



## Get to Know the Locals & Primate Tracking - Rwanda

Free cancellation up to 30 day(s) prior departure, after which the tour cancellation policy applies.

- **Activities:**
  - Backpacking
  - Cultural Walking
  - Cycling
  - Eco Tourism
  - Gorilla Trekking
  - LGBTQ
  - National Parks & Wildlife Sanctuaries
  - Nature
  - Safari
  - Trekking and Hiking
  - Wildlife Safaris
  - Women's Adventures
- **Travel Style:** Budget
- **Guiding Type:** Live Guide/Instructor
- **Activities:**
  - English
  - French
- **Tour Vibe:** Active
- **Guiding Type:** Live Guide/Instructor
- **Recommended For:**
  - Couple
  - Family/Kids
  - For Art Lovers
  - LGBTQ
  - Senior

- Solo
- Women
- Youth
- **Country:**
  - DRC
  - Rwanda
- **Routes:**
  - Kigali, Rwanda
- **Pickup:** Kigali ,Rwanda;

From:12:00 AM

To:12:00 AM

- **Drop-off:** Kigali ,Rwanda;

From:12:00 AM

To:12:00 AM

- **Age Range:** 15 - 80 (Years Old)
- **Tour Highlights:**
  - Gain a broad perspective of the Rwandan way of life
  - Learn of the healing abilities of traditional medicine
  - Take a look into Rwanda's education by visiting schools
  - Track mountain gorillas on a once-in-a-lifetime experience
- **Tour Introduction:**

On this Rwanda trip you will have a chance to discover the beauty of the Virunga Massif, breathtaking golden monkey and mountain gorilla trekking, birding on twin lakes, hiking to the top of Bisoke Crater Lake and learning about the local culture and history. The Massif covers an area of 8,000 sq km and contains a chain of eight volcanoes spanning the countries of Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It also covers the National Parks of Bwindi Impenetrable Forest alongside Mgahinga Forest (Uganda), Volcanoes National Park (Rwanda) and Virunga National Park (D R Congo), regions where sustainable tourism has been embraced

- **Itinerary:**
  - Day 1: **Arrive Kigali**

On arrival at Kigali International Airport, you will be met by Virunga Programs driver/guide and transferred to your hotel in Kigali for an overnight stay on bed and breakfast basis. Driving distance: 15 minutes Activity: None Overnight: Great Seasons Hotel / Lemigo Hotel / Kigali Serena Hotel Meal Plan: Bed & breakfast

- Day 2: **Depart for Ruhengeri & Intercultural Exchange**

After breakfast you will depart for a two hour drive to Ruhengeri, the second largest town in Rwanda, with its stunning backdrop of five volcanic mountains – The Virungas. Arrive at the Red Rocks Intercultural Exchange Center, a cultural exchange project, which aims to spread all aspects of Rwandese culture, life style, traditions and history, involving and benefitting local people in cultural tourism.

Enjoy a lunch that you will help prepare. Our cooking lessons involve mainly Rwandese dishes in an African cuisine and in an African kitchen. With a range of fresh crops, the ingredients for African cuisine are diverse even though certain foods are common to many regions. Ground maize or corn (called ‘sweet corn’ in the UK) is used as the basis for many meals. Maize flour is cooked with boiling water to form a stiff porridge (called Ugali in Swahili or Kaunga in Kinyarwanda). Sometimes it’s made into dough. This starchy staple is served with sauces or stews as well as different fresh vegetables like cabbage, carrots, spinach and other traditional greens. You get to join our staff in the kitchen as you explore the varieties of food grown from our farm behind the main building. Get your hands dirty, it’s fun! If you haven’t cried in a long time the smoke from the kitchen will give you a chance too if you are not swift in keeping the wood together to keep the flames burning.

Enjoy the meal outside in the sun or at the dining area as you chat with the locals and are introduced to the Rwandese way of telling evening stories of our past and present. This kind of tour will give you an insight into Rwandan culture and way of life that leaves you with a picture of our history. Later in the afternoon indulge in banana beer production to understand the chemistry about the process of brewing a local beer from bananas fruits. If you find the activity interesting enough you can join the women in squeezing the juice out of the bananas and drink a glass of juice (optional). Understand how long juice takes to turn into alcohol after adding in sorghum floor. Enjoy a big glass of our local brew if you feel like it. Amongst other activities, they also do basket weaving, the local community are proud of this activity and the families it supports financially. Continue for your local home stay arriving for dinner and overnight. Accommodation is basic and the rooms have clean but shared bathrooms and hot shower.

Driving distance: 2 hours Activity: Intercultural Exchange Overnight: Local home stay  
Meal Plan: Half board - Lunch, bed & breakfast

### ◦ Day 3: **Golden Monkey Tracking & Twin Lakes Visit**

Today you set out on your Golden Monkey tracking in the Volcanoes National Park. Entering dense stands of bamboo interspersed with open glades, you will make your way deep into golden monkey territory. Guides lead visitors to the groups of ‘habituated’ golden monkeys – monkeys that have become accustomed to human presence. Though viewing is kept to a maximum of one hour, travellers can get an up-close look at the golden monkey in its natural habitat. Adult monkeys frolic in plain view, feeding on

bamboo leaves and leaping from perch to perch. Females carry their young, completely comfortable among onlookers.

Return to your hotel to freshen up and have lunch then depart for the twin lakes of Bulera and Ruhondo. These are beautiful lakes located at the base of volcano Muhabura and close to the border with Uganda. They are surrounded by steep hills with a backdrop of the Virunga volcanic mountains. These twin lakes are great spots to visit and used to be referred to as neglected gems but things have changed and Bulera and Ruhondo are now well worth a visit. Their deep blue waters ringed by steep hills and tall waterfalls with the outlines of the nearby Virunga volcanoes provide a spectacular backdrop. Later drive back to your hotel for dinner and overnight.

Driving distance: 45 minutes Activities: 1 Golden Monkey Trek + Twin Lakes Visit  
Overnight: Garden Place Hotel / Mountain Gorilla View Lodge / Virunga Lodge Meal  
Plan: Full board – Lunch, dinner, bed & breakfast

◦ **Day 4: Gorilla Tracking & Kagano Community Visit**

After an early breakfast, you will proceed to the National Park headquarters, Kinigi, to meet your guides for the day. After completing the park formalities, you embark on a once-in-a-lifetime experience of tracking mountain gorillas. Once you spot them you are allowed to spend an hour watching your closest long lost cousin, perhaps one of the most breathtaking wildlife experiences on earth! You get so close to these awesome giant primates, staring at each other blankly not knowing who will break the long silence first. Tracking the gorillas through the light mountain forest on the slopes of the Virunga is a magical experience. These massive primates are extremely rare, with less than 700 living today. You will get within meters of the family and be privileged to spend an hour amongst them. The trekking may be fairly strenuous; up to six hours or longer at a relatively high altitude.

We encourage you, for your own enjoyment, to make sure that you are perfectly fit and healthy. (We've had visitors older than 70 years old do gorilla tracking so this should not be a problem, all you need is to ask your driver guide to request a shorter group for you if cannot you trek far). It's important to bring good hiking boots, long trousers, gloves for protection against stinging nettles, some snacks & sweets (for you, not the gorillas) as well as sufficient water as the rainforest gets hot and humid during the day. You will spend one hour with the gorillas, but it is an hour you will never forget. In the evening visit the Kagano community village as you get to know why the community left the park. Return to your hotel for lunch and later dinner and overnight.

Driving distance: 45 minutes Activities: 1 Gorilla Trek Overnight: Garden Place Hotel / Mountain Gorilla View Lodge / Virunga Lodge Meal Plan: Full board – Lunch, dinner, bed & breakfast

- **Day 5: Mount Bisoke Hike**

After an early breakfast, set off with your packed lunches depart for the starting point of your hike. Standing at 3,700m Mount Bisoke has the typical conic shape of a 'perfect' volcano and in its crater lies a deep crater lake. The volcano does not present an exceptionally demanding climb but it is nevertheless still a tough hike. The high elevation demands extra strength of climbers and the whole excursion can take between 5 hours and the whole day depending on the speed of the walk and the frequency of stops. The trek starts at 07:00am from the park's headquarters in Kinigi. The ascent typically takes around 3 hours. During the climb, you will cross a series of different vegetation habitats starting with bamboo forests, then moving into Hagenia – Hypericum forest and finally moving through Senecio – Lobelia bush near the summit. Porters can also be hired from the park headquarters but a professional guide from the park will accompany you for the hike. Return to your hotel to freshen up and later stay for dinner and overnight. (It is important to bring with you sufficient drinking water as the rainforest gets hot and humid during the day). Driving distance: 45 minutes Activities: Bisoke Hike Overnight: Garden Place Hotel / Mountain Gorilla View Lodge / Virunga Lodge Meal Plan: Full board – Lunch, dinner, bed & breakfast

- **Day 6: Local Community Visit; village walk, bee keeping & local market pharmacy**

After breakfast, and with your packed lunch, we depart for a village walk, through one of the villages in Musanze. This helps visitors gain a broad perspective of Rwandan way of life. The villages reside by the volcanoes and you will have views of the volcanoes and the mountainous vegetation in its natural state. Continue on to a visit to the bee keepers. Members of various bee keeping associations produce bee hives that they place in swamps or forest areas rich in certain types of plants. Depending on what kind of honey is desired, these plants for example could be banana trees or certain flowers. Honey is an important means to cure a number of local diseases, so that it is shared with traditional doctors, while the remaining honey is sold to local people and the benefits are shared with other associations. Take a tour to a local village market pharmacy and learn of the healing abilities of traditional medicine which has been used for years by the Rwandan people. Later take a walk around Musanze town then a small hike around the Amahoro tours office that leads you to a small picnic site where you enjoy your packed lunch as get to see different types of birds while enjoying the view of the volcanoes. Later return to your hotel for dinner and overnight. Activities: Local Community Visit Overnight: Garden Place Hotel / Mountain Gorilla View Lodge / Virunga Lodge Meal Plan: Full board – Lunch, dinner, bed & breakfast

- **Day 7: Local School Visit & Depart for Gisenyi**

Take a look into Rwanda's education by visiting local schools and participate in either teaching or playing games with the children, so they appreciate tourism (if schools are not closed for the routine break). Interact with the primary school children in this remote locale and get an idea of how they lead their lives. Later have your lunch then depart for Gisenyi arriving for check in at your hotel. The afternoon is spent in this largest port on the Rwandan shore of Lake Kivu, in the company of our guide to show you around. Enjoy a boat ride to one of the islands in Lake Kivu. Simply explore the town, enjoying the hustle and bustle of the local market or wander through the leafy streets admiring the old colonial buildings. Dinner and overnight at your hotel. Driving distance: 2 hours Activities: Inter cultural exchange + 1 hour boat ride in Gisenyi Overnight: Discover Rwanda Youth Hostel / Palm Garden Beach Hotel / Kivu Serena Hotel Meal Plan: Full board – Lunch, dinner, bed & breakfast Depart for Kigali

◦ **Day 8: Depart for Kigali**

After breakfast, the early part of the day is spent on the Rwandan shore of Lake Kivu. One of the African Great Lakes, it lies on the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, and is surrounded by majestic mountains. Take a swim in the lake, which covers an area of 2,700 km<sup>2</sup> (1,040 sq mi) and sits at an altitude of 1,460 m<sup>2</sup> (4,790 ft) above sea-level. The lake bed is situated in a rift valley that is slowly being pulled apart, causing volcanic activity and making it especially deep. Its maximum depth of 480 m (1,575 ft) is ranked the fifteenth deepest in the world. This Depart for a 3 hour drive to Kigali arriving for overnight at your hotel.

Driving distance: 3½ hours Activities: At Leisure Overnight: Overnight: Great Seasons Hotel / Lemigo Hotel / Kigali Serena Hotel Meal Plan: Bed & breakfast

◦ **Day 9: Ntarama & Nyamata Memorial Visit & Depart**

After breakfast, and depending on your flight departure timings, you will depart for a visit to the Ntarama church where mass killings occurred during the 1994 genocide; more than 5,000 people were killed in the church. The Ntarama Genocide Memorial is located about 30 km south of the capital city of Kigali. Located in the Bugasera region, this church and its contents are a reminder of the horrifying violence that took place at this site during Rwanda's 1994 genocide. Learn more about the unity and reconciliation commission. Proceed to Nyamata memorial site; a church where around 2,500 people were killed and it has become emblematic of the barbaric treatment of women during the genocide. In the church at Nyamata, there will be graphic and audio-visual displays that will focus particularly on the mass rape, brutalization of women and the use of HIV as a deliberate weapon of genocide. Return to the city for lunch then be transferred to Kigali International Airport for your flight back home.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

Location	Nights	Type	Property Name	Rating	Occupancy
Rwanda	8	Hotel	mountain view lodge	3	Private

- **Pickup & Drop-Off**

- **Guide**

- **Meals**

- Meat
- Vegan
- Vegetarian

- **Transport**

- Jeep & 4WD

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Flights

- Insurance

- Transport

- **Other Excluded:**

- All Government Taxes And Levies
- Pre & Post Accommodation in Kigali
- Gratuities/ Tips
- Any Other Item Of Personal Nature

## Covid Safety

- Face masks required for travelers in public areas
- Face masks required for guides in public areas
- Face masks provided for travelers
- Hand sanitizer available to travelers and staff
- Social distancing enforced throughout experience
- Tour Language
- English - Guide
- Regularly sanitized high-traffic areas Gear/equipment
- Gear/equipment sanitized between use



- Transportation vehicles regularly sanitized
- Guides required to regularly wash hands
- Regular temperature checks for staff
- Temperature checks for travelers upon arrival

All visitors are expected to test negative for COVID-19 within 72 hours prior to arrival. Tourists will take a second COVID-19 test on arrival and prior to visiting any tourist attraction. • We do arrange your testing appointment.

- COVID testing fee is paid by international visitors

## **Tour Cancellation Policy**

Free cancellation up to 30 day(s) prior departure, Or traveler will pay 100 % of the tour amount

Face masks required for travelers in public areas• Face masks required for guides in public areas• Face masks provided for travelers• Hand sanitizer available to travelers and staff• Social distancing enforced throughout experience• Tour Language English - Guide Regularly sanitized high-traffic areas• Gear/equipment sanitized between use• Transportation vehicles regularly sanitized• Guides required to regularly wash hands• Regular temperature checks for staff• Temperature checks for travelers upon arrival• Paid stay-at-home policy for staff with symptoms• Contactless payments for gratuities and add-ons• A note from this tour provider All visitors are expected to test negative for COVID-19 within 72 hours prior to arrival. Tourists will take a second COVID-19 test on arrival and prior to visiting any tourist attraction. • We do arrange your testing appointment. • COVID testing fee is paid by international visitors

## **Good To Know**

## **FAQs**