

Travel Tips

INTO THE WILD - RWANDA GORILLAS EXTENSION

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

****Please check your own country's international travel advice as well as the airline requirements before travel.****

****IMPORTANT - As our Rwanda tours also travel into Kenya, please ensure you also check the requirements for entry to Kenya, as they differ to those for Rwanda.**

US guests please see the Travel State website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Rwanda.html>

PASSPORTS

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months beyond the period of stay. It is advised to have 1 blank page in your passport. Please be sure to fill out the "Emergency Next of Kin" section in your passport.

VISAS

Visas are required to enter Rwanda. Citizens of the UK, US, Canada, Australia, and most European countries may enter Rwanda for up to 30 days for tourist purposes and can purchase visas on arrival at Kigali International Airport for \$50 USD per person, payable in cash or by card. Other nationalities must check visa entry requirements before departure. Ensure you have sufficient funds and a return airline ticket. You can check if you need a visa to visit Rwanda by visiting the Travisa website.
<https://www.travisa.com/>

****All nationalities must check the visa entry requirements before your departure.**

Hotel details for Visa applications

MOUNTAIN GORILLA VIEW

Center of Reservations, KG 9 Avenue, Nyarutarama, Kigali, Rwanda.

Tel : +250 788305708

Email : info@3bhotels.com

www.3bhotels.comKigali

SERENA HOTEL KIGALI

KN 3 Ave, Kigali, Rwanda

Tel : +250 788 184 500

www.serenahotels.com/serenakigali/default-en.html

GORILLA PERMIT

At the time of writing a payment of \$1,500 per visit is required on booking for the Gorilla Permit. The payment as well as copies of passport are required at the time of booking. There are only a small, limited number of permits available per day, therefore the Rwanda extension is subject to availability and not guaranteed.

N.B. Please note, visa and entry requirements, regulations and restrictions can vary on a regular basis. Please ensure you check in good time prior to travel the current requirements applicable to you.

Travel Insurance

All passengers must have valid travel insurance before traveling, including health and cancellation insurance. Ensure all pre-existing medical conditions are declared to the insurer. Provide the details of your insurance to The Big Journey Company at least 6 weeks before your departure date by emailing info@thebigjourneycompany.com. Take note of important information such as the insurer's 24-hour emergency number and your policy number.

Medical Conditions and Personal Medication

Please advise us prior to travel if you have any medical conditions requiring special attention during your trip. If you have a

specific medical condition, it is wise to carry the relevant doctor's prescription with you.

Important:

Pack a sufficient supply of any medications you are taking, copies of the prescriptions and the telephone/fax numbers of your doctor.

Please note, some countries require that prescription drugs be carried in their original container, with the label clearly visible. In the event of you losing your medication, a qualified pharmacist should be able to source a replacement.

Travelling with CPAP or other Medical Machines:

If you travel with CPAP or other medical machines, inform The Big Journey Company early and check you have the correct electrical and voltage adapters. Confirm with your airline that they allow your device as additional hand luggage. Carry a letter from your medical practitioner prescribing its use and details of your machine for repairs or replacements. Consult your medical practitioner about using tap or bottled water if distilled water is unavailable. Inform The Big Journey Company at least two weeks ahead of travel if you require distilled or ionized water; there will be an additional charge.

*Please note, if you require distilled or ionised water, you must inform The Big Journey Company of this at least two weeks ahead of travel, so we are able to make preparations with our ground agents. There will be an additional charge for this.

LUGGAGE

What to Pack and Wear:

Please watch our video "What's in my bag" for advice on what to pack for this trip: <https://youtu.be/clUXbjs6I2E>

As you will expect, going on safari is dry and dusty and the temperature likely to be anywhere from 20-32°C. Pack light comfortable clothing e.g. vests/t-shirts, shorts/light trousers for the daytime. Some of the game drives depart early in morning when temperatures are slightly cooler, so please bring a jumper/fleece or jacket. There is no dress code, but in the evenings, it is a good idea to wear long tops and trousers to reduce insect bites. Feel free to include a smart-casual outfit for dinner if you wish, however there is no pressure to follow a dress code. Comfortable footwear is recommended. As there is not much walking, a pair of sandals with a thick sole should be sufficient. There are pools at the lodges whilst on safari, so make sure you pack your swimwear.

For gorilla trekking you are able to hire waterproofs and hiking gaiters in Rwanda, though you might prefer to bring your own with you. It is essential that you have a good pair of worn-in, comfortable hiking shoes with ankle support and good grip/tread. A small backpack to carry your water, camera etc is also recommended.

Obviously, we can't give advice on any medication but please ensure you are prepared for any minor ailments that may occur whilst you are away as pharmacies are few and far between. If you need any assistance with storage conditions for medication, do let us know. Don't forget your suntan lotion.

Luggage Allowances

International airlines are often strict about the size and weight of checked in baggage and carry-on luggage. Prior to your departure, please contact your airline or visit their website for specific luggage requirements, as size and weight limitations may vary according to the airline and destination.

LANGUAGE

Rwanda has four official languages – Kinyarwanda, English, French and Swahili. The main language of Rwanda is Kinyarwanda, with English and French serving as second languages for most of the population.

WEATHER

Rwanda has a temperate, tropical climate. Temperatures in Rwanda are lower other equatorial countries due to its high elevation. Kigali has a typical daily temperature range between 12-27°C (54-81°F), which does not vary much throughout the year.

ELECTRICITY

In Rwanda, the standard voltage is 230V and the frequency is 50Hz. You will need a European plug adapter, and/or converter depending on which electrical appliances you bring with you.

MOBILES & INTERNET COMMUNICATION

Mobile coverage is widely available across Rwanda, be sure to check with your mobile provider for coverage and rates, as data roaming can be extremely expensive.

MONEY

Currency:

The currency of Rwanda is the Rwandan franc (RFR). Credit cards are increasingly accepted at mid-high range establishments, but it is advisable to carry money in cash with you as well. ATMs are widely available in cities, but not so in smaller villages. They have often run out of money and do not always accept foreign cards.

Visa and Mastercard are the most widely accepted credit cards however many places do not accept cards such as Diners Club or American Express. If you intend to use any of your debit or credit cards whilst away, please make sure that you contact your bank before you leave to inform them that you will be travelling in order not to cause any problems using your cards or whilst on the trip.

Banks in Kigali can exchange US dollars or Euros for Rwandan Francs, but it can be time consuming and it is advised to use a bureau de change instead, where rates are often better. However, many establishments will also allow payments in US dollars. Please bring crisp, clean notes, issued after 2008 as older, torn or dirty notes will not be accepted. Travellers cheques are not accepted.

Gratuities:

After feedback from previous guests, we offer a group tipping package for this tour, more information on this will be shared in the 'Pre-Tour Emails'.

WATER

In Rwanda, never drink tap water unless it has been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected (such as with iodine tablets). Do not drink from streams, rivers and lakes and it is best to avoid drinking from pumps and wells – as animal presence can still contaminate supplies. Bottled water can be bought at hotels, supermarkets, kiosks and many shops.

SAFETY & SECURITY

As visitors, tourists may be more vulnerable to petty crimes like pickpocketing and scams, so we recommend staying aware and taking simple precautions.

RELIGION

Rwanda is mostly Christianity, with over 40% of the population belonging to the Catholic Church and almost 40% to the Protestant Church.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Rwanda offers photo opportunities one after another. You will return with many photos that can never be repeated. Remember to pack your camera, along with the charger, spare batteries and a spare memory card!

SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR WALKING TOURS

Gorilla Trekking in The Parc National De Volcans

In order to see the gorillas in the Parc National de Volcans, you will need to trek through the park to get to them. The day in the park will start with a very early morning transfer to the Park Office for trekking formalities before you begin.

Groups are assigned a gorilla group that they will go and observe. Due to the vast size of the park and the wild nature of the animals who live there, treks vary in duration depending on which gorilla group you are assigned to and where those animals have headed. After locating your assigned gorilla group, you will spend approximately one hour in their company before heading back down the volcano slopes. Please note, the treks may be long and the ground uneven. It is essential that you have a good pair of worn-in, comfortable hiking shoes with ankle support and good grip/tread. A small backpack to carry your water, camera etc is also recommended.

ARRIVAL IN RWANDA

Please note, standard hotel check-in is around 3pm, so should you arrive earlier than this, your room may not be available upon arrival. For those arriving early morning, we will do everything we can to work with the hotel to get you an earlier check-in subject to availability.

If you have any other questions that we have not covered here; then please send us an e-mail to:
info@thebigjourneycompany.com

Disclaimer: The above information is provided as a guideline only. The Big Journey Company assumes no liability for any errors or omissions in this document.

Updated Mar 2025