

Rwanda

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Best for Nature

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Best for Culture

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Why Go?

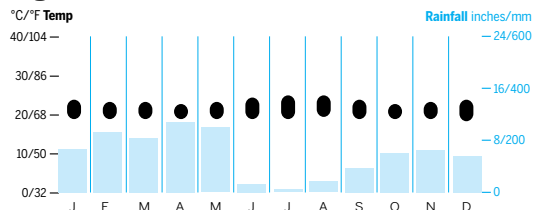
Mention Rwanda to anyone with a small measure of geopolitical conscience, and that person will no doubt recall images of the horrific genocide that brutalised this tiny country in 1994. But since those dark days a miraculous transformation has been wrought and today the country is one of tribal unity, political stability and a promising future.

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 equatorial jungles and helped earn Rwanda the well-deserved moniker of 'Le Pays des Mille Collines' (Land of a Thousand Hills).

So, while Rwanda's scars may run deep, now is the time to help the country look to its future and embrace its new-found optimism.

When to Go

Kigali



Dry seasons

Rains ease during the long dry (mid-May to Sep) and short dry (mid-Dec to mid-Mar).

Jun & Jul

Baby gorillas are named during the Kwita Izina ceremony.

The long rains Al-

though often wet from mid-March to mid-May, travel is still possible.



Rwanda Highlights

1 Hike the forested slopes of the Virungas for a close encounter with mountain gorillas and golden monkeys in **Volcanoes National Park** (p501).

2 Hack your way through steamy rainforests in search of colobus monkeys and chimpanzees in the **Nyungwe Forest National Park** (p516).

3 Watch an Intore dance performance at the **National Museum of Rwanda** (p513), the finest museum in the country, in Huye (Butare).

4 Confront the horrors of the genocide at the haunting **Kigali Memorial Centre** (p489) on the outskirts of the capital.

5 Kick back with a locally brewed Bralirwa on the sandy shores of Lake Kivu at **Gisenyi** (p508) or the equally beautiful **Kibuye** (p521) further south.

6 Take a Rwandan-style safari in the up-and-coming **Akagera National Park** (p523).

KIGALI

POP 1.13 MILLION

Spanning several ridges and valleys, Kigali, with its lush hillsides, flowering trees, winding boulevards and bustling streets, is arguably one of the most attractive capital cities in Africa, as well as one of the cleanest and safest.

It wasn't always like this. Kigali exists as a testament to the peace and order that has defined Rwanda's trajectory for more than two decades, though it bore the brunt of the genocide in 1994. When the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) finally captured Kigali after 100 days of systematic slaughter, dead and decaying bodies littered the streets and dogs