

...approach shaped nearly every course. One stand-out dish paired beef with peanut curry, sweet potato purée and crisp sweet potato shards. Dgedge explained how the peanut reduction was made by extracting milk

...the finished harmony. Perhaps that is what makes The Chef's Table Africa increasingly important to Kampala's growing culinary culture. It is quietly teaching diners that fine dining is not really about exclusivity or ex-

...your notes too carefully. They were simply enjoying themselves. Which may ultimately be The Chef's Table Africa's greatest trick of all.

A green retreat at Kalinzu Ecolodge

Refresh. A chance to be surrounded by nature.

BY TREVOR LUTALO

Hidden within the tropical greenery of western Uganda, Kalinzu Eco Lodge offers a quieter kind of weekend escape. Located on the edge of Kalinzu Forest Reserve in Bushenyi District, the lodge sits along the tourism route linking Queen Elizabeth National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, making it accessible for travellers looking for a short break away from the city.

For visitors travelling from Kampala, the journey is largely straightforward. The drive takes about six to seven hours through Masaka and Mbarara before branching toward Bushenyi

and Rubirizi. Much of the route follows the paved Kampala-Mbarara highway, although roads closer to the forest reserve become narrower and partly murram. Public buses and taxis also travel daily to Bushenyi, after which visitors can connect to the forest area using local transport.

The transition into Kalinzu Forest is noticeable almost immediately. The air becomes cooler, the vegetation thicker and the sounds of birds and insects more constant. Unlike some of Uganda's busier tourism destinations, Kalinzu offers a quieter rainforest setting, making it appealing for travellers interested in nature, walking trails and slower-paced weekends.

Kalinzu Forest Reserve itself is one of Uganda's important tropical forests and is managed by the National Forestry Authority. The reserve is known for its biodiversity, particularly its population



The lodge's design leans toward sustainability. PHOTO/TREVOR LUTALO.

of habituated chimpanzees. Several other primates also live in the forest, including black-and-white colobus monkeys, baboons, vervet monkeys and blue monkeys. Birdwatchers are often drawn to the area because of the hundreds of bird species recorded within the forest ecosystem.

Chimpanzee trekking remains the main activity for most visitors. Guided

forest walks begin early in the morning, taking groups through dense trails in search of chimpanzee families. The experience can involve several hours of walking, depending on where the animals are located that day. Along the way, guides also point out medicinal plants, indigenous tree species, butterflies and birdlife found within the reserve.

Nature walks are another common activity for weekend visitors. Some trails pass through valleys, streams and sections of thick canopy where sunlight filters through towering trees. The forest's terrain also makes it suitable for photography, birdwatching and quiet retreats away from urban noise.

Within this setting, Kalinzu Eco Lodge was developed as an eco-tourism facility designed to blend into the surrounding environment rather than dominate it. The lodge uses timber, stone and thatched architectural elements that reflect the forest landscape. Private cottages are spread across the property, allowing visitors views of the surrounding vegetation and forest canopy.

For travellers looking for a weekend that combines forest exploration with quiet accommodation, Kalinzu Eco Lodge offers an experience different from the traditional savannah safari. Instead of open plains and game drives, the attraction here lies in rainforest walks, chimpanzee encounters and the atmosphere of one of western Uganda's lesser-known forest reserves.

Here, you find space, silence and a close encounter with nature only a few hours from Kampala.