



Rwanda Visitor Guide



Welcome to Rwanda

Rwanda is a modern nation with a fast-growing economy. It is ranked the third most competitive country in Africa by the World Economic Forum 2016 Competitiveness Report, and is rated one of the cleanest and safest countries in Africa.

Kigali is within easy reach of our rich offering of cultural and natural treasures. Take advantage of a range of experiences in discovering Rwanda – venture into our national parks to track the endangered mountain gorilla on the slopes of the Virunga Volcanoes, enjoy a ‘Big 5’ safari in Akagera, rated amongst the most scenic national parks in Africa, or learn about the rich biodiversity in Nyungwe, the largest protected

mountain rainforest in Africa. Our Cultural Heritage Corridor, community tours, tea and coffee plantations, adventure experiences and the shores of Lake Kivu await you.

Our delicious local cuisine, unique culture and arts, combined with breathtaking natural beauty are waiting for you to come and experience a taste of Rwanda’s warm hospitality and wonderful people. You will quickly learn what makes Rwanda remarkable, and why we are becoming one of Africa’s most popular tourist destinations.

We invite you to take time to explore Rwanda, the land of a thousand hills and a million smiles.



Practical Information

President: H.E. Paul Kagame

Official Languages: Kinyarwanda, English, French and Kiswahili

Time Zone: Central African Time (CAT)

Local Currency: Rwandan Franc (All major currencies are accepted)

Visa: On arrival for ALL nationalities without prior application.
Refer www.migration.gov.rw

Climate: Temperate all year round (24 - 27° C)

Telephone Country Code: +250

ICT: High speed 4G LTE wireless broadband in major cities

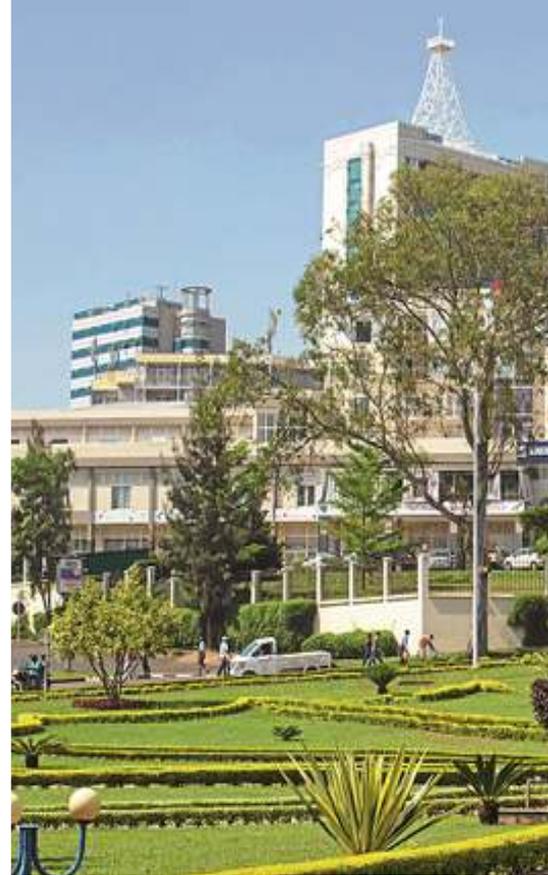
Electricity: Voltage 230V at 50Hz

Health: Consult your doctor about Malaria and Yellow Fever vaccination prior to your visit

Airlines: RwandAir, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, KLM, Qatar Airways, Turkish Airlines

Tourism Highlights

- ✦ Home to 1/3 of the world's remaining endangered mountain gorilla population in Volcanoes National Park
- ✦ 4,507 meters to the top of the highest volcano, Mt. Karisimbi
- ✦ 14 species of primates including mountain gorillas, chimpanzees, golden monkeys and more
- ✦ Home to the 1 and only canopy walkway in East Africa - some 70 meters above the Nyungwe Forest floor
- ✦ 227 kms of breathtaking Congo Nile Trail
- ✦ 4,000+ hectares of bamboo forest
- ✦ 1,000+ hills
- ✦ 700+ bird species and 7 Important Birding Areas
- ✦ 151+ animal species



Our Past... and



"We cannot turn the clock back nor can we undo the harm caused, but we have the power to determine the future and to ensure that what happened never happens again".

His Excellency President Paul Kagame

When visiting Rwanda, it is impossible not to see and learn about the impact of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. While this is a remarkably moving experience, it is at the same time surprisingly uplifting, as you will experience first-hand how the people of Rwanda have moved forward together positively and are an example to the World of a success story in peace and reconciliation.

GENOCIDE MEMORIAL - GISOZI

Rwanda is committed to fighting the ideology of genocide. The memorials found throughout the country are moving testimonies in memory of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Inaugurated on the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, the Kigali Genocide Memorial is where 259,000 victims have been buried. This memorial also serves to educate about genocide around the World in the 20th Century.



Our Remarkable Present

Today Rwanda is a peaceful, vibrant and forward-looking country. No longer divided through tribal affiliation, Rwandans are now one working together in rebuilding the Nation. The country has advanced enormously in terms of improved education, health, social security and encouraging individual entrepreneurship. It is the second easiest place to do business in Africa according to the 2016 Doing Business Report.

When visiting Rwanda you will be pleasantly surprised by many little things such as the cleanliness of the streets and the standards of many of the roads ... but most of all, you will fall in love with the warm smiling people. The 'Land of a Thousand Hills' compact size is no secret; this means minimized travel time that allows visitors to explore our natural and cultural attractions, one hill at a time!

KIGALI CITY

Founded in 1907 as a small administrative outpost with limited linkage to the outside world, Kigali is today Rwanda's rapidly growing vibrant capital city and a modern metropolis.

Kigali offers a range of three to five star accommodation options. One of the best things about Kigali city is that it is safe to wander the streets and explore the city by foot. Immerse yourself in the local art, fashion and culture scene as you shop for souvenirs, sip some of the best coffee on the continent grown right here in Rwanda or taste our excellent local cuisine at a rooftop restaurant with breathtaking views of the city. If you are looking for nightlife there are many options in clubs and bars with great music, beer, good food and happy crowds to explore.









Volcanoes National Park Gateway to Gorillas

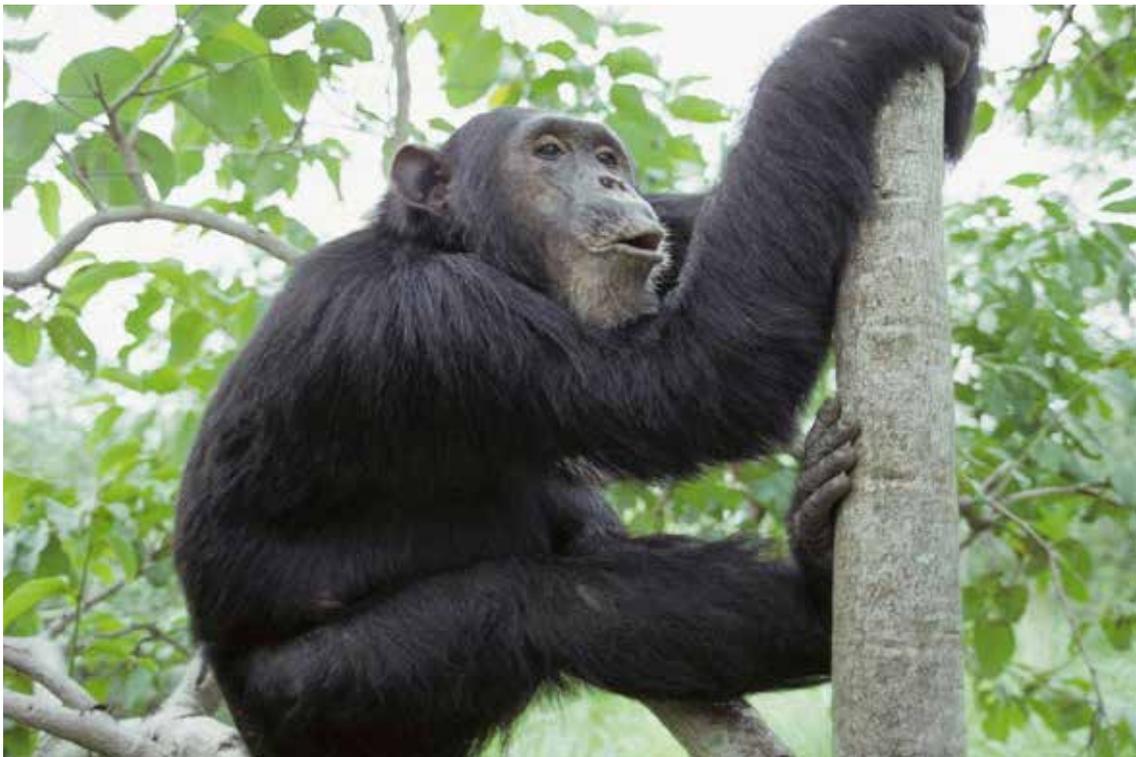
"In the heart of Central Africa, so high up that you shiver more than you sweat," wrote the eminent primatologist Dian Fossey, "are great, old volcanoes towering almost 15,000 feet, and nearly covered with rich, green rainforest - the Virungas".

Situated in the far northwest of Rwanda, Volcanoes National Park (VNP) protects the steep slopes of this magnificent mountain range - home of the endangered mountain gorilla and a rich mosaic of montane ecosystems, which embrace evergreen and bamboo forest, open grassland, swamp and heath. Within the boundaries of VNP are Buhanga Eco-Park, an ancient forest holding Rwanda's most intriguing

folklore and Musanze Caves, formed 62 million years ago after the last estimated volcanic eruption.

VNP is named after the chain of dormant volcanoes making up the Virunga Massif: Karisimbi (the highest at 4,507m), Bisoke with its verdant Crater Lake, Sabinyo, Gahinga and Muhabura.

Trekking endangered mountain gorillas through the mysterious intimacy of the rainforest, alive with the calls of colourful birds and chattering of the rare golden monkey, is only one of the truly unique experiences in the area. Hiking, canoeing, mountain biking and village experiences offer something for everyone to enjoy.





Nyungwe National Park Primate & Hiking Paradise

Within the Great Rift Valley lies Africa's largest protected mountain rain forest, Nyungwe Forest, acclaimed for its rich biodiversity, endemic species and showcasing the only canopy walk in East Africa (reaching 70m above the forest floor and spanning 200 m in length).

Located in the southwestern region of Rwanda, at an elevation of over 1600m, sounds and sights collaborate to create a magical experience as you journey through the majestic rainforest. Nyungwe National Park (NNP) holds the source of Africa's great rivers, feeding the Nile River in the east and the Congo River in the west, and is known as the most endemic species-rich area in all of Africa.

The park boasts ecosystems from rainforest, bamboo, grassland, swamps, and bog habitats.

It is home to orchids among 1,000 other plant species, habituated chimpanzees and 12 other primates (including 400 strong troops of the Black and White Colobus monkey), and 75 different species of mammals. It is a birder's paradise with over 310 species of which 27 are Albertine Rift endemics including the Ruwenzori Turaco, Ruwenzori Double-collared Sunbird and Grauer's Swamp Warbler.

A piece of paradise found its home inside the remarkable Nyungwe Forest - we invite you to come and explore the beautiful trails, trek chimpanzees, bike, bird watch, learn about the tea plantations and community cultural villages in the area, and be thrilled by the canopy walkway that gives a birds eye view of one of the world's remarkable natural treasures.





Akagera National Park Home to the Big 5

Akagera National Park (ANP), located in the north-eastern region of Rwanda is named after the Akagera River that flows along its eastern boundary and feeds into a labyrinth of lakes of which the largest is Lake Ihema. Founded in 1934, with an area of 1,122 km², it is the largest protected wetland in central Africa and the last remaining refuge for savannah-adapted animals and plants in Rwanda.

Akagera National Park is home to lions, leopards, servals, hyenas, jackals and giraffes, large herds of buffaloes, zebras, rhinoceros and several antelope species. Elephants congregate around the lakes that

are inhabited by more than 800 hippos as well as Africa's largest freshwater predator, the Nile crocodile.

Embark on an authentic day or night guided African savannah and rolling highlands safari, or experience forest fringed lakes on a boat ride in one of the most scenic reserves in Africa. If you are lucky you may even come across the secretive blue monkey, bush baby or sitatunga swamp-dwelling antelope. Akagera is an important birding area with nearly 500 species, of which 99 are not found in any other Rwandan national park. Of note are the rare and elusive Shoebill, the Red-faced Barbet and the exquisite Papyrus Gonolek.





Lake Kivu and the Congo Nile Trail

Part of Africa's Great Rift Valley, Lake Kivu in the west of Rwanda is surrounded by magnificent mountains and has deep emerald green waters covering a surface area of 2,700 km². It is Rwanda's largest lake and the sixth largest in Africa.

Rubavu (or Gisenyi) is a large town on the northern edge of Lake Kivu, an hour's drive from Volcanoes National Park and the perfect place to relax after gorilla trekking. Once a colonial beach resort of note, Rubavu's waterfront is lined with fading old mansions, hotels and trendy bars on the lakeshore, ideal for sundowner cocktails.

From Rubavu in the north, the Congo Nile Trail extends 227 kilometers of breathtaking landscapes all the way to Rusizi in the south of Lake Kivu. The trail gently curves back and forth as it weaves through hills and mountains beside the lake with eucalyptus trees lining the road and every inch of the hills seemingly terraced with bananas.

For adventurous travellers an exciting way to explore Rwanda is a kayaking tour on Lake Kivu, or mountain biking / hiking one of the 6 off-the-beaten path stages of the spectacular Congo Nile Trail.

Explore so much more in Rwanda



CAVING IN MUSANZE

Rwanda's caves dating back 65 million years lie within the volcanic region where lava flow layers long ago created the Albertine Rift Valley. The caves offer easy hiking of up to 2 kms and showcase stunning rock formations and many entrances with most being roof collapses. There is nothing more magical than the dense dark silence broken only by the drops of water that hit the rock floor below, and the sounds of the hundreds of bat wings rebounding through the caves.



BUHANGA ECO-PARK

Another hidden gem near VNP, Buhanga Sacred Forest, is a site of tremendous ecological importance, astonishing beauty and cultural significance where Rwandan Kings of the past had their initiation ceremonies. Full of myth and legend, where you will experience majestic dragon trees and sightings of many different birds and colourful butterflies, the forest encompasses a network of trails made entirely from cut lava stones.



FROM CROP TO CUP

Some of the world's best tea and coffee is grown in Rwanda; the breath-taking high mountain verdant landscapes, cool climate and rich volcanic soil result in our award winning quality tea and coffee products. Explore growing and production processes - from the nursery to plantations, pruning, picking, washing, drying and the many steps in-between to finally (in the case of coffee) roasting. Finish off with a memorable tea tasting or coffee cupping experience.



KARONGI

Located in the western part of the country about 100km south of Rubavu, Karongi (Kibuye) is one of the prettiest, most relaxing and romantic of Lake Kivu's towns. It is an ideal place to enjoy lakeside recreation with pristine beaches and crystal clear waters where along with water sport activities, authentic experiences of daily Rwandan life can be enjoyed. Visiting Napoleon's Island (home to a colony of thousands of fruit bats), night fishing with locals in traditional boats, and Amahoro Island (aptly known as 'One Bar Island' because all it has on it is one bar). For the adventurous hiking, mountain biking and kayaking tours along the Congo Nile Trail, or visiting the moving Bisesero Genocide Memorial with breathtaking views of the lake are just some of the experiences that can be found in the area.



If you're visiting in August, you may catch thousands of yellow-billed kites here flying over Lake Kivu on their annual migration. Most of Karongi's hotels are in beautiful locations overlooking the lake and facing the sunset.



BIRD-WATCHERS PARADISE

Rwanda's location in the Albertine Rift and its dense forests and mountains create a unique and remarkable environment for the eco-tourist and birding enthusiast to enjoy. Though small (26,338 kms²) Rwanda boasts the highest concentration of birds per square kilometer in Africa, with a bird list of over 700 species and the second highest number of Albertine Rift endemics than any other country. There are seven Important Birding Areas (IBAs) including the three National Parks. Rwanda's wetlands and marshes cover 10% of the country of which the main protected areas include Rugezi, Akanyaru and Nyabarongo Wetlands. Birding in Rwanda will reward you with many rare bird species easily accessed across remarkably diverse habitats.





Cultural Heritage Corridor Our Rich History

Rwanda is more than just home of the iconic mountain gorilla. In the southern province you'll find incredible cultural and historical sites in the Cultural Heritage Corridor that showcases Rwanda's rich history and unique culture.

King Mutara III Rudahigwa's 1931 Royal Palace museum in Nyanza, stands today as it did when the King was in residence along with the 'Inyambo', traditional Rwandan cows known for their impressive long horns. Alongside the King's Palace, Rwesero Art Museum, King Rudahigwa III's modern palace, now displays contemporary Rwandan artworks and serves as the National Art Gallery. The Ethnographic Museum in Huye houses one of Africa's finest collections of pre and post-colonial ethnographic, artistic and archaeological displays.

IBY'IWACU Cultural Village in Musanze is a living museum of Rwanda's ancient ways supporting the local community; here you will see a traditional healer, grind sorghum, shoot arrows after being greeted by traditional Intore dancers and drummers.

Rwanda is also rich with remarkable religious sites and attractions some of which are Sanctuaire Notre-Dame de Kibeho - a place of pilgrimage and apparitions and the only Shrine in Africa officially approved in 2001, the Divine Mercy Statue of Jesus - a bronze statue 16ft tall and weighing 2 tons brought to Rwanda by the Marian Fathers in 2004, and Nyanza Christ the King Catholic Parish built in 1935 - one of Rwanda's oldest churches and where King Rudahigwa was baptized.





Conservation Successes A Foundation for the Future

Although it has one of the largest population densities in central Africa, Rwanda has recognized the critical need for conservation-based tourism and economic development through the protection of its natural ecosystems. It has become a World leader in conservation practices, with 8.9% of its land base proclaimed as national parks; the most recent addition being Gishwati - Mukura National Park in 2015.

Rwanda has worked effectively with its many regional and international partners to protect critically endangered species such as the Mountain Gorilla, assisted East Africa's recovery efforts for Grey-crowned Cranes, and reintroduced Lion and East African Rhinoceros, both extirpated species, back into the natural landscapes of ANP.

To ensure the support for and benefits from its national parks, Rwanda established a unique Revenue Sharing Programme in 2005 in which today 10% of all tourism park revenues are invested in community development projects (such as schools and health clinics) around national parks, resulting in more than US\$ 2.5 million being invested into more than 415 projects.

These and other conservation achievements in Rwanda are celebrated annually through Rwanda's flagship event Kwita Izina that was launched in 2005 to name baby Mountain Gorillas and profile success in monitoring gorillas and their habitat. It has grown to a series of events in which partners from around the World convene to discuss challenges and recognize remarkable conservation and sustainable tourism achievements, both a foundation for future generations.

Rwanda Tour and Travel Association (RTTA)

RTTA accredited members

www.rttarwanda.org

Company Name	Email	Company Name	Email
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Akagera Aviation	habba@akageraaviation.com	Mega Reservation	info@Megareservations.com
Albatross Safaris	Jessica1358@126.com	MERCATOR ASSISTANCE SARL	info@mecatorassistance.rw
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