



GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION RWANDA



Rwanda is a small mountainous country in central Africa and is bordered to the north by Uganda, to the east by Tanzania, to the south by Burundi and to the west by the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The country is divided by great mountain peaks of up to 3000m (9842ft), which run across from north to south and it is no wonder the country is commonly referred to as 'The Land of a Thousand Hills'. Rwanda has also a good climate.

Rwanda has rich and beautiful attractions. Among these include the Akagera National Park, Nyungwe National Park, and the Parc Nationale des Volcans or the Volcano National Park – which is famed for its Silverback Mountain Gorillas.

The country has three official languages, namely Kinyarwanda (vernacular), French and English. Most Rwandese are multi-lingual or at least bi-lingual. Swahili and other dialects from the region are also spoken, especially in major commercial centres.

BEST TIME TO TRAVEL:

The **best time to visit Rwanda** is, for most people, during the short and longer dry seasons, from December to early February, and June to September.

WHAT IS RWANDA FAMOUS FOR:

Rwanda, landlocked republic lying south of the Equator in east-central Africa. Known for its breathtaking scenery, **Rwanda** is often referred to as le pays des mille collines (French: "land of a thousand hills"). The capital is Kigali, located in the centre of the country on the Runganwa River.

Mountain gorilla trekking, birdwatching, classic game drives, nature walks, cultural experiences, hiking, and lakeside relaxation—these are just some of the ways to spend your vacation



in **Rwanda**. The country has experienced a dynamic transformation since the tragic genocide that took place in 1994.

TOP SITHS IN RWANDA:

- **Volcanoes National Park**
- **Nyungwe Forest National Park**
- **Mount Karisimbi**
- **Gahinga Volcano**
- **Mount Bisoke**
- **Kingali Genocide Memorial**
- **Lake Ruhondo**
- **Lake Ihema**
- **Lake Burera**

CURRENCY:

The **Rwandan Franc (RWF)**, is the authorized tender utilized in Rwanda. The **Rwandan Franc** is subdivided into a hundred centimes. Banknotes and coins are both used as legal tender for the country.

ATMs

Banks in all towns and cities have ATMs, but not all work with foreign credit cards. The notable exceptions are the Bank of Kigali, GT Bank and Ecobank, which work with both Visa and MasterCard.

Cash

Banks throughout the country can exchange US dollars or euros, although they can be very slow to do so. Most people use the foreign-exchange bureaus in Kigali and other larger towns instead, and this is quite safe. Foreign-exchange bureaus also offer slightly better rates.

Rwanda, like other African countries, is very particular on which notes it will or will not accept. Anything older than 2006 or deemed too dirty, crinkled or tatty will not be accepted. Denominations of US\$50 or US\$100 are preferred.

If you bring US dollars, note that you won't really need to change them, as most activities can be paid in US dollars and almost all hotels accept US dollars.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are increasingly accepted at midrange and top-end tourist hotels and restaurants. The [Rwanda Tourism Information Centre \(RDB\) office](#) in Kigali also accepts them, as do most national park offices (though lines are sometimes down at these).

CREDIT CARD EMERGENCY NUMBER:

We suggest to keep the emergency number which is on the pack of your Credit Card separate in case the card gets lost or stolen so that you can contact your bank directly.



EMERGENCY NUMBER/S:

If no other assistance is at hand, **emergency numbers** are:

Police emergency number: 999

Traffic accidents: 113

Medical emergency number: 112

Fire emergency number: 111

Hospitals:

Yashoda Hospitals Medical Information Centre, Kingali, Tel: +250 788 482 893

Muhima Hospital, Kingali, Tel: +250 728 283 887

Kacyiru Hospital, Kingali, Tel: +250 785 061 906

Ruli Distprict Hospital, Tel: +250 783 680 102

Police Stations:

DPU Nyarugenge Police Station, Kingali, Tel : +250 788 311 155

Rwanda National Police Headquarters, Kingali, Tel: +250 788 311 133

LANGUAGES / HOSPITALITY:

Kinyarwanda is the national language of Rwanda, and the first language of almost the entire population of the country. It is one of the country's official languages alongside French, English, and Swahili.

TRADITIONAL FOOD OF RWANDA:

Ugali is not only popular in **Rwanda**, it is also a favorite dish throughout eastern Africa.

Ibihaza: This dish is made from cut up pumpkin that is mixed with beans and is then

boiled. Isombe: This meal combines mashed cassava leaves with dried fish.

REGIONAL DRINKS:

Fruit juices, wine and beer are all favourite drinks in Rwanda. Commercial beers include Primus, Mutzig and Amstel. Rwanda has a large commercial brewery, however, many people tend to brew their own beer and alcoholic beverages.



SAFETY:

Rwanda is one of the safest destinations in Africa, particularly for solo travelers. Crime is relatively low, with visitors sometimes experiencing petty crime, and locals are welcoming, friendly and hospitable. Pickpockets are active in crowded places, such as markets, and hire cars may be broken into for valuables.

VISA REQUIREMENT/S:

Do you need a visa to travel to Rwanda?

Yes, a **visa is required for travel to Rwanda**. A yellow fever vaccination may also be **required** depending on your specific itinerary. Most visas to Rwanda last 90 days, but can often be renewed or extended. See below or contact a Passport Health travel documents specialist about other visa types.

For more information go to:

[Rwanda Tourist Visa - Rwanda Directorate General of ...
https://www.migration.gov.rw >](https://www.migration.gov.rw)

HEALTH / INSURANCE:

Malaria is endemic in Rwanda. Antimalarials are the best protection against infection. Be sure to use mosquito repellents as a second barrier against the disease.

Some vaccines are recommended or required for Rwanda. The CDC and WHO recommend the following vaccinations for Rwanda: **hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, yellow fever, rabies, meningitis, polio, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis), chickenpox, shingles, pneumonia** and **influenza**.

Visit: <https://www.passporthealthusa.com/destination-advice/rwanda/>

A Medical and Travel insurance is highly recommended prior to the start of the holiday.

WHAT TO PACK:

As a general guide, comfortable, casual wash and wear clothes are recommended. Please note that muted colours are recommended for game-viewing. Game-drives are conducted in the early morning and late afternoon, which can be very cold, especially in winter.

The most practical items to pack for safari are:

- Khaki, green, beige and neutral colours (dark blue and black clothing should be avoided, as it attracts Tsetse flies)
- Shirts with long sleeves (even in summer, as protection from the sun, mosquitoes and Tsetse flies)
- T-shirts
- Shorts



- Jeans or safari trousers for evenings and cooler days
- A jacket and sweater are recommended for early morning and evening game drive
- Lightweight water-proof jacket
- Sturdy trousers
- Rain hat
- Swim and beachwear while at camp
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Strong waterproof walking boots (comfortable for going upsteep hills). Pants should be tucked into socks and boots while trekking.
- Sun block, sunglasses, hat, moisturizer and lip-salve are all essentials
- Strong insect repellent
- Binoculars and camera equipment
- Small backpack to carry water and a packed lunch

Bear in mind that packing space is limited on all modes of safari transport (including 4x4 vehicle and small aircrafts) so you will need to restrict your baggage to 12-15 kg (preferably packed in a soft bag) plus a reasonable amount of camera equipment. You will be allowed two separate pieces of luggage on safari.

Please don't forget to pack in: malaria medication (consult your local physician for specifics), head ache tablets, diarrhea tablets, rehydrate, plasters, antiseptic cream, antihistamine (tablets and cream) and sun cream

For game drives aim for reasonable neutral colours – think of the movie “Out of Africa”. A windbreaker or hoddie is ideal too. For evening we suggest something more formal at more up market and exclusive lodges/hotels. DO NOT FORGET the binoculars for the game viewing and your camera!

Electricity

In Rwanda, the power sockets are of type C and J. The standard voltage is 230 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz. Most hotel rooms have sockets for 110V electric razors. Also, most safari camps have electricity points either in the main communal area or in each tent/room. It is best to bring an adapter/convertor combination.

Gorilla Trekking Guidelines

- No spitting in the park
- No littering in the park
- No coughing in the direction of the gorillas
- Only speak in whispers
- Do not point at the gorillas
- Movements around the gorillas must be unthreatening
- No venturing behind thick shrubs, you may surprise a gorilla
- If a nettle stings you, do not cry out, scream, shout-out loud or make any sudden moves
- If a gorilla charges or vocalizes, do not look directly at it - stand perfectly still unless the guide asks you to crouch or move back
- Keep a minimum distance of 7 meters from the Gorillas

Please note: that children must be older than 15 years of age for gorilla tracking.



GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION UGANDA



Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa whose diverse landscape encompasses the snow-capped Rwenzori Mountains and immense Lake Victoria. Its abundant wildlife includes chimpanzees as well as rare birds. Remote Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is a renowned mountain gorilla sanctuary. Murchison Falls National Park in the northwest is known for its 43m-tall waterfall and wildlife such as hippos.

In Uganda is the world's longest river, the Nile, snowy mountains, and wildlife reserves. The country has a diverse culture, comprised of more than 50 local tribes, each with their own traditions and history. There's also a lively night life, particularly in Kampala, with tonnes of parties, bars, and dance floors around.

Gorilla Trekking Guidelines:

No spitting in the park / No littering in the park / No coughing in the direction of the gorillas / Only speak in whispers / Do not point at the gorillas / Movements around the gorillas must be unthreatening / No venturing behind thick shrubs, you may surprise a gorilla / If a nettle stings you, do not cry out, scream, shout-out loud or make any sudden moves / If a gorilla charges or vocalizes, do not look directly at it - stand perfectly still unless the guide asks you to crouch or move back / Keep a minimum distance of 7 meters from the Gorillas

Please note: that children must be older than 15 years of age for gorilla tracking.



BEST TIME TO TRAVEL:

The **best time to visit Uganda** is during its two dry seasons: between December and February, and between June and August, when conditions are particularly good for trekking to see mountain gorillas and chimpanzees. Game spotting in national parks is also good at this **time**, as well as between February and March.

WHAT IS UGANDA FAMOUS FOR:

Uganda boasts of 10 National Parks, 12 Wildlife reserves and 14 Wildlife sanctuary.

- Kampala
- Entebbe
- Bwindi Impenetrable Forest
- Queen Elizabeth National Park
- Kibale National Park
- Murchison National Park

CURRENCY:

UGX is the currency code for the **Ugandan shilling**, the national currency for the Republic of Uganda, although the symbol USh is used to represent the currency locally. Up until 2013, the **Ugandan shilling** was divisible into 100 cents.

The following denominations are currently in circulation:

Banknotes

UGX 1,000 UGX 2,000 UGX 5,000 UGX10, 000 UGX 20,000 and UGX 50,000.

Coins

UGX; 1,2,5,10,50,100,200, 500 and 1000.

Most Ugandan Banks have ATMs and those that do not have are in advanced stages of incorporating the same in their line of services. Initially banks that pioneered with ATM services were offering more of a cash dispensing service but now they have merged their services to the VISA family making these ATMs visa enabled and giving rise to the Debit Card which operates globally. This also means that you can access your account in Uganda while in the UK or any location in the world as long as that point of sale is Visa enabled.

Some commercial banks in Uganda have been operating from 8.00am to 7.00pm and also opening on weekends. All commercial banks have been ordered to remain closed on Saturdays and Sundays.

Bringing cash:

If you are bringing cash, U.S. dollars should be "big head" dollars dated 2009 or later. Larger denomination notes (50s or 100s) give you a better exchange rate than 20s or below. Euros are also widely accepted at bureaux de change. Paying in U.S. cash often gives you a cheaper rate for your hotel or tours than Shillings.



Credit and debit cards:

Several ATM machines now take cards with a Mastercard logo. And some hotels take American Express. However, the whole country predominately uses Visa. So if you are depending on your Mastercard ATM or credit card, this may be a problem unless you use Orient Bank or Barclay's Bank in countrywide for a fee. The fee is also based on what your bank may charge and at Barclays ATMS it informs you of the fee and asks you to confirm you understand the fee will be deducted before it dishes out the money.

CREDIT CARD EMERGENCY NUMBER:

We suggest to keep the emergency number which is on the pack of your Credit Card separate in case the card gets lost or stolen so that you can contact your bank directly.

EMERGENCY NUMBER/S:

Police	999
Ambulance	997
Fire	998
Traffic police	993
Mobile phones	112 or 911
Non-emergency ambulance	1777
Police hotline	1800 255 0000
Traffic police	6547 0000.
Traffic police	11-269-11-11

Hospitals:

Kampala Independent Hospital, Kampala, Tel: +256 312 563 400

Paragon Hospital, Kampala, Tel: +256 759 061 519

Nakasero Hospital, Nakasero, Tel: +256 776 516 596

Kisiizi Hospital, Kabale, Tel: +256 392 700 806

Bwindi Community Hospital, Tel: +256 703 342 891

Kumi Hospital, Tel: +256 776 221 443

LANGUAGES / HOSPITALITY:

Luganda is the most widely spoken indigenous language and the most widely spoken second language alongside English. The native speakers of Luganda are the Baganda, who constitute 18% of the population.

TRADITIONAL FOOD OF UGANDA:

In **Uganda**, the staple food is matoke (cooking bananas). Other food crops include cassava (manioc), sweet potatoes, white potatoes, yams, beans, peas, groundnuts (peanuts), cabbage, onions, pumpkins, and tomatoes. Some fruits, such as oranges, pawpaws (papayas), lemons, and pineapples, are also grown.



REGIONAL DRINKS:

Bell lager and Nile lager are popular **Ugandan** beers, but each region has their own local beer. Pombe and lubisi are generic words for locally brewed fermented beer made from banana or millet. Uganda waragi can mean Ugandan gin, but it is also a generic term for domestic distilled beverages.

SAFETY:

While Uganda is generally viewed as a **safe**, secure and politically stable country within the region, its extensive and porous borders are inadequately policed, allowing for a robust flow of illicit trade and immigration.

VISA REQUIREMENT/S:

Do you need a visa to travel to Rwanda?

Visitors to **Uganda** must obtain a **visa on arrival** to **Uganda** or from **one** of the **Ugandan** diplomatic missions, unless they come from **one** of the **visa** exempt countries. All visitors must hold a passport valid for 6 months.

For more information go to: <https://immigration.go.ug/content/visas-and-passes>

HEALTH / INSURANCE:

Some vaccines are recommended or required for Uganda. The National Travel Health Network and Centre and WHO recommend the following vaccinations for Uganda: **hepatitis A**, **hepatitis B**, **typhoid**, **cholera**, **yellow fever**, **rabies**, **meningitis** and **tetanus**.

Visit: <https://www.passporthealthglobal.com/en-gb/destination-advice/uganda/>

A Medical and Travel insurance is highly recommended prior to the start of the holiday.

WHAT TO PACK:

Conservative/casual clothing is advisable in the bigger towns and cities in Uganda. Generally speaking, light layers of clothing in neutral safari colours of green, khaki and beige are the best items to bring with you. Dark colours such as navy or black can attract tsetse flies and are best avoided, as are bright colours like yellow, red and purple if you are going on safari.

- Ugandans are very relaxed and most types of clothing are acceptable. We suggest you **pack for comfort rather than fashion**.
- In Kampala and most of the bigger cities Western clothes such as **jeans and t-shirts are fine**.
- Outside of major cities we suggest that you **dress more conservatively**.



- During the day it is hot so our advice is to **pack lightweight layers in natural fabrics** such as linen, bamboo and cotton.
- Wear plenty of sunscreen (we love the Riemann P20 range for 10 hour protection), **sunglasses** and a sunhat.
- However **it does cool off at night** so pack a fleece or jumper too.
- We suggest **keeping to light, neutral colours**; khaki, green and brown, but not white as it will get dirty and dusty very quickly.
- **Avoid blue or black clothing** – the tsetse flies are drawn to these colours, and their bite can give you African Sleeping Sickness.
- **Long trousers and long-sleeved tops** will protect you from the harsh sun and protect against mosquitoes at night. But don't forget your insect/mosquito repellent too.
- Pack light, and include some soap for hand laundry – it's very **quick to dry clothes** outside on a bush as the locals do. Spare t-shirts are very cheap to buy too if you need one.
- It would be a good idea to pack a lightweight and versatile travel jacket. We like the SCOTTeVEST range because they have been specifically designed with travel in mind, offer plenty of storage pockets and have awesome additional features like RFID security and Personal Area Network connectivity.
- To use **electrical gadgets** you may need a travel adapter plug, and also a step down voltage converter if your devices are not designed for the local **voltage (240V)**.

Bear in mind that packing space is limited on all modes of safari transport (including 4x4 vehicle and small aircrafts) so you will need to restrict your baggage to 12-15 kg (preferably packed in a soft bag) plus a reasonable amount of camera equipment. You will be allowed two separate pieces of luggage on safari.

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For game drives aim for reasonable neutral colours – think of the movie “Out of Africa”. A windbreaker or hoddie is ideal too. For evening we suggest something more formal at more up market and exclusive lodges/hotels. **DO NOT FORGET** the binoculars for the game viewing and your camera!

Electricity:

In Uganda, the standard voltage is 240 V and the frequency is 50 Hz. You can use your electric appliances in Uganda, if the standard voltage in your country is in between 220 - 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, Australia and most of Asia and Africa). If the standard voltage in your country is in the range of 100 V - 127 V (as is in the US, Canada and most South American countries), you will need an adapter/converter.

camping
africa