

# RWANDA



## OVERVIEW

The lens has shifted on this veritable jewel of the African continent and is now firmly glittering. The 'Land of a Thousand Hills' was for many years blighted by the legacy of the awful events of 1994, but now - following concerted and determined effort to recover and rebuild - tourism outpaces any other part of the economy. It celebrates in its breath-taking scenery and rich wildlife - whilst not shying away from its troubled past; indeed, tourism is positioned as one of the roads of its recovery. Although tiny, Rwanda has the largest remaining single tract of montane forest anywhere in East and Central Africa and it boasts three national parks, including Volcanoes, home to the mountain gorillas - arguably one of the top animal sighting privileges in the world. Luxury accommodation and low visitor numbers make Rwanda a compelling option for those seeking an exclusive and exhilarating Africa experience.



## KEY FACTS

### CAPITAL CITY

Kigali

### TOURIST HUB(S)

Kigali

### RELIGION

Christian

### LANGUAGE

Kinyarwanda, Swahili,  
English, French

### CURRENCY

Rwandan Franc

### TIME ZONE

GMT +2hrs

### FLIGHT TIME (to Cape Town)

London 10h40m | New York 16h25m | Dubai 6h10m



## KNOWN FOR

Kigali's Genocide Memorial & local markets

Akagera National Park - big five safaris with expert-guided game drives, walks & boat trips

Volcanoes National Park - trekking to find Mountain Gorillas & endemic Golden Monkeys

Dian Fossey's grave at Volcanoes National Park

Nyungwe National Park - trekking to find Chimpanzees & Colobus Monkeys

Canopy Walk suspension bridge at Nyungwe NP

Lake Kivu, one of the African Great Lakes



## ACCESSIBILITY

**Air** | Flights mainly go into the capital city of Kigali. Regular flights from Entebbe, Nairobi, Kilimanjaro, Addis Ababa and Johannesburg. Airlines include RwandAir, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, KLM, Qatar Airways & Turkish Airlines. Travelling by helicopter is also common for those that can afford it.

**Road** | roads within Rwanda are excellent and although drives can be long (up to 6 hours) they are very scenic.



## WHO FOR

First timers and safari aficionados alike

Photographers: wildlife, landscape & nature

Honeymooners

Families

Wildlife enthusiasts

Serious primatologists & bird watchers



## WHEN TO GO



## PACKING

Light layers of clothing in neutral colours. Bright coloured clothing is not suitable for walking safaris. Packing checklist: Layers - long and short sleeve shirts and trousers | Warm fleece or jumper for cooler evenings | Waterproof jacket | Comfortable, sturdy shoes | Flip-flops/sandals | Swimming attire | hat/ baseball cap | Sunglasses and Sun-cream | Personal items - toiletries, small medical kit etc | Torch, plug adapters and charging equipment | Binoculars and camera | Books etc for siesta time

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Akagera NP	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Nyungwe NP	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best
Volcanoes NP	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best	Best

Okay
  Better
  Best

# KEY REGIONS



## KIGALI

Located in the geographical centre of the country, the capital city of Kigali extends across several hills and valleys, with good road links to the rest of the country. Recently voted the world's 9th safest country and Africa's safest country by the World Economic Forum, it's the primary arrival hub for most tourists. With little time to visit, most travellers do a full-day tour of the city which includes the Kigali Genocide Museum honouring the 1 million Rwandans killed in 1994, with three permanent exhibitions and burial gardens. The city is also popular for its art scene and the city has over 10 galleries. Visiting local art spaces within the city is included in most Kigali day tours.

## NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK

Located in the western Great Rift Valley, the Nyungwe National Park stretches from Lake Albert to Lake Tanganyika and is approximately 970 km<sup>2</sup> of rainforest, bamboo, grassland, swamps, and bogs. This National Park is home to 13 primate species and is included in most Rwandan itineraries so that visitors can trek to find Chimpanzees and Colobus Monkeys. The park is also a birdwatcher's paradise with over 320 species, 29 of which are endemic to the Albertine Rift. Animals lovers can also try to catch sight of the 85 mammal species, and botanists can indulge in the 248 orchid species within the park. Other highlights here include visiting Nyungwe's biggest waterfall Isumo and the Canopy Walk suspension bridge which offers the best aerial view of the forest's canopy. The area is also well known for its tea plantations which border the park.

## VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK

The most popular park in Rwanda, Volcanoes National Park is situated in the far northwest of the country, it has a variety of montane ecosystems, including evergreen and bamboo forest, open grassland, swamp and heath. Home to the endangered mountain gorilla, many itineraries will only include one night in Kigali followed a day or two of gorilla trekking in the Volcanoes National Park before guests go on safari in neighbouring Kenya or further afield. That said Rwanda is an incredible safari destination in its own right, and this area specifically has a lot to offer. An extra night will allow guests to trek for the rare and endemic Golden Monkeys, set out to the 62-million-year-old Musanze Caves on the boundaries of the park, or take part in other activities such as hiking, canoeing and mountain biking.

## AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK

Located in eastern Rwanda along the international border with Tanzania, Akagera National Park is 1,122 km<sup>2</sup> and the country's primary safari destination. The park is home to the big five following the reintroduction of lions and rhinos and is also rich with other iconic African mammals including zebra, giraffe, crocodiles and hippos. There are also more than 490 species of birds. The park is ideal for game viewing with a variety of ecosystems to explore including savannah, woodland, wetland and a dozen lakes. In addition to day and night game drives, a highlight of a visit here includes a boat trip on Lake Ihema for an entirely different vantage point.

## LAKE KIVU

Located just one hour from Volcanoes National Park, Lake Kivu works well as a lake-side extension to a gorilla trekking itinerary. Lake Kivu is the sixth largest of the African great lakes (2,700 km<sup>2</sup>) and is a part of a string of freshwater lakes in the Great Rift Valley. Along the northern edge of the lake is a large town called Gisenyi, which is often included in itineraries due to its superb lakeshore location and unique look with fading old mansions, hotels and trendy bars. Beyond taking some time out to relax on the shores of the lake, visitors can enjoy kayaking, wind surfing, canoeing, mountain biking and hiking along one of the six off-the-beaten path stages of the spectacular Congo Nile Trail.