

Rwanda

Welcome to 'Le Pays des Mille Collines' or the Land of a Thousand Hills: Rwanda is a lush country of endless mountains and stunning scenery. Nowhere are the mountains more majestic than the peaks of the Virunga volcanoes in the far northwest of the country, forming a natural frontier with Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) and Uganda. Hidden among the bamboo and dense jungle of the volcanoes' forbidding slopes are some of the world's last remaining mountain gorillas, and it is the opportunity to encounter these contemplative creatures at close quarters that continues to draw visitors to Rwanda.

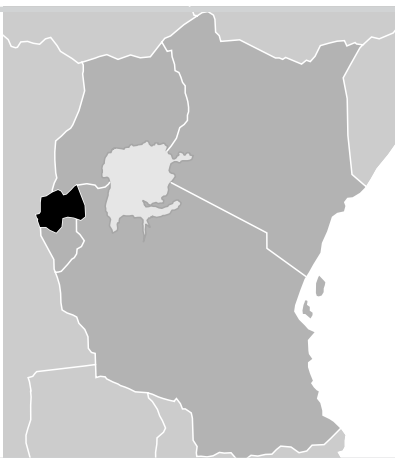
A beautiful yet brutalised country, Rwanda is all too often associated with the horrific events that unfolded here in 1994. It has been etched into the world's consciousness as one of the most savage genocides in the history of mankind. What happened here is beyond belief, but the country has taken giant strides towards recovery in the years since.

Rwanda has more than the magical mountain gorillas. The shores and bays of Lake Kivu conceal some of the best inland beaches on the African continent, pretty handy given how far it is to the sea. Deep in the southwest, Parc National Nyungwe Forest is the most extensive montane rainforest in the region and provides a home for many primates. But it's not all monkey business in Rwanda, as the capital Kigali is safe and sophisticated.

Many visitors are unsure about travelling to Rwanda given its history. However, as long as security and stability persist, Rwanda is a refreshing country in which to travel, where tourists remain a relative novelty and the rewards of the present outweigh the risks of the past.

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 26,338 sq km
- **Birthplace of** Paul Kagame
- **Capital** Kigali
- **Country code** 250
- **Famous for** Mountain gorillas
- **Languages** Kinyarwanda, French and English
- **Money** Rwandan franc (RFR); US\$1 = RFR554; €1 = RFR668
- **Population** 8.6 million



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Parc National des Volcans** (p583) Experience the ultimate animal encounter with the rare mountain gorillas on the slopes of the Virunga volcanoes.
- **Kigali Memorial Centre** (p576) Learn more about the horrors of the past at this haunting genocide memorial in the capital city.
- **Gisenyi** (p586) Chill out on the country's best beaches on Rwanda's very own Costa del Kivu.
- **National Museum** (p589) Check out one of Africa's best ethnographical museums in Butare, Rwanda's intellectual capital.
- **Parc National Nyungwe Forest** (p591) Get down to some monkey business in this towering forest, with a visit to the huge troops of colobus.

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

The average daytime temperature is around 24°C with a possible maximum of 30°C, except in the higher mountains, which take up a lot of the country, where the daytime range is 10° to 15°C. There are four discernible seasons: the long rains from mid-March to mid-May, the long dry from mid-May to September, the short rains from October to mid-December and the short dry from mid-December to mid-March.

It rains more frequently and heavily in the northeast, where volcanoes are covered by rainforest. The summit of Karisimbi (4507m), the highest of these volcanoes and the highest peak in Rwanda, is often covered with sleet or snow.

For details about planning your trip, and what to bring, see the boxed text, p16.

With the infrastructure in such reasonable shape, Rwanda can be visited at any time of year. However, if you don't like rain, avoid the long rains of mid-March to mid-May. The dry season from mid-May to September is easier for tracking mountain gorillas, but the endless hills can look quite dry and barren, a contrast to the verdant greens of the wet season. See Climate Charts p621. Peak season for gorilla tracking is July and August; travelling outside this time means it is easier to arrange a permit.

HISTORY

For the background on Rwanda's history prior to independence in 1962, see p28.

HOW MUCH?

- **Tracking the mountain gorillas** US\$375
- **Fresh fish at a decent restaurant** US\$5 to US\$10
- **Internet access per hour** US\$1 to US\$2
- **New Times newspaper** US\$0.50
- **100km bus ride** US\$2

LONELY PLANET INDEX

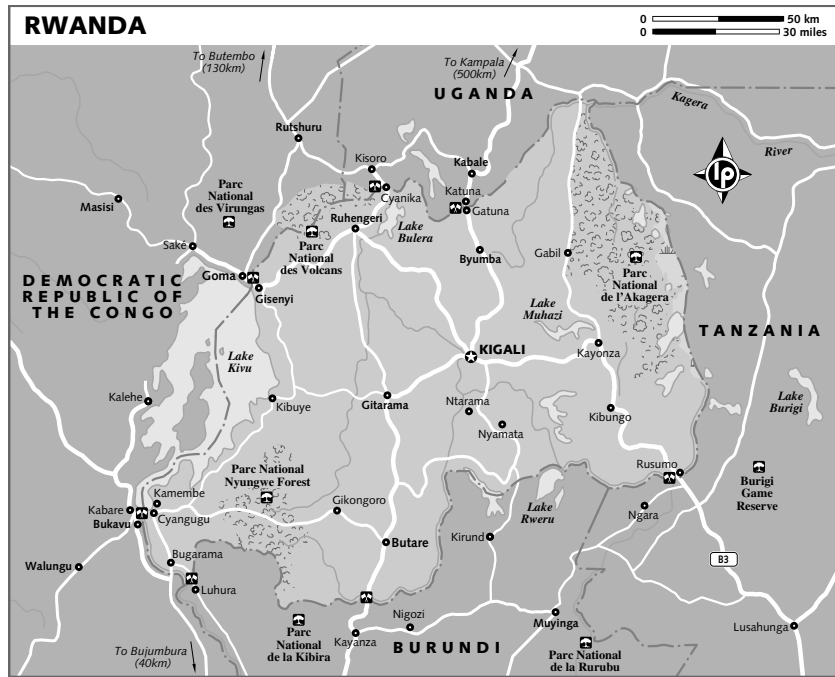
- **Litre of petrol** US\$0.90
- **Litre of bottled water** US\$0.50
- **Primus Beer 720ml** US\$1.50
- **Souvenir T-shirt** US\$10
- **Street snack (beef brochettes)** US\$0.50

Independence Time

Rwanda, like Burundi, was colonised first by Germany and later Belgium, and like their southern neighbour, the Europeans played on ethnic differences to divide and conquer the population. Power was traditionally concentrated in the hands of the minority Tutsi, with the Tutsi *mwami* (king) playing the central role.

However, in 1956, Mwami Rudahigwa called for independence from Belgium and the Belgians began to switch allegiance to the Hutu majority. The Tutsi favoured fast-track independence, while the Hutus wanted the introduction of democracy followed later by independence. Following the death of the *mwami* in 1959, armed clashes began between groups of Hutu and Tutsi, marking the start of an ethnic conflict that was to culminate in the 1994 genocide. Tutsi fled the country in numbers, resettling in neighbouring Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

Following independence in 1962, the Hutu majority came to power under Prime Minister Gregoire Kayibanda. The new government introduced quotas for Tutsis, limiting opportunities for education and work, and small groups of Tutsi exiles began to launch guerrilla raids from across the border in Uganda. In the fresh round of bloodshed that followed, thousands more



Tutsis were killed and tens of thousands fled to neighbouring countries.

Intertribal tensions continued to simmer under the surface and erupted once again in 1972, when tens of thousands of Hutu tribespeople were massacred in neighbouring Burundi by the Tutsi-dominated government in reprisal for a coup attempt. The slaughter reignited the old hatreds in Rwanda and prompted army commander Major General Juvenal Habyarimana to oust Kayibanda in 1973. He made some progress towards healing the ethnic divisions during the early years of his regime, but before long it was business as usual. However, events unfolding in Uganda in the 1980s were to have a profound impact on the future of Rwanda. Yoweri Museveni came to power there in 1986 after fighting a five-year bush war and some of his key lieutenants were Rwandan exiles, including current president Paul Kagame.

The Civil War Erupts

On 1st October 1990 the whole intertribal issue was savagely reopened. Rwanda was

invaded by 5000 well-armed rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi-dominated military organisation led by Paul Kagame, a former security chief of the Ugandan army. All hell broke loose. Two days later, at Habyarimana's request, France, Belgium and DR Congo flew in troops to help the Rwandan army repulse the rebels.

With this support assured, the Rwandan army went on a rampage against the Tutsi and any Hutu 'suspected' of having collaborated with the rebels. Thousands were shot or hacked to death and countless others indiscriminately arrested, herded into football stadiums or police stations and left there without food or water for days. Many died. Congolese troops joined in the carnage. Thousands of refugees fled to Uganda.

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda was accused of encouraging the rebels and supplying them with equipment. The accusations were denied but it seems inconceivable that Museveni was totally unaware of the preparations that were going on, and it was also common knowledge that Uganda was keen to see the repatriation of

the 250,000 Tutsi refugees based in western Uganda.

The initial setback for the RPF was only temporary, however. It invaded again in 1991, this time better armed and prepared. The government forces were thrown back over a large area of northern Rwanda, and by early 1993, the RPF was within 25km of Kigali. At this point a ceasefire was cobbled together and the warring parties were brought to the negotiating table in Arusha (Tanzania).

Negotiations stalled several weeks later and hostilities were renewed. French troops were flown in, ostensibly to protect foreign nationals in Kigali, but they were accused by the RPF of assisting the Rwandan army. The accusations were denied but TV footage of their activities didn't quite confirm their denials. Meanwhile, with morale in the Rwandan army at a low ebb, the RPF launched an all-out offensive. Habyarimana attempted to contain this by calling a conference of regional presidents to which the RPF was invited. Power sharing was on the agenda.

Habyarimana came away from this conference in April 1994 with somewhat less than he would have liked, but just as his light jet was about to land at Kigali airport, it was shot down by a surface-to-air missile. Both he and President Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi died in the crash. It will probably never be known who fired the missile, but most observers believe it was Hutu extremists who had been espousing ethnic cleansing over the airwaves of Radio TV Libre de Milles Colines. Whoever was responsible, this event unleashed one of the 20th century's worst explosions of blood-letting.

The Genocide

Extremists among Habyarimana's Hutu political and military supporters decided at this point to activate a well-planned 'final solution' to the Tutsi 'problem' by exterminating them. The principal player among those in favour of this course of action was the cabinet chief of the Ministry of Defence, Colonel Theoneste Bagosora, who had been in charge of training the Hutu Interahamwe militia, an extremist group, for more than a year. (For more information on the Interahamwe, see the boxed text, p570.) One of his first acts was to direct the army to kill the 'moderate' Hutu prime minister,

Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and 10 Belgian UN peacekeepers. The killing of the UN peacekeepers prompted Belgium to withdraw all of its troops – precisely what Bagosora had calculated – and the way was then open for the genocide to begin in earnest.

Rwandan army and Interahamwe death squads ranged at will over the countryside killing, looting and burning, and roadblocks were set up in every town and city. Every day thousands of Tutsi and any Hutu suspected of sympathising with them or their plight were butchered on the spot. The streets of Kigali were littered with dismembered corpses and the stench of rotting flesh was everywhere. Those who attempted to take refuge in religious missions or churches did so in vain and, in some cases, it was the nuns and priests themselves who betrayed the fugitives to the death squads. Any mission that refused the death squads access was simply blown apart. But perhaps the most shocking part of the tragedy was the enthusiasm with which ordinary Hutu – men, women and even children as young as 10 years old – joined in the carnage.

It's probably true to say that a large number of Hutu who took part in the massacre were caught up in a tide of blind hatred, fear and peer pressure, but there's no doubt whatsoever that it was inspired, controlled and promoted by the Rwandan army and Interahamwe under the direction of their political and military leaders. Yet the carnage also proved to be their nemesis. While up to one million people were being butchered – mainly Tutsi but also many so-called 'moderate' Hutu – the RPF pressed on with its campaign and with increasing speed pushed the Rwandan army and the Interahamwe militia out of the country into DR Congo and Burundi. The massacre finally ended with the RPF in firm control of the country but with two million of the country's population huddled in refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

The UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (Unamir) was in Rwanda throughout the genocide, but was powerless to prevent the killing due to an ineffective mandate. Although UN Force Commander Lt General Romeo Dallaire had been warning senior UN staff and diplomats about the coming bloodshed, his warnings went unheeded. The international community left

Rwanda to face its fate. Unamir was finally reinforced in July, but it was in the words of Dallaire, 'too much, too late'. The genocide was already over, as the RPF had taken power in Kigali.

The Aftermath

That, of course, is far from the end of the story. Within a year of the RPF victory, a legal commission was set up in Arusha to try those accused of involvement in the genocide; Rwandan prisons are still overflowing with suspects (including women and youths). However, many of the main perpetrators of the genocide – the Interahamwe and former senior army officers – fled into exile out of the reach of the RPF.

Some went to Kenya where they enjoyed the protection of President Moi who long refused to hand them over, which led to the breaking of diplomatic relations. Others – including Colonel Theoneste Bagosora, the alleged architect of the genocide, and Ferdinand Nahimana, the director of the notorious Radio TV Libre de Milles Collines, which actively encouraged Hutu to butcher Tutsi – fled to Cameroon where they enjoyed the protection of that country's security boss, John Fochive. However when Fochive was sacked by the newly elected president of Cameroon, Paul Biya, the Rwandan exiles were arrested.

Of more importance though were the activities of the Interahamwe and former army personnel in the refugee camps of DR Congo and Tanzania. Determined to continue their fight against the RPF, they manipulated the situation in the camps to their advantage by spreading the fear among the refugees that if they returned to Rwanda they would be killed. When Rwanda began to demand the repatriation of the refugees, the grip of the Interahamwe on the camps was so complete that few dared move.

What was of most concern to the RPF was that the Interahamwe used the refugee camps as staging posts for raids into Rwanda, with the complicity of the Congolese army. By 1996 Rwanda was openly warning DR Congo that if these raids did not stop, the consequences would be dire. The raids continued and the RPF mounted a lightning two-day campaign into DR Congo and targeted one of the main refugee camps north of Goma. Tens of thousands

fled further west into the bush along with the Interahamwe, but hundreds of thousands more took the opportunity to return home to Rwanda.

Several months after this, events in eastern DR Congo totally changed the picture. In October 1996 a new guerrilla movement known as the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire, led by Laurent Kabila, emerged with the secret support of Rwanda and Uganda. The rebels, ably supported by Rwandan and Ugandan regulars, swept through eastern DR Congo and, by December, were in control of every town and city in the region.

The Congolese army retreated west in disarray towards Kisangani, looting and pillaging as they went. They were joined by their allies, the Interahamwe and former Rwandan army personnel.

The grip the Interahamwe had on the refugee camps was broken. Hundreds of thousands of refugees began streaming back into Rwanda, not only from DR Congo but also from Tanzania. The government was faced with a huge refugee resettlement task and began to build new villages throughout the country. Much of Parc National de l'Akagera was given over to this 'villagisation' program and much of the northwest, a former battle zone, has been steadily resettled.

Rwanda Today

Rwanda has done a remarkable job of getting back onto its feet and has achieved an astonishing level of safety and security in a remarkably short space of time, albeit with considerable help from a guilty international community that ignored the country in its darkest hour. Visiting Kigali today, it is hard to believe the horror that visited this land in 1994, although the scars are much more visible in the impoverished countryside.

Things have been rather less remarkable on the international front, as Rwanda has been embroiled in the conflict in DR Congo, which has cost somewhere between three and four million lives. Rwanda and Uganda joined forces to oust Mobutu in 1996 and then tried to use the same tactics two years later to force out their former ally Laurent Kabila. What ensued was Africa's first great war, sucking in as many as nine neighbours at its height. Rwanda and Uganda soon fell out, squabbling over the rich resources that were

there for the plunder in DR Congo. Rwanda backed the Rally for Congolese Democracy and Uganda the Movement for the Liberation of Congo and the two countries fought out a proxy war. Peace negotiations began in 2002 and DR Congo continues to edge towards peace. Rwanda withdrew its forces, but if and when an international inquiry is launched into the war in DR Congo, Rwanda may find itself in the dock. Rwanda's motives for entering the fray were just, namely to wipe out remnants of the Interahamwe militia and former soldiers responsible for the genocide, but somewhere along the line, elements in the army may have lost sight of the mission.

Back on the domestic front, Paul Kagame assumed the presidency in 2000 and was overwhelmingly endorsed at the ballot box in presidential elections in 2003 that saw him take 95% of the vote. Parliamentary elections followed in October, but EU observers say the poll was marred by irregularities and fraud. Meanwhile, the search for justice continues at home and abroad; for more on this, see the boxed text, p570.

Looking at the bigger picture, Rwanda is home to two tribes, the Hutu and the Tutsi, and the former Belgian colonialists encouraged a hostile division of the two. The Hutu outnumber the Tutsi by more than four to one and while the RPF government is one of national unity with a number of Hutu representatives, it's viewed in some quarters as a Tutsi government ruling over a predominantly Hutu population. However, the RPF government has done an impressive job of promoting reconciliation and restoring trust between the two communities. This is no small achievement after the horrors that were inflicted on the Tutsi community during the genocide of 1994. It would have been all too easy for the RPF to embark on a campaign of revenge and reprisal, but instead the government is attempting to build a society with a place for everyone, regardless of tribe. There are no more Tutsis, no more Hutus, only Rwandans. Idealistic perhaps, but it is also realistically the only hope for the future.

THE CULTURE The National Psyche

Tribal conflict has torn Rwanda apart during much of the independence period,

culminating in the horrific genocide which unfolded in 1994. There are basically two schools of thought when it comes to looking at Rwandan identity.

The colonial approach of the Belgians was to divide and rule, issuing ID cards that divided up the population along strict ethnic lines. They tapped up the Tutsis as leaders to help control the Hutu majority, building on the foundations of precolonial society in which the Tutsi were considered more dominant. Later, as independence approached, they switched sides, pitting Hutu against Tutsi in a new conflict which simmered on and off until the 1990s when it exploded onto the world stage.

In the new Rwanda, the opposite is true. Ethnic identities are out and everyone is now a Rwandan. The new government is at pains to present a Rwandan identity and blames the Belgians for categorising the country along tribal lines that set the stage for the savagery that followed. Rwanda was a peaceful place before: Hutu and Tutsi lived side by side for generations and intermarriage was common, or so the story goes.

The truth, as always, is probably somewhere in between. Rwanda was no oasis before the colonial powers arrived, but it was a sophisticated state compared to many others in Africa at this time. However, Tutsis probably had a better time of it than Hutus, something that the Belgians were able to exploit as they sought control. However, it is true to say that there was no history of major bloodshed between the two peoples before 1959 and the foundations of this violence were laid by the Belgian insistence on ethnic identity and their cynical political manipulation. The leaders of the genocide merely took this policy to its extreme, first promoting ethnic differences and then playing on them to manipulate a malleable population to kill, all because they were driven by hate and fear and a desire to protect their political power.

Paul Kagame is trying to put the past behind and create a new Rwanda for Rwandans. Forget the past? No, but learn from it and move on to create a new spirit of national unity. It will take time, maybe a generation or more, but what has been achieved in just over a decade is astonishing. Rwandans are taking pride in their country once more, investment is on the

THE SLOW HAND OF JUSTICE

Following a slow and shaky start, the **International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda** (www.ict.rw) has managed to net most of the major suspects wanted for involvement in the 1994 genocide.

The tribunal was established in Arusha in 1995, but was initially impeded in its quest for justice by the willingness of several African countries to protect suspects. Countries such as Cameroon and Kenya long harboured Kigali's most wanted, frustrating the Rwandan authorities in their attempts to seek justice. However, due to changes in attitude or government, some big fish have been netted in the last decade. Most important was Prime Minister Jean Kambanda, one of the first to be tried in 1998, who filed a guilty plea and provided the trial with much inside information on other architects of the genocide. His was the first-ever conviction of a head of state for the crime of genocide.

Many of the former ministers of the interim cabinet that presided over the country during the genocide have been located. Since the 1996 change of government in Cameroon, the authorities there have arrested many suspects including the most senior military figures who oversaw the killing. One such suspect is Colonel Theoneste Bagosora. Colonel Bagosora was essentially army commander during the genocide. Other suspects were tracked down all over Africa and beyond, in Belgium and the UK.

In April 2002 former chief of staff General Augustin Bizimungu was handed over by the Angolan authorities. Even more encouraging was the arrest of Colonel Tharcisse Renzaho, prefect of Kigali-ville during the genocide, the first time DR Congo had actually cooperated with the tribunal. Many of the Interahamwe militia leaders involved in the genocide had managed to evade justice by fighting with the Kinshasa government against forces from Rwanda and Uganda. With the Congolese on board in the quest for justice, there are now very few places left for the genocidaires to hide.

It is not just Congolese cooperation that is important, but the US 'Rewards for Justice' campaign that offers significant cash for a list of nine key suspects. This may have played its part in the Angolan arrest and most of the suspects are now in custody. Of the 88 individuals indicted, 15 have been sentenced, five released, seven are appealing verdicts, 26 are on trial, 17 are awaiting trial and 17 are at large. Of the 17 at large, some may already be dead, as one suspect has died of natural causes during detention. The tribunal hopes to complete its work by 2008.

The prisons in Rwanda are still overflowing with genocide suspects. Prison numbers are thought to be around 120,000, and many of these prisoners are seen all over the country in their pink uniforms, helping on civil works programs. Security may look lax, but that is because the prisoners have little motivation to escape.

There are three categories of prisoner: category-one suspects are those who planned and orchestrated the genocide; category-two prisoners are those who oversaw massacres and failed to prevent them when in a position to do so; and category three are those who killed or looted during the genocide. Most prisoners are category three, but evidence against them is mainly hearsay, hence the government has revived the *gacaca*, a traditional tribunal headed by village elders, to speed up the process. However, the quest for justice in Rwanda looks set to be a long one and will cast a long shadow over the country's attempts to make a new start. Justice is a necessary part of reconciliation, but remains a principle rather than priority as the country simply has too many cases to deal with and too many other problems to worry about.

boil and people are once again optimistic about their future. The real challenge is to make sure the countryside comes along for the ride, as many of the investors in Kigali are overseas Tutsi finally returning home, and many of the poorest farmers are Hutus who have always tilled the land. To avoid the divisions of the past once again surfacing in the new Rwanda, democratic

development is required that favours all, urban and rural, rich and poor, and is blind to tribe.

As East Africa moves towards greater integration once more, it is to be hoped that Rwanda and Burundi are invited along for the ride. This way, the ethnic divide between Hutu and Tutsi may become submerged in a wider mosaic of regional peoples.

Daily Life

Urban Rwanda is a sophisticated place and people follow a Mediterranean pattern of starting early before breaking off for a siesta or long boozy lunch. The rhythm of rural life is very different and follows the sun. People work long hours from dawn until dusk, but also take a break during the hottest part of the day. However, it is a hard life for women in the countryside, who seem burdened with the lion's share of the work while many menfolk sit around drinking and discussing.

Faith is an important rock in the lives of many Rwandan people and Christianity remains the dominant religion. The church in Rwanda was tainted by its association with the genocide in 1994, but that doesn't seem to have dampened people's devotion to the word of God.

Rwanda's economy was decimated during the genocide, as production ground to a halt and foreign investors were scared away. However, the current government has done an amazing job of turning things around and the economy is now fairly stable with steady growth, low inflation and investors once again prepared to do business in Kigali.

Agriculture is the main employer and export earner, contributing about half of GDP, with coffee by far the largest export, accounting for about 75% of export income. Tea and pyrethrum (a natural insecticide) are also important. The majority of farmers are subsistence and grow plantain, sweet potato, beans, cassava, sorghum and maize.

Like many countries in Africa, the government is keen to promote universal primary education. However, the education system suffered badly during the genocide, with many teachers killed and a number of schools and colleges destroyed. Only about half the current teachers are actually qualified, although a number of international organisations are involved in programs to train teachers. There are only about 2000 primary schools, 300 secondary schools and two universities in the whole country. Illiteracy runs as high as 50%.

Population

The population is moving towards nine million, which gives Rwanda one of the highest population densities of any country in Africa. The population is believed to be about 85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi and 1% Twa pygmy.

One of Rwanda's largest 'exports' during the long years of conflict and instability was refugees, but most of these returned home in the second half of the 1990s; virtually the only ones who haven't are those who had some involvement in the genocide of 1994 and are roaming the jungles of DR Congo, terrorising local populations.

SPORT

Like all of Africa, football is Rwanda's national obsession and the 'Wasps', as the national team are known, are a growing force in the sport. In 2004 they qualified for the African Nations Cup for the first time.

RELIGION

About 65% of the population are Christians of various sects, although Catholicism is predominant, a further 25% follow tribal religions, often with a dash of Christianity, and the remaining 10% are Muslim.

ARTS Dance

Rwanda's most famous dancers are the *Intore* troupe. Their warriorlike displays are accompanied by a trancelike drumbeat similar to that of the famous Tambourinaires in Burundi.

Cinema

Hotel Rwanda has put Rwanda back on the map for moviegoers. Although it was shot in South Africa, it tells the story of Hotel des Milles Collines manager Paul Rusesabagina, played by Don Cheadle, turning this luxury hotel into a temporary haven for thousands fleeing the erupting genocide. *100 Days* and the HBO miniseries *Sometimes in April* also convey the story of the Rwandan genocide in a powerful way.

Gorillas in the Mist is based on the autobiography of Dian Fossey and her work with the rare mountain gorillas in Parc National des Volcans. Essential viewing for anyone visiting the gorillas.

ENVIRONMENT The Land

Known as the 'Land of a Thousand Hills', it is hardly surprising to find that Rwanda's endless mountains stretch into the infinite horizon. Rwanda's 26,338 sq km of land is one of the most densely populated places

on earth, and to feed the people, almost every available piece of land is under cultivation, except the national parks. Since most of the country is mountainous, this involves a good deal of terracing and the banded hillsides are similar to those in Nepal or the High Atlas of Morocco. Coffee and tea plantations take up considerable areas of land.

Wildlife

Rwanda shares much of the flora and fauna of its larger neighbours in the region. For more information on the rare mountain gorillas of Parc National des Volcans, see p101.

National Parks & Reserves

Due to its small size, Rwanda only has a small network of national parks. The most popular protected area and the focus of most visits to Rwanda is Parc National des Volcans, a string of brooding volcanoes that provides a home for the rare mountain gorillas. It costs US\$375 to track the gorillas here and other volcano treks are available.

Nyungwe Forest is the newest national park, a tropical montane forest that is one of the richest primate destinations in the region. Entry is US\$20 per day and chimp tracking is possible at US\$50. See p591 for more information.

Parc National de l'Akagera is the third of Rwanda's parks, but is sadly a shadow of its former self, as many animals fled across the border into Tanzania during the civil war of the early 1990s.

Environmental Issues

Soil erosion resulting from overuse of the land is the most serious problem confronting Rwanda today. The terracing system in the country is fairly anarchic, unlike in Bali or the Philippines, and the lack of coordinated water management has wiped out much of the topsoil on the slopes. This is potentially catastrophic for a country with too many people in too small a space, as it points to a food-scarcity problem in the future.

Population density has also had a detrimental effect on the country's national park system, reducing Parc National des Volcans by half in 1969 and Parc National de l'Akagera by two-thirds in 1998.

When travelling through the countryside by bus, you will see children chasing the

vehicle shouting '*agachupa*', which means 'little bottle'. They want your water bottle to carry water to school or to sell to recyclers, so this is an easy way to get involved in helping the environment.

FOOD & DRINK

African fare in Rwanda is very similar to that in Kenya (see p277) and prices are reasonable in local restaurants. Popular dishes include *tilapia* (Nile perch), goat meat and beef brochettes (kebabs). There's also a wide variety of continental food available; some of it is excellently prepared and presented, but it is more expensive than local fare.

It is important not to drink tap water in Rwanda. Bottled water is generally RFr250 a bottle in shops, a little more in restaurants. Soft drinks (sodas) and the local beers, Primus (720ml) and Mulzig (330ml and 660ml), are available everywhere, as is the local firewater, *konyagi*, but wines (both South African and European) are generally only available in the more expensive restaurants and hotels.

KIGALI

pop 600,000

Rwanda was known once the 'Land of Eternal Spring' and its capital Kigali still fits the bill. Sprawled over ridges, hills and valleys, it is a small, attractive city with superb views over the intensively cultivated and terraced countryside beyond. The mountains and hills seem to stretch forever and the abundant rainfall keeps them a lush green.

The city took a pounding during the genocide in 1994 (see opposite), but a massive amount of rehabilitation work has been undertaken in recent years and there is a major construction boom in the city centre today. This is a city on the move, looking ahead to development rather than looking back at its destruction.

There aren't a huge number of sights in the city, but the Kigali Memorial Centre, documenting the Rwandan genocide, is a must for all visitors to Rwanda. The city has a reasonable range of hotels and restaurants to suit most budgets, and while nightlife is not quite as pumping as Kampala or Nairobi, it is worth a whiff at the weekend. Many of the most popular restaurants and

nightspots are spread across the extensive suburbs that surround the city centre.

HISTORY

Walking the streets of Kigali today it is hard to imagine the horrors that unfolded here during those 100 days of madness in 1994. Roadblocks were set up at strategic points throughout the city, manned by Interahamwe militia, and thousands upon thousands of innocent Rwandans were bludgeoned or hacked to death. People swarmed to the churches for sanctuary, but the killers soon followed them there.

Unamir stood by and watched, shackled by the shortsightedness and cynicism of bureaucrats and politicians who failed to grasp the magnitude of what was unfolding. After 10 Belgian peacekeepers were murdered at the start of the genocide, the Belgian government withdrew its contingent, leaving Unamir to fend for itself with a minimal mandate and no muscle. There was little the 250 troops that remained could do but watch and rescue or protect the few they could.

Unbelievably, a contingent of the RPF was holed up in the parliamentary compound throughout this period, a legacy of the Arusha 'peace' process. Like the Unamir troops, there was little they could do to stop such widespread killing, but they did mount some spectacular rescue missions from churches and civic buildings around the city.

Hotel des Milles Collines became a refuge for those fleeing the violence and thousands of people were holed up there living in the most dire conditions. *Hotel Rwanda* (see p571) tells this heroic story. Meanwhile Unamir was protecting thousands more civilians holed up at its base in the Amahoro Stadium near the airport.

When the dust finally settled and the RPF swept the genocidaires from power in early July 1994, Kigali was wrecked. What little of the population remained were traumatised; dead and decaying bodies littered the streets; and buildings lay in ruin. Dogs had to be shot en masse, as they had developed a taste for human flesh. As the Kigali Memorial Centre so aptly puts it, Rwanda was dead.

And it's all the more remarkable that there are few signs of this carnage today. Kigali is

now a dynamic and forward-looking city, the local economy is booming, investment is the buzz word and buildings are going up like mushrooms. There are few outward signs of the damage, although the parliament building still bears scars of mortar shells and bullets. The inner damage? That's another story, but Kigali, and Rwanda beyond, have recrossed the Rubicon and deserve all the support they can get.

ORIENTATION

It is not that easy to get to grips with Kigali when you first arrive, as it is spread across several hills and valleys. The centre fans out above Place de l'Unité Nationale, the busy commercial heartland along Ave de la Paix and the side streets heading west. Heading north down the valley from the centre of town is Blvd de Nyabugogo, which leads to the Nyabugogo bus terminal and all roads upcountry.

South of the centre along Blvd de la Révolution and surrounding streets is where many of the embassies are found, and to the southwest is the plush suburb of Kiyovu, with several popular restaurants. Across the valley to the east of the centre is Kacyiru, a sophisticated suburb that includes government buildings, embassies, hotels and restaurants. Further out towards the airport is Remera, with several hotels for those wanting a quick getaway.

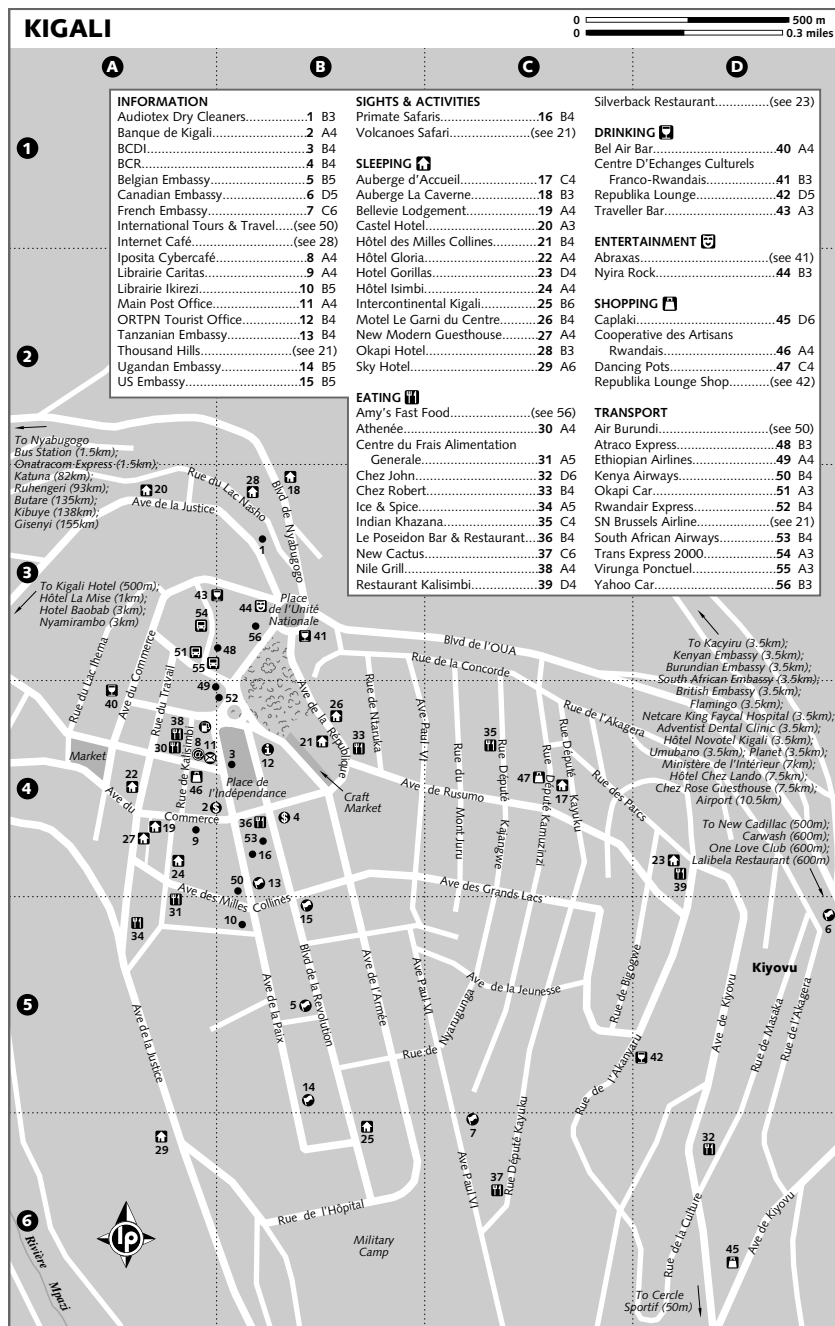
Maps

It is hard to get hold of good maps of Kigali. The best one is the pullout map that comes with the free *What's on Rwanda* guide, but this isn't that well distributed at the moment. There is also an older *Map of Kigali* produced in association with MTN Rwandacell which costs RFr2000, but is also hard to track down.

INFORMATION Bookshops

There are a few bookshops in Kigali, selling mainly French-language publications. **Librairie Caritas** (Ave du Commerce) A central bookshop for French titles.

Librairie Ikirezi (☎ 571314; Ave de la Paix; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12.30pm Sat & Sun) The best bookshop in town, it stocks a wide range of French- and English-language books on Rwanda and the world beyond. No, the name doesn't mean crazy bookshop.



Cultural Centres

Centre D'Echanges Culturels Franco-Rwandais (Ave de la République) Overlooking Place de l'Unité Nationale, this place has live music at the weekend (see p580).

Emergency

Police (☎ 083 11170) A 24-hour emergency number.

Internet Access

Internet access is widespread and very cheap in Kigali. There are plenty more places throughout the centre, meaning no online junkie need go without their fix.

Iposita Cybercafé (per hr RFr400) Part of the post office complex.

Internet Café (Blvd de Nyabugogo; per hr RFr500) There is a handy Internet café in the lobby of this popular hotel.

Laundry

Most hotels seem to have an aversion to standard laundry and offer only more expensive dry-cleaning. This means for those at the budget end, DIY might be the way to go.

Audiotex Dry Cleaners (Ave de la Justice) Those in midrange hotels could try this place.

Medical Services

Some embassies also have medical attachés who offer services through private practices.

Adventist Dental Clinic (☎ 582431) Located near the Novotel in Kacyiru district, this place is run by an international dentist based in Kigali.

Netcare King Faycal Hospital (☎ 582421) Also near the Novotel, this South African-operated hospital is the best in Kigali. Prices are high but so are standards.

Money

For cash transactions banks are best avoided, as the bureaucracy and paperwork is a pain. Street rates are generally better, but it may be safer to use of the many foreign exchange (forex) bureaux in Kigali, mainly located around the post office.

Banque de Kigali (Ave du Commerce) When it comes to travellers cheques or credit-card cash advances Banque de Kigali is the only option at the time of writing. Both involve hefty commissions of about US\$15 minimum!

There were plenty of ATMs in Kigali, but none were accepting international credit cards. In case they do:

Banque Commerciale de Rwanda (BCR; Blvd de la Revolution)

Banque de Commerce, de Developement et de l'Industriel (BCDI; Ave de la Paix)

Post

Main post office (Ave de la Paix; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) Poste restante services available.

Telephone

There are quite a few telecommunications kiosks opposite the post office that are open throughout the day and into the night. There are also MTN kiosks and public payphones throughout the city. One of the funniest sights in Kigali are all the 'mobile' telephones you see around the city. These are full-sized desktop telephones, but they are somehow looped into the mobile network and young boys run around with them offering cheap calls. They are definitely not trying to sell the telephones, as we first suspected.

Tourist Information

ORTPN (☎ 576514; www.rwandatourism.com; BP 905, 1 Blvd de la Revolution; ☎ 7am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat & Sun) The national tourism office, right in the centre of town. The office has a glossy brochure *Rwanda – Home of the Mountain Gorilla*, a few leaflets (in French and English) about the mountain gorillas and some maps, but not a whole lot more. Staff here speak French and English and are pretty helpful in assisting with enquiries. This is also the place for independent travellers to make reservations to track the mountain gorillas in Parc National des Volcans, as they keep a computerised record of all bookings. See p585 for more details.

Travel Agencies

There are quite a few travel agencies around town these days, most of which sell international air tickets and local tour packages.

International Tours & Travels (☎ 574057; www.itt.co.rw; Ave des Milles Collines) A reliable place for air tickets, it also represents Air Burundi.

Thousand Hills (☎ 501151; www.thousandhills.rw; Ave de la République) The helpful team here have years of experience in the travel business.

ACTIVITIES

If you're feeling energetic or need a workout, try the **Cercle Sportif** (Ave du Rugunga), where there are facilities for swimming, tennis and golf. However, be warned, they sometimes don't allow outsiders in for no apparent reason.

TOURS

ORTPN (above) offers a Kigali city tour (US\$20, three hours) departing at 8am or 2pm daily. The tour includes the Kigali Memorial Centre and some other prominent

THE GENOCIDE REMEMBERED...

More than a memorial for Kigali, more than a memorial for Rwanda and its tragedy, this is a memorial for all of us, marking the Rwandan genocide and many more around the world that never should have come to pass. The **Kigali Memorial Centre** (www.kigalimemorialcentre.org; admission free, donations welcome, ☎ 10am-5pm) is a must for all visitors in Rwanda wanting to learn more about how it was that the world watched as a genocide unfolded in this tiny landlocked country.

Downstairs is dedicated to the Rwandan genocide and the informative tour includes background on the divisive colonial experience in Rwanda and the steady build-up to the genocide. Exhibits are professionally presented and include short video clips. As the visit progresses, it becomes steadily more powerful, as you are confronted with the crimes that took place here. The sections on the cold and calculated planning of the genocide and its bloody execution are particularly disturbing and include moving video testimony from survivors. The story continues with sections on the refugee crisis in the aftermath of the genocide and the search for justice through the international tribunal in Arusha and the local *gacaca* courts (traditional tribunals headed by village elders) around the country. Finally you are confronted with a room full of photographs of Rwandan victims of the genocide. The effect is very similar to Tuol Sleng, the Khmer Rouge prison in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. You feel yourself suffocating under the weight of sadness and despair, the wasted lives and loves of the nameless people surrounding you. Quotes stand out from the faces and Apollon Katahizi's words are particularly resonant as killings continue across the world today: "When they said 'never again' after the holocaust, was it meant for some people and not for others?"

Upstairs is a moving section dedicated to informing visitors about other genocides that have taken place around the world to set Rwanda's nightmare in a historical context. Armenians, Jews, Cambodians, all have been victims of the mass slaughter we now know as genocide. Finally there is a section on Rwandan children who fell victim to the killers' machetes. Young and innocent, if you have remained impassionate until this point, the horror of it all catches up with you here. Life-size photos are accompanied by intimate details about their favourite toys. Why? Why? Why? The Kigali Memorial Centre explains it as best it can, but no one can answer the fundamental question of what it takes to turn man into beast.

Buried in the memorial gardens here are the remains of more than 250,000 victims of the genocide, gathered here as a final resting place.

Set up with assistance from the **Aegis Trust** (www.aegistrust.org), the Kigali Memorial Centre is located in the Kisozi district of town. It can be visited as part of the Kigali city tour promoted by ORTPN (p575) or you can come independently by taxi or taxi-motor.

buildings around town. It's not amazing value given the memorial currently has no entry charge, but the guides are very knowledgeable and take you closer to the capital.

KIGALI FOR CHILDREN

This definitely isn't the world's most exciting city for children. The best bet is to check into a hotel with a swimming pool and take it from there. Otherwise, head out of town to Parc National Nyungwe Forest (p591) for some monkey business or across to Gisenyi (p586) or Kibuye (p593) for some 'beach' time on Lake Kivu.

SLEEPING

Finding accommodation is not a great problem, but advance reservations at more

expensive places are recommended. Accommodation is spread across town, but those without their own transport should head for the city centre. There are slim pickings at the budget end, making this a worthwhile city in which to splash some extra cash.

Budget

Auberge La Caverne (☎ 574549; Blvd de Nyabugogo; r RFr5000-15,000) Clearly a cut above the competition at the cheaper end of the scale, this little *auberge* is tucked away beneath the main road. The cheapest rooms are pretty small, but the more francs you spend the more they begin to expand. RFr10,000 gets a huge room and the top rate tier is a suite with TV and raised bathtub. Book ahead as there are only 15 rooms.

One Love Club (☎ 575412; Ave des Poids Lourds; camping RFr5000, r RFr15,000) 'Let's get together and feel alright, altogether now'...if it's the spirit of peace and harmony you are after, then this little retreat is the place for you. Expensive camping is available, but then it is currently the only place to camp in Kigali. The large rooms are fairly basic, but include a bathroom and space to spread out. The lush gardens include an Ethiopian restaurant, Lalibela Restaurant. Most importantly, it's all for a good cause, as profits are ploughed back into a local nongovernmental organisation (NGO) to help the disabled community in Rwanda.

Hôtel Gloria (☎ 571957; fax 576623; cnr Rue du Travail & Ave du Commerce; s/d RFr6000/8000) Possibly the longest running budget digs in town, Hôtel Gloria's location is great, as it is right in the heart of the city. It's clean enough, although there is an undeniable air of neglect about the place and the attached bathrooms are cold water only.

Kigali Hotel (☎ /fax 571384; s/d RFr5000/7000) On a bang-for-your-buck basis, this is probably the best value in town, but the big drawback is that it is quite a long way from the action, tucked away behind the mosque on the road to Nyamirambo. Oh, and that mosque – don't forget the early morning wake-up calls. The large, clean rooms come with TV, telephone and bathroom.

Also central are a couple of local dives down a small alley off Ave du Commerce. **Bellevie Logement** (☎ 557158; s/d RFr4000/5000) and **New Modern Guesthouse** (☎ 574708; s/d RFr4000/5000) are right opposite each other, but both are big-time basic and the shared facilities aren't ideal. Bellevie is the slightly better of the two, but better still, upgrade to somewhere else.

Midrange

Okapi Hotel (☎ 576765; www.okapi.co.rw; Blvd de Nyabugogo; s/d US\$40/50; ☎) The most popular choice in this range, Okapi has a reasonable location just below the city centre. The area looks a bit rough-and-ready with the un-surfaced road, but security is fine. It offers smart rooms with TV, hot-water bathtub and a balcony at reasonable rates. There are also some cheaper rooms in an extension below the main building with just a hot shower and these go for US\$20/26. All rates include a buffet breakfast. There is

an excellent restaurant here with a healthy selection of dishes from around the world, plus a reliable Internet café.

Castel Hotel (☎ 576377; castelhotel@rwanda1.com; Ave de la Justice; s/d RFr16,000/18,000) Another excellent establishment, this place offers prime views across the valley to Kacyiru. A modern business hotel, the clean rooms here include satellite TV, telephone and hot-water showers. Make sure you ask for one at the back with the big views.

Hôtel Isimbi (☎ 575109; isimbi@hotmail.com; Rue de Kalisimbi; s/d incl breakfast RFr15,000/18,000) The most central of the midrange hotels, this place offers functional rooms with TV and bathroom, and rates include breakfast. It's a good option for those who don't fancy walking up and down the endless hills near the centre. There's a restaurant with a good menu, as well as a TV lounge downstairs, but both are lacking atmosphere.

Sky Hotel (☎ 516693; skyhotel1@yahoo.fr; Ave de la Justice; s/d RFr14,000/18,000) Perched on the edge of the valley on the road to Nyamirambo, this is another place with first-class views. Rooms are smart and well equipped, and there is a great little terrace bar below the hotel with big breezes blowing up from the valley below.

Auberge d'Accueil (☎ 578915; 2 Rue Député Kayukuru; s/d RFr11,800/14,200) Housed in the Église Presbytérienne au Rwanda, the rooms here aren't fantastic value when compared with facilities at the leading hotels in this range. That said, the bathrooms have reliable hot water, the staff are friendly and there is a restaurant with a small menu. Visa accepted.

Chez Rose Guesthouse (☎ 08505545; s/d RFr13,000/18,000) The Remera suburb of town is popular with expats, thanks to its proximity to the airport, and Chez Rose is a friendly little guesthouse up here. The large rooms are well lit and include attached bathrooms with hot water.

Top End

Hôtel Chez Lando (☎ 584328; www.hotelchezlando.com; s/d from US\$50/60) A Kigali institution out in the suburb of Remera, the rooms here are in single-storey units set around a lush garden. It's a pretty good deal, although it's a long way out of town for those without transport. The restaurant and bar here are often packed and at the weekend DJs crank up the tunes as bar becomes club.

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Hotel Gorillas (☎ 501717; www.hotelgorillas.com; Rue des Parcs; s/d US\$50/70, large s/d with bathtub US\$60/80) A slick little hotel in the upmarket Kiyovu area of the city, this place is winning over a lot of customers thanks to its spacious rooms with a touch of decorative flair. One of the best deals in town, it is also home to the popular Silverback Restaurant.

Motel Le Garni du Centre (☎ 572654; garni@rwanda1.com; Ave de la République; s/d incl breakfast US\$75/90; 📺) Kigali's answer to the boutique guesthouse, this atmospheric little *auberge* is tucked away on a side road below Hôtel des Milles Collines. The well-equipped rooms come with TV, fridge and telephone, and there's a buffet breakfast. All rooms are built around the swimming pool, which doesn't draw the crazy crowds like the big hotel pools.

Hôtel des Milles Collines (☎ 576530; www.millescollines.net; Ave de la République; r US\$88/103; 📺 📺) Welcome to the Hotel Rwanda. With the international success of the movie, this hotel looks set to see a surge in bookings. The hotel used in the movie was actually down in South Africa, but the original hotel where horror and hope collided was right here, the Milles Collines. Rooms here are a four-star standard and rates are pretty flexible so don't be surprised if you are quoted different prices. Rumours of a renovation abound, probably to cash in on the hotel's new-found fame. Use of the hotel swimming pool costs RFr3000 for nonguests, and is a popular place to relax at weekends. There is also a poolside bar, a tennis court and business centre.

Intercontinental Kigali (☎ 597100; adminich@rwanda1.com; Blvd de la Revolution; s/d US\$180/192; 📺 📺 📺) Kigali's first and currently only five-star hotel, the Intercontinental is certainly the smartest address in town. Formerly the Diplomates, it is just a short walk from the city centre. Rooms are the up to the usual Intercon standards and the bar and restaurants here are popular with Kigali's high-flyers.

Hôtel Novotel Kigali (☎ 585816; umubano@rwanda1.com; s/d US\$135/150; 📺 📺 📺) Long considered the best in town, the Novotel has

lost that title to the Intercontinental. A long way out in the suburb of Kacyiru, this is another place for those with transport. Francophones will no doubt stay loyal to the brand and the rooms are exactly what you would expect from the Accor family.

EATING

The dining scene in Kigali is getting more sophisticated and the current crop of restaurants includes Rwandan, Ethiopian, Indian, Chinese, Italian and French.

Chez Robert (☎ 501305; Ave de la République; meals RFr2000-5000) Formerly home to the extravagant Aux Caprices du Palais, it now plays host to a Brussels exile, Chez Robert. The menu is French and Belgian and is great value for money for those that want a sophisticated meal without the sophisticated bill at the end. The steaks are particularly good and the blue-cheese sauce the perfect complement.

Chez John (Rue de Masaka; meals RFr2000-4000) For a more local experience, head to Chez John, a Rwandan restaurant specialising in meat and maize. The surroundings may have gone upmarket, but everyone still gets stuck into their grills and it is a good place to sink some beers.

Restaurant Kalisimbi (☎ 575128; Rue de l'Akanyuru; mains RFr2000-5000) Just down the road from Hotel Gorillas, this continental restaurant has one of the best Italian selections in town, including reliable pizzas. Service comes with a personal touch making it a popular place with local residents.

Silverback Restaurant (☎ 501717; Rue des Parcs; mains RFr4000-10,000) One of the best restaurants in Kigali, the accent here is most definitely French. Foie gras, duck à l'orange and even rabbit are available for the discerning diner. The wine list is impressive, but so are the prices at around US\$40 a bottle.

Indian Khazana (Rue Député Kajangwe; full meal RFr7500) Kampala's most celebrated Indian restaurant comes south to Kigali. Khana Khazana has been spicing up people's lives for years in the Ugandan capital and now Rwanda can enjoy the subtle flavours of the subcontinent. One of the hottest places in town right now.

Ice & Spice (Rue du Travail; curries RFr3000) Another Indian restaurant near the city centre, this place is popular for reasonable prices and big portions. All the old favourites are here,

THE AUTHOR'S CHOICE

New Cactus (☎ 572572; Rue Député Kayuku; mains RFr2000-5000) Set on a commanding ridge up in Kiyovu, this restaurant has the views if you want to see Kigali by night. Outrageously popular with expats and well-to-do Rwandans alike, this place is always buzzing thanks to a good menu of French favourites and authentic pizzas. Fondues are available, plus there is a good wine list. Plan to spend liberally and you can live well.

like chicken tikka masala, and you can cool off with an ice cream for dessert, made on the premises.

Lalibela Restaurant (☎ 575412; Ave des Poids Lourds; mains RFr3000) Set in the grounds of the One Love Club, this is Kigali's only Ethiopian restaurant following the demise of the Addis. It has a laid-back atmosphere in keeping with the Rasta owner and serves big portions of spicy chicken and the like on *injera* (unleavened bread). It rocks on as a bar later in the evening.

Flamingo (☎ 586589; 6th fl, Telecom House, Blvd de l'Umuganda; mains RFr3000-7500) Like the famous Fang Fang in Kampala, the Flamingo has moved into an anonymous office block in Kacyiru, but it doesn't seem to be affecting its pulling power. The sizzling platters are quite a sight, plus there is a serious selection for vegetarians, not often the case in Kigali. That said, someone should probably tell them that bean curd with beef doesn't count!

Nile Grill (Rue de Kalisimbi; ☎ 7.30am-8pm) There are several local joints in the city centre doing a roaring trade in lunchtime buffets and cheap eats. Nile is one of the best known and has a vegetarian buffet for RFr1500 or a meaty choice for RFr2000.

Le Poseidon Bar & Restaurant (Blvd de la République; mains RFr1500-3000) This is Kigali's very own fast-food spot, with a lively bar and local restaurant offering sandwiches, burgers, pizzas and pastas. It draws a healthy work crowd at lunchtime and can fill up with stragglers leaving the office on Fridays.

Amy's Fast Food (Ave de la Paix; snacks RFr1500) A popular spot in town for snacks and light bites like sandwiches, burgers and pizzas. Check out the little terrace for people-watching on a sunny day.

Hotel Baobab (☎ 575633; dishes from RFr2000) It is worth venturing into the wilds of Nyamirambo to this popular garden restaurant. It is also a good place to go for a meal if you want some privacy or are catching up with people you haven't seen for a while, as dining is in private pavilions. The menu is extensive, including steaks, fish and some pretty good pizzas.

Athenée (Rue de Kalisimbi) Travellers who want to do a spot of self-catering or who are planning some time in Parcs National Nyungwe Forest or de l'Akagera will find a small selection of things here, a sort of alimentation-style store near the main post office.

Centre du Frais Alimentation Generale (Ave des Milles Collines) Probably the best stocked of the central supermarkets, including a good range of far-flung imports. There is also a bakery on the premises.

DRINKING

The good folk of Kigali take their drinking and partying pretty seriously and there are some good bars around town, some of which turn into clubs as the night wears on. Ask around to be sure all the following places are open and to see what's hot and what's not.

Republika Lounge (Rue de l'Akanyuru) The re-birth of cool! Once Zanzibar was the place to be, now the former owner has bounced back with Republika, definitely the place to be in Kigali. In the fancy Kiyovu area, there are huge views from the large terrace here. Lush furnishings, a well-stocked bar and a small menu for the midnight munchies keep the crowds happy.

Carwash (Ave des Poids Lourds) Quite literally a carwash, but don't worry we are not going mad. There is also a brilliant garden bar here with stacks of space. You may not always get a seat, but you won't be elbow to elbow either. Rwandans drop their cars off for a wash and give their tonsils a bit of a tickle with beer. It's cheaper to drink here than in New Cadillac, so drop by on the way.

Traveller Bar (Ave du Commerce) This local used to pull the crowds thanks to its strategic location opposite the local bus park. With the closure of said park, the crowds have quietened down, but the beer and brochettes are cheap.

Bel Air Bar (Ave du Commerce) Another popular local haunt with some great views over the centre of town. The beer is cheap and the

atmosphere lively. 'Pass through the corridor and go upstairs' it says outside. Yes, they have finally got rid of the stairs of certain death.

The swimming pool at Hôtel des Milles Collines ends up serving as the city's most popular daytime bar at weekends, as half the expats in the city come here to relax by the water. There is a happy hour here from 5pm to 7pm every day.

Hôtel Chez Lando is another popular hotel bar and draws a local crowd almost every night, whether for drinking, dining or dancing, as it also has DJs at the weekend.

ENTERTAINMENT

Cranking it up a gear, the following places double up as nightclubs and often have live music.

New Cadillac (admission RFr2000; ☹ Wed-Sun) This long-running club is still just about holding off all-comers to remain the most popular place in town. Located in the Kimikurure district not far from the centre of Kigali, this is a large, partly open-air venue that plays a mixture of East African pop, Congolese *soukous* (dance music) and Western hits most nights. Drinks are pricey (RFr1500 for Primus) but you are paying to be seen. It doesn't really pick up until after midnight, but once it does, it really rocks.

Nyira Rock (Ave du Commerce; admission RFr1000) A local nightclub in the city centre, there is usually a friendly crowd here. Don't be put off if it looks closed from the main road, as the entrance is up the alley to the right. DJs, cheap beers and plenty of action towards the weekend.

Abraxas (Ave de la République; admission RFr2000) On Fridays and Saturdays, the Centre D'Echanges Culturels Franco-Rwandais plays host to leading local bands. The music is an eclectic mix of Rwandan, reggae and international covers, and after a few beers everyone finds their rhythm. Very popular.

Planet (Kigali Business Centre, Ave du Lac Muhazi; admission RFr3000) This trendy nightclub is often called KBC by locals due to its location. The most popular place in town with the beautiful people, it really goes off at weekends.

SHOPPING

Rwanda produces some attractive handicrafts, but the lack of tourists in the country has kept development of souvenir shops to a

minimum. Look for basketry, batik, drums, woodcarvings and the famous cow-dung art of symmetrical symbols. There are also a lot of Congolese handicrafts, including the ever-popular masks.

Kigali isn't exactly the shopping capital of Africa, but there are a few good places to have a sniff around. There are some good craft shops selling locally produced carvings, cards and paintings, mostly located near the main post office in the centre of town.

Caplaki (Ave de Kiyovu) The old street market of crafts along Ave de l'Armée next to the Milles Collines has been moved to a new home funded by the French. Sellers are now organised in fixed stalls and popular items include a range of carvings and masks from across the border in DR Congo. Prices start high, as they are, of course, 'antiques' but as most are modern replicas, bargain down to something sensible.

Cooperative des Artisans Rwandais (Rue de Kalisimbi) This is one of the best craft shops about. Prices are generally fixed, but small discounts may be offered.

Republika Lounge Shop (Rue de l'Akanyaru) For something more sophisticated, check out the handicraft shop beneath this bar. There are some nice pieces of art and the best quality souvenir T-shirts you are likely to find in Rwanda.

Dancing Pots (Rue Député Kamuzinzi) This is a fair-trade project established to assist the Batwa pygmies. The Forest Peoples' Project has been training potters to produce terracotta pieces which can be bought here.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

For contact details of the international airlines flying in and out of Gregoire Kayibanda International Airport, see p599. **Rwandair Express** (☎ 503687; www.rwandair.com; Ave de la Paix) is the national airline and is planning domestic flights to Gisenyi.

Bus & Minibus

Several bus companies operate services to major towns, which are less crowded and safer than local minibuses. Okapi Car runs to Butare, Gisenyi, Kibuye and Ruhengeri; Atraco Express to Butare, Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, including a through service to Goma; Trans Express 2000 to Butare; and Virunga Ponctuel to Ruhengeri. See the

individual town entries for more details on journey times and road conditions. All buses depart from company bus offices in the city centre. Onatracom Express have larger 45-seat buses, which could be considered safer, and these run to Ruhengeri and Gisenyi (three daily), plus Butare and Cyangugu (two daily). These services depart from the Nyabugogo bus terminal.

Local minibuses depart from the Nyabugogo bus terminal for towns all around Rwanda, including Butare (RFr1200, two hours), Katuna (RFr1500, 1½ hours), Kibuye (RFr1300), Ruhengeri (RFr1100, two hours) and Gisenyi (RFr1600, four hours). These minibuses leave when full throughout the day, except at weekends when they tend to dry up after 3pm. Just turn up and tell someone where you're going. See the respective town entries for further details.

Nyabugogo is about 2km north of the city centre in the valley and minibuses (RFr200) are available from the city centre, although there is no longer a local bus station in the centre.

GETTING AROUND

To/From the Airport

Gregoire Kayibanda International Airport is at Kanombe, 10km east of the city centre. A taxi costs about RFr5000, but a direct minibus from the city centre is cheaper (RFr3000).

Minibus

There is no longer a local bus station in the city centre, so minibuses cruise the streets looking for passengers. All advertise their destination in the front window and run to districts throughout the city. Costs are very cheap, from RFr100 to RFr300.

Taxi

There are no metered taxis, but a fare within the city centre costs, on average, RFr1500 to RFr2000, double that out to the suburbs or later at night.

Taxi-Motor

These small Japanese trail bikes can be a swift way to get around Kigali, although it can be quite scary travelling out to the suburbs as the drivers really hit the throttle. Short hops are just RFr200 to RFr500, while out to the suburbs is RFr700 to RFr1000.

AROUND KIGALI

NYAMATA & NTARAMA GENOCIDE MEMORIALS

During the genocide, many horrific massacres took place in churches around the country, to which victims had fled in the hope of refuge. Nyamata, about 30km south of Kigali, is a deeply disturbing memorial where skulls and bones of the many victims are on display. The church at Ntarama is more understated but no less powerful. The church has not been touched since the bodies were removed more than a decade ago and there are many bits of clothing on the floor. This church is about 25km from Kigali and both these memorials can be visited in one day trip.

NORTHWESTERN RWANDA

The northwest of Rwanda is where the country really earns its nickname as the Land of a Thousand Hills. It's a beautiful region and the peaks culminate in the stunning Virunga volcanoes, forming a formidable natural border between Rwanda, Uganda and DR Congo.

RUHENGERRI

For most travellers, Ruhengeri is a staging post on their way to magnificent Parc National des Volcans, the best place in Africa to track rare mountain gorillas.

It's a small, insignificant town, but the views make up for it, with the mighty Virunga volcanoes looming over town to the north and west – Karisimbi, Bisoke, Mikeno, Muside, Sabinyo, Gahinga and Muhabura.

Forget any ideas about climbing the hill (Nyamagumba) near the post office – it's a military area and access is prohibited.

Information

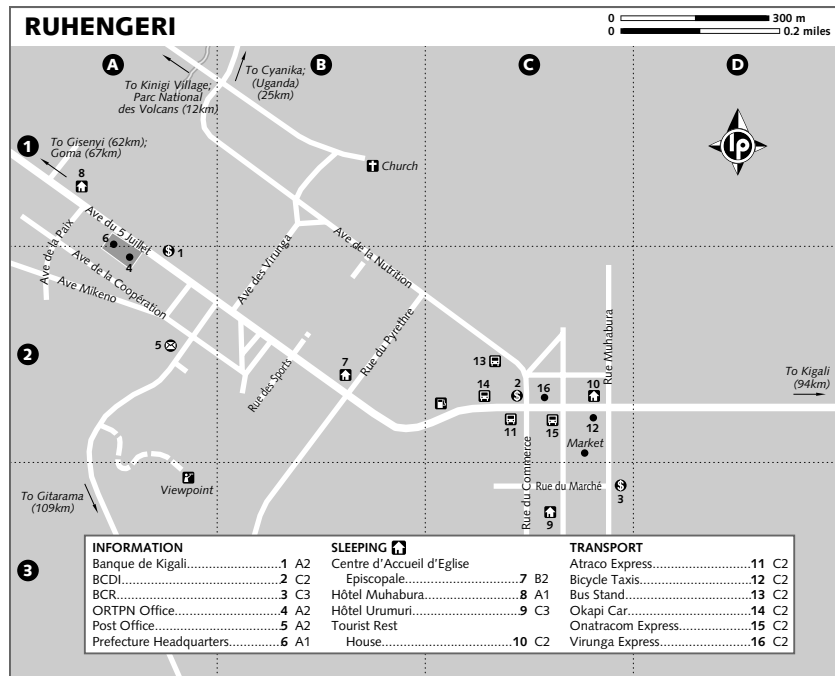
Banks in Ruhengeri aren't that helpful as they can only change cash and cannot deal with travellers cheques or credit cards.

Banque de Kigali (Ave de 5 Juillet)

BCDI (Ave de la Nutrition) Represents Moneygram.

BCDR (Rue Muhabura) Represents Western Union.

ORTPN office (Ave du 5 Juillet) In the prefecture headquarters (local government headquarters), where it is



necessary to meet at 7am for departure on gorilla visits. For details about visiting the mountain gorillas, see opposite.
Post office (☎ 8am-noon & 2-4pm Mon-Fri) Offers basic telephone and postal services.

Sleeping

Arguably the best places to stay in Ruhengeri are not in Ruhengeri itself, but on the edge of Parc National des Volcans around Kinigi. See p586 for more details. But a few places in Ruhengeri are worth checking out.

Tourist Rest House (☎ 546635; Rue Muhabura; s/tw RFr3000/5000) Part of the same group as the popular Skyblue hotels in Uganda, this is a well-run little establishment for budget travellers. Rooms are small but clean and there is hot water in the shared showers, making it good value.

Hôtel Urumuri (☎ 546820; r RFr3500) For those wanting a bathroom on tap, so to speak, this local hotel is the best deal in town. Tucked away on a side street off Rue du Marché, it is a friendly spot and bathrooms have hot water.

Hôtel Muhabura (☎ 546296; Ave du 5 Juillet; r/apt RFr15000/20,000) Ruhengeri's leading hotel,

the lack of competition in town has seen prices double here in the last few years. Close to the ORTPN office, the Muhabura offers large, clean, airy rooms with bathroom and hot water, and several apartments that are verging on minisuites. Definitely book ahead here, as it is often full with tour groups and NGOs.

Centre d'Accueil d'Eglise Episcopale (☎ 546857; cnr Rue du Pyrethre & Ave du 5 Juillet; r RFr5000-30,000; ☎) This church-run establishment has moved into the hotel stakes in recent years, with the widest range of rooms in town. Cheap rooms are in a small block with shared bathrooms, but as you start spending more, facilities improve, including, at the top of the scale, TV and a bathtub. There is a small swimming pool here, which is also open to nonguests for RFr1000.

Eating & Drinking

Dining options are pretty limited in Ruhengeri given the number of foreigners passing through these days. The best restaurant in town is at the Hôtel Muhabura, which has a continental menu of brochettes,

steaks, *tilapia* and some well-dressed salads. Meals run from RFr2000 to RFr4000. Although Ruhengeri is a quiet place in the evenings, the bar here is the place to meet international movers and shakers, and big European football games are screened here at weekends.

Hôtel Urumuri has an outdoor courtyard restaurant with a good value menu, including brochettes, pastas and salads, with most meals in the RFr1000 to RFr1500 range. It also has very cold beers and draws locals for a drink.

Getting There & Away

Numerous bus companies offer scheduled hourly services between Ruhengeri and Kigali, including **Okapi Car** (Ave du 5 Juillet), **Virunga Express** (Ave du 5 Juillet) and **Atraco Express** (Ave du 5 Juillet), all charging RFr1300. These buses are less crowded than normal minibuses. **Onatracom Express** (Ave du 5 Juillet) has three large buses per day passing through, connecting Kigali and Gisenyi; tickets are available at the petrol station.

There are normal minibuses from Ruhengeri to Kigali (RFr1100, two hours), on a breathtaking mountain road, as well as to Cyanika (RFr400, 45 minutes), on the Rwanda-Uganda border, and to Gisenyi (RFr800, 1½ hours).

Getting Around

There are few taxis in Ruhengeri, but plenty of *boda-bodas* (bicycle taxis) for those needing a rest. A typical fare from the centre to the Hôtel Muhabura is RFr200. Taxi-motors are also available, but they are pretty optimistic with their prices.

PARC NATIONAL DES VOLCANS

This is the definitive location to track the rare and captivating mountain gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla beringei*) in Africa. This area along the border with DR Congo and Uganda also happens to be one of the most beautiful sights in Africa. There is a chain of no less than seven volcanoes, the highest, Karisimbi, more than 4500m.

On the bamboo- and rainforest-covered slopes of the volcanoes are some of the last remaining sanctuaries of the mountain gorilla, which was studied in depth first by George Schaller and, more recently, by Dian Fossey.

Fossey spent the best part of 13 years living at a remote camp high up on the slopes of Bisoke in order to study the gorillas and to habituate them to human contact. She'd probably still be there now had she not been murdered in December 1985, most likely by poachers with whom she had made herself very unpopular. Without her tenacious efforts to have poaching stamped out and the work of committed locals since her death, there possibly wouldn't be any mountain gorillas remaining in Rwanda.

Fossey's account of her years with the gorillas and her battle with the poachers and government officials, *Gorillas in the Mist*, makes fascinating reading (see p75). Pick up a copy before coming here. Her story has also been made into a film of the same name (p571), and following its success, the tourism industry in the country boomed for a while, until fighting between the government and the RPF put the area out of bounds to tourists. Things were on and off until 1999, when the park fully reopened, and it is now receiving visitors daily.

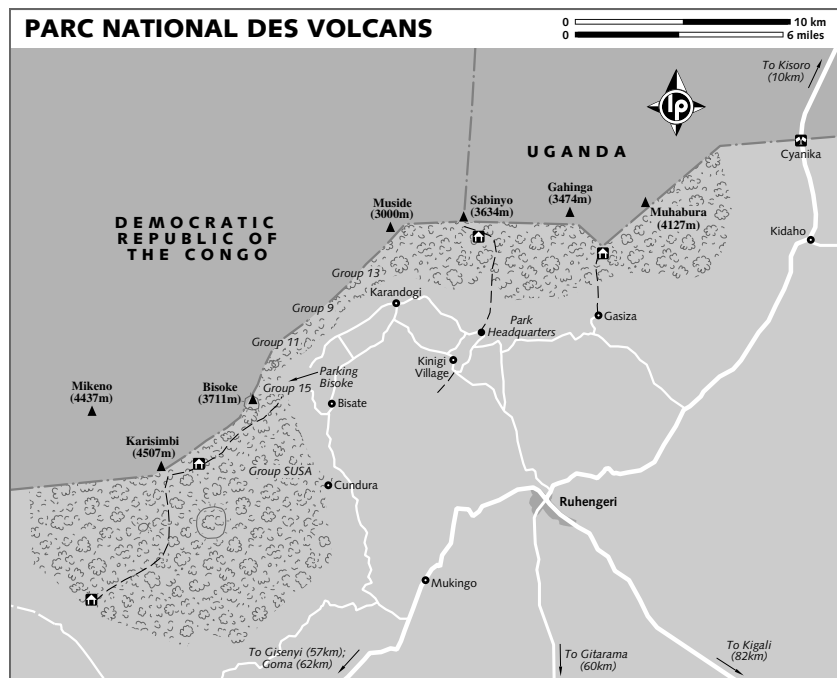
During the early part of the last civil war, these mountains were the focus of intense fighting that included artillery duels. This was hardly conducive to good gorilla-human relations and it was reported that at least seven of the gorillas had met their end. Poaching continues to threaten their existence today and in 2002 two females of the remote Susa group were killed to capture their infants for sale on the international market.

It isn't just poaching or soldiers, however, that threaten the gorillas. Also clawing away at their existence is local pressure for grazing and agricultural land, and the European Community's pyrethrum project – daisylike flowers processed into a natural insecticide. In 1969 this project was responsible for reducing the size of the park by more than 8900 hectares – almost half its area! The park now covers just 0.5% of the total land area of Rwanda.

Activities

VISITING THE GORILLAS

An encounter with these beautiful creatures is the highlight of a trip to Africa for many visitors. An encounter with a silverback male gorilla at close quarters can be a hair-raising experience if you've only ever seen



large wild animals behind the bars of a cage or from the safety of a car. Despite their size, however, they're remarkably nonaggressive animals, entirely vegetarian, and are usually quite safe to be around. For most people, it's a magical encounter.

It is no joy ride, however. The guides can generally find the gorillas within one to four hours of starting out, but this often involves a lot of strenuous effort scrambling through dense vegetation up steep, muddy hillsides, sometimes to more than 3000m. There are many stinging plants at higher altitudes and they can make it through light clothing such as trekking trousers. It also rains a lot in this area, so without the right footwear, clothing and a pair of gloves to avoid the stingers, it can be tough going.

There are five habituated gorilla groups in Parc National des Volcans, including the Susa group, which has 35 members. The Susa group is the largest but hardest to reach of all the groups, as much as three to four hours up the slopes of Karisimbi, and, at an altitude of more than 3000m, the going is tough if you are not fit. The other groups –

Sabinyo with 13 members, Amahura with 16 and Group 13 with just six – are all easier to reach as roads go right up to the forest line near Bisoke and Sabinyo volcanoes. Numbers of people allowed to visit each group are limited to a maximum of eight people per day, limiting the total number of daily permits to an absolute maximum of 40.

Visits to the gorillas are restricted to one hour and flash photography and video cameras are banned unless you are prepared to pay a huge sum for a filming permit! Children under 15 are not allowed to visit the gorillas.

For a compare and contrast look at the competing mountain gorilla experiences in Rwanda, Uganda and DR Congo, see p97.

Reservations

Bookings for gorilla permits can be made through the ORTPN tourist office (see p575) in Kigali or a Rwandan tour company (see p96). Those visiting on a tour package will have everything arranged for them, but independent travellers are also encouraged to make advance reservations where

possible. It is not always that easy to deal with ORTPN by phone or email from overseas, so it might be easier to book a permit through a Rwandan tour operator to be twice as sure the booking is confirmed. With tourism in Rwanda now on the up and up, it is getting more difficult to secure permits during the peak seasons of December/January and July/August so book well in advance if there is no room for flexibility with the date. Bookings are secured with a US\$50 deposit and full payment must be made 30 days prior to the visit. Independent travellers who have only decided to visit the gorillas in Rwanda once in the East Africa region can turn up at the ORTPN offices in Kigali or Ruhengeri and try to secure a booking at the earliest available date. During the high season, waits of several days are not uncommon. If bookings are really solid, consider tracking the mountain gorillas in DR Congo, if the security situation remains stable (p563).

Having made a booking and paid the fees, head to the ORTPN office in Ruhengeri ready for the experience of a lifetime. Ideally get there the afternoon before just to double check everything is OK, but it is also no problem to turn up at 7am on the day of the visit. It is also necessary to arrange a vehicle through the ORTPN office to take you to the point at which you start climbing up to where the gorillas are situated, which costs about US\$50 shared between however many there are in the group. In practice, however, it should be possible to hitch a ride with other tourists or expats who have their own vehicles. If the only option available is to charter a vehicle and you are alone, it will be cheaper to arrange a taxi-motor for the 13km ride.

Permit Fees

Fees are now a hefty US\$375 per person for a gorilla visit (including park entry, compulsory guides and guards), payable in hard currency. However, there are reliable rumours that this could rise again to US\$500 during the lifetime of this book. Resident foreigners pay just US\$200 and Rwandan nationals RFr10,000. Porters are also available but you pay extra for this service (US\$2). The guides, guards and any porters will expect a tip (around US\$5 each depending on the quality of the service) at the end, plus it is

a good idea to tip the driver for those who get a free ride up to the park.

GOLDEN MONKEY TRACKING

Golden monkey tracking is a relative newcomer on the wildlife scene of East Africa, but is rapidly rising in popularity both in Parc National des Volcans and across the border at Mgahinga in Uganda. More like chimp viewing than a gorilla encounter, these beautiful active monkeys bound about the branches of bigger trees. Currently classified as an endangered species, hopefully this new activity will ensure their future. It costs US\$75 to track the golden monkeys, although it may be worth noting that the fee is just US\$20 across the other side of the Virungas at Mgahinga in Uganda. Factoring in the park fees, that adds up to US\$100 in Rwanda, only US\$40 in Uganda.

TREKKING THE VOLCANOES

The stunning volcanoes are an evocative backdrop for a guided trek. There are several possibilities for trekking up to the summits of one or more of the volcanoes in the park. The treks range from several hours to two days. A guide is compulsory but porters are optional. Overnight treks are currently suspended, but should they resume you'll need to bring your own sleeping gear, but not tents as there are huts on the mountain.

The ascents pass through some remarkable changes of vegetation, ranging from thick forests of bamboo, giant lobelia or hagenia on to alpine meadows. If the weather is favourable, the reward is some spectacular views over the mountain chain. It is forbidden to cut down trees or otherwise damage vegetation in the park and you are only allowed to make fires in the designated camping areas.

The two-day climb up Karisimbi costs US\$150, including park fees and a guide. The Bisoke crater climb or a visit to the grave of Dian Fossey and the gorilla graveyard cost US\$50.

The following treks are among the more popular.

Bisoke

The return trip to Bisoke (3711m) takes six to seven hours from Parking Bisoke. The ascent takes you up the steep southwestern flanks of the volcano to the summit, where you can see the crater lake. The descent follows

a track on the northwestern side, from where there are magnificent views over the Parc National des Virungas and Lake Ngezi.

There is also another trek to visit the grave of Dian Fossey, who did so much research on the slopes of Bisoke, part of the gorilla graveyard where many of her subjects were buried, including the famous Digit.

Karisimbi

Climbing Karisimbi (4507m) takes two days. The track follows the saddle between Bisoke and Karisimbi and then ascends the northwestern flank of the latter. Some five hours after beginning the trek, there is a metal hut in which to spend the night (the hut keys are available at Parking Bisoke). The rocky and sometimes snow-covered summit is a further two to four hours walk through alpine vegetation. To do this trek, take plenty of warm clothing and a very good sleeping bag. It gets very cold, especially at the metal hut, which is on a bleak shoulder of the mountain at 3660m. The wind whips through, frequently with fog, so there is little warmth from the sun. This trek was not available at the time of writing, but should be reinstated some time during the lifetime of this book.

Other Treks

Before the genocide, there were several other treks available that have not yet been reinstated, but we describe them here, as they may be reintroduced soon.

- The return walk to Lake Ngezi (about 3000m) takes three to four hours from Parking Bisoke. This is one of the easiest of the treks, and at the right time of the day it is possible to see a variety of animals coming to drink.
- Climbing Sabinyo (3634m) takes five to six hours from the park headquarters near Kinigi. The track ascends the south-eastern face of the volcano, ending up with a rough scramble over steep lava beds along a very narrow path.
- Climbing Gahinga (3474m) and Muhabura (4127m) is a two-day trip from Gasiza. The summit of the first volcano is reached after a climb of about four hours along a track that passes through a swampy saddle between the two mountains. The trip to the summit of Muhabura takes about four hours from the saddle.

Sleeping

Kinigi Guesthouse (☎ 546984; www.rwanda-gorillas.com; s/d incl breakfast US\$20/25) This is the best-value option in the vicinity of the national park and the good news is that it is run for a cause. Located very close to park headquarters in Kinigi village, all profits from this local lodge are ploughed back into the Association de Solidarité des Femmes Rwandaises, which assists vulnerable Rwandan women of all backgrounds and ages. Set in lush gardens, the wooden bungalows are good value and the staff friendly.

Gorilla's Nest Camp (☎ 546331; gorillanest@yahoo.fr; s/d incl breakfast US\$80/100) Also in the Kinigi area is this midrange lodge, with wonderful views up to the volcanoes. Rooms are smart and include hot-water showers. The breakfast is hearty and other meals are available.

Virunga Lodge (☎ 502452; www.volcanoessafaris.com; s/d US\$265/400) One of the most stunningly situated camps in the region, the new Volcanoes-run Virunga Lodge is nestled on a ridge above Lake Burera and offers incredible views across to the Virunga volcanoes. Accommodation is in individual stone chalets, but the price is definitely more about atmosphere than absolute luxury. There is a striking bar and restaurant with a 360-degree view of the lakes and volcanoes beyond.

Getting There & Away

The access point for the national park is Ruhengeri. To get to the park from Ruhengeri, you can arrange a vehicle through the ORTPN office in Ruhengeri (about US\$50), or try hitching a ride with fellow trekkers. There are usually enough vehicles around, especially at weekends.

GISENYI

Welcome to the Costa del Kivu! Gisenyi is a resort town for rich Rwandans, expat escapees and, increasingly, tourists. Landscaped villas, plush hotels and private clubs occupy much of the Lake Kivu frontage and are quite a contrast to the African township on the hillside above.

For those with the money, there's a variety of water sports available, plus plush hotels and restaurants. For those without, there are magnificent views over Lake Kivu and, looking northwest, the 3470m-high volcano of Nyiragongo, which blew its top and swallowed much of Goma in neighbouring DR

Congo in early 2002. Swimming and sunbathing on the sandy beaches are also free.

Information

BCR (Rue de Ruhengeri), representing Western Union, and **BCDI** (Rue des Poissons), representing Moneygram, both have branches near the market, while **Banque de Kigali** (Ave de Fleures) is near the lakefront in the lower part of town. Currently these banks can only deal with cash exchanges. **Modern Internet** (Rue de Ruhengeri) offers the best Internet connection in town, sometimes the only connection.

There is no DR Congo consulate here, but visas (US\$35) are available on the border if crossing to Goma to trek Nyiragongo volcano or visit the mountain gorillas in Parc National des Virungas (see p560).

Sights & Activities

Gisenyi is home to the **Primus Brewery**, the factory responsible for churning out all those blessed bottles of lager found up and down Rwanda. We were able to arrange a tour of the brewery, located about 7km out of town along a lovely lakeshore road. The tour is free and may include a beer, but keep cameras well out of sight, as they are very sensitive about photographs.

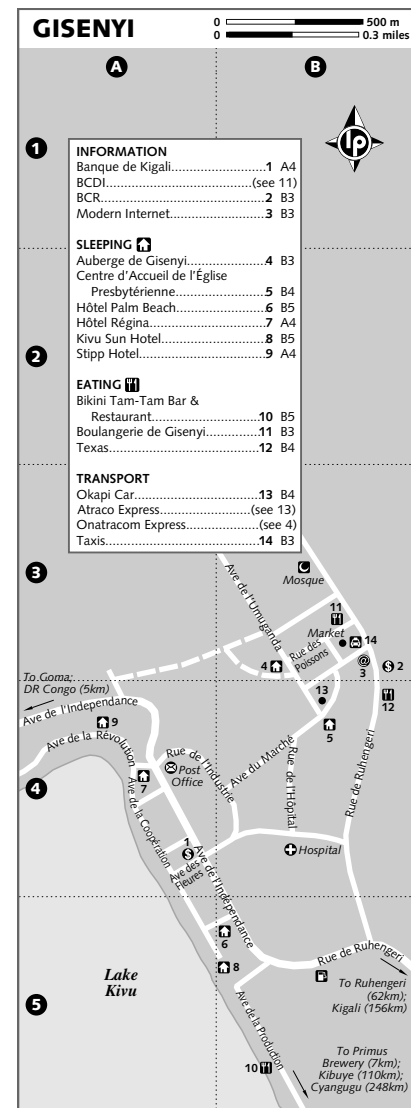
Sleeping

The cheaper places are all found around the upper part of town, but it is better to spend a little more and stay down near the lakeside.

Centre d'Accueil de l'Église Presbytérienne (☎ 540397; Ave du Marché; dm RFr1000-1500, d RFr4800) This church-run hostel has the cheapest beds in town. Dorms come with varying numbers of beds and the more expensive ones have just four people per room. The double rooms are clean and include a bathroom. Basic meals are served in a small restaurant and there is a craft shop selling banana-leaf cards and stuffed toys to raise money for local women's groups.

Auberge de Gisenyi (☎ 540385; Ave de l'Umuganda; s/d RFr5000/6000) The pick of the pack among the cheaper guesthouses in the upper part of town, the rooms here face onto an attractive courtyard garden. The doubles are almost suites, making them a good deal, and the restaurant is popular at night for both food and beer.

Hôtel Palm Beach (☎ 085 59551; uwinya@yahoo.fr; Ave de la Coopération; r RFr15,000-30,000) Housed



in a rambling old colonial-era house, the rooms here are spacious and comfortable. The cheaper rooms include a bathroom with hot water, while the most expensive options have a lake view and satellite TV. It has its own stretch of private beachfront, a beachside bar and a popular restaurant-bar downstairs.

WARNING: SWIMMING IN LAKE KIVU

There are certain parts of Lake Kivu, particularly around Gisenyi, where it is very dangerous to swim, as volcanic gases are released from the lake bed and, in the absence of wind, tend to collect on the surface of the lake. Quite a few people have been asphyxiated as a result. Watch where the local people swim and you should be safe.

Stipp Hotel (☎ 540540; www.stippag.co.rw; Ave de la Révolution; s/d US\$60/70) One of the newest hotels in town, the owners have done a number on an old property, creating Gisenyi's, surely Rwanda's, first boutique hotel. The 10 rooms are packed with extras like satellite TV, IDD telephone and big bathtubs and the lush grounds include a swimming pool and sauna. The restaurant here is considered one of the best in town.

Kivu Sun Hotel (☎ 541111; kivusun@southernsun.com; Ave de la Coopération; s/d from US\$85/95; ♿ ♻️ 🚰) Once upon a time this was the Izuba Meridien, a resort hotel that used to feel a bit like a Club Med that got lost on its way to the Seychelles. However, it has risen from the ashes as the South African-run Kivu Sun and is the smartest place in town. Rooms are packed with creature comforts and many offer a lake view. Facilities include a swimming pool and some prime beachfront on the lake shore. The building has a dark past, however, having briefly served as the headquarters for the interim government that presided over the genocide – so they could flee into DR Congo when things got too hot.

Hôtel Régina (Ave de la Coopération) Once one of the most atmospheric budget hotels in the region, the colonial-era Regina was closed at the time of writing, awaiting an investor to turn it into another beautiful boutique hotel.

Eating & Drinking

Most visitors end up eating at the bigger hotels, as there isn't a great selection of restaurants in town. There are several simple restaurants on the main road in the upper part of town serving cheap meals, but the standard isn't up to much.

Among the hotels, the Palm Beach has a popular restaurant, which includes a beach-

front bar for a meal at sunset. The menu is predominantly French and it draws a local crowd most nights. The bar has a pool table and hustlers come from as far afield as Goma to show their skills.

The restaurants at Stipp Hotel and Kivu Sun Hotel are both highly regarded, serving continental cuisine. Meals run from about RFr2000 to RFr10,000 and service at either place is swift.

Texas (Rue de Ruhengeri; snacks RFr1000-3000) For something completely different, head to this sophisticated coffee shop in the upper part of town. The décor is definitely more international than most in Gisenyi and the menu includes fresh breads, pastries and even pizzas, plus creative coffees and juices.

Bikini Tam-Tam Bar & Restaurant (Ave de la Production; mains RFr1500-3000) In a great location on the beach in the south of town, the menu here is limited but the setting more than makes up for it. Who knows where they came up with the name, but it's easy to remember. It gets busier at the weekends when the drinking crowd rolls in.

For self-caterers, there's a wide variety of fruit and vegetables available at the main market. For cheese, meats, yogurts and fresh bread try **Boulangerie de Gisenyi** (Rue des Poissons).

Getting There & Away**BOAT**

All passenger ferries across Lake Kivu to other Rwandan ports are currently suspended. However, there are fast boats between Goma and Bukavu, taking just two hours, although this would require a DR Congo visa and there are potentially serious security question marks over this route.

BUS & MINIBUS

It is a beautiful journey from Ruhengeri through rural farms and villages and there are panoramic views of Lake Kivu as the road descends into Gisenyi. **Okapi Car** (Ave du Marché) and **Atraco Express** (Ave du Marché) operate minibuses between Gisenyi and Kigali (RFr1800, three hours) and the advantage with this service is that it does not stop all the time for people getting on and off. There are also regular minibuses between Gisenyi and Ruhengeri (RFr700, two hours). **Onatracom Express** (Ave de l'Umuganda) runs big buses and has three services a day to Ki-

gali (RFr1600) passing through Ruhengeri (RFr800). All the buses terminate on Ave de l'Umuganda.

There are only infrequent minibuses running between Gisenyi and Kibuye, but one bus (RFr1200, six hours) a day heads in each direction around 8am.

For the slowdown on crossing the border into DR Congo, see p600. It is easy enough to reach the border by taxi-motor for RFr200 or taxi for RFr1000.

Getting Around

If you need wheels, taxi-motors do the run between the market and lakeside areas of town for RFr200.

SOUTHWESTERN RWANDA

The endless mountains don't stop as you head south towards Burundi. Highlights here include the intellectual centre of Butare and the magnificent forest of Parc National Nyungwe Forest, not forgetting of course the stunningly beautiful blue waters of Lake Kivu.

BUTARE

Butare is the intellectual centre of Rwanda, home to the National University, the National Institute of Scientific Research and the excellent National Museum. The town itself is a step down in size after bustling Kigali, but all the same, it offers a good range of hotels and many of the locals speak English or French.

Information

There are branches of BCR, BCDI, and Banque de Kigali on the main Rue de Kigali, but they can only deal with cash.

Computer Link @ Butare (Rue de Kigali; per hr RFr500) The place for Internet access in town.

Expo Vente (Rue de Kigali) A large handicrafts shop exhibiting local products made by cooperatives in villages around Butare. One of the best-value places to buy crafts in the country.

Librairie Caritas (Rue de la Prefecture) A good bookshop frequented by students from the university.

Post office (Rue de Kigali) Has postal services, but no telephones. For domestic and international calls try the shops opposite Hôtel Ibis.

Sights

The excellent **National Museum** (☎ 530586; Rue de Kigali; admission RFr1000; ☎ 8-5pm) opened in 1989 and is one of the best museums in East Africa. It's certainly the most amazing building in the country. A gift from Belgium to commemorate 25 years of independence, it's well worth a visit for its ethnological and archaeological displays. The museum is about 2km north of the centre, past the minibus stand. It is probably best to take a *boda-boda* for RFr200 or try a short hitch.

Those interested in Africa flora might like to check out the **Arboretum de Ruhande** near the university.

Sleeping

Hôtel Faucon (☎ 086 17657; Rue de Kigali; s/apt RFr5000/10,000) Not so many years ago, this place provided serious competition for the Ibis, but standards have slipped. However, this is great news for budget travellers, as it offers huge rooms at rockbottom prices. Apartments come with a bathroom, satellite TV and seating area, and breakfast is included, making for enticing value.

Hôtel Ibis (☎ 530335; championibis@hotmail.com; Rue de Kigali; s/d RFr15,000/18,000, apt RFr20,000-23,000) Probably the best hotel in town thanks to a central location and comfortable rooms. The normal rooms are fine, but for a touch more class, take an apartment with space to spread your stuff around. There is an excellent terrace bar-restaurant here that serves drinks and snacks.

Hôtel des Beaux-Arts (☎ 530032; Ave du Commerce; r RFr4000-6000) Set a little way back from Ave du Commerce, this hotel has character for a cheapie. The hotel is attractively decorated with local products and there's a handicraft shop selling a selection of what is displayed on the walls. All rooms include hot-water bathrooms making them the real deal.

Motel Dusabane (☎ 085 59220; Rue Rwamamba; s/d RFr2500/3500) The basic rooms found here are nothing to write home about, but you'd have to be pretty sad to be writing home about hotel rooms anyway. No room for complaints at these prices.

Motel Gratia (☎ 530278; Rue Rwamamba; r RFr5000) This small hotel is mildly more inviting than the other budget options thanks to all the rooms facing on to a small garden. The simple rooms are clean and furnished and hot water is available on request.

BUTARE

INFORMATION		EATING	
Banque de Kigali.....	1 D2	Chez Venant.....	15 C2
BCDI.....	2 D2	Hôtel Faucon Restaurant.....	(see 10)
BCR.....	3 D1	Hôtel Ibis Restaurant.....	(see 11)
Computer Link @ Butare.....	4 D2	TRANSPORT	
Expo Vente.....	5 D2	Atraco Express.....	16 D2
Librairie Caritas.....	6 C2	Bus/Minibus Stand.....	17 D1
Post Office.....	7 D1	Okapi Car.....	(see 16)
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES		Trans Express 2000.....	(see 11)
National Museum.....	8 D1	Volcano Express.....	18 D2
SLEEPING 		Yahoo Car.....	19 D2
Hôtel des Beaux-Arts.....	9 C2		
Hôtel Faucon.....	10 D2		
Hôtel Ibis.....	11 D2		
Motel Dusabane.....	12 C2		
Motel Gratia.....	13 D2		
Procure d'Accueil.....	14 D2		

Hotel Credo (☎ 530505; Ave de l'Université; s RFr10,000-23,000, d RFr13,000-26,000) A modern hotel on the road to the university, this place draws well-to-do Rwandans visiting their kids at college, as well as business folk travelling between Rwanda and Burundi. Rooms are smart and come with a varying degree of gadgets at a variety of prices.

Procure d'Accueil (Ave de la Cathédral) Church-run, this place with very pretty gardens was undergoing a thorough renovation during our last visit, so should be in slick shape.

Eating & Drinking

Like many towns in Rwanda, this is another place where most visitors tend to eat at the guesthouses and hotels. Budget hotels can turn out basic food such as brochettes and rice, while the fancier hotels have pretty impressive menus at attractive prices.

Chez Venant (☎ 085 04115; Rue Rwamamba; mains RFr1000-5000) One of the few restaurants in town, this place brings the taste of China to Butare. All the usual suspects turn up on the menu, including spring rolls and beef in black bean sauce, but there are also a few local dishes for good measure.

Hôtel Ibis restaurant (☎ 530335; campionibis@hotmail.com; Rue de Kigali; meals RFr2000-3000) This hotel restaurant serves delicious food including a selection of meats, fish and pastas, and a wholesome range of salads for around RFr1000. This terrace here is also a popular drinking stop, whether at lunchtime or dinner.

Hôtel Faucon restaurant (☎ 086 17657; Rue de Kigali) The restaurant here seems to have taken a dive and is now pretty dead. However, the bar is still a lively place to be in the evening and has cheap Primus.

Entertainment

There is a traditional Rwandan dance troupe based near Butare and their show is spectacular. The *Intore* dance originated in Burundi and involves elaborate costumes and superb drumming routines. Performances can be organised through the National Museum and cost RFr10,000 for up to five people and then rises by RFr2000 for each additional five people. This is pretty good value for a group as photography is allowed, although not video. At weekends, prices rise by 25% and an evening performance is 50% more.

Contact the **museum** (☎ 532136) to book and confirm the dancers are in town, as they are sometimes on tour.

Shopping

In the surrounding area are several craft centres, such as Gihindamuyaga (10km) and Gishamvu (12km). Anyone thinking of buying anything at these places should look first at the quality and prices of what's for sale at the National Museum shop and Expo Vente opposite the Hôtel Ibis.

Getting There & Away

There are several bus companies operating between Butare and Kigali (two hours)

found on Rue de Kigali: Atraco Express, Okapi Car, Trans Express 2000 and Volcano Express have almost hourly services in both directions, costing RFr1300. Atraco Express (8am and 2pm) and Onatraco Express (9.15am and 3.30pm) have daily departures to Cyangugu (RFr1700).

Yahoo Car and New Yahoo Coach operate minibuses between Kigali and Bujumbura (Burundi) that stop in Butare at 9.30am daily. Butare to Bujumbura costs RFr3000. However, check security conditions very carefully before crossing this way. There are also local minibuses to the Burundi border at Kayanza Haut.

The minibus stand is just a patch of dirt about 1km north of the town centre, by the stadium. Arriving minibuses often drop passengers in the centre of town, but when leaving, you must go to the bus stand. *Bodabodas* abound, so this is no problem.

Minibuses run between Butare and Kigali (RFr1100, two hours) and Kamembe (for Cyangugu, RFr1600, three hours) on a spectacular road in places, passing through the Nyungwe Forest, which contains some amazing virgin rainforest between Uwinka and Kiutabe.

GIKONGORO

Gikongoro would be a fairly forgettable town, but for the unforgettable horrors that took place here during the genocide. The location of a well-known technical college before the war, during the genocide many flocked here to seek protection from the killers. Then the Interahamwe came and in a matter of days thousands were dead. This is one of the most graphic of the many genocide memorials, as hundreds of bodies have been preserved with powdered lime, left exactly as they looked when the killers struck. Wandering through the rooms at this former institute of learning, the scene becomes more and more macabre, beginning with the contorted corpses of adults and finishing with a room full of toddlers and babies, slashes from the machetes still visible on the shrivelled bodies. This is horrific and not everyone can stomach it. It is, however, another poignant reminder to all of us of what came to pass here and why it must never be allowed to happen again.

Gikongoro is 28km west of Butare and there are regular minibuses running between

the two, costing RFr500. The memorial is 2km beyond the town and taxi-motors can run you there.

PARC NATIONAL NYUNGWE FOREST

Nyungwe Forest is the newest of Rwanda's parks to receive national park status, but the protected area covers one of the oldest rainforests in Africa. It is one of the leading attractions in Rwanda, easily the equal of Kibale Forest in Uganda. One of the largest protected montane rainforests in Africa, it covers 970 sq km and offers superb scenery overlooking the forest and Lake Kivu, as well as views to the north of the distant volcanoes of the Parc National des Virungas.

The project to protect the forest began in 1988 and has been sponsored by the Peace Corps, the World Conservation Society and the Rwandan government. The project aims to promote tourism in an ecologically sound way while also studying the forest and educating local people about its value.

The main attraction is the guided tours to view large groups of black-and-white Angolan colobus monkeys (up to 400 in each troop) or the chimpanzees. The lush, green valleys also offer outstanding hiking across 20km of well-maintained trails, passing through enormous stands of hardwoods, under waterfalls and through a large marsh. There are about 270 species of tree, 70 or more species of mammal, 275 species of bird and an astonishing variety of orchids and butterflies.

The park headquarters is at Uwinka, where there is an information centre. It costs US\$20 per day to visit Nyungwe Forest, but this includes unguided walks on any of the colour-coded forest trails. Chimpanzee walks leave from Uwinka at 6am and cost US\$50, while other primate walks, such as colobus walks, leave between 9am and 3pm, and cost US\$30. There are now seven hiking trails in the forest, ranging from 1km to 10km, all of which offer the chance of primate sightings. There is no law against spotting primates on a normal walk, but there is certainly the likelihood of more sightings on a specific primate walk. The short Blue Trail passes through colobus territory, while the longest Red Trail may offer a chimpanzee sighting and you are guaranteed some waterfalls. For a different scene, the Kamiranzovu Trail leads to a marshy area, where elephants used

to be seen. For those staying at the ORTPN Resthouse or those with wheels, there is a waterfall trail with good birding and the chance to view a group of fairly easy-going Angolan colobus in a small section of forest near the local tea estate. Whatever the colour of your walks, good footwear, binoculars and rain gear are advisable.

Sleeping

Those with their own transport usually opt to stay in Cyangugu or Butare, but there are a couple of options in and around Nyungwe Forest.

There is a camp site at the Uwinka headquarters, occupying a ridge (2500m) overlooking the forest that offers impressive views in all directions, but the camping fee has been whacked up to a prohibitive US\$20. Campers should bring pretty much everything they need – tent, sleeping bag, cooking equipment, food and warm clothes – as only drinks are available. The nearest towns for provisions are Cyangugu, Gikon-goro and Butare. There is little here other than toilets, charcoal and wood.

ORTPN Resthouse (r per person \$15-20) A more sophisticated option for those without a tent but with transport (it's 18km west of Uwinka). It offers wholesome meals with a bit of notice for RFr2500. The big problem is location, location, location, as it is a long haul to Uwinka for those with no transport.

Getting There & Away

The Nyungwe Forest lies between Butare and Cyangugu. Minibuses travel between Butare (90km, two hours) and Kamembe (for Cyangugu, 54km, one hour) throughout the day. The Uwinka headquarters is well marked with a picture of a colobus monkey. The trip between Uwinka and Kigali takes between four and five hours.

CYANGUGU

Clinging to the southern tip of Lake Kivu and looking across to Bukavu in DR Congo, Cyangugu is an attractively situated town on the lakeshore. Kamembe, a few kilometres above the lake, is the main town and transport centre and an important location for the processing of tea and cotton, while most of the better hotels are down below in Cyangugu proper, right next to the bor-

der. It is also the nearest major town to Parc National Nyungwe Forest, one of the richest primate destinations in Africa.

Information

There is a branch of BCR in Kamembe that changes cash, but for Congolese transactions, it is better to change near the border post in Cyangugu. Anyone planning to travel on to DR Congo can obtain an eight-day visa on the border for US\$35, but as Bukavu has experienced more unrest than most eastern towns, check carefully before crossing; see p562 for more details.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel du Lac (☎ 537172; s RFr5000-8000, d RFr12,000-15,000; 📶) So close to the border it's almost in DR Congo, this popular hotel has a good mix of rooms, although some of them are showing signs of age, so don't be shy about asking to see more than one. Smaller doubles come with bathroom and balcony, while there are also a couple of larger doubles with a bathtub. The swimming pool here is open to nonguests for RFr1000 per day. The lively terrace bar and restaurant is the place to be at night, with an inexpensive selection of snacks, while the 2nd-floor restaurant offers à la carte, but sans atmosphere.

Hotel des Chutes (☎ 537405; r RFr8000-10,000) Set back on the hill just above the lake, this hotel offers fine views. All the bathrooms have hot water, but it is worth spending a little extra for satellite TV and balconies overlooking the action below. There is also a great little restaurant here with a range of European cuisine available (mains from RFr2000), including steaks, lake fish and crisp salads. The bar here includes a pool table, which is popular with locals, and an outdoor terrace overlooking the lake.

Hôte St François (☎ 537915; s/d/tr RFr1500/2500/3700) Very close to the DR Congo border, this is a cheap and convenient stop for those heading east. It's friendly, spotlessly clean and offers excellent value for money, but couples may be separated unless obviously married. The meals, at around RFr1500, are also good value.

Muli Peace Guesthouse (☎ 537799; s/d RFr3000/5000) Kind of in the middle of nowhere, this is another religion, another guesthouse, with well-tended rooms, clean shared bathrooms and hot water. There are pretty

impressive views from here across the lake to Bukavu. Only really for those with their own transport.

Ten to Ten Paradise Hotel (☎ 537818; deluxe/lake view/ste RFr10,000/12,000/14,000) Up in more rough-and-ready Kamembe, this is the most modern hotel in town with some pretty smart rooms with satellite TV and bathroom. However, putting charm above comfort, you are better off down in Cyangugu.

There are also several hole-in-the-wall local restaurants up in Kamembe, which can provide a quick snack before or after a bus journey.

Getting There & Away

BOAT

All passenger ferries across Lake Kivu to other Rwandan ports are currently suspended. However, there are some fast boats between Bukavu and Goma, taking just two hours, although this would require a DR Congo visa and there are potentially serious security question marks over this route.

MINIBUS

Minibuses for the short hop between Cyangugu and Kamembe cost RFr100. Atraco Express and Onatracom Express have four daily departures between them to Butare (RFr1700). From Kamembe to Butare local minibuses cost RFr1600 and take about three hours. This road is incredibly spectacular in parts and passes through the superb Nyungwe rainforest, where it is possible to see troops of Angolan colobus playing by the roadside.

See p594 for details on the daily bus service connecting Cyangugu and Kibuye.

KIBUYE

Kibuye has a stunning location, spread across a series of tongues jutting into Lake Kivu. With good road connections to Kigali, it rivals Gisenyi as beach and water-sports capital of Rwanda, but sandy beaches are less common on this part of the lake. It's a pleasant place to relax for a few days and it is safe to swim here, unlike Gisenyi where there are sometimes dangerous volcanic gases.

Information

There is a post office near Guest House Kibuye with international services, plus plenty of MTN phones in the centre of town.

Bethanie Guesthouse (☎ 568509; bethanie@epr.org.rw; per hr RFr500) For Internet access.

Sights & Activities

To help ensure no one forgets the horrors that were perpetrated here in 1994, there is a **genocide memorial** in the church near Hôme St Jean – Kibuye was hardest hit of all prefectures during the killings, with about 90% of the Tutsi population murdered.

Before it was closed down by the government, Kibuye Guesthouse was offering **water-skiing** and **boat trips** to the surrounding islands, and these may restart once new investors are found.

There is a busy **market** on the lakeshore on Friday and this attracts traders from as far afield as DR Congo.

When returning on the road to Kigali, keep an eye out for the 100m-high waterfall **Les Chutes de Ndaba** after about 20km – buses usually slow down and helpful locals point it out.

Sleeping & Eating

Hôte St Jean (☎ 568526; dm RFr1500, s/d RFr2500/4000) Sitting on an isolated hillside to the west of town, this church-run pad has great views and the rooms are the cheapest in town, but for those without transport it means a lot of walking.

Bethanie Guesthouse (☎ 568509; bethanie@epr.org.rw; dm from RFr2000, r RFr7000-12,000; 📶) Run by the Presbyterian Church, this popular guesthouse occupies a peaceful location on a wooded peninsula jutting into the lake. There are plenty of dorm beds and the price depends on how many beds are in the room. The private rooms are smart, but it's wise to book ahead as this is Kibuye's leading conference venue. There is a basic restaurant, as well as Internet access.

Eden Golfe Rock Hotel (☎ 568524; r RFr10,000-14,000) This big hotel is open to the public once more, having housed the Chinese road-construction crew working on the Kigali road for many years. The location is not as nice as Bethanie, but the rooms are the smartest in town. The most expensive rooms include a balcony with views over Lake Kivu.

Guest House Kibuye (☎ 568554) Long the most popular place in town, offering cottages on the lakeside, water sports and fine dining, the government decided to close it, as

apparently the owners had failed to upgrade it. Not that the guests seemed to notice. No doubt other investors will step in and it should be up and running again some time during the lifetime of this book.

Restaurant Nouveauté (meals RFr1000) This place, in the centre of town near Okapi Car, has a basic menu of goat stew or brochettes, beans, rice, potatoes and so on. It also offers cold beers and soft drinks.

Getting There & Away

The Chinese-built road linking Kibuye with Kigali is endlessly winding but in excellent shape, making it very accessible from the capital. Okapi Car runs buses between Kigali (2½ hours, departing 8am, noon and 2pm) and Kibuye (departing 7am, noon and 2pm), costing RFr1400. Local minibuses also run this way for RFr1200, but are more crowded. Getting between Kibuye and either Cyangugu or Gisenyi is more difficult without your own vehicle as shared taxis and buses are very infrequent. There is a daily bus at 7.30am in either direction between Kibuye and Cyangugu (RFr1200, six hours) which involves one of the most spectacular roads in the country, complete with hairpin bends and plunging drops. There are infrequent minibuses to Gisenyi charging RFr1200. Friday is generally the easiest day for heading north or south, due to the market.

There are no ferry services currently in operation on Lake Kivu.

EASTERN RWANDA

The landscape changes in Eastern Rwanda, as the hills drop away to the plains of Tanzania. Sights are light and most people only pass through if visiting Akagera or taking the road less travelled to Tanzania.

PARC NATIONAL DE L'AKAGERA

Created in 1934 and covering an area of 2500 sq km, **Parc National de l'Akagera** (admission US\$10, wildlife viewing 1/2/3 days US\$20/30/50, car/minibus/jeep/truck US\$10/15/20/50) used to be one of the least visited but most interesting wildlife parks in Africa. However, with the massive numbers of refugees who returned to Rwanda in the late 1990s, as much as two-thirds of the park was degazetted and resettled with new

villages. This human presence led many of the animals in the remaining sector to take a holiday in Tanzania and a visit to this park became something of a vegetarian safari in recent years. However, the government is once again committed to promoting the park and the old Akagera Game Lodge has been rehabilitated by South African investors, offering genuine comfort.

There are three distinct environments in the park: standard savanna as seen in much of the region; an immense swampy area along the border with Tanzania that contains six lakes and numerous islands, some of which are covered with forest; and a chain of low mountains on the flanks of the park with variable vegetation, ranging from short grasses on the summits to wooded savanna and dense thickets of forest.

The best time to visit is during the dry season (mid-May to September). November and April are the wettest months. Tsetse flies can be bad in the north and east, so bring a fly swat and/or a good insect repellent.

Hiring a guide is a good idea, as the trails aren't that well marked, plus it will help give the rangers some encouragement as they really don't get many visitors. It doesn't necessarily mean more animals with a guide, however. The park's animals include hippos, buffaloes, zebras, topis, giraffes and elephants. The lion population is extremely small, but the park is a good destination for birders with the possibility of more than 500 species. Rather dated park maps, for sale at the tourist office in Kigali, are reasonably accurate for the remaining sector of the park and these are not on sale at the park. A wildlife handbook is also a useful thing to have, plus the obligatory pair of binoculars. Also fill up on fuel, as nothing is available once in the park.

Double-check on the entry charges with ORTPN in Kigali (p575), as it seems like a double whammy right now: an entry charge, plus a wildlife-viewing charge. There are discounts for students and children.

Sleeping

Akagera Game Lodge (☎ 567805; agl@rwanda1.com; s/d US\$100/144; 📍) Great news for those on an upmarket safari in the region, the Akagera Lodge has finally been rehabilitated and now offers four-star comfort for park visitors. Fully renovated by a South African

hotel group, this is really more a hotel than a lodge and the rooms are very well equipped with satellite TV, deluxe bathroom and IDD telephone. Full-board deals are available, a wise choice given there are no other restaurants in the park. Day-trippers should head here for lunch.

Camping (adult/child US\$10/5) is possible at the park headquarters on the shores of Lake Ihema, but more attractive is the second, basic camp site at Lake Shakani, a few kilometres north. However, at either place facilities are so minimal as to be verging on nonexistent!

Getting There & Away

The problem with Akagera is that it is only really accessible for those with their own transport. Safari and tour companies in Kigali can arrange a vehicle, but charges are rather expensive. It might be cheaper to negotiate with private taxis around Kigali. Alternatively save the park experience for Uganda, Kenya or Tanzania and concentrate on primates in Rwanda.

RWANDA DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Camping

The only fully functioning camp sites in the country are at Parcs National Nyungwe Forest and de l'Akagera, but it may be possible to camp at some of the missions around the country on request.

Hostels

Dorm accommodation at the mission hostels costs RFr1000 to RFr2500 per night without food. A private double room at the hostels costs from RFr2500 to RFr15,000 per night depending on facilities.

Mission hostels are places run by churches or missionaries; these differ from ordinary places in that few foreigners stay at them and the hostels usually enforce a curfew – the door is usually closed at 10pm (or earlier). They seem to attract an exceptionally conscientious type of manager who takes the old adage 'cleanliness is next to godliness' fairly seriously. There might not be hot water but the bed and room will be spotless. It's a possibility that couples may be separated unless obviously married.

PRACTICALITIES

- Rwanda uses the metric system and distances are in kilometres.
- Electricity in Rwanda is 240V, 50 cycles, and plugs are mainly two-pin.
- The English-language *New Times* is published several times a week, plus the *New Vision* and *Monitor* are available from Uganda. French magazines and international titles are available in Kigali.
- Radio Rwanda is the government-controlled station, broadcasting in Kinyarwanda, French, Swahili and English.
- Television Rwandaise (TVR) is the state-owned broadcaster.

Hotels

Compared with mission hostels, hotels are generally more expensive and, at the rock-bottom budget end, not always worth the extra amount, especially where they are often none too clean. More expensive budget hotels and midrange places usually offer satellite TV and hot showers, but rates are sometimes higher than elsewhere in the region.

Top-end hotels, mostly found in Kigali, are much the same as their counterparts elsewhere in Africa. Some of the newer, smaller places offer better value for money and more character than the international chains. There are also now a couple of up-market camps located near Ruhengeri on the edge of Parc National des Volcans.

ACTIVITIES

Bird-Watching

Bird-watching in Rwanda may not be in the same league as Uganda, but there are some good opportunities for ornithologists in Parc National Nyungwe Forest (p591), where a host of Albertine Rift endemics can be seen, as well as Parc National de l'Akagera (opposite), in the east of the country, which offers an alternative range of savanna birds.

Gorilla & Chimpanzee Tracking

Without a doubt the number-one attraction for all visitors to Rwanda, an encounter with the enigmatic mountain gorillas is simply

magical. It's possible to track the mountain gorillas in Parc National des Volcans (p583) throughout the year. Bookings should be made with the ORTPN office (p575) in Kigali. For more information on the mountain gorillas, see p97.

Primate tracking is also beginning to take off at Parc National Nyungwe Forest (p591), but sightings are not as common as in Uganda, as habituation is still ongoing. However, there are also huge troops of colobus monkeys in Nyungwe and these are easy to spot from the well-marked walking trails that cut through the forest.

Hiking & Trekking

Trekking is beginning to take off again in Rwanda. As the waiting list for gorilla permits grows longer in peak season, more travellers are taking the opportunity to trek on the volcanoes or track the golden monkeys at Parc National des Volcans (p583). There is also an excellent network of colour-coded walking trails at Parc National Nyungwe Forest (p591), the largest tropical montane forest in the East Africa region.

Wildlife Watching

The only opportunity for wildlife-watching drives in Rwanda is in Parc National de l'Akagera (p594), but with wildlife numbers still recovering, it is not quite the Kenya or Tanzania experience yet.

BOOKS

Many of the most powerful books written about Rwanda cover the tragedy of the 1994 genocide. For an in-depth insight into the Rwandan genocide, read *The Rwanda Crisis – History of a Genocide* by French historian Gerard Prunier.

One of the most hard-hitting books on the genocide is *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* by Phillip Gourevitch; see p37 for more.

Another journalist who bore witness to much of the killing was BBC correspondent Fergal Keane, who returned to write *Season of Blood*. Full of first-hand accounts of unbelievable horrors, this is hard reading.

Shake Hands With the Devil by Lt Gen Romeo Dallaire tells the inside story of the UN mission in Rwanda; see p32 for more.

Leave None to Tell the Story, published by African Rights Watch, is a meticulous record

of the genocide through the eyes of victims who survived and government records which attest to the clinical planning of it all.

A Sunday by the Pool in Kigali by Gil Courtemanche is a fictional account of a relationship between a French reporter and a beautiful Tutsi woman during the genocide. No doubt based on very real events, this is an ill-fated love story that perfectly captures the horrors of the time.

Gorillas in the Mist by Dian Fossey is another classic; see p75 for a review.

BUSINESS HOURS

Government offices and businesses are generally open between 8.30am and 4.30pm or 5.30pm, with a short break for lunch sometime between noon and 2pm. Most shops and banks do not break for lunch, but some banks close early at 3.30pm.

Local restaurant hours are 7am to 9pm, and international-type restaurants are open 11.30am to 2.30pm and 5.30pm to 10.30pm.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Mention Rwanda to most people and they think of it as a highly dangerous place. In fact the reality today is very different and security has returned to all parts of the country. That said, it is still worth checking security conditions before entering the country as it is in a very unstable area of the world. There is always the remote possibility of Interahamwe rebels re-entering the country or problems spilling over from DR Congo. The most important thing to remember about security is that there is absolutely no substitute for researching current conditions before arrival and again once in the country. Read newspapers, ask other travellers and hostels for the latest and check again locally once in the provinces. Things can change very fast in Africa, for the better or worse, and it pays to be well informed.

Urban Rwanda is undoubtedly one of the safer places to be in this region of Africa, and Kigali is a genuine contender for the safest capital in Africa, but like in any big city take care around unlit areas at night.

Out in the countryside, do not walk along anything other than a well-used track; there may still be land mines in some remote areas, although most have now been cleared by international organisations.

Never take photographs of anything connected with the government or the military (post offices, banks, bridges, border crossings, barracks, prisons, dams). Film, and maybe the equipment, will be confiscated. In fact take care of where you point your camera anywhere in the country, as most Rwandans are very sensitive to who and what you are snapping.

The most common annoyance is the roadblocks on all of the main roads around Rwanda, particularly close to the capital Kigali. Vehicles must stop at these and passengers and their baggage may be searched. On roads near borders, the soldiers will also want to check passports and travel documents.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Rwandan Embassies

For Rwandan embassies in Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania or Uganda, see the relevant section in those chapters. Useful Rwandan embassies worldwide:

Belgium (☎ 02-771 2127; 1 Ave de Fleurs, Brussels)

South Africa (☎ 012-460 0709; 35 Marais St, Pretoria)

UK (☎ 020-7224 9832; 120-122 Seymour Place, London)

USA (☎ 202-232 2882; 1724 New Hampshire Ave, Washington DC)

Embassies in Rwanda

Quite a number of embassies are now located on Blvd de l'Umuganda, across the valley in the Kacyiru suburb of Kigali.

Belgium (☎ 575551; Rue de Nyarugenge)

Burundi (☎ 517529; Kacyiru)

Canada (☎ 571762; Rue de l'Akagera)

France (☎ 575206; 40 Ave Paul VI)

Kenya (☎ 583332; Blvd de l'Umuganda)

South Africa (☎ 583185; Blvd de l'Umuganda)

Tanzania (☎ 505400; Ave de la Paix)

Uganda (☎ 572117; Ave de la Paix)

UK (☎ 585280; Blvd de l'Umuganda)

USA (☎ 505601; Blvd de la Revolution)

HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day 1 January

Democracy Day 8 January

Easter (Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Monday) March/April

Labour Day 1 May

Ascension Thursday May

Whit Monday May

National Day 1 July

Peace & National Unity Day 5 July

Harvest Festival 1 August

Assumption 15 August

Culture Day 8 September

Kamarampaka Day 25 September

Armed Forces Day 26 October

All Saints' Day 1 November

Christmas Day 25 December

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet access in Rwanda is reasonable by regional standards and is now widely available in Kigali, as well as on a more limited basis in Butare, Cyangugu, Kibuye and Ruhengeri. It is cheap at around RFr500 per hour.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Rwanda doesn't have a huge presence in cyberspace, but there are a few useful websites to keep an eye out for.

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (www.ict.org) The official website for the genocide trials taking place in Arusha.

New Times (www.newtimes.co.rw) For the latest news on Rwanda in English.

Tourism in Rwanda (www.rwandatourism.com) The official tourist website on Rwanda, with information on national parks and local culture.

MAPS

It's difficult to get hold of decent maps of Rwanda before getting to the country. The best map currently is *Rwanda Burundi – International Travel Map* by ITMB Publishing at a scale of 1:400,000. Once in Kigali, it may be possible to buy older maps of some of the national parks from the ORTPN office or from local bookshops.

MONEY

The unit of currency is the Rwandan franc (RFr). It is divided into 100 centimes, but these are no longer in circulation. Notes come in RFr100, RFr500, RFr1000, RFr5000 and RFr10,000 denominations. Coins come in RFr1, RFr5, RFr10, RFr20 and RFr50.

ATMs

Banks in Kigali have a network of ATMs, but they are not yet wired up for international transactions, despite the Visa signs at some. Ask locals on arrival for the latest rather than wander the city from ATM to ATM experiencing disappointment as happened to us.

Black Market

There is still a bit of a black market in Rwanda, but there is not much difference in the rate offered on the street and in banks and forex places. Moneychangers gather around the main post office in Kigali, but count your cash very carefully if you change on the street.

Cash

It is definitely best to come with US dollars or euros cash to Rwanda, as travellers cheques and credit-card withdrawals attract a hefty commission, and rates against other currencies are poor. There are a number of banks open in Kigali, but some can be very slow at dealing with currency exchange. There are branches of Banque Commerciale de Rwanda (BCR), Banque de Commerce, de Developement et de l'Industrie (BCDI) and Banque de Kigali in Butare, Cyangugu, Gisenyi, Gitarama and Ruhengeri, but they usually only deal with either US dollars or euros cash.

Another option is to change cash on the street or in shops, usually attracting a slightly higher rate than elsewhere, particularly for non-US currencies.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are generally only accepted in relatively expensive hotels and restaurants in Kigali. It is possible to make cash withdrawals against credit cards at Banque de Kigali in the capital, but minus a commission of around US\$15 and a lot of time, plus a bill in euros.

Tipping

Tipping is common in the cities these days due to the large international presence. As in many parts of the developing world, Rwandan salaries are low and a tip of about 10% will be appreciated.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques attract a hefty combination of commissions adding up to about US\$16 per transaction, so it is well worth changing all the money you'll need in one go. Irritatingly enough, Banque de Kigali is the only place that can exchange travellers cheques and only in Kigali. Yes, that's right, your travellers cheques are useless beyond the capital.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

Bring plenty of film to Rwanda, as it is very expensive here and the choice is extremely limited. Slide film is pretty much impossible to obtain. If you do buy film, check the expiry dates.

Be extremely careful wherever you take photos in Rwanda; see p596.

To take photos of the gorillas in the Parc National des Volcans, bring higher-speed film. Depending on where you encounter them, it is often very dark in their dense forest habitat, so normal film can produce very disappointing results when developed. Carry 200 ISO (ASA) and 400 ISO (ASA) and consider pushing it one stop when developing it if conditions are particularly dark.

POST

Postal rates for postcards going overseas are RFr200 for Africa, RFr250 for Europe and North America and RFr300 elsewhere. There is a poste restante facility at the post office in Kigali. See p575 for details.

TELEPHONE

There are two main operators in Rwanda, MTN and Rwandatel. International calls are relatively expensive at RFr500 to RFr1000 per minute to most countries including Europe, North America and Australia. There are currently no area codes in Rwanda. The international code for Rwanda is ☎ 250. Mobile telephone numbers start with the prefixes ☎ 083, ☎ 085 and ☎ 086. Visit www.rwandaphonebook.com when looking for telephone numbers in Rwanda.

TOURIST INFORMATION

The tourist office, ORTPN, is in Kigali; see p575 for more on contact details and its services. With no network of hostels or camps around the country, there is very little travel information available in Rwanda and it is easier to pick up information in Kampala (Uganda) before coming here.

VISAS

Visas are required by everyone except nationals of Canada, Germany, South Africa, Sweden, the UK, the USA and other East African countries. For other passport-holders visas cost US\$60 in most countries, require two photos, and allow up to a three-month stay if requested. When applying,

there is no need to show an onward ticket or 'sufficient funds'.

When applying for a visa, you should request a multiple-entry visa if you intend to re-enter Rwanda from Uganda, DR Congo or Burundi. There's no extra cost and it offers flexibility.

Most of the travellers visiting Rwanda, however, get their visa on arrival at the border. The 15-day visa also costs a whopping US\$60, but is issued instantly.

Those driving their own vehicles are required to buy an entry permit at the border for RFr5000 and insurance is compulsory, available from **Sonarwa** (in Kigali ☎ 573350) for about RFr4000 per day.

VISA EXTENSIONS

Both tourist and transit visas can be extended in Kigali at **Ministère de l'Intérieur** (MININTER; ☎ 585856) in the Kacyiru district, about 7km northeast of the city centre. Extensions take a week or more to issue and cost RFr15,000 per month.

VISAS FOR ONWARD TRAVEL

Anyone wanting visas for neighbouring countries while in Rwanda should take note of the following (see p597 for the addresses):

Burundi Visas cost US\$40 for one month single entry, although check on the security situation very carefully before visiting. Also available on the border.

DR Congo At the time of research, visas were not being issued for travel to Kinshasa as the embassy had not yet reopened. However, for land crossings to eastern DR Congo eight-day visas are available at Bukavu or Goma for US\$35.

Kenya Visas cost US\$50 or the equivalent in local currency, require two photographs and are issued the same day if you apply before 11.30am. However, visas are also available on arrival.

Tanzania Visas require two photos and generally take 24 hours to issue. The cost depends on nationality.

Uganda Visas cost US\$30, require two photos and are issued in 24 hours. However, it is far easier to get them at the border on arrival.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Although Rwanda is a safe place in which to travel, it is sensible not to venture too far off the beaten track alone and to avoid wandering down dark streets in larger towns. In general, women will find that they encounter far fewer hassles from men than on the coast of Kenya.

WORK

With all the international money sloshing around Rwanda, one might be forgiven for thinking it would be easy to pick up some work here; however, most international organisations tend to recruit professionals from home. Anyone considering looking for work must secure a work permit from a Rwandan embassy before entering the country. The permit costs more than US\$300.

TRANSPORT IN RWANDA

GETTING THERE & AWAY

For information on getting to Rwanda from outside East Africa, see p631.

Entering Rwanda

Yellow-fever vaccination certificates are in theory compulsory for entry or exit, but are rarely requested in reality.

Air

Gregoire Kayibanda International Airport (KGL) is located at Kanombe, 10km east of Kigali centre. Few budget travellers enter Rwanda by air because most of the discounted air fares available in Europe and North America use Nairobi as the gateway to East Africa. Most high-end tourists also enter by land as part of a two-country safari including Uganda. Air tickets bought in Rwanda for international flights are expensive and compare poorly with what is on offer in Nairobi or Kampala. It is possible to pay in local currency.

AIRLINES IN RWANDA

Air Burundi (airline code 8Y; ☎ 572113; Ave des Milles Collines) Hub: Bujumbura.

Ethiopian Airlines (airline code ET; ☎ 575045; www.flyethiopian.com) Hub: Addis Ababa.

Kenya Airways (airline code KQ; ☎ 577972; www.kenya-airways.com; Ave des Milles Collines) Hub: Nairobi.

Rwandair Express (airline code WB; ☎ 503687; www.rwandair.com) Hub: Kigali.

SN Brussels Airline (airline code SN; ☎ 575290; www.brusselsairlines.com) Hub: Brussels.

South African Airways (airline code SA; ☎ 577777; www.flysaa.com; Blvd de la Revolution) Hub: Johannesburg.

TO/FROM BURUNDI

Rwandair Express, Air Burundi and Ethiopian Airlines all connect Kigali and Bujumbura.

TO/FROM KENYA

Rwandair Express and Kenya Airways offer daily services between Kigali and Nairobi.

TO/FROM TANZANIA

Rwandair Express has direct flights between Kigali and Kilimanjaro, which offer a great way to combine ascending Mt Kili and tracking the mountain gorillas. Visit their website for more details.

TO/FROM UGANDA

Rwandair Express and Ethiopian Airlines connect Kigali with Entebbe International Airport for Kampala.

Land

Rwanda shares land borders with Burundi, DR Congo, Tanzania and Uganda. However, most travellers only tend to use the crossings with Uganda. The main crossing with Tanzania is considered safe, but passes through some pretty remote country. There are also land border crossings with DR Congo, but with the exception of the Gisenyi border post for visiting Goma and the mountain gorillas, it is currently not advisable to cross. Finally the land border with Burundi has to be considered risky as long as rebels remain active there. We crossed here, but check the security situation in Burundi before travelling this way.

TO/FROM BURUNDI

The main border crossing between Rwanda and Burundi is via Butare and Kayanza, on the Kigali to Bujumbura road, which is sealed pretty much all the way. The border post is called Kayanza Haut and Burundian visas are available on arrival for US\$40. Bus companies Yahoo Car, New Yahoo Coach and Gaso Bus all run daily buses between Kigali and Bujumbura (RFR4000 small bus, RFR5000 big bus, about six hours), departing at about 7am.

There is also a direct road from Bujumbura to Cyangugu, but this is not in such good condition and should be considered unsafe as long as one Burundian rebel faction remains at large.

TO/FROM DR CONGO

There are two main crossings between Rwanda and DR Congo, both on the shores of Lake Kivu. To the north is the crossing between Gisenyi and Goma and this is considered safe to cross at the time of writing, although only for day trips to Goma, climbing Nyiragongo volcano or visiting the mountain gorillas. Longer trips into DR Congo or overland trips through the country are inadvisable at the time of writing. The southern border between Cyangugu and Bukavu is also open for crossing, but the security situation around Bukavu is a little more volatile than Goma. Check carefully in Cyangugu before venturing across and be very wary of visiting Parc National Kahuzi-Biega, as there have been security problems there. For more on visiting DR Congo, see p562.

TO/FROM TANZANIA

Travelling between Rwanda and Tanzania is slow going due to a lack of reliable transport on the Tanzania side. Hitching lifts with trucks or chartering a car is sometimes the only way to make progress further into Tanzania. Don't forget that Rwanda is tiny and getting to either Mwanza or Kigoma is pretty much double the distance of the longest journey in Rwanda. It is arguably faster to backtrack through Uganda.

From Kigali, take a minibus to Rusumo, the last Rwandan town before the border (RFR1500, three hours), and then a pick-up truck from there across the border to Ngara. From Ngara, there are some buses direct to Mwanza. Otherwise, you'll need to do the trip in stages via Benako and Lusuhunga. Once in Lusuhunga, you can catch onward transport to Biharamulo, Geita and Mwanza, or take the longer and slightly pricier but smoother southern route via Kahama and Shinyanga. Both routes are expeditions in themselves, and can easily take two days.

From the border at Rusumo, take a shared taxi to Benako (about TSh3000). At Benako there are several basic guesthouses, if you need a room. From Benako, there are minibuses to Lusuhunga and Nyakanazi (about 25km further south) for about TSh5000. From Lusuhunga, there are buses three times weekly on to Kasulu and Kigoma, although they're often full when they reach Lusuhunga. Otherwise, you'll need to do the

trip in stages via Kibondo and Kasulu. Many aid workers travel this route, so hitching is also possible. From Lusuhunga to Kigoma on the Tanzanian side is rough going, and you should get an update on security here before setting off.

TO/FROM UGANDA

There are two main crossing points for foreigners: between Kigali and Kabale via Gatuna (Katuna), and between Ruhengeri and Kisoro via Cyanika.

The border is called Gatuna on the Rwandan side, Katuna on the Ugandan side. There are lots of minibuses between Kigali and the border at Gatuna (RFR1500, 1½ hours) throughout the day. There are also plenty of minibuses (US\$1000) and special hire taxis (US\$15,000 for the whole car) travelling back and forth between Katuna and Kabale.

From Ruhengeri to Kisoro via Cyanika the road is in excellent shape on the Rwandan side and poor condition on the Ugandan side. With Parc National des Volcans increasingly popular, the Rwandan military have prioritised security on this stretch. Minibuses link either side of the border with Ruhengeri (RFR500, 25km) and Kisoro (US\$1000, 12km).

Those travelling direct between Kigali and Kampala can travel with **Jaguar Executive Coaches** (☎ 086 14838), which offers an executive bus (RFR7000) and a standard service (RFR5000), both departing at 5.45/6.15/9am from the Nyabugogo Bus Station and taking eight to nine hours, including a long border crossing. **Regional Coach** (☎ 575963) also offers a bus to Kampala (RFR6500, 6.30am), which continues to Nairobi (RFR14,000).

Tours

For more info on a few companies running organised tours, see p96.

**GETTING AROUND
Air**

There are currently no domestic flights in Rwanda, but distances are so short that it hardly matters. Rwandair Express may introduce flights from Kigali to Gisenyi early in the lifetime of this book.

Bus

Rwanda has a reasonable road system, for the most part due to its small size and a large

CROSSING TO BURUNDI?

Don't cross into Burundi by land without carefully checking the current security situation in the north of the country. At the time of research, we were able to safely travel by bus from Bujumbura to Kigali, but there is no substitute for double checking the latest story. At the time of writing, one rebel group is still fighting the new government and that means ambushes are a remote possibility.

dose of foreign assistance. The only major unsealed roads are those running alongside the shore of Lake Kivu and some smaller stretches around the country.

The best buses are privately run, scheduled services operated by Okapi Car, Trans Express 2000, Atraco Express and Virunga Ponctuel. Destinations covered include Butare, Gisenyi, Kibuye and Ruhengeri and departures are guaranteed to leave, hourly in many cases. They are less crowded and drive more carefully than the normal minibuses, but cost a little more. Onatracom operate bigger buses on longer routes, including Cyangugu and Gisenyi. See p580 for more details.

You will find there are plenty of well-maintained, modern minibuses serving all the main routes. Head to the bus stand in any town between dawn and about 3pm, and it is quite easy to find one heading to Kigali and nearby towns. Destinations are displayed in the front window and the fares are fixed (you can ask other passengers to be sure). However, anyone who gets stuck somewhere late in the afternoon is going to have to pay top price for the privilege of getting out.

Minibuses leave when full, and this means when all the seats are occupied (unlike in Kenya and Tanzania, where most of the time they won't leave until you can't breathe for the people sitting on your lap and jamming the aisle). They are, however, still quite cramped. There is no extra charge for baggage. Many minibuses have decent sound systems, so there might be some good African tunes that aren't ear-splitting.

Whichever form of transport you end up taking, you should be prepared to be

CROSSING INTO DR CONGO?

Think twice, maybe twice again, before crossing into DR Congo. At the time of research, we were able to safely cross into Goma and visit both Bukima and Djomba before crossing back into Uganda at Bunagana. However, things have been very volatile in DR Congo over the terrible years of civil war, so it is extremely important to do your own homework before visiting. Should things stay stable, a DR Congo loop between Rwanda and Uganda is an enticing prospect, but check, check and check again before you sign up.

stopped at military checkpoints. These vary in number depending on the route, but at each it is necessary to get out and allow the soldiers to examine all luggage. Other than the time it takes, there's no hassle at all, plus it is to ensure your security.

Car & Motorcycle

Cars are suitable for most of the country's main roads, but those planning to explore Parc National de l'Akagera or follow the shores of Lake Kivu might be better off with a 4WD.

Car hire isn't well established in Rwanda, but most travel agents and tour operators in Kigali can organise something from RFr25,000 per day for a small car and up.

Ferry

Before the latest civil war, there were ferries on Lake Kivu that connected the Rwandan ports of Cyangugu, Kibuye and Gisenyi but these are suspended at present. Speedboat charters are currently the only option between these ports, but they are expensive.

Hitching

Hitching around Rwanda can be relatively easy because of the prodigious number of NGO vehicles on the roads. Drivers will rarely ask for payment for a lift. Women who decide to hitch should realise that accepting a lift from long-distance truck drivers is unwise, but the NGOs should otherwise be OK. Remember, travellers who decide to hitch should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk.

Local Transport

TAXI

These are only really necessary in Kigali. See p581 for details. It is also possible to find the odd taxi in most other major towns.

TAXI-MOTOR

Most towns are compact enough to get around on foot, but where you need transport, the taxi-motor is a good bet. It's just a motorcycle, but the driver can usually sling a pack across the petrol tank. They generally drive safely, if a little fast – there's no helmet for the passenger.