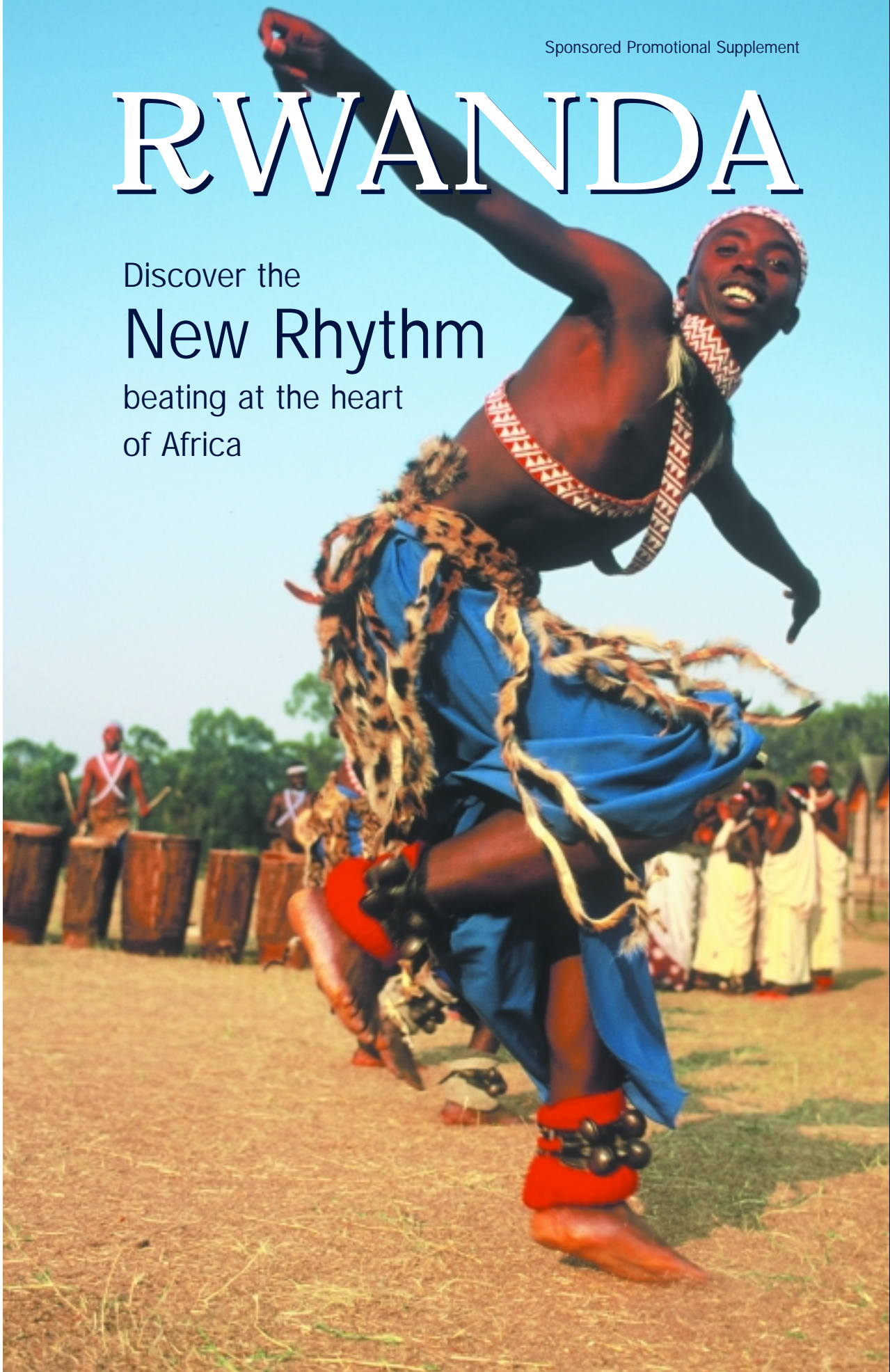


Sponsored Promotional Supplement

RWANDA

Discover the
New Rhythm
beating at the heart
of Africa





"What really took us by surprise was the warmth of the welcome we received from the people, and how affected and impressed we were with the way they are rebuilding the country together after the genocide."

Rob McCreath
Tourist, 2002

"My first visit to Rwanda has left me with a sense of the country's great potential: its gorillas are breathtaking and its natural attractions intriguing."

Tourists are still unusual in most of Rwanda, so being there brings all the joys and difficulties of cutting-edge travel."

Chris McIntyre
Tour operator, 2003

A New African Dawn

EVEN though it's nearly 10 years past already, Rwanda's genocide was so far beyond our comprehension that it's hard for us to shake off the appalling images: the dead, the injured, the streams of refugees. In Rwanda, no-one forgets; it's a part of their history, and their lesson for the world is "Never again". Memorials mark the graveyards and honour the victims.

But life has moved on. As Rwandans will tell you, there was no alternative; to survive, they had to work together to construct their future. And this is happening now, today, with an amazing buzz of optimism and energy. Throughout the country there are new buildings, new enterprises and new hope. Rwanda's main sources of income are coffee, tea and tourism – and all, especially tourism, are booming.

As with Rwanda, so with its children. Even six years ago, driving through the country, you'd see them standing silently by the roadside with empty eyes. Then gradually they began to chat together and play with simple toys. The toys became more complicated, the games more involved – and today they run and shout and leap and squabble and giggle like kids anywhere in the world.

At first Kibuye's church (where over 4,000 died) stood bare and empty, its scars untouched. Then outlines for new mosaics were chalked above the altars and new stained glass filled the broken windows. Carefully, it was restored. On Sundays now it's packed with worshippers, their singing drifting out across Lake Kivu.

Throughout Rwanda, courage and beauty are replacing the horror. From the ruins, rebirth. From the nightmare of genocide, a new dawn.

Did you know? Rwandan children learn French and English from the start of primary school.

A World Apart

RWANDA is less than half the size of Scotland but with three million more inhabitants. It's tucked deep in the heart of Africa, over 1500km from the nearest sea port.

Into its tiny frame it packs mountains, rivers, lakes, marshes, savannah and forests – including Nyungwe, the largest remaining single tract of montane forest in East and Central Africa.

Rwanda's wildlife switches from savannah to mountain forest species within a single day's driving – and includes mountain gorillas as well as the little-known golden monkey. Tea bushes vie with coffee trees for space on the crowded hillsides and a patchwork of intensive cultivation covers the valleys.

Oral history, combined with legend, traces Rwanda's colourful monarchs back a thousand years and more: Gihanga, who introduced the cow; Ndahiro II, who catastrophically lost the Royal Drum in battle; Mibambwe II, who organised milk distribution to his subjects; Yuhi III, who composed poetry and went mad...

Last but certainly not least, this pint-sized country has produced a football team (nicknamed *Amavubi* or "The Wasps") that has just played its way into the 2004 finals of the African Nations Cup. "Small is beautiful" indeed.

At a Glance

Land area: 26,340km²

Population: approx 8.2 million

Altitude: 1,000-4,500m above sea level

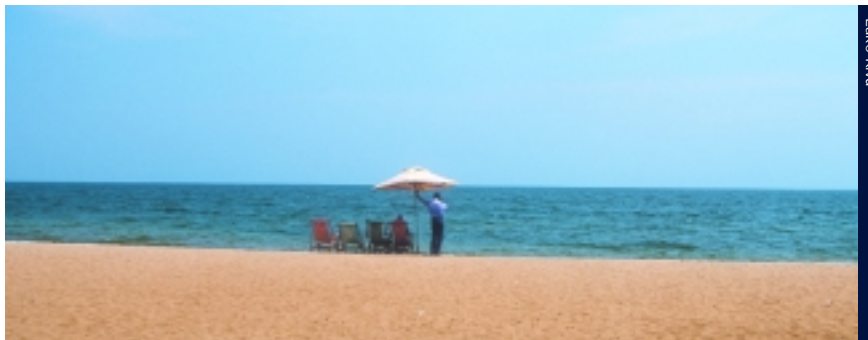
Contains: five volcanoes, 23 lakes (including half of Lake Kivu) and numerous rivers

Official languages: Kinyarwanda, English, French

Capital: Kigali



Volcanoes National Park



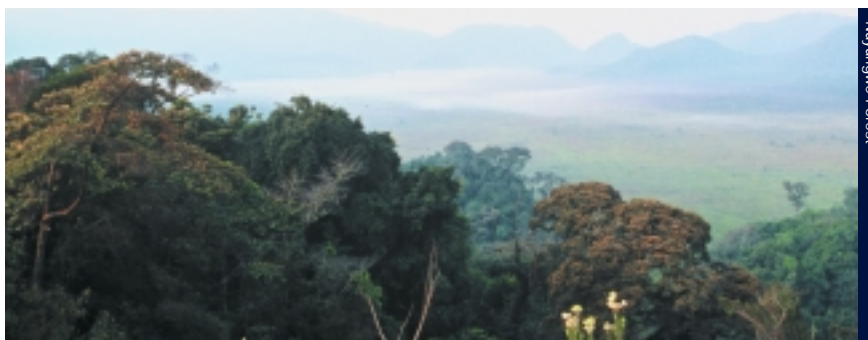
Lake Kivu



Near Ruhengeri

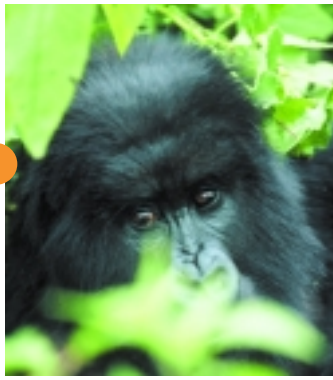


Akagera National Park



Nyungwe Forest

Did you know? Henry Stanley is the first known white man to have entered Rwanda; he reached Lake Ihema (now in Akagera Park) in 1874.



1



4



5



10



7



8

Top Spots



- 1 **Golden monkeys and gorillas in the mist.** The 'Little and Large' of Virungas' primates – be captivated by their antics and interactions. Meeting the eyes of a mountain gorilla is a heart-stopping privilege you'll never forget.
- 2 **The theatre of life.** Attend a spectacular dance performance at Butare. You'll be impressed by the leaps and dazzling footwork of the Intore dancers as they interpret traditional tales. Feel the pulse of their historic drums.
- 3 **Into the woods.** Explore the ancient and mysterious Nyungwe Forest. Camp within its shade; follow its winding paths; discover waterfalls, hills and valleys; track colobus and l'Hoest's monkeys and spot the elusive blue touraco.
- 4 **Wide open spaces.** Visit the savannah of Akagera National Park. Camp beside Lake Ihema with its wealth of water birds; track timid giraffe and antelope; hear the rumble of elephant and the chatter of baboons; enjoy the undulating landscapes.
- 5 **A day in the sun.** Bask in the peace and beauty of Lake Kivu. Sip a sundowner on its shore at sunset; hire a pirogue to visit uninhabited islands; swim in its rippling waters.
- 6 **High ideals.** Trek to the summit of Mount Karisimbi. Of all Rwanda's 'thousand hills,' this is the greatest; conquer it and Rwanda is yours!
- 7 **In Fossey's footsteps.** Visit Karisoke to see Dian Fossey's grave alongside those of her beloved gorillas, near her former research station. Reflect upon her passionate protection of these endangered primates, in whose service she literally gave her life.
- 8 **Food for thought.** Eat freshly caught fish in lakeside restaurants. Linger over your meal, watching the pirogues as they return home with their catch. Buy fresh fish from the lakeshore.
- 9 **Rising from the ashes.** Cross to Goma (Democratic Republic of Congo) to see the spectacular lava from the 2002 volcanic eruption. The town was bisected by the flow, and houses were trapped in it with just their upper storey protruding. Already new buildings are emerging from the rubble.
Take in the sights. Snake through tea plantations, banana groves, ancient forests. Watch the light change from misty blue to pink to evening gold. See the smokey kilns firing their hoard of mud-made bricks; paddle in wayside streams.
- 10 **Market forces.** Shop – or just people-watch – in lively local markets. Bargain with smiling stallholders. Browse for multi-patterned cotton fabric, juicy tomatoes, tiny sweet bananas, salted fish, honey, fresh vegetables – and modern paraphernalia and gadgets.

Did you know? Of international tourists visiting Rwanda's gorillas in the past three years, the largest numbers have come from the UK and the USA.



Travel Tips

When to go. Any time of year. The long dry season is June–September, wet seasons are March – May and September – December. December – March is unreliable. Gorillas are accessible year-round but easier to track in the dry; chimps are more accessible when it's wetter.

Travel Planning. At least 25 international tour operators offer package trips to Rwanda, particularly for gorilla tracking.

Visas. Nationals of the UK, USA, Germany, Sweden, South Africa and adjoining African countries currently do not need visas for visits of less than three months.

Accommodation. Facilities vary from international 5-star hotels (one is opening in December 2003) to simple guest houses. Prices range from £2 (extremely basic) to around £100 (luxury). From about £10 upwards, most offer en-suite bath/shower.

Getting There and Around. Regular flights link Kigali to Nairobi, Entebbe, Johannesburg and Dar es Salaam, with

onward connections worldwide. Public buses/minibuses cover all parts of the country; fares are under £1 per 50km. Tour operators in Kigali arrange package trips and vehicle hire. Taxis are available in main towns. Roads between all main towns and international borders are surfaced.

Money. Kigali banks change cash (all main currencies) and US\$ travellers' cheques. Banks elsewhere change cash. Credit cards aren't much use now but should be widely accepted by autumn 2004. Western Union is widespread.

Communications. Phones work! Even international calls are easy. Public phones in shops and kiosks are metered – just pay when you are finished. Most towns and all main hotels have fax and email facilities. There are an increasing number of internet cafés in many towns, especially Kigali.

Safety. This is no longer an issue – Rwanda is among the safest and most hassle-free African countries for tourists. Leave your anxieties behind!

The Spirit of Discovery

A ROUGH mountain road twists and switchbacks through a vista of tea plantations, wispy forest, banana groves and distant glimpses of the lake. There's an easy buzz of conversation inside the jam-packed minibus. The 'conductor' counts his wad of money and a baby in the next seat beams toothlessly.

STROLL up a hill in one village and you come to a bustling market; turn down a lane in another and there are coffee trees ahead; pause to rest or enjoy the view and a gaggle of children surround you, jostling and grinning.

OLD men sit in the sun, women with heavy baskets on their heads turn to stare or smile, students want to chat and practise their English. Boys heave jerry cans of water uphill, balanced on bicycles, or push wooden scooters laden with sacks of grain.

AND the endless hills, drifting off into the distance, coloured by the changing light into blue and mauve and gold. The 'land of a thousand hills', they call it – but local people joke that whoever counted wasn't paying attention and missed a few. Rural Rwanda. It tugs at your heart.



Wild at Heart

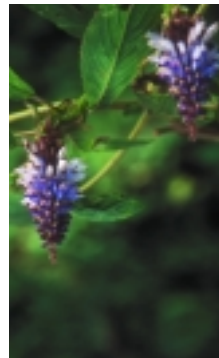
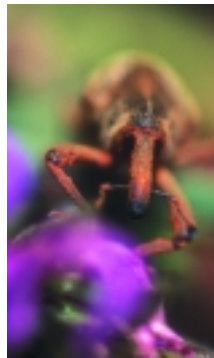
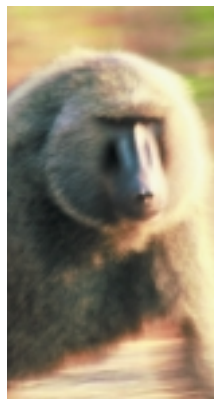
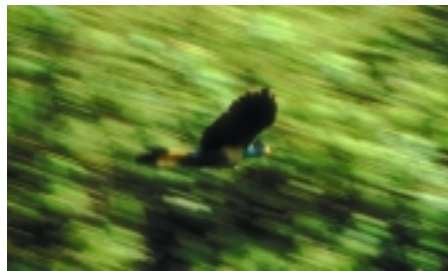
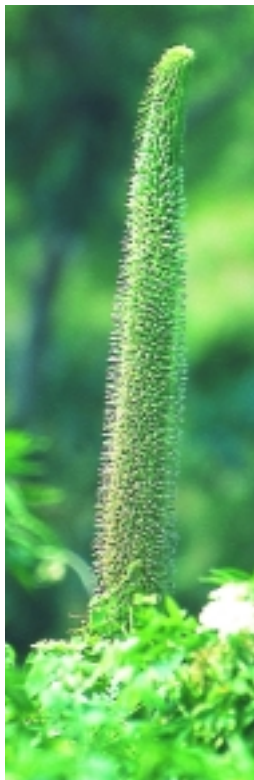


IT'S not just the amazing mountain gorillas, nor its multiple birds. Rwanda's A-Z of wildlife (antelope, buffalo, crocs, Dent's monkey, elephant, fish eagles, giraffe, hippo...) doesn't miss on many letters! Akagera National Park, with its lakes and rolling landscapes, is great for savannah game: Nyungwe Forest has chimps and other primates, butterflies, orchids, stunning forest vegetation (check out its giant lobelias!) and accessible trails to make exploration easy.

Rwanda will hold massive appeal to twitchers. There are 670 recorded bird species in the country, and nowhere are they more abundant than at Nyungwe, where the blue touraco is the biggest tick.

But the gorilla is still king. Watching these giants interact only a stone's throw away is among life's greatest wildlife wonders: grandad grumbling at the womenfolk; mother disciplining the kids; toddlers and teenagers playing to the gallery... it's all there.

Volcanoes National Park also has a much smaller primate, newly habituated for tourists: the cute little golden monkey (*Cercopithecus kandti*), now listed as endangered by the IUCN because of the small number remaining. And treks to the volcanoes or strolls in the forest and beside crater lakes reveal yet more mountain wildlife (birds, silver monkeys, bushbuck...) and some terrific views.



Natural Treasures

- Three national parks
- 670 recorded bird species
- 120 butterfly species
- Over 100 varieties of orchid
- 11 antelope species
- Mountain gorillas
- Golden monkeys
- Fish eagles
- The largest remaining single tract of montane forest in East and Central Africa

Did you know? Mountain gorillas eat up to 58 different plant species. They also eat ants.



The Cultural Experience

WHEREVER you travel around Rwanda, you cannot help but sense for its rich cultural heritage. First time visitors often remark that it is stronger than in many East and southern African countries.

Today's Rwandans arrived in the country at different times and with their own traditions. The earliest inhabitants were the Twa, hunter-gatherers in the forests and now Rwanda's most skilled potters. Then came the Hutu, who farmed the fertile valleys and hillsides. Last to arrive were the Tutsi, with their herds of striking Ankole cattle – so important to their culture that there are 19 words to describe the animal's colour! In time, these three groups merged into a complex hierarchy.

In modern Rwanda, with its international links, fast-growing economy and integrated population, the early traditions survive – but to a different purpose. The potters (and other craftspeople) have devised new and decorative items to appeal to tourists. Smiling girls tempt you to buy tightly woven baskets and little boys hawk cars and trucks made from cassava stalks. Mats, wall hangings, calabashes, batik, traditional musical instruments, masks, paintings,

carvings, tiles with geometric cow-dung patterns devised by an ancient king – the choice is bewildering and displayed with so much pride.

The cattle supply Rwanda's growing dairy industry, with its home-produced yoghurts and cheeses.

Agriculture now provides world markets with top-quality Rwandan tea and coffee. In the UK Comic Relief campaign in 2003, Sainsbury's sold Rwandan coffee in 353 of its stores countrywide.

Traditional dance, important to both Tutsi and Twa, is still used ceremonially but also for tourism purposes at home and abroad. It is worth making the effort to witness a dance and drumming performance, especially by the Intore dancers at Butare National Museum. It may be the highlight of your Rwandan visit.

So the old is contributing to the new.

Cultural Highlights

WATCH woodcarvers at work at the Viaki workshop near Butare, as they create delicate antelope, giraffe, crocodiles...

Visit the former *Mwami's* (King's) palaces at Nyanza and learn how the monarchs lived.

Dance to the infectious rhythm of the Intore dancers at Butare Museum and the Batwa dancers in Kigali.

See Batwa potters shaping and firing their pots and attend a performance of their joyful dancing. In olden days they were the dancers and music-makers at the royal court. New and inventive choreography tells the story of their pottery and their background.

Discover Rwanda's history and prehistory in Butare's National Museum.

Check out – and buy! – the local handicrafts in all their range and variety. They mirror the range and variety of Rwandan culture.

Get into the music, so integral to Rwanda's history and culture. Visit the nightspots in Kigali that offer traditional Rwandan music. Cassettes are on sale from street vendors and markets. Drumming in particular holds great historic significance.

Did you know? Part of King Solomon's Mines (1956) was filmed in Rwanda; the Mwami and members of his court appear briefly in the movie.

Murakaza neza!

You are welcome!

Since 1994, Rwanda has turned itself into a fantastic eco-tourist destination. There's much more to do – new lodges to build, cultural sites to develop, museums to open, guides to train – but all that's already underway.

Tourism will play a vital role in the sustained development of the country and the conservation of Rwanda's wildlife and environment.

So why wait to visit? The wildlife is in fine shape and there's no delay for gorilla permits. Forest trails are empty and roads are low on traffic. There's no better time to discover Rwanda.

Rwanda's future has already started. You can share it. Welcome to Rwanda – and enjoy!



For more information on Rwanda, please contact:



Rwanda Tourism UK / Southern Skies Marketing
www.discover-rwanda.org email: info@discover-rwanda.org
tel: +44 (0)1344 298 985 fax: +44 (0)870 706 0116

Or your local Rwanda travel specialist:

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Text by Janice Booth, co-author of the Bradt Guide to Rwanda.
Photography by Eric Gauss for Rwanda Tourism / Travel Africa.