



# Burundi

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## Best for Nature

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## Best for Culture

- ➔ Les Tambourinaires drummers (p539)
- ➔ Bujumbura Central Market (p538)
- ➔ Musée National de Gitega (p544)

## Why Go?

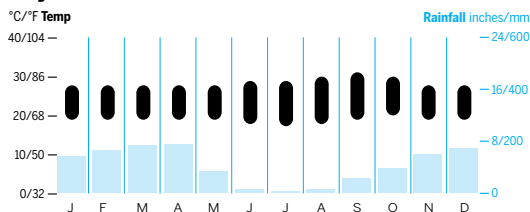
Tiny Burundi is an incongruous mix of soaring mountains, languid lakeside communities and a tragic past blighted by ethnic conflict.

When civil war broke out in 1993, the economy was shattered and the tourist industry succumbed to a quick death. Since then, many of the upcountry attractions have been off limits, including the southernmost source of the Nile and the ancient forest of Parc National de la Kibira.

Now the word is out that the war is over, Burundi has begun receiving a trickle of travellers and the country is safer than it has been for years. The steamy capital, Bujumbura, has a lovely location on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, and just outside the city are some of the finest inland beaches on the continent. Burundians also have an irrepressible *joie de vivre*, and their smiles are as infectious as a rhythm laid down by a Les Tambourinaires drummer.

## When to Go

### Bujumbura



### Year-round

Altitude affects regional temperature. Bujumbura is warmer than elsewhere.

### Oct–May

Mild rainy season with a brief dry spell in December and January.

### Jun & Aug

Locals flock to Lake Tanganyika beaches during the 'long dry' season.



## Burundi Highlights

- 1 Dine out in style and dance into the wee hours of the morning in Burundi's surprisingly vibrant capital **Bujumbura** (p537).
- 2 Down a cold one under the shade of a palm tree on **Saga Beach** (p538).

- 3 Take a cold shower under one of four waterfalls at the **Chutes de la Karera** (p544).
- 4 Travel to Burundi's very own pyramid, a memorial marking a small

- stream in Kasumo, at the southernmost **Source du Nil** (p544).
- 5 Be among the first to rediscover the wildlife of the **Parc National de la Rusizi** (p543) and remote **Parc National de la Kibira** (p543).

## BUJUMBURA

Largely frozen in time thanks to more than a decade of conflict, there has been very little development in Burundi's capital, Bujumbura. The steamy little city retains much of its grandiose colonial town planning, with wide boulevards and imposing public buildings. The peace and relative stability of the last few years mean that change is coming, but for the moment Buju (as it's commonly

known) retains an obviously different feel to any other East African capital. This is most obviously manifest in the city's distinctly French outlook on life.

Perhaps it's thanks to this French influence that Bujumbura has earned a freewheelin' reputation for its dining, drinking and dancing scene; despite its village-like size this is one of the best places to eat out in East Africa. While the security situation is greatly