



# MARRIAGE IN UGANDA: A SIMPLE FACT SHEET

## The Five Legal Ways to Marry & What You Actually

Uganda legally recognizes five distinct types of marriage. Your choice of marriage determines whether you can marry more than one spouse, whose customs you follow, and where you hold the ceremony. (We will only talk about four of them)

### Did You Know

You must be 18 or older for any valid marriage. Parental consent is now only relevant for procedural formalities, not legal capacity.

### Civil Marriage

**Type:** Strictly Monogamous (One spouse for life)

What it is:

A non-religious, state-recognized contract performed at the Registrar's office or district office. It is the easiest form for anyone who doesn't want to splash on a lavish wedding or ceremony and offers the clearest international recognition.





## WHAT YOU NEED (Requirements & Steps):

### Notice

Give 21 days' public notice at the Registrar's office.

### Residency

One party must have lived in the district for at least 15 days prior.

### Documents

National ID/Passport, Birth Certificate, and an Affidavit of Single Status (or Decree Absolute if

### Venue

Must occur at the District Registrar's office.

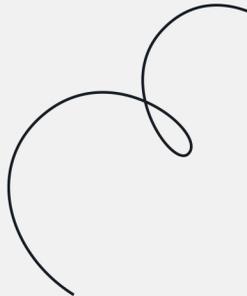
### Witnesses

Two witnesses present.

### Fees

UGX 260,000 (Citizens) / \$310 (non-citizens).

**Beware:** Once you do this, you cannot marry anyone else under customary law. Any subsequent customary marriage is void.





# Church Marriage

**Type:** Strictly Monogamous

What it is:

A religious ceremony in a licensed place of worship. The Minister/priest officiates as an agent of the state.

## WHAT YOU NEED (Requirements & Steps):

### Venue

Must be a church with a valid Minister's license (URSB publishes list of approved churches every year)

### Documents

Same as Civil (Notice, IDs, Affidavit). The church cannot marry you without a Registrar's Certificate or Minister's Special Licence.

### Age:18+

(Voluntary consent required)

### Prohibited

Cannot marry blood relatives (consanguinity).

### Registration

The church files returns to NIRA  
Fee:UGX 35,000 for registration.

**Fact:**The blessing in church is not the legal marriage.Registration with NIRA/URSB is what makes it legal.





# CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE

**Type:** Potentially Polygamous (Man can marry multiple wives)

What it is:

A marriage based on the traditions of the bride's tribe. This is the only marriage where the community/family officiates, not the state.

## WHAT YOU NEED (Requirements & Steps):

### The Essentials

(Must-haves for validity)

### Consent

Free consent of both parties.

### Customs

Full performance of the required rites (e.g. Kwanjula/Kuhingira). If the bride's family requests bride price, it must be paid in full when demanded by the family. (If no bride price is requested, that is fine).

### Must

You must follow the custom of the woman's tribe if tribes differ.

### The Paperwork (Registration)

1. **When:** Within 6 months of the ceremony.
2. **Where:** Sub-county chief's office where the marriage took place.
3. **Cost:** UGX 20,000 (on time); UGX 40,000 (late).

**Note:** Non-registration does NOT invalidate the marriage. It just makes it hard to prove in court.





# ISLAMIC MARRIAGE

**Type:** Potentially Polygamous (Up to 4 wives)

What it is:

A marriage under Islamic law. Governed by the Kadhi's courts for matrimonial issues

## WHAT YOU NEED (Requirements & Steps):

### Faith

Both parties must be Muslim.

### Dowry (Mahari)

Mandatory. This is paid to the bride, not her family. The amount is determined by the woman.

### Waiting Period (Iddah)

Required before remarrying after death or divorce (approx. 3 months).

### Registration

Must be registered at the mosque or with the registrar within one month.

### Capacity

The man must treat all wives equally. The woman must not already be married.

