



### Classic Rwanda + Akagera National Park Discover the land of thousand hills!

The trip will not only bring you to the three National Parks of Rwanda but will also explore the unique sceneries of Lake Kivu and highlight some unique cultural aspects of Rwanda life. As an option we propose you a visit to the recent devastated city of Goma (RDC) to show you another side of the Virunga volcanoes.

- Min. 2 participants. For gorillas the min. age is 15 years.
- Only the Park Authorities will assign you a gorilla group. Communicate your wishes to our driver-guide he will make some arrangements for you! The Sussa group leaves at the Karisimbi volcano and is more challenging with much longer hiking times!
- Flash photography is not permitted when tracking the gorillas.
- What is included?

**Tour Includes:** Airport transfers, accommodation, all meals, plenty of mineral water, the services of a driver-guide, all park and entry fees, all activities as per programme: visit of Kigali including the Genocide Memorial Centre at Gisozi, visit of the national Museum at Butare, performance of the Intore dancers, all guided primates walks in Nyungwe, speed-boat trip to Gisenyi, boat trip Lake Ihema, game drive Akagera NP. Options: second

gorilla trekking, climbing the Bisoke (3.711 m), visit of the Dian Fossey grave and former Karisoke centre, visit of the golden monkeys. **It excludes:** Airline ticket, beverages, tips, visas and personal expenses.

This safaris can be organized for private parties with min. 2 participants. Conditions apply ask us for more information.

## What to bring with you?

Money for your personal expenses (average of \$ 50 p.p.), outfit with adapted colours for wildlife observation, good walking shoes, raingear, a few long-sleeve shirts, slippers, sweater for cool evenings, sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sun cream, video/photo camera, a 200 mm or longer telepholens is very usefull, reserve batteries, films and a torch.

**Duration :** 12 Days

**Travelstyles :** Small Group Safaris, Road Safaris, Lodge Safaris

**Activities :** Bird Watching, Chimpanzee Trekking, Cultural Activities, Gorilla Trekking, Guided Nature Walks & Hikes., Wildlife Viewing

**Parks & places :** Akagera National Park, Butare and the National Museum, Genocide Memorial Centre - Gisozi & others, Lake Kivu, Nyungwe Forest NP., Volcanoes National Park

## Itinerary

### Day 1 : Arrival at Kigali

Meet and greet at the Airport by your your Safaris guide. Diner (D) is included in the package. Overnight at your Hotel.

Flights: There are daily flights to Kigali out of Nairobi with Kenya Airways and Rwandair Express.

### Day 2 : Kigali - Butare - Nyungwe Forest NP.

After breakfast you will depart for Butare the second largest city of Rwanda and is regarded as the intellectual city of Rwanda. It hosts the National Museum, several academic (University) and research institutions.

On your way to Butare you will visit Nyanza (currently Nyabisindu) the former Mwami's palace (King's palace) and the seat of the feudal monarchy. The palace has been reconstructed to its 19th century state and shows a traditional dome that can be compared with the Kabaka's palace of Buganda.

You will visit the National Museum which is one the well set-up if not the finest ethnographic museum of East Africa. It's a good source of information on the cultural history of Rwanda and the region.

After the visit of the museum you will have a spectacular performance of the national ballet with the Intore-dancers. The performance is regarded by many as one of the highlights of your safari. Lunch is foreseen in Butare and in the afternoon we will drive to Nyungwe Forest NP. Your driver-guide will stop at the Uwinka offices to have the last update on the presence of the semi-habituated groups of chimps and colobus monkeys. This will help you to prepare your activities of the next day. Overnight is foreseen at the Guest House of Gisakura. (B-L-D)

Rwanda has one of the finest traditional handicrafts of Africa. The ceramics, woodcarvings and basketry are found in the streets of Kigali and Butare.

*The "Intore", once the elite of the traditional Rwanda army, were not only trained as military but also in high jump and dance. They were known for there remarkable technique allowing them to jump over 2m40. The Intore became worldwide famous as dancers in 1958 when the World Expo was held in Brussels. Today Intore dancers are part of the rich Rwanda folklore.*

*The warriors dance is a jewel of the choreographic heritage of Rwanda. Dressed with a mane made of sisal fibre, Tied up on ankles, little bells jingle on each step, giving the warriors dance a thrilling rhythm. Throughout the Intore ballet, physical confrontation turns into artistic rivalry and then at "the end" comes out into a vigorous hug of the*

warriors. This is the most artistic gesture of friendship, mutual aid and protection.

The National Museum in Butare was donated in 1989 by the Belgium government and gave back a part of the ethnographic collection acquired during the colonial period. The design and concept of the museum was realized in co-operation with the Royal Museum for Central Africa of Tervuren, Belgium. The modern building has different sections and displays a wide collection of monochrome pictures, traditional artefacts and objects, tools and different craft products. Ethnographic objects are grouped together according to theme giving excellent information on the daily life. Traditional ceramics and basketry are still manufactured and belong to the finest handicrafts of the region. The National Museum remained surprisingly untouched during the civil war in 1994.

**Activities :** Cultural Activities

### Day 3 : Nyungwe Forest NP

If the chimps are nearby we recommend to have a chimp tracking experience in Nyungwe! Otherwise you may choose to have another guided primate walk or have one of the hikes in the well-maintained trails. There are l'hoest monkeys and blue monkeys present and often observed around Uwinka, requiring less strenuous hiking. There is also an orchid garden at Uwinka and for those who would like a challenging hike we recommend the trail "the Bigugu Mountain", the highest peak in Nyungwe Forest at nearly 3000m. Bird watchers will certainly be interested to know that Nyungwe has also some Albertine rift endemic species that can only be seen here! Birding is very rewarding on one of the special designed trails! Don't forget to bring your binoculars with you! (B-L-D)  
*Nyungwe Forest has more than 100 species of orchids!*

**Activities :** Bird Watching, Chimpanzee Trekking, Guided Nature Walks & Hikes.  
**Parks & places :** Volcanoes National Park

### Day 4 : Nyungwe Forest NP

Nyungwe Forest NP is a paradise for hikers. The terrain is rugged and steep, and you will be at relatively high elevation. Wear good hiking shoes and bring warm clothing! Your day will start with an early breakfast and a briefing at Uwinka tourist information centre. Depending on your personal interests you will have a choice of different opportunities to explore the largest high altitude rainforest of East Africa! Of a particular interest are the large social groups of Angolan Colobus (*Colobus angolensis*), which may be over 300 individuals. These are the largest troops of this species known in the world! Nyungwe forest counts 25% of the African Primates!

One of these groups is semi-habituated and we recommend to start your exploration with a guided primate walk in search of the Angolan Colobus monkeys (black and white Colobus)! Rangers will tell you approximately where the group is located and the hiking times may vary as the group is travelling continuously looking for food. Be prepared to have a more strenuous hiking!

In the afternoon you can continue your exploration. There are different beautiful trails available and the superb waterfall trail of Gisakura is probably the most rewarding. The hiking time is 2 up to 3 hours and is a very enjoyable hike accessible to everybody! If you missed the Angolan Colobus you can have another try near to the tea factory where another troop is hosted. Overnight at the Guest house of Gisakura. (B-L-D)

*Nyungwe Forest is the only place in Africa where troops of 300 black-and-white colobus monkeys (Angolan Colobus) can be seen jumping in the trees! A spectacular sight!*

**Activities :** Bird Watching, Chimpanzee Trekking, Guided Nature Walks & Hikes.  
**Parks & places :** Nyungwe Forest NP.

### Day 5 : Nyungwe Forest NP - Kibuye

After breakfast you will leave for Kibuye, passing through the green fields of tea plantations before exploring the shores of Lake Kivu. Kibuye which is one of the three resort town on Lake Kivu is the most beautiful. Arrival at Kibuye is foreseen at lunch time. After Nyungwe, most participants will welcome that relaxing moments on the shores of Lake Kivu! Lake Kivu is Bilharzia free! Rest of the day at leisure (B-L-D)

*Lake Kivu is unique: Its deep waters contain an enormous quantity of dissolved gas. There are, in fact, 65 billion cubic metres of methane, in other words the equivalent of 50 million tonnes of petrol lying at the bottom of the lake under 250 m of water. If it were exploited, this energy, veritable manna from heaven, would provide Rwanda with an almost inexhaustible source of energy, freeing it from worry about energy needs linked to its development projects. There is a pilot station for the extraction of methane for energy.*

Parks & places : Lake Kivu

## **Day 6 : Kibuye - Gisenyi (Goma) - Kinigi**

After breakfast, you will have an enjoyable speed-boat trip to Gisenyi. The trip is not only an encounter with local people; fishermen, fishing villages but also with the residents of Idjwi Island (Congo) who are rowing long distances in their dugout canoes to visit the Rwanda markets.

You will be picked up in Gisenyi for lunch and if time allows we make arrangements to cross the border to Goma (Optional). Goma was devastated by the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano. The visit shows the fantastic capabilities of the local population to overcome this natural catastrophe! We drive to Ruhengeri and Kinigi for an overnight at your hotel. (B-L-D)

*Idjwi is an island in Lake Kivu, belonging to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At 40 km in length and with an area of 285 km<sup>2</sup>, it is believed to be the largest inland island in Africa, and the eighth largest in the world. Idjwi is roughly equidistant between the DRC and Rwanda, with 10 to 15 kilometres separating its western shore from the DRC mainland and a similar distance between its eastern shore and the coastline of Rwanda. The island's southern tip, however, lies only 1 kilometre from a promontory of the Rwandan coast.*

*The Nyiragongo volcano (3470 m) erupted on the 17th of January 2002 and destroyed part of Goma town. Most of Goma's 400 000 inhabitants escaped the advancing lava flows crossing the border into neighbouring Rwanda. The eruption destroyed the homes of 120 000 people and caused between 70 and 100 victims.*

Parks & places : Lake Kivu

## **Day 7 : Gorilla Trekking**

After breakfast you will report at the ORTPN headquarters where your driver-guide will accomplish the necessary formalities for you. You will meet your ranger guide(s) for a briefing about the greatest animal experience ever. We will drive you to the slopes of one of the Virunga volcanoes for your trekking.

After the trekking, lunch at your hotel or at Ruhengeri and in the afternoon, if time allows, an excursion to explore the beautiful lakes in the region: Lake Bulera & Ruhondo. An excellent view of the Virunga chain of Volcanoes can be seen while there depending on weather conditions. Overnight at your hotel. (B-L-D)

Activities : Gorilla Trekking

Parks & places : Nyungwe Forest NP.

## **Day 8 : Second gorilla trekking or another activity - Transfer to Kigali**

For a second gorilla trek we propose that you visit one of the groups with a longer hiking time; the Susa group which is located on the slopes of the Karisimbi volcano has more than 35 members and will give you a great sense of achievement!

### **Other activities/options:**

- An excursion to the top of the Bisoke volcano (3.711 m) of which the distinctive feature is a beautiful crater lake! Fantastic views in all directions, lushly forested slopes, shady bamboo forest and an exhilarating climb!

- An excursion to the grave of Dian Fossey and the former Karisoke Research Centre. The excursion will provide excellent background information and this is a wonderful site to see!
  - A visit to the Golden Monkeys: the little-known Golden Monkey (*cercopithecus mitis kandti*) is listed as “endangered”, the newly habituated groups of about 40 individuals are the only ones in Africa. The Kabatwa troop is located not so far from the Park Headquarters and the Musanga troop lives near the Karisimbi volcano and has a much longer walking distance.
- Transfer to Kigali for overnight at your hotel (or departure). (B-L-D)

**Activities :** Gorilla Trekking, Guided Nature Walks & Hikes.  
**Parks & places :** Volcanoes National Park

## Day 9 : Kigali - Kayonza - Akagera NP

You will drive for 3 hours to Akagera NP, via Kayonza to the Eastern part of Rwanda. We will arrive before lunch at the beautiful Akagera Game Lodge which has a swimming pool. Take a swim before lunch. After lunch you will start your exploration with a game drive by visiting the giraffe valley.

*The giraffes of Akagera NP were translocated from Kenya in January 1986. The 2 males and 4 females Masai giraffes were captured near Lake Magadi (Kenya) and transported by plane B-747 from Nairobi to Kigali. The giraffes were first put in an enclosure on the peninsula of Rurama. One night on Christmas 1987 they escaped because the barrier was broken down by elephants. (A ranger died of its wounds when he tried to prevent the elephants). The giraffes crossed the Kiyonza ridges and settled on the plain of Nyamwashama since then also named as the giraffe valley. The first baby giraffe was born in 1988 and the second a year later.*

**Activities :** Bird Watching, Wildlife Viewing  
**Parks & places :** Akagera National Park

## Day 10 : Akagera NP

You can do as much and as little you want, Akagera NP allows you not only to visit this beautiful Park but also to enjoy the Lodge and its astonishing views over Lake Ihema.

After an Early breakfast your exploration starts with a boat trip on Lake Ihema which is a very rewarding for seeing the large number of hippos, the huge Nile crocodiles and many birds. After the boat trip you will continue your exploration along the lakes Kivumba, Hago; Mihindi and Rwanyakizinga. They are the most interesting part of the park especially for birders. You will for your lunch and enjoy a fresh swim at the Lodge. In the late afternoon you will return to the giraffe valley which is usually full of surprises. Overnight at the Akagera Game Lodge.

**Activities :** Bird Watching, Wildlife Viewing  
**Parks & places :** Akagera National Park

## Day 11 : Akagera NP - Kayonza - Kigali

You will wake up early in the morning and leave after breakfast for another day of exploration. This time you will start with a visit to the height of Mutumba, the highest point of the park. You will have a view on all the Akagera lakes and the Karangwe mountains in Tanzania. You will descend to the Lake area where you will have a pic nic lunch on edge of one of the beautiful lakes. In the afternoon you will drive back to the lodge before returning to Kigali where we will drop you at the hotel.

**Activities :** Bird Watching, Wildlife Viewing  
**Parks & places :** Akagera National Park

## Day 12 : Kigali visit and departure

The half day Kigali City trip (option) includes a visit to the Genocide Memorial Centre at Gisozi, which takes a few hours. It's a touching visit! Transfer to Airport for departure. (B-L)

*Genocide Memorials: In Rwanda you will find all over the country Memorials to remember the genocide of 1994. The most important Genocide Memorials are those of Kigali (Gisozi) and Murambi (Gikongoro) where the history of the genocide is explained. A visit to the genocide memorial is for most visitors an emotional event.*

**Parks & places :** Genocide Memorial Centre - Gisozi & others

**Important:** Before you travel please check your Tour Voucher and Arrival Information for the latest joining instructions. This will be sent to you upon receipt of final payment.

**All itineraries are subject to change without prior notice.**

The Parc National des Volcans (PNV) is part of the Virunga Conservation Area and covers more than 125 km<sup>2</sup>. PNV is home of five Virunga volcanoes: Sabyinyo (3.674 m), Gahinga (3.474 m), Bisoke (3711 m), Muhabura (4.127 m), and the Karisimbi, the highest volcano with an altitude of 4.507 m. All five volcanoes are extinct, the active ones are located in Congo. Two of them erupted recently; the Nyiragongo erupted in January 2002 and Nyamulagira in July 2002. Parks & places

### **Safaris featuring this park**

The Virunga ecosystem is composed of 4 major vegetation zones: bamboo (base altitude), Hagenia and Hypericum forest (2600-3300m), Sub-alpine (3300-4000m), and Afro-alpine (4000m+).

The mountain gorillas ( gorilla gorilla beringei ) spend most of their time in the hagenia woodlands and bamboo forests. During the raining season when new bamboo shoots are growing, the gorillas spend more time foraging in the bamboo forests (base altitude). The climb to the natural habitat of bamboo forest and Hagenia woodlands offers fantastic views.

The PNV was Dian Fossey's base a long time ago (She died on the 26th of December 1985), and it is at the Karisoke Research Center that during 18 years she carried out her study on mountain gorillas.

The park was closed for tourism in 1991 when the war broke out and was reopened again in July 1999. The numbers of visitors are increasing every day and the PNV regains its former reputation as the best organized and most popular mountain gorilla sanctuary.

There are 5 gorilla groups habituated for tourism, the Sabinyo group has been divided up in two:

Susa group has more than 38 individuals. Amahoro group has 14 individuals. Sabyinyo - group has 11 individuals. Umubano - group has 8 individuals (break away group of Amahoro) Group 13 has 18 individuals

**Highlights:** Gorilla viewing, a day excursion up to the top of the Mt Sabinyo or a visit to the grave of Dian Fossey on the edges of Mt Sabinyo.

**Distance (travelling time):** Access to the area starts with Ruhengeri a town about 1h30 drive from Kigali and afterwards to Kinigi (14 km from Ruhengeri) which takes another 30 minutes.

**Weather conditions:** Due to the altitude it is generally quite cold, especially during the evenings and nights. Gorilla viewing is possible all the year round.

## **GORILLA RULES**

Eco-tourism is nature-based tourism that meets conservation objectives and favours sustainable development. Gorilla tourism depends largely on the conservation of these magnificent animals. Some rules have been developed to protect the gorillas and the park rangers will brief you before the trekking. Please respect them.

**Only the Park Authorities will assign your gorilla groups.**

**Nyungwe forest is an Albertine Rift montane rainforest.**

The Albertine Rift forms the epicentre of Africa's montane rainforest circle. It is dominated by a series of mountain chains, originating on the Lendu Plateau in northern Uganda and Congo, running south through the Rwenzori mountains, western Rwanda and Burundi, to some isolated massifs on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. The Albertine Rift eco-region is one of Africa's most endemic rich regions. Parks & places

**Safaris featuring this park**

Nyungwe forest received only recently the status of National Park and became the largest protected high-altitude rainforest of East Africa. It was particularly important to protect the forest reserve when you know that the highest population pressures in Africa are to be found within the Albertine Rift and that the forest is the biggest water reservoir for the country.

The highland forest covers 970 km<sup>2</sup> and has a unique habitat. It's the only place where we have seen troops of more than 300 colobus monkeys travelling in the trees. The park has 25 % of the primates of Africa with its 13 recorded primate species. It's a primate nirvana!

Birds: The forest has 300 species of birds with 27 Albertine Rift endemics and 121 forest species. Including the Ruwenzori turaco, Ross's turaco, Grey-cheeked hornbill, Red-throated alethe, Red-breasted sparrow hawk, White-headed wood-hoopoe, Kungwe apalis, Ruwenzori batis, Blue-headed and Regal sunbirds. The flora is particularly rich with 200 species of trees and more than 100 species of orchids! The park has an extensive network of walking trails that leads you through various waterfalls and viewing points. Nyungwe offers scenic views over the forest, lake Kivu and sometimes also the Virunga.

The primate fauna includes: chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), Rwenzori colobus (*colobus angolensis*), Hoest's monkey (*C.l'hoesti*), silver monkey (*c.mitis doggetti*), golden monkey (*C.mitis kandti*), owl-faced monkey (*C.hamlyni*), red-tailed monkey (*C.ascanius*), Den't mona monkey (*C.mona denti*), vervet monkey (*C.aetiops*), olive baboon (*papio anubis*), grey-cheeked mangabey (*Cercocebus albigena*) and three species of bushbaby.

**Akagera NP** is located in the east of Rwanda along the Akagera river which is the natural border with Tanzania. The park was created in 1936 and was once in terms of natural beauty, landscape, scenery and animal life, one of the best national parks. The National Park has been de-gazetted by two-thirds of its original territory due to human pressure.

Wildlife has also been considerably reduced during the war by heavy poaching. The park has still a remarkable selection of birdlife with over 500 bird species in its swamps and wetlands along the Akagera River.

Set at a relatively low altitude on the border with Tanzania, Akagera National Park could scarcely be more different in mood to the breezy cultivated hills that characterise much of Rwanda. Dominated scenically by the labyrinth of swamps and lakes that follow the meandering course of the Akagera River, the most remote source of the Nile, this is archetypal African savannah landscape of tangled acacia woodland interspersed with open grassland.

By the 1960s, the Park formed part of a much larger ecosystem that included Uganda's Kikagati Game Reserve, Lake Mburo National Park, and rangeland areas north to the Katonga River (Uganda). Across the Akagera River to the east, the ecosystem extended into Tanzania's Ibanda and Rumanyika Game Reserves, with corridors of relatively unsettled wood and bushland linking these areas to the Biharamulo and Burigi Game Reserves farther south, between Lake Victoria and the Rwanda border.

Today, the Akagera-Lake Mburo ecosystem is fragmented and its wildlife populations are confined to small, disturbed enclaves. Akagera NP and Lake Mburo NP, which are surrounded by cattle ranches, have been both reduced. Uganda's Katonga WR is also isolated by surrounding villages, and its wildlife populations have been virtually extirpated. On the Tanzania side, human settlements block wildlife corridors to Biharamulo and Burigi. Thus, the protection of Akagera is critically important for the conservation of the remnants of this unique and diverse biotic community.

Camping alongside the picturesque lakes of Akagera is a truly mystical introduction to the wonders of the African bush. Pods of 50 hippopotami grunt and splutter throughout the day, while outsized crocodiles soak up the sun with their vast jaws menacingly agape. Magically, the air is torn apart by the unforgettable high duetting of a pair of fish eagles, asserting their status as the avian monarchs of Africa's waterways. Lining the lakes are some of the continent's densest concentrations of waterbirds, while the connecting marshes are the haunt of the endangered and exquisite papyrus gonolek, and the bizarre shoebill stork - the latter perhaps the most eagerly sought of all African birds.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

- You will have excellent photo opportunities in Rwanda.
- When photographing people we advise you to respect their privacy. Be discreet when taking pictures or ask first. Some will refuse, some will accept and some will ask you for money.
- Special photographic film conditions are applicable to professionals, a non-professional video camera will be allowed during the visit, without additional charge.
- Flash photograph is not permitted when tracking the gorillas!

## WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU?

- Money for your personal expenses: Us Dollars or Euro!
- Outfit with adapted colours for wildlife observation, good walking shoes, rain gear, gloves (nettle stings), a few thick long-sleeve shirts, slippers, sweater for the cool evenings!
- Sun protection: hat, sunglasses, sun cream.
- Mosquito repellent
- Video camera/ photo camera, a 200 mm or longer telephoto lens will be very useful, reserve battery, films (with a few high speed films – 800/1600 ASA).
- Binoculars, if you can. Highly recommended!
- A torch

Note that due to the altitude the mornings, evenings and nights are quite cold. During the trekking you can expect both sun and rainfall (raining season) and we recommend long trousers and long sleeve shirts to avoid nettle stings. Waterproof raingear is essential for your trekking!

## VISA AND INOCULATIONS

Visa: A valid passport is mandatory. Visas are required by all visitors except nationals of the USA, UK, Germany and Canada. Nationals of countries without an embassy can obtain a visa on arrival by prior arrangement with their hosts, who can arrange an entry facility. We will make the necessary arrangements for you.

**Inoculations:** Yellow fever is required! Ask your physician for malaria protection.

**Security:** There are no security problems in Rwanda. After the tragedy of the genocide in 1994, Rwanda has now stabilised and welcomes visitors.

**Safari guide:** Your guide is an experienced person speaking english, french and the local language. He will be your guide from your arrival till your departure.

**Locations:** Ruhengeri: A small town, 150 km from Kigali is giving access to the Parc National des Volcans (Kinigi).

**Kinigi:** The park headquarters are located at Kinigi, 14 km from Ruhengeri.

**Butare:** Rwanda's second city, situated at 135km south of the capital, is the intellectual and cultural heart of the nation Cyangungu, Kibuye and Goma are resort towns located on Lake Kivu.

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