



TRUEAFRICA  
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Specialists in creating unique travel experiences which capture the essence of Africa.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRAVEL TO RWANDA



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## GENERAL

Mountain Gorillas live at high altitudes in the Virunga Mountains located in Volcanoes National Park. There are currently 10 habituated gorilla families that can be visited by a maximum of 8 visitors per day. Viewing time with the gorillas is limited to 1 hour.

Gorilla trekking involves walking long distances, through thick vegetation, wet, muddy and steep terrain which may be difficult for some visitors. We recommend that you pace yourself; walk slowly and drink plenty of water. During the trek, carry as little as possible in a waterproof bag: water, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, rain poncho and camera. For a small fee (and if required), porters are available to carry your day pack.

No one should feel deterred from making this trip, we can arrange a stretcher for clients who feel that they are unable to trek but would still like the experience (subject to additional cost).

*Children under 15 years of age are not permitted on gorilla treks.*

## VISAS

Most visitors – except nationals of a few exempted countries – require a Visa before entering Rwanda.

Please contact the Rwandan Embassy/Consulate in your home country to find out what the visa requirements are and to apply for your visa in advance.

If there is no Rwandan Consulate in your vicinity, a pre-entry facility/Visa Acceptance Letter can be requested online at [www.migration.gov.rw](http://www.migration.gov.rw) and used to obtain a visa at any official point of entry into Rwanda. Visitors are required to e-mail an invitation letter showing who will be hosting them in the country. We are able to supply a letter of invitation when necessary.

*NB: Visas are otherwise not automatically issued at the port of entry, unless authorized in advance as above.*

## WEATHER

Due to a combination of a tropical location and a high altitude, most of Rwanda has a temperate climate year round. Temperatures **rarely stray above 30C by day or below 15C at night throughout the year.** The exceptions are the chilly upper slopes of the Virunga Mountains. Throughout the country, seasonal variations in temperature are relatively insignificant. Most parts of the country receive in excess of 1,000mm of precipitation annually with the **driest months being July to September** and the **wettest is February to May.**

## VACCINATIONS

The only vaccination that is required for Rwanda is Yellow Fever. Please ensure you obtain this vaccination and **be sure to travel with your Yellow Fever vaccination certificate.**

## MONEY AND CREDIT CARDS

RWF (Rwandan Franc) is the currency in Rwanda however, US Dollar is the currency of preference. Very few places in Rwanda accept either credit cards or traveller's cheques. If they do, there is a significant fee charged. Bring USD cash with you (though be sure to keep it secure).

## SECURITY

Rwanda is considered an incredibly safe travel destination. As always, maintain common sense when travelling and you should encounter no problems whatsoever.

## COMMUNICATION

Rwanda has an excellent cell phone network covering almost the entire country. Appropriate SIM cards for the network are readily available (even in remote towns!). Cell phones can be purchased or rented from major shops in Kigali. Wifi is typically at all hotels/lodges (although speed and connectivity is never a guarantee).





## VOLTAGE

Voltage is 240V

## HEALTH & SAFETY

To minimize possible transmission of human diseases, you must maintain a distance of 7m (22ft) from the gorillas.

If you are sick with a cold, flu or other contagious illness, the Park Ranger may not allow you to participate on the trek. Any illness can be quite detrimental to the gorillas' health and wellbeing.

Spitting in the park is strictly prohibited.

Should you need to cough, please cover your mouth and be sure to turn away from the gorillas.

Do not litter! Eating and drinking near the gorillas is prohibited. Smoking anywhere in the park is forbidden.

Photography is permitted but you cannot use a flash.

When with the gorillas, please keep your voice low. Do not make rapid movements that may frighten them.

Should a gorilla charge or vocalize at you, do not be alarmed! Stand still, look away from the gorilla and be sure to follow your guide's directions.

Most of the Park's team of Guides/Trackers and anti-poaching officers speak English or French.

## WHAT TO BRING/WEAR

The climate in the Virunga Mountains is changeable! One can generally expect rain or sunshine (or both!) on any day of the year. When trekking for gorillas you will be in a rain forest so you can at least expect some gentle rains. Do not forget a lightweight windbreaker/waterproof jacket! Good hiking boots, hat, gloves (garden gloves will work just fine!), gators, long sleeves and trousers to avoid stinging nettles.

At 1,700m above sea level, it is generally quite cold in the mornings and evenings, a sweater/fleece, warm clothing is strongly recommended.

Bring your swimming costume as the main hotels in Kigali all have pools. If your itinerary includes Lake Kivui at either Kibuye or Gisenyi, you will have the opportunity to swim in the lake.

A torch is highly recommended for every adventure destination and Rwanda is no exception.

If you feel more comfortable with a walking stick, pack a folding one. You can also rent wooden walking sticks upon entering the Park.

## TO ENHANCE YOUR TREK

For your trek, carry enough bottled water (up to 1 litre). If you feel like you might require a snack during the hike, be sure to pack one. If required, porters are available to carry your daypack for a small fee.

## UMUNGANDA (SOCIAL WORK DAY)

Every last Saturday of the month, from around 08h00 to 12h30, all Rwandans of all walks of life (including the President!) take the time from their everyday lives to come together within their neighbourhoods/villages to undertake communal work together - for the benefit of the whole society. Work often includes general cleaning, unblocking trenches or roadside drains, sweeping streets, breaking fallow ground for farming etc. After the work, communities have short meetings to discuss general societal issues and then go back home. The afternoon is free to revert to personal engagements. If this day occurs while you are traveling, please be aware that most stores/shops will be closed.





## TIPPING

If you are pleased with the service you are more than welcome to tip your guide and the staff in the various lodges and camps. Obviously, tipping is an extra reward for excellent service and is not compulsory.

As a guideline for tipping your driver/guide, we suggest about 10 - 15 USD per person per day. For your gorilla trek, there is typically one main guide and several rangers. Gorilla Trackers/Rangers 15 - 20 USD per person per trek, you would pay the main guide and the tip is shared amongst the team. Porters can be hired at

the park to help carry your bags and assist you with the thick foliage and steep terrain during the hike. A general guideline for porters is 10 - 15 USD per person per day. Walking poles can be hired at the entrance of the park for a tip/donation of 5 - 10 USD per pole.

Tipping is usually sorted out at the end of your trek.

You can tip the lodge staff by using the 'communal tip box' that is located in the common area or reception. This 'communal tip' should be around 5 - 10 USD per person per day stayed and is then distributed amongst cooks, waiters, housekeepers, porters etc..

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## EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Emergency contact details while you are travelling in Rwanda:

**Jacqui M. Sebageni**

Office: +250 252 504330,

Mobile: +250 788 301000

### Emergency (alternative) Contact Numbers in Rwanda:

+250 788 300430 - Manzi Kayihura

+250 788 351000 - Duty Manager

Of course, you can always contact our General Manager in Cape Town, **Troy Smith** on his personal cell (mobile) on **+27 82 387 2717**

Please do not email us if you have any problems - for quicker resolution, call or text/SMS instead

