

Uganda & Rwanda

TRAVEL INFORMATION



RWANDA

Getting There

Airlines servicing Kigali International Airport are: RwandAir, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, KLM, Qatar Airways and Turkish Airlines. Helicopter transfers within Rwanda are available through Akagera Aviation.

Getting Around

Rwanda has a well-surfaced road network linking the major towns, and the most convenient way to travel the country is by car. Smaller roads are frequently unsurfaced with varying conditions, especially during rainy season. Tour operators can arrange a vehicle with driver, or a number of agencies rent out cars and 4x4s. Taxis operate in the larger towns. Travel insurance may not cover motorbike taxis, which are also common. There are no rail services and the most popular form of public transport is shared minibuses. In Kigali, buses operate a smart card system called Tap&Go. Akagera Aviation provides helicopter transfers and tours.

Connectivity

Rwanda has an excellent mobile phone network covering almost the entire country, and international calls can be made easily. Local SIM cards are readily available everywhere, even in remote towns. The main provider is MTN followed by Tigo. Mobile phones can be purchased or rented from major shops in Kigali. Rwanda is among the top three African countries in terms of internet connectivity, with an ever-growing fibre optic network. There is high speed 4G LTE wireless broadband in major cities. Most towns have several internet cafes and wifi is available in higher end hotels.

Immigration & Visas

Citizens of all countries are allowed to get visa upon arrival without prior application. Citizens of country members to the African Union, Commonwealth & La Francophonie can get free visas upon arrival in Rwanda for a visit of 30 days. A citizen of East African Community Member States can receive a pass/entry visa free of charge upon arrival for a six-month stay in Rwanda. Visitors from the following countries can be granted 90-day visas at no cost upon arrival in Rwanda: Angola, Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, The Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis, Ghana, Guinea, Indonesia, Haiti, Mauritius, Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Singapore and the State of Qatar. Citizens of countries that are not visa exempt have an option of applying online or at the Rwanda Diplomatic Mission of the country of residence before departure. Those applying online have the option to pay online or upon arrival. There is no single affiliated agent that is authorized to apply for a visa on your behalf. The visa fees must not exceed 50 USD for single entry visa or 70 USD for multiple entry. For tourists crossing to Uganda – should apply for East African Tourist visa Arrival, it costs USD 100 per person.

Money

The Rwandan franc (Rwf) is the principal currency, although US dollars are widely accepted. Expect to pay for local services in cash, in Rwandan francs. The greater the amount, the more likely US dollars or other hard currencies are preferred, such as gorilla tracking and upmarket hotels. A growing number of places accept credit and debit cards, with Visa being more widely accepted than Mastercard. It's best to check when making a booking. ATMs can be found in Kigali and nearly all major cities. Cash can be exchanged at banks and private forex bureaux (bureau de change). Both are closed on Sundays and public holidays. It may be impossible to exchange traveler's cheques away from the capital. Western Union facilities are common. Tipping is discretionary and appreciated. Cash is usually preferred. As a rough guide, tip professional guides and drivers US \$10 per day, trekking porters US \$2.

Plastic Ban

Please refrain from bringing plastic bags to Rwanda. Banned by law since 2008, any plastic bags in your luggage will be confiscated at the airport or other point of entry. As a country we strive to protect, safeguard and promote the environment – a matter which is written in to our constitution and carefully observed by our citizens, who all participate in a community service called Umuganda on the last Saturday of every month. We respectfully request that all visitors help us keep Rwanda the cleanest country in Africa, and dispose of all litter responsibly.

Drones

A permit is required to fly a drone recreationally or commercially in Rwanda. Permits are issued by the Rwanda Civil Aviation Authority, with an average processing time of 2 to 4 weeks (RPAS Activity Permit) or 2 months (RPAS Operator Certificate). Foreign citizens are unable to register drones themselves – a Rwandan citizen, permanent resident or body / entity may register a drone on behalf of a foreign citizen. Drones must be marked with a registration number assigned by the RCAA. Basic rules: Do not fly your drone over people or large crowds Respect others privacy when flying your drone Do not fly your drone over airports or in areas where aircraft are operating You must fly during daylight hours and only fly in good weather conditions Do not fly your drone in sensitive areas including government or military facilities. Use of drones or camera drones in these areas are prohibited For more information, please consult the RCAA website or email enquiries to d.fss@caa.gov.rw. You may be interested to read up on the partnership between Rwanda and the World Economic Forum (WEF) to nurture the drone industry in Rwanda, building on the success of Zipline's blood delivery technology, which hails from Silicon Valley. The partnership is managed by WEF's Center for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. As Rwanda looks to the future, we will continue to put in place the infrastructure and policy frameworks that accelerate the adoption of emerging technologies to transform people's lives.

Health

Much of Rwanda lies at too high an elevation for malaria to be a major concern, but the disease is present and prophylactic drugs are recommended. Travellers should seek professional medical advice on taking anti-malarial medicines and take precautions to avoid mosquito bites, especially between dawn and dusk. Travellers should ensure they are up to date with vaccinations, following the advice of their local healthcare provider, and should consider bringing a small first aid kit. It is advisable not to drink tap water. Bottled mineral water can be bought in all towns – make sure the seal is intact. As a small country, medical help is rarely far away. For basic treatment most towns of any size have pharmacies with a limited range of medicines, while larger towns have hospitals.

King Faisal Hospital in Kigali is the most advanced in Rwanda. In case of medical evacuation, Akagera Aviation operates a helicopter ambulance service within Rwanda in daylight hours, with one military paramedic on call. Please make sure you have adequate medical insurance. Due to the risks of passing on human colds or other illnesses to primates, it is essential that you are in good health if you want to see them.

What to Wear

Dress codes are informal yet respectful. Men tend to wear trousers but shorts are fine, although walking around without a shirt is frowned upon. Women will feel more comfortable in knee-length or longer. Daytime temperatures are generally warm, so bring lots of light clothing and think about sun protection, including a hat & sunglasses. The evenings tend to be cool, and a light sweater appreciated. In Volcanoes National Park and Nyungwe National Park slightly heavier clothing is useful. A lightweight waterproof jacket may come in handy in the moist mountains.

Avoid wearing blue in Akagera National Park, which attracts tse tse flies, and take sensible precautions against mosquitos and other bites. When tracking gorillas, wear sturdier clothing to protect against stinging nettles, and solid walking shoes. Consider bringing gardening or leather gloves as well as gaiters. For those who wear contact lenses, cleaning fluid is not readily available & dust or sun could prove an irritation, so it's best to bring a pair of glasses for peace of mind.

Weather

Fractionally south of the Equator and with much of the country lying at altitude, Rwanda enjoys an agreeable tropical highland climate. Temperatures vary considerably between locations, but vary little from month to month. Peak temperatures rarely exceed 30°C (86°F) in the daytime or drop below 15°C (59°F) at night. Akagera is generally the warmest and the Virunga mountains the coolest. The average daily temperature in Kigali is 21°C (70°F). There are two rainy seasons in a year, from mid-February to May and mid-September to mid-December. The dry season, from June to mid-September, sees light cloud cover and occasional light rainfall. The roads and paths tend to be easier to navigate in this period.

Terrain

Known as the land of a thousand hills, Rwanda has five volcanoes, 23 lakes and numerous rivers. The country covers 10,169 square miles or 26,338 square kilometres. Much of the country lies at elevations between 1,500m and 2,500m. The highest peak is Mount Karisimbi at 4,507m and the lowest point is the Rusizi river at 950m above sea level. The terrain is often uneven and sensible shoes are essential

UGANDA



Unlike other typical Savanna Safari destinations, Uganda offers a wider range of experiences from Savannah Game drives and Boat Safaris to mountain Hiking, beautiful sceneries, Cultural tours, primate Safaris including Gorillas, Chimps and Golden Monkeys. Uganda is located on the Equator presents an awesome weather for all visitors all year around, In The south, combined with high altitude ensure a pleasant, temperate year-round climate. Temperatures therefore hardly vary throughout the season, with an average of 25°C during the day and slightly cooler at night. However, it is a little Cooler in the southern parts of Uganda and hotter in the northern parts of Uganda. The climate in the southern Uganda which is also the mountainous areas range between 13 in the most cold and 28 in the hottest. In the northern you could experience about 30 degrees to maximum while on a Uganda safari. The Long rainy season takes place from March till May and there is a short rainy season around October-November and a little of December. Jan and feb is a little humid dry than most months of the Year.

Best time to travel to Uganda

Uganda safari can perfectly be visited during all seasons and throughout the Year while the weather is perfect all year around. Please keep in mind though that July and August are peak season for tracking the mountain gorillas and therefore gorilla permits are more difficult to obtain. The Dry season months are also good to visit for wildlife viewing as the grass is short and animals are easier to find. Gorilla trekking is also rewarding in the dry season as the terrain is manageable for both cars and trekking experience.

Visa Requirements


Most nationals will require visas for Uganda. The cost is USD \$50 per person per entry. We recommend that you apply and acquire your visa in advance, at least a week to arrival. Please follow the link below to apply for your Uganda visa <https://visas.immigration.go.ug/#/help/visa>. Visas can only be obtained on line. For clients entering Uganda from Rwanda, you will need to apply for East African tourist visa on arrival in Kigali at USD 100. Insist on East African Tourist Visa.

Health

Please ensure you consult with a travel clinic or your physician for the appropriate medication. Usually, this prescription starts a couple of weeks prior to your arrival, and continues for a couple of weeks after your return. Simply put, if you aren't bitten - you can't catch malaria. Wearing long sleeved shirts and long trousers after dark will reduce the possibility of being bitten.

Vaccinations and Yellow Fever

We recommend that our guests consult the closest Uganda embassy for current requirements. Your travel clinic or physician can brief you on recommended vaccines. The rules for Yellow Fever vaccination state that entry to Uganda from a Yellow Fever Endemic Zone requires a vaccine. Persons older than 60 or younger than 1 are exempt. Anyone with a letter from a doctor saying that they are unable to take it are also exempt. If entry into Uganda is direct from a non-endemic zone (e.g. Europe, USA, Australia) then no vaccine is required.



Insurance

When making your deposit payment, we strongly recommend obtaining insurance simultaneously to safeguard against unforeseen cancellations, medical evacuations, and luggage loss. Equally crucial is ensuring that your health and life insurance provides adequate coverage for the duration of your safari, including emergency evacuation or repatriation if needed. It's necessary to obtain this coverage in your country of origin.

Language

English serves as Uganda's official language, with Kiswahili and Luganda also widely spoken across the nation.

MONEY MATTERS

Uganda operates on the Uganda Shilling as its primary currency in a predominantly cash-based economy. While US dollars are widely accepted, major credit cards are only accepted at select establishments, primarily larger shops, hotels, and lodges. ATMs are accessible in larger cities nationwide, albeit less common in remote regions and national parks.

WHERE TO EXCHANGE MONEY

Exchange money only at authorized outlets such as currency Forex bureaus, banks and hotels. Only exchange what you feel you will need while on a Uganda safari. Save all receipts from any currency transaction. You may be asked to produce them when you exit the country, and they are required if you intend to reconvert local currency. We suggest traveling with some U.S. dollars to be exchanged for local currency and at least two major credit cards. Because of Uganda's cash-based economy, we suggest you bring enough cash in USD \$ (in smaller denominations), to finance your gratuities, purchases and other incidentals.

WHICH CURRENCY RULES UGANDA

The regulated currency is the Uganda Shilling (ush). Notes are 500, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 and now 50,000, we have coins from a 50, 100, 200 and 500 and 1000. At this writing, the exchange rate was about ugx 3850 for US\$1. Please avoid bringing US dollar notes printed older than 2009. Uganda does not accept older, written on, or torn notes. Most major hotels in Uganda accept US dollars, Euros, and Uganda shillings, and they also accommodate all major credit cards with a surcharge of 5% to 10%.

SAFARI GUIDE

Our driver/guides are well-versed in the experience, information, and knowledge of all the areas you'll visit during your safari. Feel encouraged to ask them numerous questions and engage in conversation about any aspect of your safari journey.

Tipping In Uganda

In Uganda safaris, tipping isn't customary, but it's based on your satisfaction. Even a modest tip to express gratitude is greatly appreciated. If pleased with your safari guide's service, consider USD10 – 15 per day, and USD 5-10 at upmarket hotels.

Packing List for Uganda Gorilla Safaris. & Trek

- 1. Long Sleeved Shirts**
- 2. Long Trousers**
- 3. Waterproof Hiking Sturdy Boots as well as Comfortable Safari Shoes**
- 4. Sturdy Gardening Gloves**
- 5. A Rain Jacket/ Poncho**
- 6. A Safari Hat**
- 7. Insect Repellent**
- 8. Warm Sweater**
- 9. Sun Blocker cream**
- 10. Walking stick (Normally provided at the park or at the Lodge Free of Charge)**
- 11. Safari Socks**
- 12. Hand Wipes**
- 13. Sun glasses**
- 14. Anti-Malaria Tablets such as Malarone or Doxycycline.**
- 15. A pack of toiletries**
- 16. Batteries for Cameras or Power banks for Phone charging**
- 17. A small back Pack for your packed Lunches and mineral water while you head for the trek**

