildlife Law	Fuels poaching; species threatened with extinction; illegal trade; heavy penalties
Feathers or stuffed birds (crowned crane, owls, parrots), butterfly wings in jewellery	Birding areas in Uganda and Rwanda	CITES Appendix II; National Red Lists	Threatens endangered species; disrupts ecosystems; illegal
Cycads, orchids, Prunus africana bark, carvings from endangered hardwoods (e.g., African blackwood, mahogany)	Forest reserves and mountain areas (Rwenzori, Kibale, Nyungwe, Volcanoes)	CITES Appendix I & II; Uganda & Rwanda Forest Acts	Overharvesting threatens forest ecosystems; illegal collection
Ancient artefacts, traditional masks, sacred objects, royal regalia	Buganda Kingdom, Toro, Acholi (Uganda); Rwandan kingdoms and heritage sites	UNESCO Convention on Cultural Property; Museums & Monuments Acts	Part of protected heritage; buying may disrespect or exploit cultural traditions

Bracelets, toys, crafts sold by children	Kampala, Entebbe, Kigali, Musanze, Gisenyi	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; National Children Acts	Encourages child labour; denies education; promotes exploitation
Marijuana, khat, pangolin fat, unsealed alcohol sachets	Across both countries	Uganda Narcotic Drugs Act; Rwanda Narcotics Law; CITES (pangolin)	Illegal; health and legal risks; wildlife exploitation
Coral, starfish, shells, live parrots, turtles, chameleons, insect collections	Lakes Victoria, Kivu, and islands	CITES Appendix I & II; Wildlife Acts	Damages aquatic ecosystems; illegal wildlife trade
Counterfeit currency, fake antique coins, and artefacts	Tourist markets in both countries	National Museums & Antiquities Laws	Misleading to tourists; may involve illegal trading

Recommended Sustainable Souvenir Alternatives

Discouraged / Avoid	Recommended / Safe Alternative
Ivory or Rhino Horn Products	Hand-carved soapstone, recycled metal, or wooden crafts
Big Cat Skins or Crocodile Leather	Locally made fabrics or ethically sourced livestock leather
Pangolin Scales / Bushmeat	Banana fibre, papyrus, sisal, or clay crafts
Rare or Wild Plants	Seeds or potted plants from certified nurseries
Cultural Artefacts / Human Remains	Handmade replicas by local artisan cooperatives
Child Labour Products	Fair-trade crafts from adult artisan groups
Illegal Substances	Herbal teas, natural oils, or certified local products
Counterfeit or Imported Goods	Authentic crafts made by community cooperatives

Other Recommended Ethical Souvenirs from Uganda and Rwanda

1. Handwoven baskets and mats made from banana fibres, papyrus, or raffia
2. Barkcloth products such as wallets, purses, and artwork (UNESCO-recognized)
3. Bead jewellery made from recycled paper, seeds, or glass
4. Hand-carved wooden crafts from sustainably sourced or reclaimed wood
5. Colourful textiles and clothing made from *kitenge* and *imigongo* patterns
6. Locally produced coffee, tea, cocoa, and honey from smallholder farmers
7. Traditional music, literature, and visual art that celebrate local culture

By choosing responsible souvenirs, you directly support local families, artisans, and conservation efforts in Uganda and Rwanda. Your purchases help build a tourism industry that uplifts communities, protects nature, and preserves the unique heritage of both countries.