Tour Code
RW10

ADVENTURESABROAD

ULTIMATE RWANDA

Safaris, Chimpanzees & Gorillas

12 days

Created on: 12 Nov, 2026

Day 1 Arrive in Kigali

Today we arrive in Kigali, Rwanda's vibrant capital and largest city, strategically situated in the heart of the country. Since gaining independence in 1962, Kigali has evolved into the nation's economic, cultural, and transportation hub. This bustling metropolis seamlessly blends traditional Rwandan culture with modern amenities, offering a unique glimpse into the country's rich history and resilience.

Overnight in Kigali.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Kigali - Akagera National Park

Today we embark on a scenic drive east from Kigali to Akagera National Park, Rwanda's hidden gem. As we cover the 150 km (93 mi) to the park's South Gate, keep an eye out for the rolling hills, picturesque villages, and bustling markets that line the route. The journey takes approximately 2.5 hours, giving us plenty of time to soak up the views and get a feel for rural Rwanda.

Akagera National Park forms Rwanda's eastern border with Tanzania, and its diverse landscape is home to a wide variety of wildlife. On arrival, we'll enter the park and make our way to our lodge, where we'll check in and enjoy lunch.

This afternoon, we'll set out on a game-viewing drive through the park's southern regions. With a bit of luck, we might spot some of the park's resident antelope, giraffe, or elephant. As the day wears on, we'll take to the water for a Sunset Boat Excursion on Lake Ihema. This tranquil experience offers a unique perspective on the park's wildlife, and the setting sun will only add to the magic.

As night begins to fall, we'll embark on a night game-drive, searching for the park's nocturnal creatures. With spotlights in hand, we'll venture into the darkness, keeping an eye out for the likes of bushbabies, genets, or even the occasional leopard. It's the perfect way to cap off an action-packed day in Akagera.

Overnight in Akagera National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 3 Akagera National Park: Game Viewing Northern Sector

We rise early today, fuel up with breakfast, and set out on a thrilling full-day adventure through Akagera National Park. Our mission is to explore the park's diverse landscapes and capture some unforgettable images. We'll traverse the park from south to north, navigating through varied terrain and scenic vistas, in search of the incredible wildlife that calls Akagera home.

As we make our way through the northern sector, where the majority of the park's wildlife tends to congregate, keep your cameras at the ready! We might spot hippos wallowing in the lakes, or crocodiles basking in the sun. We'll also be on the lookout for rare bird species, such as the shoebill stork or the papyrus gonolek. And with a bit of luck, we might even catch a glimpse of a lion or the elusive leopard.

As we explore the park's diverse habitats, we'll also take note of the unique flora that thrives here. The park's woodlands are dominated by acacia trees, while the grasslands are dotted with colourful wildflowers. We'll take a break mid-day to enjoy a packed lunch, courtesy of our lodge, and recharge for the rest of our game-viewing escapade.

As the late afternoon sun begins to cast its golden glow, we'll begin our journey back to the southern sector of the park and our lodge.

Overnight in Akagera National Park.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4 Akagera: Sunrise Wildlife Viewing - Kigali

As the first light of dawn, we'll embark on an unforgettable sunrise game-viewing excursion in the southern reaches of Akagera National Park. The soft, golden light will cast a magical glow over the landscape, and we might even spot some of the park's wildlife stirring from their slumber.

After working up an appetite, we'll return to our lodge for a hearty breakfast. The rest of the morning is yours to unwind and relax at leisure. Take a refreshing dip in the lodge pool, or simply lounge on the deck and soak up the tranquil atmosphere.

We'll gather for lunch at the lodge, and then it's time to bid farewell to our Akagera home. After checking out, we'll begin our journey back to Kigali.

Overnight in Kigali.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 5 Kigali - Nyungwe Forest National Park

This morning, we set off from Kigali on a scenic journey southwards, bound for the breathtaking Nyungwe Forest National Park. As we cover the 260 km (160 mi) to our destination, we'll break up the drive with fascinating stopover visits to two of Rwanda's most historic and culturally significant towns: Nyanza and Butare.

In Nyanza, we'll delve into the region's rich history at the Royal Palace Museum, which showcases the traditional seat of the Rwandan monarchy. Next, we'll head to Butare, home to the National Museum of Rwanda, which offers a treasure trove of artifacts, exhibits, and insights into the country's cultural heritage.

We'll take a break for lunch at a popular local restaurant and then continue our journey to the Nyungwe Forest region, arriving in the late afternoon as the sun casts its golden light over the treetops.

Overnight in Lake Kivu (our base for Nyungwe Forest National Park).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 6 Nyungwe: Chimpanzee Trek & Canopy Hike

This morning we'll embark on an unforgettable adventure: trekking through the lush Nyungwe Forest in search of its most charismatic residents – the chimpanzees. Our expert guides will lead us through the forest, sharing insights into the ecology and behaviour of these intelligent primates.

As we trek, we'll need to be prepared for a moderately challenging hike, covering a distance of approximately 4-6 km (2.5-3.7 miles) over uneven terrain. The duration of the trek will depend on the location of the chimps, but we can expect to be walking for around 2-4 hours. The forest's terrain can be steep and slippery in some areas, so sturdy hiking shoes and comfortable clothing are essential.*

After an exhilarating morning with the chimps, we'll head to a different part of the forest for the Adventure Canopy Hike. This thrilling experience will take us high above the forest floor, offering breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape and the chance to spot a variety of bird species and other wildlife.

Following our two exciting excursions, we'll return to our hotel for some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

* We have assigned our East African offerings in Rwanda, Kenya & Tanzania our lowest Difficulty Rating Level 1, strictly with respect to physical activity that occurs OUTSIDE of our one-day chimpanzee and/or gorilla trekking hikes, which can specifically be rated a LEVEL 3 (you can review info on all three levels via the "Tour Styles" on this tour's webpage). Aside from these two excursions, the only physical activity while on safari is limited to walking to/from your room from the main public areas of our hotels/lodges (some of which are spread out). One must also be aware that our programs are ambitious -- some early starts, long/full days of road travel on some some poor/rough roads, and some dust and heat, which can cause fatigue over time.

Overnight in Lake Kivu (our base for Nyungwe Forest National Park).

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 7 Nyungwe Forest - Lake Kivu & Boat Excursion - Kigali

This morning after breakfast we'll bid farewell to the enchanting Nyungwe Forest region. Our journey takes us north along the scenic Kivu Belt Road, hugging the shores of Lake Kivu as we make our way to the charming town of Kibuye. The 130-kilometer (80 mi) drive takes approximately 2 hours, offering breathtaking views of the lake and its surroundings.

Upon arrival, we'll embark on a leisurely 2-hour Boat Excursion on the calm waters of Lake Kivu. As we glide across the lake, we'll have the opportunity to hike up Napoleon Island Hill, which offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. Keep your eyes peeled for the infamous "swimming cows" – a unique sight that's sure to delight!

After our boat trip, we'll head to a picturesque lake shore hotel for lunch and some time to freshen up, after which we'll depart Kibuye and head east, beginning our journey back to Kigali. The 130-kilometer drive takes approximately 3.5 hours, giving us plenty of time to reflect on the incredible experiences we've had so far.

Upon arrival in Kigali, we'll check into our hotel and enjoy some time at leisure. Dinner is on your own account tonight, giving you the freedom to choose from Kigali's many restaurants and cafes.

Overnight in Kigali.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Lunch

Day 8 Kigali - Genocide Museum - Parc National des Volcans

Today we transfer to the Parc National des Volcans (115 km/71 mi, +/- 3 hours).

But first we make a significant stop at the Kigali Genocide Memorial. This poignant memorial, established in 2004, commemorates the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. While the genocide was a complex event with multifaceted causes, it remains a dark chapter in Rwandan history. Visiting the Genocide Memorial is a powerful and thought-provoking experience. It offers a sobering look at the tragic events of 1994, highlighting the resilience and strength of the Rwandan people. As we learn about the history and the impact of the genocide, we'll gain a deeper appreciation for the country's journey toward healing and reconciliation.

After a break for lunch in Kigali, we depart for the Parc National des Volcans. "In the heart of Central Africa, so high up that you shiver more than you sweat," wrote the eminent primatologist Dian Fossey, "are great, old volcanoes towering up almost 15,000 feet, and nearly covered with rich, green rainforest - the Virungas." Situated in the far northwest of Rwanda, the Parc des Volcans protects the steep slopes of this magnificent mountain home of the rare mountain gorilla and the rich mosaic of montane ecosystems, which embrace evergreen and bamboo forest, open grassland, swamp and heath.

Overnight at Parc National des Volcans.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 9 Parc National des Volcans: Twin Lakes & Village

We'll start our day with a leisurely walk to the Ellen DeGeneres/Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, a fantastic opportunity to learn more about gorillas and the remarkable work of Dian Fossey. The center offers informative exhibits and educational programs whereby visitors can gain valuable insights into gorilla conservation efforts and the challenges these magnificent creatures face.

We then have a scenic drive to the picturesque Twin Lakes of Burera and Ruhondo. Upon arrival at Virunga Lodge, we'll enjoy a short walk, taking in the stunning views of the surrounding mountains and the tranquil waters.

We'll then head to the bustling Musanze market. As we wander through the vibrant market, we'll immerse ourselves in the local culture, experiencing the sights, sounds, and smells of this bustling marketplace. We'll have the opportunity to interact with local vendors and learn about their products, from fresh produce to handcrafted souvenirs.

At some point during our stay, we'll be able to trek to walk to the edge of the forest with the hope of seeing endangered Golden Monkeys, a rare treat to watch these unique primates play and perform in the forest (the walking involved depends on where the monkeys are at the time of our visit. More information on this once we arrive in the area).

Overnight near Parc National des Volcans.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 10 Parc National des Volcans: Gorilla Trekking

Parc National des Volcans: Gorilla Trekking*

Early this morning we drive to the park headquarters where we are briefed by the guides of the Parc des Volcans before we start our gorilla trek. This 13,000-hectare national park protects the Rwanda sector of the Virunga Mountains, a range of six extinct and three active volcanoes which straddle the border with Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Bamboo forest is interspersed with alpine moorland, grassland and marsh.

Tracking the gorillas through the light mountain forest on the slopes of the Virungas is a magical experience. If you are lucky you will get to the gorillas, spend an hour with them, and be back at the base in time for a late lunch. Some gorilla families however are more elusive, and tracking can take a full day… especially when wet and muddy.

The Mountain Gorillas in the Parc National des Volcans are part of a worldwide population of just 740 individuals. The gorillas we are allowed to track belong to one of five habituated family groups. For up to five years each, these groups have undergone an extremely delicate process that has gradually brought them to tolerate the presence of humans for a brief period every day and allowed a few privileged visitors to interact with them in the wild.

The gorillas are by no means tame, and are completely wild animals. However, experienced guides will accompany us on our tracking, many of who have been involved in the habituation process themselves. The guides will use their knowledge of the gorillas' habits and information from the previous day to locate the group's whereabouts. Because of this, the time taken to track the gorillas varies enormously, from as little as 1 hour to as much as 8 hours before one returns to base. Once the gorillas are located, our group will be allowed a maximum of one hour with them.

Please remember that the mountain gorillas are a wild animal and are not enclosed in any form and free to move as they please. For this reason actual sightings of the gorilla groups cannot be guaranteed. For more information on gorilla tracking in Rwanda, go to www.ortpn.gov.rw.

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Overnight near Parc National des Volcans.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 11 Parc National des Volcans - Kigali

This morning we'll embark on a cultural immersion experience, visiting a nearby village. We'll witness firsthand the daily lives of the locals, observing their farming techniques, beekeeping practices, and traditional clothing-making processes. We'll also have the chance to explore their homes and gain a deeper understanding of their way of life.

Later today we travel back to Kigali arriving later in the afternoon.

Overnight in Kigali.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Departure

Departure from Kigali.

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Included Meal(s): Breakfast