



Queen Tracy: How Gen Z is making travel accessible

Creators expand the tourism map beyond marquee sites. While iconic destinations such as Murchison Falls National Park remain central, Gen Z travel content is equally interested in brunch spots, city corners, budget hostels and roadside experiences.

BY TREVOR LUTALO

On any random day, if you scroll through TikTok long enough, you will likely land on a video of a young woman boarding a bus to any destination, breaking down the cost of accommodation in a lesser-known town or somewhere along the coast, or showing you how to complete a travel checklist.

The tone is casual, the delivery unpretentious and relatable. But behind it is a deliberate mission, to prove that travel in Uganda is not a luxury reserved for the wealthy.

Queen Tracy Nakabugo, 24, has built a following of more than 70,000 across TikTok and Instagram, attracting more than 1.5 million likes to her content. A graduate of Makerere University with a degree in industrial and fine arts, she has emerged as one of a new generation of digital creators reshaping how Ugandans see tourism or travel. Nakabugo says if one can take a Shs10,000 bus to Jinja, then travel is already within reach.

From art school to open roads

Nakabugo's entry into travel content was almost unanticipated. While at



Makerere, a coursework assignment required students to create either a television advert or a social media advert. She and her friends chose the latter and turned the project into a trip to Murchison Falls National Park. It was her first time in a national park. The experience left a mark.

"We went for coursework, but when I came back, I realised I loved travelling," she recalls.

After graduation, she faced the dilemma familiar to many art students: pursue fine art in a market that rewards slowly, or pivot into something more commercially viable. Travel, it turned out, offered both creative expression and opportunity. A subsequent trip to Kenya for a beach party known as Summer Tides marked another turning point.

She documented her road travel, her use of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), and the cost. The videos went viral. Soon after, the Kenya Tourism Board reached out for a collaboration under its Magical Kenya campaign.

At 22, and with only about 5,000 followers at the time, she found herself on her first international flight to Nairobi. For three months, she posted tourism content captured from across Kenya during an eight-day stay, moving from Tsavo to Lamu on charter flights, documenting experiences she had once only seen online. The campaign paid her USD 2,000, more money than she had ever earned at once.

"I realised I could not leave this and go work on anything else," she says.