



Rwanda Travel Information

To many in the international community, Rwanda is remembered for the 1994 genocide that claimed the lives of a million people and brought the nation to its knees. Yet, since then, tragedy has surrendered to optimism and a firm determination to succeed. Strong political leadership, driving a vision of a better future has liberated the country from its past and created a plan for reconstruction of the country's social, economic and political fabric.

Visitors will find Rwandans to be friendly and welcoming, and the country itself to be breathtakingly beautiful. Despite its small size and high population density, the Rwandan Government has identified tourism as one of the priority areas of the economy, and has taken firm steps to protect the country's Virungas, Nyungwe and Akagera National Parks.

GEOGRAPHY

Country Size	26,340 km square
Location	120km south of the Equator in the Tropic of Capricorn
Capital	Kigali
Rainfall	Annual average 900-1,600mm; Rainy seasons March-May and October-December
Average temperature	24.6-27.6° C; Hottest August and September
Altitude	From 1,000 to 4,500 metres above sea level. Highest point is Mt Kalisimbi, 4,507m
Terrain	Mostly grassy uplands and hills; relief is mountainous with altitude decreasing from west to east
Vegetation	Ranges from dense equatorial forest in the north west to tropical savannah in the east
Land Use	47% cropland, 22% forest, 18% pasture, 13% other
Natural resources	Some tin, gold and natural gas
Main exports	Coffee and tea
National Parks	Volcanoes Park (Northwest); Nyungwe Forest (southwest) and Akagera Park (east).

HUMAN STATISTICS

Population	8.2 million 53.8% female, 46.2% male
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Life expectancy at birth	Women 50.1 years, men 48.1 years
Religion	Roman Catholic (majority), Protestant, Muslim, traditional
Official languages	Kinyarwanda, French, English, Some Kiswahili
Education	Primary, Secondary, technical/vocational, higher/university
GDP per capita	US\$260

POLITICS/ADMINISTRATION

Government	The broad-based Government of National Unity, with three branches, executive, legislative and judicial
President	Paul Kagame
Prime Minister	Bernard Mukuza
National Flag	Blue, yellow and green with a sun in the top right hand corner
Administrative divisions	12 provinces, divided into 92 districts

PRACTICAL DETAILS

Time	GMT +2 hours
Currency	Rwandan franc
Main health risk	Malaria
Electricity	230/240 volts at 50Hz
International telephone country Code	250
Airport	Kigali International Airport
Nearest seaports	Mombasa (1,760km); Dar es Salaam (1,528km)

AIRPORT TAX

For all passengers on international departures from Kigali International Airport, airport tax of US\$ 40 (or the equivalent in Rwanda francs) may be payable if not included in the price of your ticket.

CLIMATE

The climate is warm, though pleasantly varied depending on your location within the country. The Volcanoes National Park and Nyungwe National park can get cool during the night because of the vegetation and altitude. Due to the strong nature of Rwanda's equatorial sun, we recommend that visitors take the necessary precautions

CLOTHING

The emphasis on clothing is comfort. Very rarely will visitors be expected to conform to a specific dress code (unless something particular is tabled on their itinerary). If gorilla tracking or chimpanzee tracking, something sturdy is recommended to protect against scratches, and a good pair of walking boots, and ideally a good pair of protective leather gloves should also be worn. Safari wear should be loose fitting and relaxed in style with warm clothing for the colder evenings at the Volcanoes Park. Most hotels and lodges have laundry services, so an excessive amount of clothing should be unnecessary.

COMMUNICATIONS

Our guides carry mobile phones that allow them 24-hour local and international communication with the head office from any town in Rwanda

ROADS

Almost every road in Rwanda is tarmacked and in good condition. Driving is on the right hand side of the road. All transfers are carried out in 2 wheel drive minibuses or 4 wheel drive land cruisers. All vehicles are specially adapted for game viewing, and window seats are guaranteed.

CURRENCY

The currency in Rwanda is the franc. The current rate of exchange on the franc in US\$1 = RwFr 525. There are money-changing facilities in Kigali, which we recommend you use, as it is more difficult to change money while on safari.

We recommend that you carry cash for convenience and security, and that you change about US\$200-300 of this into Rwanda francs at the start of your tour. Cash is more easily exchanged in Rwanda, as many facilities are very reluctant to accept payment by traveller's cheque. Please do not sign your travellers cheques in advance, as it is the practice in Rwanda for suppliers to request customers to affix their second signature in their presence. Visitors are advised that if they are carrying US Dollar Cash with them, the notes should be no smaller than \$100 denomination, and should have been issued no earlier than 2000 to ease conversion into local currency at a beneficial rate.

CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards are not generally accepted, except at the main hotels in Kigali, and we recommend that you have enough cash to complete any transactions you may wish to carry out.

DAYLIGHT

Sunrise is around 0630 hours and sunset at 1930 hours. This varies slightly, depending on location within the country and time of year.

ELECTRICITY

The electricity supply in Rwanda is 230-240 volts and visitors from the United States should bring electrical appliance adapters with them. Please note that all electrical wall outlets in Rwanda are two-pin, so visitors should bring a two-pin to three-pin adapter with them.

FOOD AND DRINK

As a rule quotes are based on bed and breakfast in Kigali, and full board on safari. Standards of cuisine are reasonable but vary outside Kigali. We recommend that clients drink bottled water at all times, and do not purchase food at roadside establishments

GORILLA TRACKING

Please see separate guidelines on gorilla tracking.

MEDICAL

You are **STRONGLY** advised to take out your own medical and travel insurance before coming to Rwanda, as medical facilities are basic, and an evacuation may be required for more serious ailments than can be treated in Kigali. In case a medical evacuation is required, An evacuation from Kigali can be arranged. **PLEASE NOTE THAT EVACUATION COSTS TO A HOSPITAL IN NAIROBI ARE COVERED IN THE PRICE OF YOUR TOUR.**

HEALTH

A yellow fever vaccination is required for all travellers over 1 year old. Malaria is prevalent in certain parts of Rwanda, and all visitors should consult their doctor and take the currently effective prophylactic prescribed.

Our vehicles are equipped with medical kits for the treatment of minor wounds and ailments.

HOTEL CHARGES

Clients are usually expected to settle their extras in Rwanda francs

LUGGAGE

Luggage should be kept to a minimum, and is best restricted to one main soft-sided piece and an overnight bag. Kampala Hotels provide storage facilities. Clients on flying safaris should note that weight restrictions apply, which vary according to the aircraft.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The choice of camera accessories is very limited, although most types of film is now available in Kigali. Flash photography is not allowed while gorilla tracking, and clients should bring their own high-speed film to compensate for this. Clients should also bring a sufficient supply of batteries, as recharging is sometimes impossible on safari. Local people should be asked before their photograph is taken. Photographing military installations, government buildings and policemen is prohibited

SECURITY

Despite common misconceptions, Rwanda has had a stable, progressive and democratic government for over ten years. Security measures in the national parks have been significantly enhanced. Clients should take the usual precautions when traveling abroad in unfamiliar surroundings, and We recommend that clients take a taxi rather than walk at night

TIPPING

Please see separate guidelines on tipping.

VISA

Visas are required by all visitors except (for stays of less than 3 months) nationals of the UK, Germany, Sweden, Canada, USA, Hong Kong, Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. For all others the cost is around US\$60, depending on the place of issue. For air travellers, visas may now be obtained at Kigali Airport on arrival, but check via an Embassy that this is still the case when you travel. For clients crossing over

by road, it is recommended that visas are obtained in advance before traveling, as the border post is very small and they do not issue visas there.

General Packing List (please refer to separate gorilla tracking equipment list on gorilla tracking guidelines)

- 1) Binoculars
- 2) Sunglasses- preferably polarizes and on a string. Eye-glass holder comes in handy
- 3) Bush hat/ cap
- 4) Khaki casual clothing for safari (3 changes)
 - i. 2 shorts: 2T – shirts/short sleeved shirts: 1 pants/ light jeans, 1 long- sleeved shirt.
- 5) Casual clothes (2 changes)
 - i. 1 or 2 slacks: 1 or 2 sport shirts: 1 casual long sleeved shirt: and/ or 1 blouse: 1 dress
- 6) 1 pair thick – soled shoes (tennis / running shoes)
- 7) 1 pair shoes for evening wear
- 8) Sweatshirt, fleece or sweater
- 9) Light wind breaker / jacket
- 10) Gloves / mittens – (important in the months of June/ July/August to dress in layers)
- 11) 4 pairs of socks and underwear
- 12) Bathing suit
- 13) Flashlight that take at least 2 batteries, plus extra batteries
- 14) Basic medical kit
 - i. Band –Aids: antiseptic cream: 1 course of antibiotics: Tylenol/Advil: laxative: anti –diarrhea:
 - ii. Eye drops: anti- histamine cream. (There are first aid kits in all camps and lodges)
- 15) Personal medications
- 16) Small bottle of Mosquito/ insect repellent (the camps usually have spray in rooms)
- 17) Malaria tablets
- 18) Suntan lotion and moisturizing cream
- 19) Day backpack (small) – for use in the vehicle and on walks.
- 20) Personal toiletries: small shampoo, shaving cream, skin and hair moisturizers, etc. Most camps and lodges supply small quantities of soap and shampoo.
- 21) Small packet of washing powder
- 22) If you wear contact lenses we recommend that you bring along pair of glasses
- 23) Tissues/“Wet Ones”

- 24) Camera: charger/ converter/ adapter for 220/240AC voltage + 3 batteries. Cigarette lighter adapter
- 25) Visas, tickets, passports, money
- 26) A photocopy of your passport, visas, credit card numbers, and airline tickets (to be kept separately)
- 27) Large plastic zip-lock bags
- 28) Tevas/ Thongs/flip-flops – optional.