



# Burundi

POP 10.16 MILLION / 257

## Includes →

Understand Burundi .....	551
Burundi Today .....	551
History .....	551
Culture .....	553
Environment .....	553

## Fast Facts

<b>Capital</b>	Bujumbura
<b>Population</b>	11.1 million
<b>Languages</b>	Kirundi, French
<b>Area</b>	27,830 sq km
<b>Currency</b>	Burundian franc (BIF)

## Introduction

Tiny Burundi is an incongruous mix of soaring mountains, languid lakeside communities and a tragic past blighted by ethnic conflict. Despite their troubles, Burundians have an irrepressible joie de vivre, and their smiles are as infectious as a rhythm laid down by a drummer from Les Tambourinaires (a Burundian dance group).

When civil war broke out in 1993, the economy was destroyed and the tourist industry succumbed to a quick death. When the war finally ended in 2005, a trickle of travellers returned to rediscover the steamy capital, Bujumbura, with its lovely Lake Tanganyika setting and some of the finest inland beaches on the continent.

The new peace, however, came to a shattering end in 2015 when President Nkurunziza decided to run for what many Burundians believed to be a constitution-breaking third term in office. Violence broke out before the election, and has escalated since. The entire country is now considered unsafe to visit.

## Burundi at a Glance

**Bujumbura** The sultry capital has great nightlife and delicious food.

**Saga Beach** Soft white sands, warm waters and a stash of cool beach bars make this one of the most enticing inland beaches in Africa.

**Chutes de la Karera** Four different waterfalls make up this gorgeous cascade.

**Source du Nil** Burundi's very own pyramid, a memorial marking a small stream in Kasumo, at the southernmost source of the Nile.

**Parc National de la Rusizi** Antelopes and hippos splash and stomp through this national park just outside Bujumbura.

## UNDERSTAND BURUNDI

### Burundi Today

The political situation in Burundi is highly unstable, with frequent acts of violence throughout the country. This instability is having a very negative impact on a country that has long been one of the poorest and least developed in East Africa.

According to both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, Burundi is one of the five poorest countries in the world. Civil wars, corruption, landlocked geography, poor education, AIDS and a lack of economic freedom have all but economically crippled the country, and today it is largely dependent on foreign aid.

The country sits at just 180 out of 186 countries on the Human Development Index and 64.9% of the population are thought to live below the poverty line. Although Burundi's largest industry is agriculture

(employing around 90% of the workforce), the sheer number of people living in such a small country (Burundi is the second most densely populated country in Africa) means that not enough food is produced to keep everyone fed. According to the Global Hunger Index almost half of all households are food insecure and slightly over half of the children of Burundi have stunted growth due to a lack of food.

Economically things are grim as well, with the country recording a negative economic growth rate in 2016, which can primarily be put down to the unstable political situation and a recent contraction in food production.

### History

#### Independence & Coups

Burundi, like Rwanda, was colonised first by Germany and then later by Belgium, and like its northern neighbour, the Europeans

### Burundi

