

INTRODUCTION:

Wildlifetours - Rwanda is a Rwandan owned tours and travel company that's not in the tourism industry by chance but in the industry because they are passionately and

Naturally tourism oriented with strong conservation instincts. We are the top Rwandan tour operators with diverse experience of over 14 years in tourism, wildlife management and conservation. We are the real operators with an African touch and approach to tourism that is educational and experiential and at the same time which is pro-poor (responsible tourism) with the highest standards and professionalism. The top professionals in; Wildlife Tours, Community Based Tours, Project Tours, Volunteer tours, Event management and conservation and tourism consulting services.

The Dream of the company is to see all Rwandans benefit from tourism through employment, capacity building and empowering local communities in scaling up their economies, poverty alleviation and continue strengthen unity among the Rwandans while at the same time building strong lasting relationships with our international visitors and partners. We allocate 50% of the company profits into community development.

Our packages are pocket friendly; we tailor-make different tours and travel programmes in regard to the clients request and budget. Please contact us at info@wildlifetours-rwanda.com or mugisony@yahoo.com

Wildlifetours – Rwanda;

- ✓ For educational and enriching tours
- ✓ Responsible – pro-poor tourism

The following pages describe some of our activities and attractions:

Attractions and Activities:

Wild Life Tours: (National Parks and other Virgin lands)

We do not only take you to see the wildlife but also make sure that you understand all about wildlife with our staff who are very experienced and professionally trained in wildlife Management and tourism.

Nyungwe National Park:

Nyungwe National Park is the largest montane forest in East or Central Africa and one of the most ancient dating back to before the last ice age; covering 1,000 square kilometers across the majestic hills of southern Rwanda. A uniquely rich centre of floral diversity, the forest has more than 200 different species of trees; over 100 species of orchids and a myriad of other flowering plants including the other-worldly giant lobelia and a host of colourful orchids.

Nyungwe is most alluring for its primate: 13 species in all, including humankind's closest living relative - the chimpanzee, as well as the handsome L'Hoest's monkey and hundred-strong troops of diligently acrobatic Angola colombus monkeys not forgetting over 278 species of birds. The park has 9 well maintained trails with lots of flora and fauna and for sure; this is a magnificent place to visit.

Akagera National Park:

This park is relatively set at low altitude on the border with Tanzania. It follows the meandering course of the Akagera River on its eastern part, one of the most remote tributary of the Nile. Akagera is big game country but the four most unique things that it outstanding includes;

1. The bravura scenery in a savannah park: The Park has plains, valleys, hills, half of the park is covered with wetlands (six lakes inside the park with lots of reptiles such as the giant Nile crocodiles plus over 50 species of water birds including the rare shoe bill stock and schools of hippos), the only savannah park with opportunity to explore other vegetation types like the riverine vegetation, thick forests, open grassland etc.
2. The park is rich in wildlife species number but not in population size: It has over 12 species of antelopes including the biggest African antelopes such as the Eland cape and roan antelope (list of other antelopes can be viewed on website). Other animals include African elephants, burchelli's zebras, Masai giraffe to mention but a few. Lucky visitors might stumble across a leopard, a spotted hyena, wild cat or even a stray lion. For individuals interested in seeing different species of animals; Akagera is the only place to go to.
3. It's a park with the highest concentration of birds per square kilometer ; Rwanda has around 735 species of birds but out of this; 525 species of birds including 13 Albertine endemic species in the region. Best site for any vivid birders; a place where chances are 100% to add more lifers on your bird list.
4. Historical Sites: The Park has well preserved historical sites and locations ranging from the greatest witch crafts/doctors of the country, the first route of European explores to enter Rwanda and spiritual huts.

Volcanoes National Park:

Volcanoes National Park is the oldest national park in Africa created in 1925. It's comprised five outstanding volcanic mountains namely Muhabura – 4127m, Mgahinga – 3474m, Sabyinyo – 3634m, Bisoke – 3711meters and Krisimbi – 4507m above sea level (up to 15000 feet) and neatly covered with rich, green rainforest. The Volcanoes are situated in the far northwest of Rwanda and are home to the last population of the rare and endangered mountain gorilla in the world. The park has other species of animals such as the African forest elephants, red-fronted duikers, Cape forest buffaloes, porcupines, golden monkeys. There are different activities besides gorilla tracking of which include mountain climbing, nature walks, visit the Diana Fossey tombs and gorilla graves and a visit to the rare golden monkeys.

Community Tourism:

We provide exceptionally educational and experiential tours with professional guides and interpreters. The community based tours and cultural tours are organized and managed by the local people and the company facilitates the established tourism cooperatives and steering and development committees to ensure sustainability of the projects, minimize negative tourism impacts, equity of benefit sharing and designing educational and experiential packages that contribute to conservation, and sustainable development. The tours start with a well designed itinerary Kigali City tour that explores the ancient, genocide era and new Kigali sites under the guidance of very experienced and knowledgeable company guides.

Bugesera District: Reconciliation Village.

(Vision 2020 Village Tours):

The Model Village Tour is a one day excursion which introduces you to the development challenges of the country with a mix of the traditional history, genocide era and referencing today's life in this model village. Guests engage in different activities ranging from agricultural experiences, interaction with ever

smiling Rwandan children, learn about the health situations, get cooking and weaving lessons from locally based women associations in the village and end up with an exciting event called UBUSABANE “Get together Party” with all community members in a reconciliation village; where the perpetrators, survivors and a few returnees are living together in an exceptionally unique way; the visitors get the opportunity of listening to testimonies from the perpetrators and survivors as they took path to reconciliation in this model cluster village. All this is enticed by traditional dishes and drinks, with entertainment from a local dance troupe that explores you to the different traditional dance styles showing beauty of the cows and the Rwandese, bravery etc. Over 200 people in the community benefit from this tour and strengthen unity etc.

Rubavu: Coffee and Tea Tours: Coffee is the biggest foreign exchange earner for the country and the biggest export for the country. The coffee tours explore our visitors to over 20 coffee growing and production processes right from the nursery beds, coffee gardens/plantations, picking coffee, washing, selection, drying, fermenting etc until you drink your own coffee. Getting to learn all those stages adds value to the coffee you drink. Tea tours explore you right from the picking phase in the garden, drying up to the time when you taste your tea. The tours benefit over 500 local farmers.

Musanze: - Ethno Botany Tours: The scientific study of human cultures and their customs jointly combined with the scientific study of plants in a traditional way leading to the discovery of many herbs used against over 50 remedies in the community commonly known as traditional healing. Everything is done in the field whereby visitors go into the local garden/bushes with local herbalist and get a comprehensive introduction to the local herbs; learn different medicinal values of different plants etc. The traditional healers will introduce to you herbs that help to cure different wickets, poisoning etc. After the field tour, the visitors will be taken to visit the local pharmacy and also have the opportunity to meet individuals who have been or may be under treatment, and also follow up their recovery stages. The culture of traditional practitioners/healers has been historically passed on from generations to generations whereby any family that had a practitioner he/she would pass on to another young member of the family as he/she was aging and that’s how they were able to preserve the culture and the wonderful customs.

Ethno botany tours are at times combined with bio mimicry experiences from the native experts of the environment. . Our bio mimicry experts imitate different living organisms i.e. birds, animals, insects etc because they have lived with nature as one community and not as “secondary creatures or citizens”.

Musanze: Kinigi Cultural Village/ Community Tours: Get to understand the unique culture of Rwandese through their daily life and knowledge of the environment, poetry, folklores, dancing, singing, pottery and the theoretical hunt gathering skills. It’s one of the thrilling experiences and very adventurous as you try to adapt to the Rwandan so called “pygmy” homes and lifestyle. The village tours estimated to benefit approximately 300 local people.

Musanze & Mutara: Banana & Sorghum Beer Production Experiences: Banana and sorghum are some of our staple food products in Rwanda and they are used in different ways i.e.as food, local beer and dilute drinks etc. They are very important in the cultural practices and ceremonies most especially during our traditional wedding ceremonies, settling of disputes between community members, bonding relationship between different families etc. Rwanda has over four different species of banana plants and each species of banana plant has got unique uses and values; practically, the visitors will learn and understand while in the field. The tours benefit mostly around 70 women local members plus their extended families.

Musanze & Gatsibo: Village Walks;

Visiting local markets and introduction to the traditional dishes: The day starts with visiting a local market where they sell local food stuffs; the environment in the market trains you on how to adapt to the African shopping environment where we don't often have fixed prices and hence need to learn/ acquire the bargaining skills and convince the seller to provide lower or good prices which is quite interesting because you mutually reach a price or compromise on the price in a friendly manner and at times, it develops and bonds the friendship amongst community members. There's no exploitation in the market because you have a right to compare prices with other sellers or markets etc. After the market experience, our local Rwandese women will equip you with the knowledge and skills relating to the Rwandese traditional dish preparations right from peeling, traditional packaging in banana leaves, preparation with different local spices etc until you eat or served your own food. The visitors get historical information about the food taboos previously practiced by/within our cultures and the current respected norms related to eating etc.

Ruhengeri:

Bee keeping, pottery/ceramics, wood carving & Traditional Games: This bonds you with the elderly Rwandan men and women through the unique Rwandan cultural games; an experience worth trying!

Kibungo: - Imigongo Tour: The tour introduces our visitors to the unique modeling and paintings called IMIGONGO literally meaning backs or back in singular; developed by the Rwandese society long time ago around 1500 years by Prince Kakira the son of King KIMENYI of Gisaka kingdom part of the great Rwandan kingdom in current eastern province. Kakira invented the idea of embellishing and making more attractive art designs for decorations in the houses. They use cow dung from calves and mix it with ash and then make different designs ranging from the back of elephant, elbow designs to mention but a few. The designs come from their memories reflecting different things or items etc in memory of the designer. They have over ten different designs with well documented interpretations. The colours used come from natural soils and plants for instance white comes from kaolin, red from natural clay soil, the black colour from the sap of the aloe plant – *Igikakarubamba* mixed with ash of peeled banana and *solanum aculeastrum* plant – Umutobotobo. This type of art craft is very unique and only found in Rwanda. The other important part of the tour is that, it's helping in maintaining this culture from where it originated since we discovered that this cultural practice of IMIGOGO was fading out in the community but after introducing the tours, the community members are now getting back to their traditional art craft practices as it helps in preserving the culture, provide incomes to the members of the community as we try to widen the market for their products and it's part of the employment pillars in the village. Most of the members of the association totaling to fifty are widows following the tragedy of the genocide in 1994.

Gatsibo: Pastoralist Heritage: The culture of pastoralist has been hereditary; the social characteristics of the Rwandese pastoralists can still be traced in parts of the eastern province in Gatsibo district and Nyagatare district. The rural life in these villages elegantly and conventionally gives a very unique experience about the culture of grazing, introduces you to the history and value of cows in Rwanda including the INYAMBO cows which were very significant in many cultural festivals brought up by Kigwa a descendant of Gihanga. The importance of cows ranges from paying dowry to strengthening relationships between families or individuals. The beauty of a cow is exhibited in the cultural dances of Rwanda. The tour takes you to the pastoralist village where guests observe and participate in the tradition of cattle graz-

ing; get ready to make your own traditional rain coat from grass, learn how to milk with your own hands and no machines here! After milking, the pastoralists will show you the different calabashes used in preserving milk and the qualification it takes to make one; this goes in line with norms of handling calabashes, drinking milk etc. Milk is used in different ways for example taken fresh after milking it or fermented to make traditional yoghurt in a traditional way, and the unforgettable experience of making ghee, which ends with cooking local food with your own ghee and eating your own ghee.

Over 30 pastoralists with their families do benefit directly through the tours plus the entire community which benefits from the established Tourism Community Development Fund.

In the same village, you get the opportunity to learn about the historical monuments left behind by some prominent kings like King MUSINGA 1, RWABUGIRI, MUTARA 111 – RUDAHIGWA and RUGANZU around 1902.

VISIT HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS:

There are many projects that we work with and among these include;

1. Buranga Women Cooperative: These are mainly former prostitutes who are being helped to grow emotionally, spiritually and financially by some well wishers like Jared M. Miller and Dorsey. Rehabilitate former prostitutes by training them to start small scale projects that can generate some income for example knitting and tailoring, pottery and molding, embroidering, production of paper bead jewelry etc. www.keza.com
2. Women for Women International: Quite a lot of work is being done by the NGO. Please visit website – www.womenforwomen.org/global-initiatives-helping-women/help-women-rwanda.php
3. Orphanages and Street Kid projects like Les enfant de dieu in Kigali City, Caritas in Musanze etc. Websites; www.enfantsdedieu.org,
4. Rwanda Women Network. www.rwandawomennetwork.org
5. Rwanda Youth Society and global youth connect. www.globalyouthconnect.org
6. Association of Kigali Women in Sports. www.Akwos.org
7. Visiting some government civic education centers, Gacaca courts, TIG etc.

The essence of visiting these projects is to help raise awareness about their work and hence have ambassadors to talk about these projects abroad, to initiate and establish global partnership which can yield support and development but above to create and build understanding.

Volunteer Tourism: Rwanda still needs a lot of experts to help transform the country from a subsistence economy to a more powerful industrialized economy, boost its education sector, improve health services etc but a qualified and professional human resource base is still difficult to find in the country while at the same time, the government is in great need of expatriates with such qualifications to steer its development programmes. Wildlife tours narrows this gap by collaborating with well wishers, international and regional volunteers; who may wish to come in and help the country by providing expertise i.e. their knowledge, skills and experience to the benefit of Rwandans. We help organize everything for the willing volunteers and link them to their respective field of interest which strictly follows our acceptable criterias or guidelines in the selection process.

Event Management: We plan, organize and manage small and big functions with our reputable partners in business. These range from seminars, workshops, conferences for NGO's, government and private sector, local or international.

Consulting Services: We offer consultancy services in human resource management, capacity building, business management, tourism and Protected Area Management, conservation and conservation education, Biodiversity conservation and law, Ecosystem management, Sustainable resource use, Community Development and Tourism marketing.

RULES TO OBSERVE:

- ▶ We discourage giving out cookies, sweets, empty water bottles etc to the kids begging on the roadside because this promotes a bad culture of begging instead of building innovative and creative skills (entrepreneurship). If you want to donate anything; we encourage our guests to announce their offer or support to community tourism cooperatives in the presence of other members of the community. Alternatively, advised to talk to the management of Wildlife tours – Rwanda and they will guide you.

- ▶ Please avoid littering; leave all disposable materials with your guide and support us to maintain a clean environment.

Gorilla Naming Ceremony:

The ceremony of giving a name to a new born baby commonly known as “*Kwita Izina*” has been part of the Rwandan tradition for centuries. This ceremony has also been used for past 3 decades now to give names to new born gorillas. The names attributed to the gorillas play a great part in the program of monitoring of each individual and gorilla groups in its habitat.

Since this started, the gorilla naming ceremony was internal to the ORTPN and its partners and especially among the field staff. Through raising awareness at the national and international level about the protection of the mountain gorillas and their habitat. ORTPN launched the annual gorilla naming ceremony in 2005. The theme of 2005 ceremony was “Ensure the Future of the Mountain Gorillas of Rwanda”. In 2006, the theme was "Recognize the Role of the International Tourists who Selected Rwanda as Destination" and in 2007, the theme was “Caring for Wildlife Concerns Us All”. 2008, 12 gorilla were named with a theme; “Working together to conserve our wildlife”. During these four last ceremonies which were very successful, ORTPN and its special guests named 30, 12, 23 and 12 mountain gorillas, respectively.