

Rediscovering Mabamba: Stunning, But Little Known Tourist Attractions Of Mabamba



Background

Tourism started at least some ten years back at Mabamba, and is on an increase since the designation of the Wetland as a Ramsar Site (Wetland of International Importance) in the year 2006. All tourism activities have, however, relied on one tourist attraction – birds. One of the objectives of the *Pro-poor Community Eco-Tourism Window for sustainable Ecosystem Conservation project* is therefore to reduce reliance on this one attraction which is likely, in the long-run, to increase stress on the wetland resource. Working with community members, through their association, Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association and a resource person, Nature Palace Foundation organized a participatory mapping of other tourist attractions in the vicinity aimed at expanding the tourism base with a long-term objective of reducing the pressure on the wetland resource that is likely to increase with the increasing in-flow of tourists

Summary Of Some Little Known Tourist Attractions In Mabamba Area

1. Nansubuga Cultural Hill



Some of the Cultural Structures at Nansubuga. This is believed to give couples a blessing to have twins.



Mabamba Wetland viewed from Nansubuga Hill

NANSUBUGA is a Cultural and most significant place for the *Mamba (Claris) Clan* which happens to be the biggest in Central Uganda. It has amazing views of Mabamba Bay, Lake Victoria, Entebbe International Airport and the Country's State House (Official home of the President). When on top you are rewarded with some of the most excellent views. The Hill is dotted with cultural sites that include tombs believed to be 600yrs, rocks with board games and sacred forests.

2. Ancient Rock Writings and Board Games

The gently sloping offshore plateau provided a perfect area for relaxation for the ancient inhabitants of Mabamba area. Here they took their time – quite a lot of it –to make inscriptions that will send messages for tens of thousands of years to come. Some of these have, however, remained a puzzle to fix in order to get the intended messages. Quite interesting to pay a visit.



Ancient board games inscribed in rocks that were major forms of entertainment for people in the pre-colonial times. This is a unique mathematical game still played today – but highly neglected and known mainly by elderly persons.



Inscriptions on a rock that has communicated a message for millennia and has capacity do so for tens of thousands of years to come.

3. Stunning Mabamba Caves



Entrance and Inside of Kibuye Cave



The caves were used by early people for shelter before modern housing. To date they provide shelter to fishermen, for example if it rains or when it is too hot because the temperatures inside are regulated. They have also been used by some people as shrines. There are at least three caves in the vicinity of Mabamba that can be visited in one day.

4. Foot Print in a Rock

In what looks like defying nature, this amazing foot print on a hard rock is difficult to explain. The local people, however, are eager to tell you how this came about and why it is an important feature in the community.



Mzee Dominic Ssenyondo is one of the care takers of the *Nansubuga*. He is delighted to share the amazing issues surrounding this historical hill.



Mzee Luzzi Francis has been fishing in Mabamba wetland for over 50 years. He shares his historical milestones on issues around Mabamba

6. Nature Palace Botanic Garden and Home Herbal Gardens

Nature Palace Botanical Garden was established in year 2001. It is about 10 km from Mabamba Bay, Between Kasanje and Mpigi towns taking the Katende-Kasanje Road. The garden was started to promote conservation of important species, with special emphasis on those that are very essential to the welfare of poor communities in terms of known Medicinal values and Food Security



Some medicinal plants conserved and propagated in the garden. Such Medicinal plants are essential for the welfare of the local communities. Others, however, like *Prunus africana* (2nd picture above) are also used in the manufacture of conventional medicine.

Nature Palace Botanic garden provides an excellent atmosphere for relaxation while having a natural breeze. It is a perfect stop-over on your way to or from Mabamba. Meals can also be arranged on special order.

7. Community Gardens (Agro-tourism)

Local people have practiced agriculture for decades using Indigenous skills which have enabled them to preserve some traditional foods and medicinal plants, issues not always attractive to conventional agriculture and research. How are the local population using their Indigenous knowledge to address some of the significant issues like Climate Change? Meet farmers who are eager to share their experiences.



How to Get more Information:

1. Nature Palace Foundation:

Nature Place Foundation (NPF) is a not-for profit Community Development and Human Well being Focused organisation that operates on the principle of blending Conservation with Development which stems from our Mission and Vision. NPF is accredited by Global Environment Facility (GEF) and we are members of the international and regional networks like Cleanup the World (CUW), Arid lands Information Network (ALIN), The East Africa Communities Organisation for management of lake Victoria (ECOVIC) and Climate Change and Development Network (CDN). NPF is implementing the *Pro-poor Community Eco-Tourism Window for sustainable Ecosystem Conservation project* at Mabamba with MWETA and other partners. This project is supported by **Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation**.

2. Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association (MWETA):

MWETA is an association formed by community members around Mabamba Ramsar Site to ensure Conservation of the wetland resource and sustainable Eco-tourism.

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