

Rwanda is hypnotic land of beautiful landscapes, sunshine and culture commonly known as the land of a Thousand hills. Let us guide you through this Central African experience starting from the capital city of Kigali, along the borders and through the heart of the country. A visit to the spectacular landscape where the famous Mountain Gorillas survive will capture your hearts. This is where the small yet diverse country of Rwanda will hypnotize you. A valued love affair with this amazing country has just begun!

We shall further assist the love affair to grow with visits to the National Parks of Akagera & Nyungwe Rain Forest, the numerous lakes, the mosaic tea plantations & the extremely exotic and graceful Intore dancers. Rwanda is a country where Love is yet to sprout like the springs of the summer

### **Geography:**

Rwanda is a small, landlocked republic in Equatorial Africa. It is situated on the eastern rim of the Albertine Rift, a western arm of the Great Rift Valley, on the watershed between Africa's two largest river systems: the Nile & the Congo. Much of the country is mountainous; the highest peak is the Karisimbi (4,507 metres or 14,650 feet above sea level) in the volcanic Virunga chain, where the Volcanoes National Park lies.

Altitude varies from 1000 metres (3,250 feet) to 4,500 metres (14,650 feet) and vegetation varies from rainforest to savannah and papyrus swamps. The largest body of water is Lake Kivu in the west, but numerous other lakes are dotted around the country, notably Burera, Ruhondo (Northwest), Muhazi, Mugesera (central) and Lake Ihema in the East. Many of the lakes have erratic shapes following the contours of the steep mountains that enclose them.

### **Economy:**

While Rwanda is primarily a subsistence agriculture economy, it nonetheless produces some of the finest tea and coffee in the world and these are among the main exports. Other industries include sugar, fish, cut flowers are growing, and Rwanda's Open Door policy is attracting international investors.

### **Climate & Seasons:**

The combination of tropical location and high altitude ensures that most of Rwanda has a temperate climate year round. Situated 120 km south of the equator, Rwanda experiences a mean annual temperature of 24-27°C. Temperatures rarely stray above 30°C by day or below 15°C by night. The exceptions are the chilly upper slopes of the Virungas, Nyungwe National Park, and the warmer temperatures of the low-lying Akagera National Park.

Most parts of the country receive in excess of 1,000mm of rainfall annually; the driest months are July to September and the wettest February to May. In the Virunga chain, one can expect rainfall at any time of the year.

### **When to visit Rwanda:**

Rwanda can be visited throughout the year. Gorilla tracking and other forest walks are less demanding during the drier months. The best time for birds is the European winter, when Palaearctic migrants supplement resident species.

### **Language:**

Kinyarwanda is the official language. French and to a lesser extent English, are widely spoken. Street signs and directions are in French/English.

### **Roads:**

Rwanda has among the best roads in East/Central Africa. You will be mostly on tarred roads, which are in generally good condition. Driving times rarely exceed 6 hours, even for the most remote destinations. The spectacular landscapes make longer journeys a pleasure!

Depending on your itinerary, you may encounter a few dirt roads or bumpy stretches (reminding

you that one is in Africa) and these roads or their condition at the time of travel will dictate slow travel; you may therefore arrive later than anticipated at your destination.

### **Facilities:**

Depending on the style of your trip and the range/availability of accommodation in each stop, accommodation may range from luxurious to basic. In the higher class lodging, one can expect hot water, en-suite rooms and a bar/restaurant.

Should you decide to stay in modest local hotels/guesthouses, you may have the use of showers and toilets, though hot water may not always be guaranteed. These small hotels/guesthouses are basic and clean with friendly staff, though meal services can be rather slow. We recommend to pre-order lunches/dinners to suit your eating habits. Foods are a blend of African fare and European.

Restaurants are in plentiful especially the local restaurants providing simple beef/goat meat kebabs and fries/chips. Big hotels have a-la-carte menus and several restaurants are springing up in bigger cities and towns like Kigali, Butare, Ruhengeri, and Gisenyi. A choice of Italian, African, Chinese and Indian restaurants are available in Kigali and a limited choice outside the capital.