



EDUCATIONAL
TOURS

Capital: Kigali
Dialing code: +250
Language: Kinyarwanda
Population: 13.46 million
Drives on the: Right



Rwanda Information

Travel documents

U.S. citizens traveling to Rwanda must have a passport that is valid for six months after their expected return date. Please check travel.state.gov to confirm passport validity requirements prior to your tour. Citizens of all other countries should contact their appropriate embassies to find out what specific documentation is required for them to travel. Travelers need a visa in order to enter Rwanda—we recommend purchasing one in cash upon arrival at Kigali Airport. For more general travel information, visit travel.state.gov and reach out to your EF Travel Team.

Vaccinations and health precautions

For the most up-to-date information on vaccinations and other health requirements, we recommend checking cdc.gov or consulting your physician.

Rwandan law requires all visitors to have medical insurance, so bring multiple copies of your insurance information on tour.

Travelers arriving from any country at risk for yellow fever must show proof of vaccination. While visitors arriving directly from the U.S. may not need to show a Yellow Fever certificate on arrival, your EF Travel Team will help advise you on what's best for your group.

Tour Director and bus drivers

You will have a bilingual Tour Director for the duration of your tour. Your Tour Director will inform you before departure if they will be picking you up at the airport or if a transfer Tour Director will meet you there. Groups will often be split up into smaller coaches, so you will have multiple bus drivers while on tour. Please consider tipping bus drivers on a daily basis.

Tipping

It's customary to tip on tour as a token of appreciation. We recommend:

- \$6–8 per person per day for your Tour Director
- \$3 per person per day for each bus driver
- \$2 per person per tour for each local guide
- \$5 per person per day for your game drive guide

We encourage Group Leaders to try to collect all tip money from their travelers before departing for tour. To keep tips organized, we recommend using the envelopes from your Departure Kit. For larger groups, feel free to divvy up the money between chaperones. It is preferable for tips to be given in the local currency of your destination, especially for local guides. You can ask your travelers to convert their U.S. dollars before you collect tip money, or you can exchange the money yourself into local currency (either in the U.S. or when you arrive abroad). If you have any questions on tipping, please reach out to your EF Travel Team.

Currency

The principal local currency is the Rwandan franc (Rwf), and it's easily obtained from ATMs at the airport and in all towns and cities. It is recommended to take out larger bills due to the exchange rate. Expect to pay for local services in Rwandan francs—however, most tourist establishments accept USD cash. Visit xe.com for current exchange rates and more information.

We recommend bringing an ATM card or a credit card that you can use to withdraw cash from a bank or ATM machine. Traveler's checks are difficult to cash and should not be used. Be sure to inform your local bank of your travel plans prior to your departure, as most banks have security guards to protect patrons from theft.

Transportation

Tours to Rwanda will rely on bus transfers. Buses are new and air-conditioned, and long transfers will be broken up with stops to rest or explore along the way. Your tour also might include some sightseeing boat cruises. For game drives in Akagera National Park, you'll likely have to split up your group when riding in the open four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Accommodations

Accommodations will vary between hotels and lodges and include the amenities you would expect, such as showers, toilets, fresh linens, towels, and possibly air-conditioning. Each hotel will either have screened windows/doors or will provide mosquito nets. Travelers should pack a DEET-based insect repellent. Students under the age of 20 will share rooms with two or three other travelers of the same gender. Rooms will have single or shared double beds, or a combination of the two. Adults will share twin rooms with other adults of the same gender. Please note that groups may not always be roomed next to each other (some may be on different floors) and hotels may be located outside of the city center. Please contact your EF Travel Team if you'd like a list of sample hotels.

Phones and internet

If you plan to use your personal cell phone on tour, contact your wireless provider to see what fees you may incur for calling, texting, or using data abroad. Free Wi-Fi is available in most hotels—however, you may have to go to the lobby for access. Wi-Fi is also available in the bus but may be challenging to access in some parts of the country. International phone cards are also easy to buy and your Tour Director can help you find places to purchase them.

Local food

Travelers should not drink the tap water in Rwanda. Pack a refillable water bottle—clean water will be available for purchase in many places, including restaurants and grocery stores.

Most meals will be served buffet style. Breakfast is included every day, but lunch and/or dinner will often be included as well. These meals will usually consist of green salads, meat, vegetables, starches, beans, soups, sauces, and fruit. During the days that lunch is not included, you should budget \$8–10 USD.

Safety

Travelers will be staying in accommodations located in reliable and security-conscious areas. Rwanda prioritizes national security, so you'll likely see armed guards patrolling squares, streets, and sites. Always inform your Tour Director if you need to break away from the group at any point. Store valuables in hotel safe deposit boxes and refrain from carrying large sums of money or wearing valuable jewelry. Please be sure to read EF's *Travel & Safety Guide* before going on tour.

Genocide etiquette

The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi people was a tragic period in Rwanda's history. Despite the fact that Rwanda is now a country of peace-building, education, and reconciliation, the genocide still evokes horrific memories and emotions for many. As you learn about the genocide on tour, remember to be respectful and reflective. Many Rwandans you speak to either lived through the genocide or have loved ones directly impacted by it—don't be offended if they don't wish to talk about the event or respond to questions you may have.

Weather

Keep in mind that Rwanda is in the southern hemisphere, so you'll experience their winter during our summer (and vice versa). Rwanda is warm throughout the year, with average temperatures ranging from 75–93°F in the daytime and 62–68°F at night. The wet season ranges from February to May and late August to November, but short thunderstorms can occur at any time of year. Rain is less likely during the dry season (from July to August), but these months can be a bit hazier due to dust in the air. Please check weather.com for your destinations and travel periods.

Packing

Pack as lightly as possible, as you are expected to carry your own luggage on and off buses and into hotels. Days are warm with cold evenings, so we suggest bringing and wearing loose-fitting layers. You'll be walking for at least one hour each day across mostly flat terrain, including dirt paths and unpaved walkways, and some hills and stairs. Comfortable walking shoes are a must.

Occasional rain showers are common throughout the year certain seasons, so lightweight rainwear and quick-dry clothes may be necessary. If you're partaking in water activities, like kayaking, you should also bring sandals and waterproof sunscreen. For game drives in Akagera National Park, we recommend wearing a jacket, neutral-colored clothing, and a hat.

Luggage

The fees for one checked bag (up to 50 lbs) is included in the price of your tour. However, we strongly recommend travelers bring one piece of carry-on luggage and one personal item with them to Rwanda. **Please contact your airline for additional baggage restrictions and regulations.**