



# Rwanda

POP 11.5 MILLION

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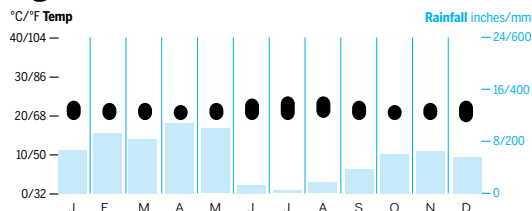
## Why Go?

Mention Rwanda to anyone with a small measure of geopolitical conscience, and they'll no doubt recall images of the horrific genocide that brutalised this tiny country in 1994 when, in the span of just three months, nearly one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were systematically butchered. But since those dark days a miraculous transformation has been wrought and today the country is one of ethnic unity and relative political stability, and a new-found air of optimism pervades the country.

Tourism is once again a key contributor to the economy and the industry's brightest star is the chance to track rare mountain gorillas through bamboo forests in the shadow of the Virunga volcanoes. These conical mountains are shrouded in cloud and equatorial jungles and helped earn Rwanda the well-deserved moniker of 'Le Pays des Mille Collines' (Land of a Thousand Hills).

## When to Go

### Kigali



## Best of Nature

- ➔ Parc National des Volcans (p642)
- ➔ Nyungwe Forest National Park (p645)
- ➔ Lake Kivu (p644)

## Best Museums

- ➔ National Museum of Rwanda (p644)
- ➔ Rukari Ancient History Museum (p645)
- ➔ Kigali Memorial Centre (p637)

**The long dry**  
Trekking is more pleasant when rains ease between mid-May and September.

**June** Baby gorillas are named during the Kwita Izina ceremony.

**The long rains**  
Although often wet from mid-March to mid-May, travel is still possible.

## KIGALI

POP 965,500

Founded in 1907 by German colonists, Kigali now spans several ridges and valleys, its winding boulevards and bustling streets climbing and falling over the hilly topography that characterises the city.

In recent years a massive amount of rehabilitation work has restored the city to its former graces, while increasing waves of

foreign investment have sparked a number of ambitious building projects. Today Kigali exists as a testament to the peace and order that has defined Rwanda's trajectory for more than a decade. It is hard to imagine that during the 1994 genocide, the city's streets were littered with dead and decaying bodies.

Kigali Memorial Centre gives an insight into those dark days.



### Rwanda Highlights

**1** Avert your gaze as a mighty mountain gorilla ambles towards you in the **Parc National des Volcans** (p642).

**2** Hike through steamy rain forests on the trail of colobus monkeys and chimpanzees in the

**Nyungwe Forest National Park** (p645).

**3** Kick back with a locally brewed Bralirwa in Kibuye or Gisenyi, on the sandy shores of **Lake Kivu** (p644).

**4** Confront the horrors of the genocide at the haunting

**Kigali Memorial Centre** (p637) on the outskirts of the capital.

**5** Get educated at the **National Museum of Rwanda** (p644), one of East Africa's best ethnographic museums in Huye (Butare), Rwanda's intellectual capital.