



HIKING

in

Rwanda

The Land of a Thousand Hills

Volcanoes National Park | Congo-Nile Hiking Trail | Nyungwe National Park

Nyanza Cultural Trails | Trail de Akagera | Liberation History Tourism Trail



Where **adventure** begins!

Rwanda's epic scenery, pleasant climate and magnificent wildlife makes the land a remarkable place to explore on foot. Hiking in Rwanda gives you a great opportunity to walk through the country's natural beauty and welcoming villages on unique trails for every experience level, from novices who choose easy walks, to experienced trekkers who prefer physical challenge and expansive views from atop some of the country's highest peaks, all the way from Volcanoes National Park in the north, through the Congo Nile Trail along the fringes of Lake Kivu in the west and down to Nyungwe National Park in the south.

More hiking trails have been developed including the certified Nyanza Cultural Trails in the south of Rwanda and the Liberation History Tourism Trails in the east and north of the country as well as in Kigali.

Hiking in Rwanda can be combined with different adventures like kayaking, canoeing, boat riding, biking, bird watching, camping, visiting landmarks and historical places as well as with community based activities. Depending on one's choice, main trails in Rwanda can be connected.

Rwanda is the first country in Africa with trails certified by the German Hiking Institute (Deutsches Wanderinstitut). This green country known for its cleanliness and safety, was ranked as the 9th safest country for tourists in the world and the 1st in Africa by the World Economic Forum report of 2017. All of this increasingly makes the country a destination of choice for international travelers.

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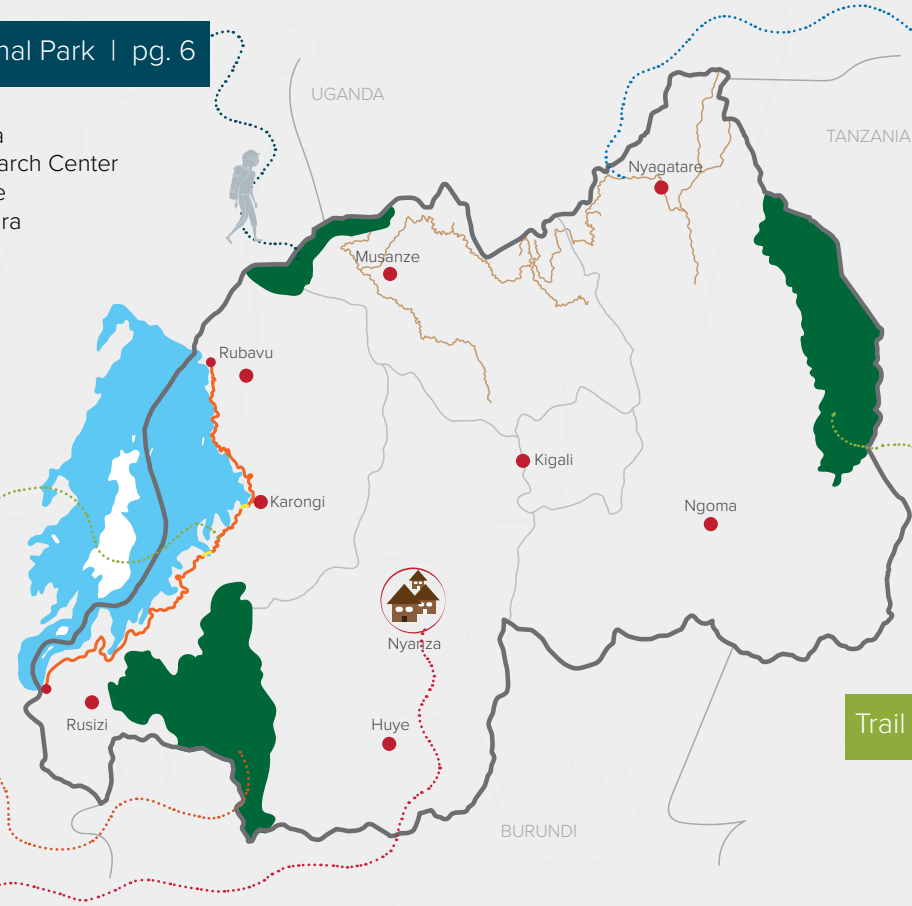
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VOLCANOES

NATIONAL PARK



Hiking in the Volcanoes National Park

The Volcanoes National Park comprises of a range of six extinct and three active volcanoes form the Virunga Massif, spanning altitudes from 2,400m to 4,507m.

The Volcanoes National Park protects the Rwandan sector, with the other slopes falling within Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The park is best known for tracking gorillas but there is plenty more to see and do and hiking is one of the astounding activities to be done.

Classification:

- Volcanoes National Park hikes are in a protected area.
- Animals live in their natural habitat.
- Guide and permit are needed.

Level:

Easy  | Medium  | Challenging 

Mount Muhabura



Starting point: Nyagahinga

Duration: 8 hours (x2)

Length: 9 km (x2)

Mount Muhabura is the second highest of the Rwandan Virunga Volcanoes, bordering Rwanda and Uganda, and the steepest of all. The Mount Muhabura hike is the most demanding hike up to 4,127m and especially since hikers are required to complete the hike in a day. For those who make it all the way up to the top, a breathtaking scenery will reward their challenging climb.

Mount Gahinga



Starting point: Gatabi Parking

Duration: 5 hours (x2)

Length: 5 km (x2)

On top of the famous mountain gorillas, Gahinga is also home to several other species of animals and birds that form part of the Mount Gahinga ecosystem. The equally endangered golden monkeys are an example of that ecosystem.

Mount Bisoke



Starting point: Bisoke Parking

Duration: 5 hours (x2)

Length: 6.5 km (x2)

For those keen to summit Mount Bisoke, a crater lake awaits at the top, which lies at 3,700m. This trail takes anything from five hours to a whole day.



Find your perfect trail!

Mount Karisimbi



Starting point: Bisoke Parking

Duration: 2 days

Length: 12 km (x2)

'Karisimbi', which translates as white shell, refers to the frequently white-capped cloud cover at the summit. At 4,507m it is a strenuous yet rewarding hike, which takes two days, camping along the way.

As this is the territory of gorillas, other primates and many bird species, hikers could be blessed with a chance of meeting them along the way.

Karisoke Research Center



Starting point: Bisoke Parking

Duration: 3 hours

In the saddle area between Mount Karisimbi and Mount Bisoke is the Karisoke Research Centre, founded by Dian Fossey in 1967, as well as the site of her grave.

The walk up takes about an hour to an hour and a half, starting with a drive from the park headquarters 30 minutes away.



Plan your Volcanoes National Park hike:

Tourism services can be booked online via:
www.irembo.gov.rw

You can also book directly with your agent or with Rwanda Tour and Travel Association members, a comprehensive list and contact details are available at:
www.rtta.rw

For more info please contact:
info@rdb.rw
or visit: www.visitrwanda.com



CONGO-NILE HIKING TRAIL



Hiking the Congo-Nile Trail

Alongside Lake Kivu, the Congo-Nile Hiking Trail is popular with both cyclists and hikers, traversing rainforests, bracken fields and bamboo forests.

The hiking trail takes 10 days to complete on foot combined with some short boat rides. It is possible to hike in single sections. The trail following mainly the footpaths of the local people is a wonderful way to soak up daily life in traditional villages, very close to nature and experience Rwanda up-close.

With interesting community based tourism activities, coffee-washing stations, tea plantations, big towns, dozens of villages, and innumerable beaches, coves, waterfalls, valleys and vistas, the winding path of the Congo-Nile Hiking Trail offers some of the finest hiking to be had anywhere in east and central Africa.

Winding its way along the fringes of the lake via the peaks of Rwanda's green hills, this hikers' dream is as

challenging as it is rewarding. With a peak elevation of 2,630m, it's a serious workout to boot. There are camp sites along the route, or guest-houses in the towns for those after a bit more comfort. Refreshments are available along the route supplied by small shops. Active tourists can discover the coastal waters on kayaking tours and boat rides and visit the many islands of Lake Kivu. The Trail can be walked from both directions (North to South/ South to North).

Hikers are advised to book ahead for accommodation facilities and /or meals.

Classification:

- Hiking through the community.
- No permit needed.
- You can take a guide if you prefer.
- No dangerous wild animals.

Level:

Easy  | Medium  | Challenging 



Rubavu - Cyimbiri



Starting point: BRALIRWA Brewery Ltd.

Duration: 5 hours

Length: 16.5 km

The 16.5 km hike starts from Rubavu, the largest beach town of Rwanda. The town has a range of accommodations from budget guest houses to four star accommodations and ends at Cyimbiri Guest House located on the shores of the lake and mainly by coffee estates and other green plantations. In the middle of this stage, tourists can choose to do different community based activities from traditional pottery, traditional healing and music to coffee and tea experiences.

Accommodation:

Cyimbiri Guest House (with possibility to camp).

Community Based Tourism Activities:

You can explore Rwanda up-close with its local community based tourism activities ranging from spending a day with tea farmers on their plantation and joining the singing fishermen at dusk to catch 'Isambaza' fish to enhancing your knowledge on traditional healing plants, amongst others.

For more information visit:

<http://kivubelt.travel> or contact the Destination Management Unit directly via email:

kivudmu@rwandatourismchamber.org

Cyimbiri - Kinunu



Starting point: Cyimbiri Guest House

Duration: 4 hours

Length: 13.4 km

Mainly near or along the Lake Kivu and passing through small villages and harbours, the 13.4 km from Cyimbiri to Kinunu starts with the traditional healing trail and continues with the charming views of the amazing landscapes. In the middle of this stage, tourists also have opportunities to experience some community based tourism products including the beekeeping experience, coffee experience as well as handcrafting experiences with a local women cooperative.

Accommodation:

Kinunu Guest House
Rushel Kivu lodge



Kinunu - Bumba



Starting point: Kinunu Center

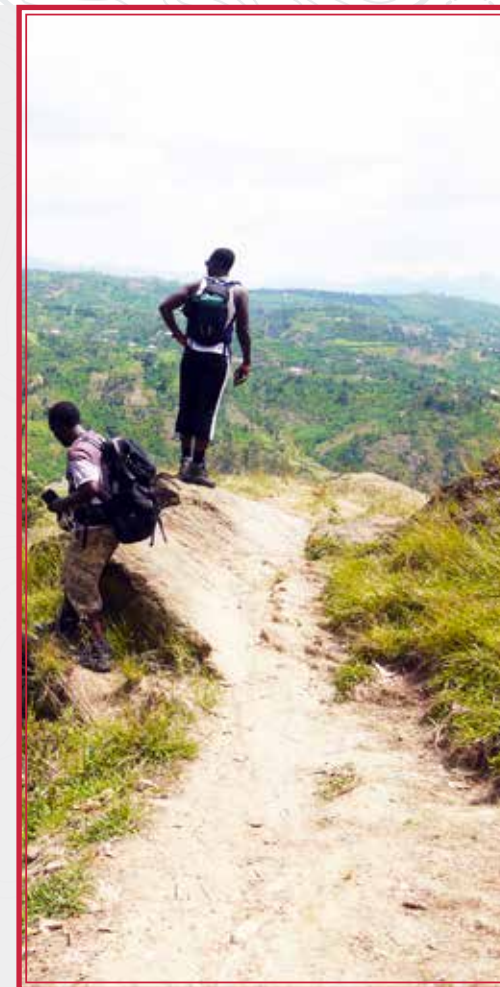
Duration: 7 hours

Length: 24 km

This challenging but walkable stage of 24 km gives hikers an opportunity to walk around rolling hills and have a great view of the clear water of the Lake Kivu. Different agro-tourism activities are available for those who prefer to spend some time with the local communities in their daily activities. The trail is high above the lake providing amazing views of the lake and into the valley of the Koko-River. It has some steep and challenging parts.

Accommodation:

Bumba Base Camp
Dian Fossey Hotel



Bumba - Karongi



Starting point: Bumba Base Camp

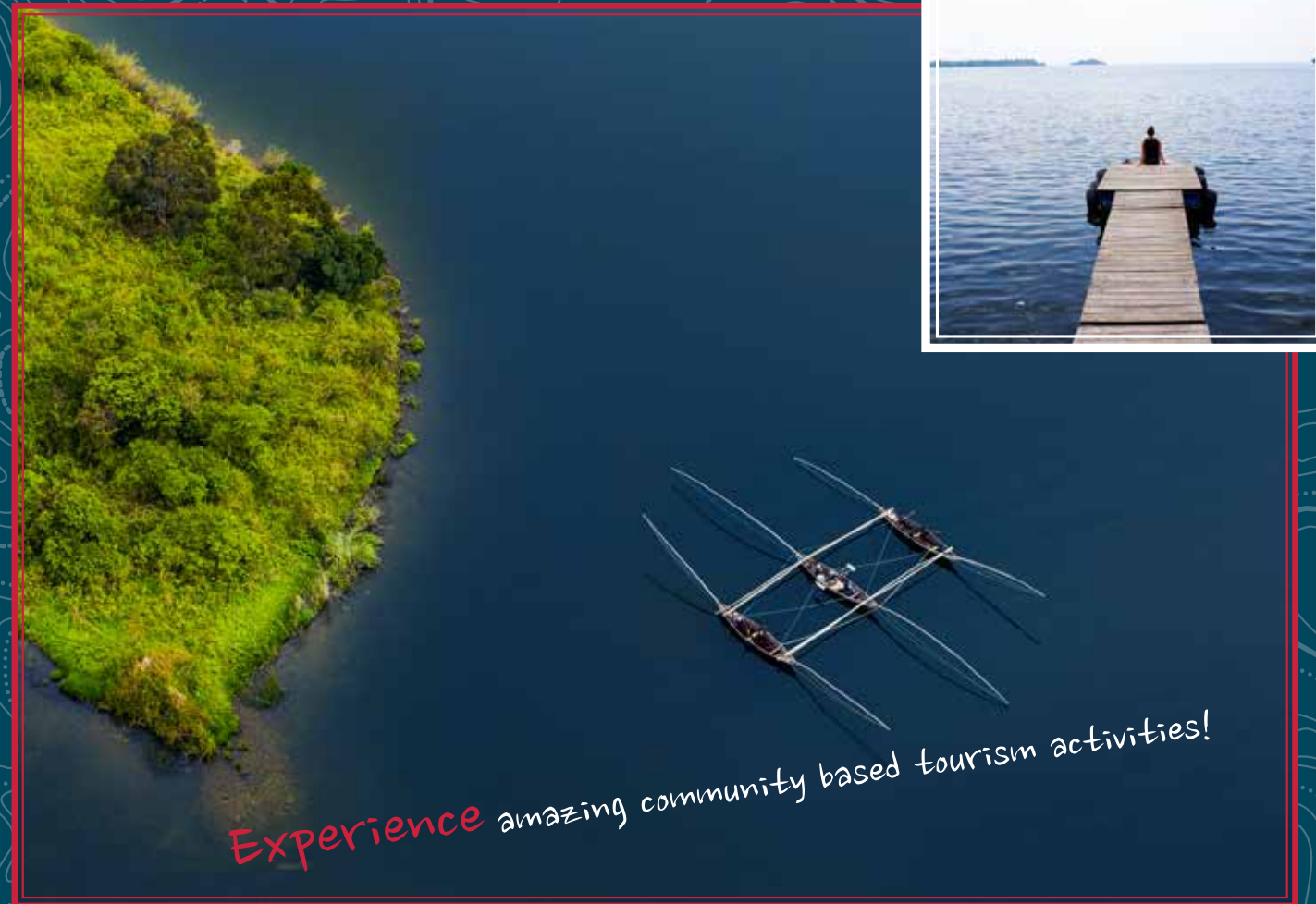
Duration: 5 hours

Length: 15.9 km

This 15.9 km is the last stage of the northern part of the Congo-Nile Hiking Trail starting from Bumba to Karongi Town. Before entering the calm town of Karongi, hikers take a short boat trip to Home Saint Jean, one of the tens of accommodations available in the town. In Karongi, tourists do not sleep without joining local fishermen for the famous night fishing experience in the lake. There are also other community based tourism activities including the swimming cows, sorghum and silkworms' experiences as well as boat rides to different hilly islands available in Lake Kivu. Cross Muregeya-River on the suspension bridge, then follow small the footpaths of the local people up and down over some hills, down to the lake and up again. Pass banana forests and the rich diversity of landscapes. There is one boat passage which must be booked/announced in advance. Your local guide or the previous accommodation can help you book.

Accommodation:

The town offers different option for accommodation ranging from small guest houses to big hotels.



Experience amazing community based tourism activities!

Karongi - Mugonero



Starting point: Karongi Hospital roundabout

Duration: 6 hours

Length: 19.6 km

The 19.6 km stage gives remarkable views of Lake Kivu and its beautiful islands. From the trail, you can see the fascinating Kivu Belt Road twisting on the shores of the lake. The stage ends at Mugonero Orphanage, where tourists can stay.

For those who like challenging themselves and want to extend their hiking days, they might choose to hike up Mount Karongi to the Gisovu Tea plantations and go to the Nyungwe National Park or re-join the Congo-Nile Hiking Trail the next day. Gisovu offers accommodation facility and tea experience in the middle of tea plantations.



Mugonero - Karengera



Starting point: L'Esperance Mugonero

Duration: 7 hours

Length: 22.5 km

This long but amazing trail of 22.5 km offers you beautiful footpaths through hills, valleys and fields. There are several points of sight to the lake and the Kivu Belt road. The hike ends at Karengera High School. Starting with the boat trip across Mugonero Bay, climb up small paths to a hill 1,800m high (350m above lake level) overlooking the lake, pass a valley with rice fields, follow a long and small valley framed by steep hills before climbing up through fields and small forests to Karengera.

There is one boat passage which must be booked/announced in advance. Your local guide or the previous accommodation can help you book.



Karengera - Kumbya



Starting point: Karengera High School

Duration: 4 hours

Length: 14.7 km

From Karengera, this stage of 14.7 km mainly through rice fields leads you to Kumbya the hidden gem that is a lovely serene and peaceful retreat center on a little peninsula on Lake Kivu secluded away from the rest of Rwanda. This peninsula with a small forest of native trees is a birder's paradise and offers two options for accommodation on the shores of the lake, either inside the retreat center or at the Kumbya Kivu Life Eco Lodge. Cross the rice fields of Kilimbi-River on small dams, jump over small ditches, watch the herons on the fields and the monkeys near Kumbya.

Accommodation:

Kumbya Retreat Centre

Kumbya Kivu Life Eco lodge



Kumbya - Ishara



Starting point: Kumbya peninsula entrance

Duration: 3 hours

Length: 13 km

This 13 km trail starts with a very beautiful footpath along the banks of the lake, continues through several villages where you come across charming smiles and greetings from the rural communities along the trail and ends with a walk through the rice fields of Kamiranzovu Valley. Ishara Beach Hotel in Nyamasheke is the main accommodation after this stage. However, one can choose to stay in other available guest houses in Nyamasheke. The trail follows the path on the shores of Karundura River.

Accommodation:

Ishara Beach Hotel in Nyamasheke

Guest houses available in Nyamasheke Town



Ishara - Shangi



Starting point: Ishara Beach Hotel

Duration: 7 hours

Length: 24 km

Laying very close to the lake and surrounded by nature, this 24 km stage is also a great trek through beautiful vegetations, including eucalyptus trees. The stage is mainly on narrow footpaths passing through villages and fields. It also offers astonishing lake views with long passages on the coastal path of the Lake Kivu. The stage ends at Shangi Catholic Church where tourists stay at St. Martin Parish in the priests 'compound.

In Shangi, you can visit one of the historical landmarks "Richard Kandt House". For more info about this German explorer and first colonial governor of Rwanda, please download the "RICHARD KANDT TRAIL" App.

Accommodation:

St. Martin Parish



Shangi - Kamembe



Starting point: Shangi Catholic Church

Duration: 5 hours

Length: 18.3 km

The last stage of the Congo-Nile Hiking Trail stretches for 18.3 km from Shangi to Kamembe Town of Rusizi District. This big town on the shores of the lake Kivu and only approximately an hour drive from Nyungwe National Park, is home to Kamembe Airport, one of the two current operating Airports in Rwanda. The town offers different option for accommodation ranging from small guest houses to big hotels. Tourists can have optional community based tourism activities including night fishing, boat rides to the inhabited islands and other cultural experiences.

Accommodation:

The town offers different option for accommodation ranging from small guest houses to big hotels.



NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK



Hiking in Nyungwe National Park

Located in the south west, Nyungwe's steep landscape makes it an ideal destination for hikers, whether novice or experienced, as the park boasts an extensive network of scenic hiking trails.

One of the oldest rainforests in Africa, Nyungwe is rich in biodiversity and spectacularly beautiful. The mountainous region is teeming with wildlife, including a small population of chimpanzees as well as 12 other species of primate, including the L'Hoest's monkey endemic to the Albertine Rift. Nyungwe has 1,068 plant species and 140 orchids, 322 birds' species including Red-collared Babbler and 29 other Albertine Rift Endemic species.

Butterflies are also a common sight, with at least 120 species. Nyungwe also has 75 known mammals such as the cerval cat, mongoose, Congo clawless otter and leopard to name but a few.

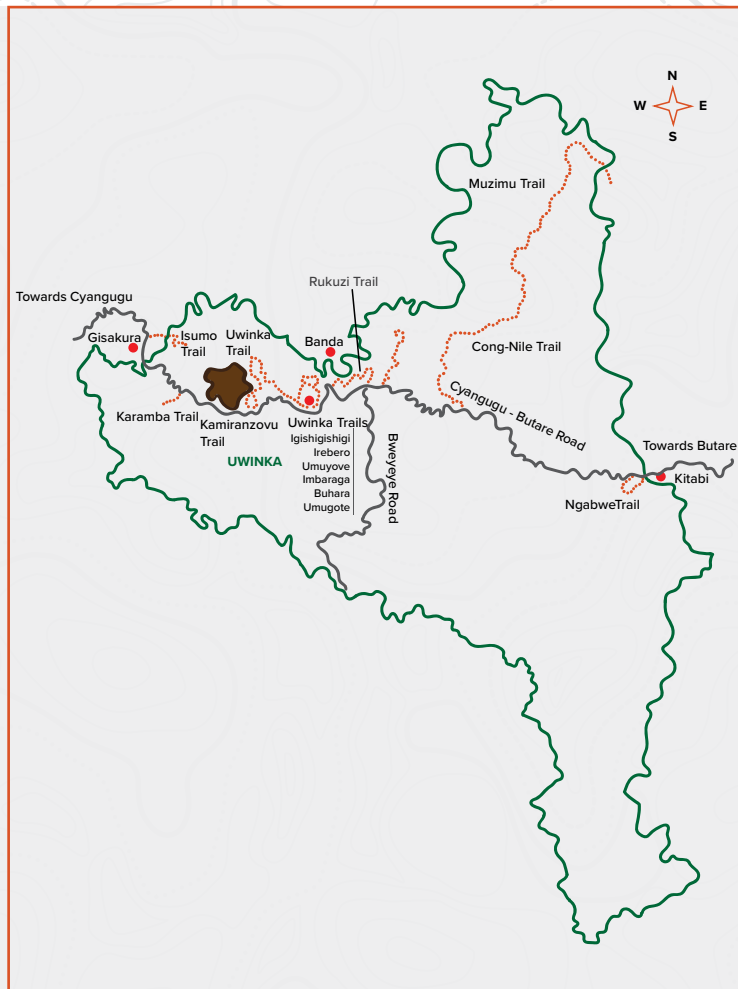
Nyungwe is also known for its Canopy Walk suspension bridge. With more than 12 hiking trails, visitors can choose to sample the delights of the forest or indulge themselves for a week or more in one of Africa's most stunning forests.

Classification:

- All Nyungwe hikes are classified as hiking in protected area/National Park.
- Animals live in their natural habitat.
- Guide and permit are needed.

Level:

Easy  | Medium  | Challenging 



Igishigishigi Trail



Starting point: Uwinka Visitors Center

Duration: 2 hours

Length: 2.1 km

A comfortable trek for novices, this 2.1 km hike will amaze you with its majestic views of the Canopy Walkway and dazzling wildflowers. The Igishigishigi Trail is named after the giant tree ferns which are dotted along the trail. It can also be combined with the longer Imbaraga or Umuyove Trails.

Karamba Trail



Starting point: Karamba Main-Road

Duration: 3 hours

Length: 6 km

Another relatively easy hike, the Karamba Trail is 6 km long and located on the former site of a gold mine, market and army camp. The trail is considered one of the best spots for birding in Nyungwe as it is flanked by numerous fern trees.

Umugote Trail



Starting point: Uwinka Visitors Center

Duration: 3 hours

Length: 3.6 km

This 3.6 km hike provides marvelous views of numerous ridges, rainforests, stunningly beautiful flowers and on a clear day, the Kibira National Park in Burundi. The trail is also a prime location for primate viewing and birding.

Umuyove Trail



Starting point: Uwinka Visitors Center

Duration: 3.5 hours

Length: 5.5 km

Also known as the Mahogany Trail, visitors relax by a waterfall, take a stroll under some of the park's tallest trees and savour the scent of aromatic leaves during this trek. With a distance of 5.5 km, the Umuyove Trail provides access to several side trails used for chimpanzee viewing.

Uwinka Trail



Starting point: Uwinka Visitors Center

Duration: 8 hours

Length: 17.8 km

Although considered a difficult hike, this 17.8 km trail takes hikers through rather lovely ravines and is the perfect place to listen to early morning bird calls.

Irebero Trail

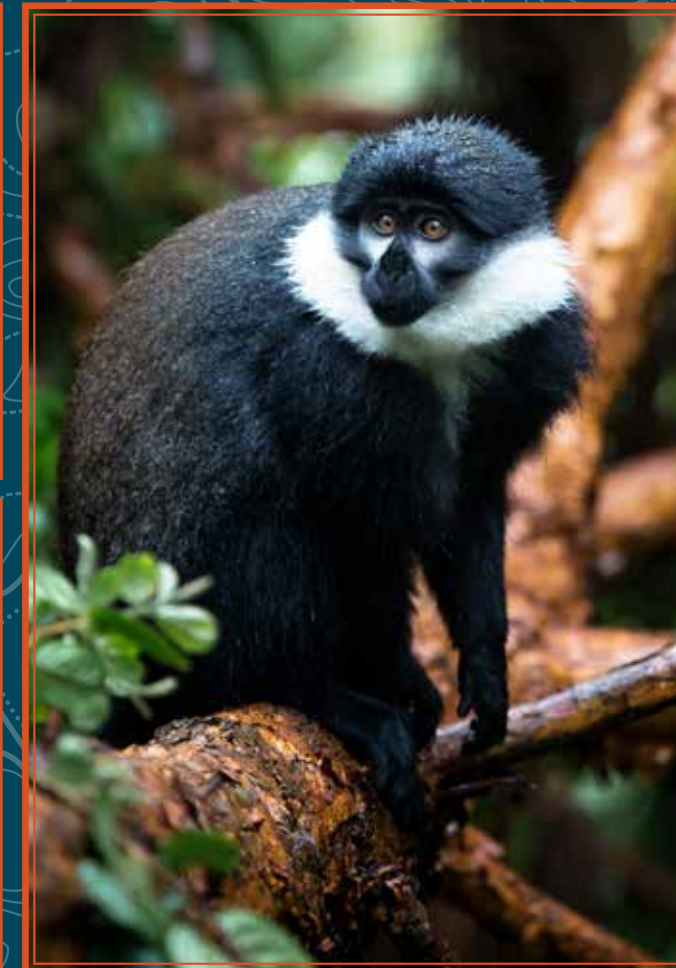


Starting point: Uwinka Visitors Center

Duration: 3 hours

Length: 3.4 km

This 3.4 km trail loops around two of the highest peaks in the park and provides views of Lake Kivu in Rwanda.



Imbaraga Trail



Starting point: Uwinka Visitors Center

Duration: 6 hours

Length: 10 km

Geared toward experienced hikers, the trail rewards hikers with the sight of four scenic waterfalls and any of them will be refreshing after trekking a little less than 10 km.

Bigugu Trail



Starting point: Nyabishwati

Duration: 6 hours

Length: 13.2 km

The highest peak in the park, this 13.2 km trail offers incredible flora and on a clear day views of Lake Kivu as well as hills and islands belonging to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Isumo Trail



Starting point: Gisakura office

Duration: 4 hours

Length: 10.6 km

This trail 10.6 km takes hikers through verdant tea fields, a steep rainforest ravines and to top it off, the biggest waterfall in the Nyungwe National Park.



Kamiranzovu Trail



Starting point: Kamiranzovu

Duration: 3 hours

Length: 6 km

Water enthusiasts will love this 6 km trail as it features the park's largest wetland, an ancient swamp that gives birth to Nyungwe National Park's brilliant waterfalls.

Muzimu Trail



Starting point: Gisovu Ranger Post

Duration: 3.5 hours

Length: 5.2 km

A relatively easy hike in the remote north-eastern part of Rwanda takes hikers through pine and eucalyptus forests on a distance of 5.2 km. On this trail, you encounter many bird species and also get perfect views of the Lake Kivu and Virunga Volcanoes on a clear day.

Ngabwe Trail



Starting point: Kitabi Center

Duration: 3 hours

Length: 4.7 km

Two paths of 4.7 km lead hikers to the summit of mountain Ngabwe, which is a lovely picnic and camping site.

Rukuzi Trail



Starting point: Uwinka Visitors Center

Duration: 5 hours

Length: 9 km

This exhilarating 9 km hike provides outstanding chimpanzee spotting locations as well as views of Banda Village, from where children's voices carry up the mountainside.



Plan your Nyungwe National Park hike:

Tourism services can be booked online via:
www.irembo.gov.rw

You can also book directly with your agent or with Rwanda Tour and Travel Association members, a comprehensive list and contact details are available at:
www.rtta.rw

For more info please contact: info@rdb.rw
or visit: www.visitrwanda.com

NYANZA

CULTURAL TRAILS



Nyanza Cultural Trails

Nyanza City, the historic capital of the Kingdom of Rwanda has much to offer to hikers. Charming and beautiful hilly landscapes surround the city, and hikers can have an authentic experience of traditional rural life in small communities that mainly live from agriculture and livestock breeding, without being staged for visitors.

For a long time, the Rwandan monarchy was mobile, moving the court between various locations. When it eventually settled in one place, Nyanza was the obvious choice and became the capital of the kingdom of Rwanda.

The city has a relatively good tourist infrastructure combined with museums and interesting facilities around Rwanda's royal history. The combination of these factors makes Nyanza a region of interest for (international) tourists.

Nyanza has three existing hiking trails and four others are under development that have an attractive trail format with great variety, as well as impressive nature and culture namely the Royal Trail, the Big View Trail and Gatagara Trail. They all start in the centre of Nyanza, and are connected to quality accommodation and gastronomy.

Classification:

- Hiking through the community.
- No permit needed.
- You can take a guide if you prefer.
- No dangerous wild animals.

Level:

Easy  | Medium  | Challenging 



Leaflet | Map data © OpenStreetMap and contributor CC-BYSA

The Royal Trail



Starting point: Heritage Hotel

Duration: 3.5 hours

Length: 10 km



Recently certified, the main trail among the Nyanza Cultural Trails is the Royal trail. The 'Royal Trail' is a 10 km cultural route at the European premium level with a maximum variety.

The 'Royal Trail' is a unique, outstanding trail in Africa. On the 10 km route, hikers experience, in a compact manner, a combination of history, culture and Rwandan rural life. This trail combines the former Royal Palace, the National Art Gallery, built in 1959 by Robert Quintett for King Matura III Rudahigwa; the former King's Palace built in 1932; replicas of historic royal palace; the Ankole-cattle-breeding shop; bistro and park; mausoleum of the Kings of Rwanda and Christ-Church built by Belgium missionaries in 1935.



Immerse yourself in culture!

The Big View Trail



Starting point: Heritage Hotel

Duration: 3 hours

Length: 8 km



The 'Big View' trail is an 8 km long trail that leads from Nyanza to Mount Remera. It extends the experience of the premium trails in Nyanza with impressive views from Mount Remera into the surrounding countryside.

The trail leads around the top of the hill, so that hikers can enjoy a 360-degree panoramic view over more than 50 km. For the first kilometre, the route runs parallel to the Royal Trail, however, at the beautiful small lake Nyamagana, the route of the Big View Trail branches off to the right and leads to the mountain community path between houses and agricultural land.



Leaflet | Map data © OpenStreetMap and contributor CC-BYSA

The Gatagara Trail



Starting point: Heritage Hotel

Duration: 4.5 hours

Length: 15 km

The Gatagara trail is a 15 km long trail that passes through a long and wide valley without communities. The valley is characterised by small-scale agriculture with horticulture and livestock in individual farms.

The trail offers a mix of wide dirt roads and narrow paths leading through agricultural land, with numerous intermediate views. Half way there is the largest facility for persons with disabilities in East Africa with workshops, schools, hospitals, homes and a church, as well as a pottery shop and a gastronomy open seven days a week. This facility offers an ideal resting place. The trail is a very quiet path with a relaxing effect.



Trail de AKAGERA



Trail de Akagera

The Trail de Akagera adventure expedition traverses one of Africa's largest protected wetland and the last remaining refuge for savannah-adapted species in Rwanda - the Akagera National Park - over a period of either five or seven nights.

The shorter option includes a three-night guided Primitive Trail covering approximately 40 km (south to north) of Akagera's inspiring landscape, while the five-night guided Primitive trails covers 60 km, with a night at a fully catered tented camp on either end.

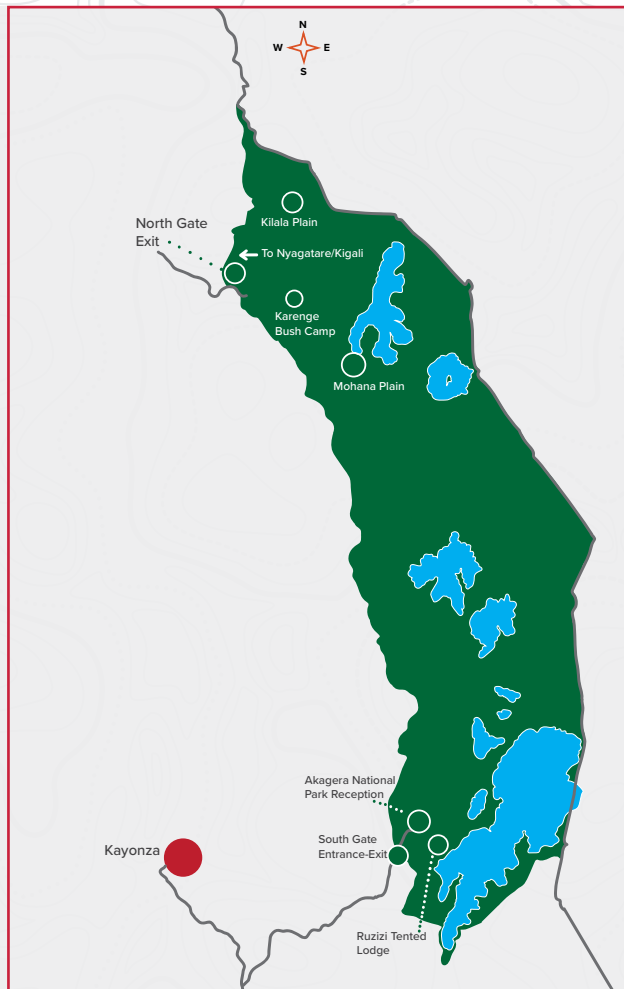
There are only 12 set-departures per year (during August, September and October), which is aligned with the best season to appreciate the intrinsic scenic and wilderness qualities of this spectacular Park in Rwanda. There is a maximum of 8 participants per trail. The small group size allows excellent opportunities for solitude and silence as well as the reflection that this brings.

Trail Equipment Includes: Backpack, ground sheet, sleeping mattress, sleeping bag, sleeping bag liner, pillow, head torch, cutlery, cooking pot, bowl, mug, dry bags, water bottles, Kelly Kettles, mosquito net (& pegs), bivy bag, toilet paper & matches.

Trail Equipment Excludes: Quick-dry towel, Personal toiletries, insect repellent, hat, sunscreen, hiking shoes, sandals, binoculars (personal equipment), light-weight poncho.

Plan your Trail de Akagera adventure expedition:

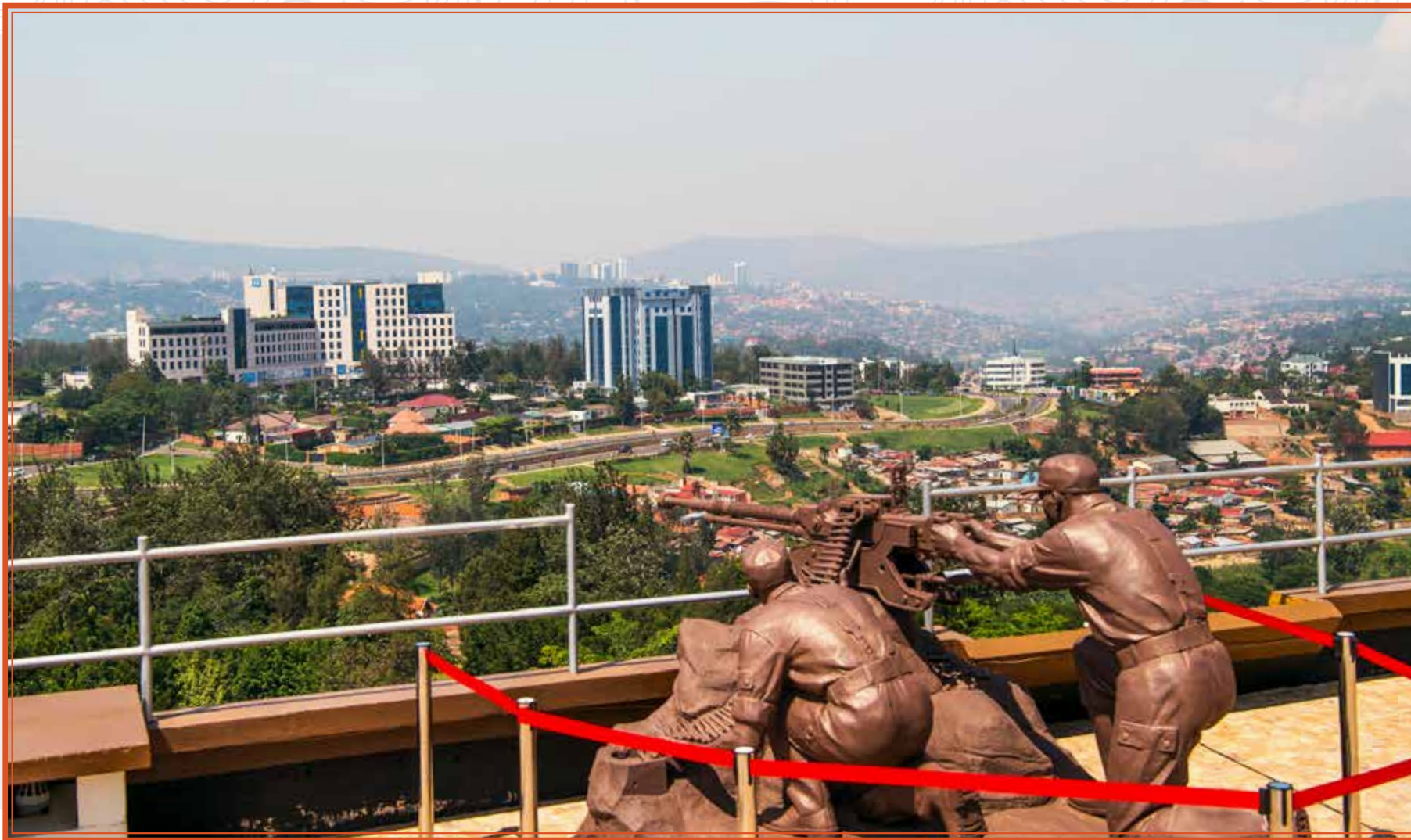
For more information please visit
www.africatrailscompany.com
 or contact: info@africatrailscompany.com



Experience guided Primitive Trails through Africa's wild spaces!

LIBERATION

History Tourism Trail



Liberation History Tourism Trail

The 120 km Liberation History Tourism Trail is a new tourism product consisting of a collection of sites and hiking trails in 29 sites in six districts of the country that were significant in the War on National Liberation that commenced on 1st October 1990 and ended on 4th July 1994.



Travel Information

What to prepare for your hiking trip to Rwanda?

- Long Sleeved Shirts and long trousers.
- Waterproof sturdy hiking boots
- Sturdy gloves
- Rain jacket/poncho
- Hat
- Gaiters
- Insect Repellent
- A warm jacket

General information

For general information about visiting Rwanda please visit:
<https://www.visitrwanda.com/practical-information/>
 or contact: info@rdb.rw

For visa application and requirements please visit:
www.migration.gov.rw
 or contact : info@migration.gov.rw



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As at:

Kigali, Rwanda | 2020

An aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest covering rolling hills and mountains in Rwanda. The forest is a mix of green and yellow-green, suggesting a diverse ecosystem. The mountains in the background are covered in a thick canopy of trees, and the sky is a pale, overcast blue.

**VISIT
RWANDA**

www.visitrwanda.com