

Rwanda Tourist Experience Permit Fees & Reservation Guidelines

January, 2018



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1. Introduction

Rwanda offers visitors one-of-a-kind experiences as it is home to one third of the remaining critically endangered Mountain Gorilla population, one third of Africa's bird species, several species of primates, volcanoes, the African Big Five to support game safaris, an exhilarating canopy walkway, volcanic caves and the furthest Source of the Nile amongst just a few.

Permits for these remarkable tourism experiences are purchased through IREMBO, a new made in Rwanda on-line services platform that includes reservations and sales of tourism experiences permits in national parks. In the event of an issue occurring during permit reservations or sales, the Rwanda Development Board team members are responsible for assisting in their resolution.

The Rwanda tourism industry has been identified by the Government of Rwanda as key to the success ensuring the long-term sustainable development and management of tourism products in Rwanda protecting and conserving natural resources and serves to ensure that the process of booking Rwanda iconic tourism products is fully transparent.



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Visitor activity fees support conservation efforts in Rwanda. To ensure the support for and benefits from its national parks, Rwanda established a unique Revenue Sharing Program in 2005 in which 5% of all tourism revenues are invested in community development projects adjacent to national parks such as schools, health clinics, water catchments and distribution systems and agricultural projects. This percentage was increased 10% starting July 1st, 2018. To date \$4.4 million USD has been invested into more than 600 projects between 2005 and 2017, anticipated to increase by 400% from \$1 million USD in 2017 to \$4 million USD by 2024 – *significant benefits for communities and Rwandans living adjacent to Rwanda's national parks!*

An additional 5% of visitor fees collected are returned to benefit local Rwandan communities near the park through the Rwanda Special Guarantee Fund. This human wildlife conflict management fund is used to support claims by Rwandans related to damage and injury resulting from wildlife. The Program is managed by the SGF Agency who also generates annual reports.

Visitors to Rwanda, along with the Tour Operators that support them (both Rwanda-based international) are advised to read these guidelines before purchasing a permit for a Tourist Experience Volcanoes and Nyungwe National Parks.

It should be noted that visitor experience permit fees and booking procedures for Akagera National Park are the responsibility of the Akagera Management Company, on behalf of the Government of Rwanda. Information can be obtained at their website: <https://www.africanparks.org/the-parks/akagera>.

2. Summary of Visitor Experience Permit Fees & Discounts

The pricing of each tourist experience permit is determined by the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) every two years and communicated to the public through IREMBO website, the Visit Rwanda website, or other means determined by the RDB. When updated, tourist experience permit pricing shall be effective on the date they are announced by the RDB.



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A summary of the tourism experience permit pricing for each of Volcanoes and Nyungwe National Parks are described below. A more detailed list of experiences available and their corresponding fees is provided at the IREMBO website at:

www.irembo.gov.rw/tourism

2.1 Mountain Gorilla Experiences at Volcanoes National Park:

Gorilla trekking permit fees

- US\$1,500 for all categories;
- Minimum age of 15 years; and
- A maximum of eight people are permitted per gorilla group per day.

Filming and professional photography fees:

- US\$ 5,000 filming fee allowing three (3) consecutive days for Mountain Gorilla filming and professional photography; and
- US\$ 12,000 for Mountain Gorilla filming and photographer crew per day to a maximum of 8 people. This fee is in addition to the filming fee.
- US\$ 1800 for Filming in Volcanoes National Park without gorillas
- US\$ 1000 per group and per day for chimpanzees filming
- US\$600 per group and per day for filming other products in Nyungwe
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Personalized / Exclusive Mountain Gorilla Experience:

- US\$15,000 for a maximum group size of 8 people.
- A new package for visitors who wish to enjoy a personalized, exclusive Mountain Gorilla trekking experience with benefits that include:
 - a meet and brief at your hotel/lodge by park personnel;
 - an additional personalized briefing by Park personnel upon arrival at the park headquarters;
 - the selection of Gorilla groups and Guides by special request; and
 - flexible gorilla trekking starting time between 8 – 11 am.



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Behind the Scene Experience:

- US\$ 15,000 for a minimum of 3 visitors for 3 consecutive days
- Provides all the benefits of an exclusive gorilla trekking experience, plus:
 - a pre-trek meeting and presentation about gorilla conservation by the park management;
 - gorilla trekking with "tracking experts" and gorilla conservation experts;
 - live experiences with anti-poaching, researchers and vets;
 - a complimentary experience add-on of golden monkeys, nature walks, Musanze Caves, and Buhanga Eco-park;
 - visit and interaction with members of the local community, such as former poachers;
 - a personalized autograph photo with your park rangers, guides and conservation experts.

2.2 Special Discounted Rates

The following discounted rates are available to individuals, groups and Tour Operators licensed to operate in Rwanda.

Low season discount (Mountain Gorilla Trekking):

- 30% discount (US\$ 1,050) for combined trips to other National Parks in Rwanda (Akagera and/or Nyungwe National Park) for a minimum of 3 days / 2 nights during the months of November-May.

Conditions/eligibility:

- Required to provide proof of full payments for 2 nights accommodation / 3 days for experiences at Nyungwe or Akagera National Park, or a combination of the two national parks, and proof of full payment of permits in other parks; or confirmation email from hosting accommodation facility.
- Each person is eligible for 1 discounted gorilla trekking experience permit for every 3 days / 2 nights additional stay in either Akagera and/or Nyungwe National Parks should they choose to trek more than once;
- Discount does not apply for Exclusive mountain gorilla experiences, Behind the scenes experiences; or Filming permits.



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Meetings, Conference and Exhibition (MICE) Discounts:

- 15% discount (US\$1,275 rather than US\$1,500) for individual or group bookings for Conference delegates registered for an international conference that is hosted in Rwanda with a pre or post-MICE events to have a Mountain Gorilla experience in Volcanoes National Park.

Conditions/eligibility:

- Proof of conference registration; or a conference invitation letter; or official list of conference participants will be required.

Bulk Gorilla Experience Permit Discounts for Local Tour Operators Licensed in Rwanda

- As an incentive to Rwanda-based and licensed Local Tour Operators, after every 10 experience permit (booked and used within a 2 year period), an 11th permit is free, except VAT;
- Cancelled permits should be reported to RDB.

2.3 Exemptions/ Complimentary Experience Permit Fees

- Exemptions, complementary permits, reductions or waiving of experience permit fees may be granted at the discretion of the RDB, on a case-by-case basis.

3. Visitor Categories

Tourism visitor experience pricing varies by type of Visitor with categories defined as follows:

- **Rwandans:** Rwandan citizens (RC) and Foreign Residents (FR);
- **East African Citizens (EAC)** – EAC Nationals and EAC Foreign Residents;
- **Foreign non-resident Visitor (FNR)** – international visitors from all other locations other than Rwanda and EAC;
- **Students** - those studying in EAC member states, with proof of citizenship/ residency and student card to be provided).
- **Children** in this category are those below 15 years and pay like students

Conditions/eligibility:



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- the visitor permit category will be verified at the RDB point of sale and at the check-in point at the park prior to departure for experience.
- **Foreign Residents** in Rwanda and East African Countries need to have a minimum of four consecutive months' residency status/work permit in their passport or diplomatic card to qualify for the Rwandan/East African Foreign resident status.
- **A Diplomat** who has a Residence visa can be allowed to use the applicable resident rates for his spouse and legally accepted children even if the spouse and legally accepted children do not have the resident visas (reside outside of Rwanda).
- **Reporting EAC residents** need to provide EAC ID Cards or Passports.
- **A Tourist with one Rwandan parent or a Rwandan spouse** will be considered as Rwandan as long as Immigration and Emigration Director General confirms it.

4. Age Limits and Groups Sizes for Tourism Experiences:

There are a number of limits related to age and group size for some tourism experience permits in both Volcanoes and Nyungwe National Parks as described in the following.

4.1 Age Limits:

- Visitors must be a **minimum of 15 years of age** for Mountain Gorilla and Chimpanzee tracking, Musanze Caves, karisimbi crater, Bisoke, Muhabura, Gahinga and Congo Nile Divide trail;
- Visitors must be a **minimum age of 12 years** for Golden Monkeys, Other Primate Trekking, Bisoke Crater hike, Dian Fossey Tomb hike, Lake Ngezi experiences; and
- Children of **7 years of age and younger** for Buhanga Eco-park and nature walks (guided walking trail) in Nyungwe, with proof (birth certificate or passport).

4.2 Group Sizes:

- The maximum group size for **Mountain Gorilla trekking** is 8 people permitted per gorilla group per day;
- The maximum group size for **Golden Monkey Trekking (Volcanoes NP)** is 16 people permitted for each golden monkey trek;



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- The maximum group size for **Musanze Caves (Volcanoes NP)** is 25 people visit, with 2 visits per day available at 10:00am and 3:00pm;
- The maximum group size for **Other Primate Trekking (Nuyngwe NP)** is 10 people permitted for each other primate trek;
- The maximum group size for trekking **Chimpanzees (Nyungwe NP)** is 8 people permitted per group per day.

5. Experience Permit Booking Procedures

- Booking and reservations for all tourism experience permits are done on a first-come, first-serve basis;
- Information about tourism experience in Rwanda are available at the **Visit Rwanda** website at <https://www.visitrwanda.com/> or any Rwanda Tourism Information and Sales Office.
- Booking and reservations for all tourism experiences are done on-line with **IREMBO** at:
www.irembo.gov.rw/tourism
- In case of any query or disagreements about experience permit applications and supporting documents please send your supporting documents to **RDB Tourism Reservation & Sales Offices** or by email at: reservation@rwandatourism.com.
- Visitors, or Rwanda-based Licensed Tour Operators on their behalf, who make reservations for an experience permit must provide their full details at the time of payment including names, passport or national identification number, date of birth, country of residence, email and telephone number. Documents necessary for obtaining a tourist experience permit include:
 - Passport or Identity / Residency Card;
 - Proof of East African citizenship or East African residency; and
 - Student identification card.
 - For Children under 7 years of age – copy of passport and student ID. If no passport or national identification is available, an official document from the local government offices can be used as evidence of age.



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- Experience permits must be used within two years of purchase date, unless rescheduled in advance (with a minimum of 7 days prior the visit date);
- For Rwanda-based, licensed Tour Operators:
 - The RDB only works with licensed, Rwanda-based Local tour operators. International Tour Operators must book through Local Tour Operators.
 - All tourism experiences must be booked in advance with full payment, except Mountain Gorilla experience permits where a non-refundable deposit is required;
 - A booking deposit fee ONLY applies to licensed Rwanda-based local tour operators (not applicable to independent visitors and permit purchases);
 - Advance bookings shall be allowed up to two (2) years prior with a deposit of 40% (\$US600) of the total Gorilla permit fee required, with the balance payable one (1) month prior to the visit date;
 - Advance booking permits can be moved and confirmed to another date at least 30 days in prior the initial booking date, subject to availability;

6. Means of Payment:

Payment for tourist experience permits can be made by:

- Credit Card: Visa, Master Card, China Union Pay, or any other major credit card;

Note: while payments by cash are accepted in Parks, payment by credit card is preferred and recommended for ease and speed of processing.

7. Check-in and Permit Validation Procedure

Prior to a park visitor experience, every visitor is expected to check-in at a park office for permit validation by park staff prior to the time of departure. This validation process involves the visitor presenting his or her original copy of the experience permit or booking reference number obtained from IREMBO or the RDB Sales & Reservation Office.

Reporting times at Visitor Information/Registration Centers in national parks as follows:



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- **Volcanoes National Park** - 07h00hrs, except Karisimbi and Caves - 09h00.

Notes:

KARISIMBI HIKE is a 2 days experience, including an overnight camping, with scheduled departures: Saturday to return on Sunday; Tuesday to return on Wednesday; and Thursday to return on Friday. One day climbing can be arranged prior to the hike, but will not change the cost for the experience permit.

MUHABURA HIKE is a one day hiking experience and more strenuous. Check-in and permit validation is conducted one day before the visit. Meeting time with the guide and departure time is 6:30am from the MUSANZE Tourism information Center. Hikes are available for Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

- **Nyungwe National Park** - 07h00hrs for Chimpanzee tracking, various for all others.

8. Tourist Experience Permit Cancellations and Rescheduling

The RDB recognizes that there will be times when it is necessary to reschedule tourist experience permits that have been purchased, either as a result of planned changes to travel itineraries or due to unforeseen circumstances.

8.1 Rescheduling is only applicable with a seven (7) days advance notice:

- For Mountain Gorilla, or any other tourism experience permit in Volcanoes or Nyungwe National Parks;
- Reschedule will only be acceptable once and must be done within 12 months of date of purchase / booking; and
- Will be subject to availability.

8.2 Rescheduling for Other Reasons

For rescheduling a tourism experience permit booked by a Visitor or a Rwanda-based licensed Tour Operator for any other unforeseen circumstances in less than 7days ;

- Decision to grant a renewal is solely left to the discretion of the RDB Management.

9 Recording Tourism Experience Permit Revenues



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- All receipts received from tourism experience permits in national parks, Musanze Caves and Buhanga Eco-Park are recorded by the RDB as revenue.
- For deposits remitted by international tourists, the funds are treated as revenue even though the permit is not yet issued.

10 Office Locations, Hours of Operation and Contact Information

10.1 RDB Sales, Reservations and Reception Offices:

- RDB Headquarters (Gishushu, Kigali);
- Kigali Town Office (Grand Pension Plaza Building);
- Kigali International Airport;
- One stop Border Post – Rubavu;
- Border Post – Cyanika;
- Border Post – Rusizi I;
- Border Post – Gatuna; and
- One Stop Border Post – Kagitumba.
- Hours of operation: Monday - Friday from 07h00 am to 5h00 pm
Saturday and Sunday from 08h00 am to 12h00 pm

10.2 National Park Offices and Hours of Operation

- Volcanoes National Park:
Kinigi Park Headquarters; and
Musanze Tourism Information Centre.
- Nyungwe National Park:
Uwinka Visitor Centre;
Kitabi Visitor Reception Centre (east park entrance); and
Gisakura Park Headquarters (northwest park entrance).
- Hours of operation for all park offices: 07h00 am to 5h00 pm

10.3 RDB Contact information:

- Phone: +250 252 576 514
- Email: reservation@rwandatourism.com



- Website: <https://www.visitrwanda.com/>

Annex A

Kigali City Guided Tour Prices - 2017

- Kigali City Tour Price for Rwandans with RDB transportation and guide : 10,000 Rwf
- Kigali City Tour Price for Rwandans with guide and own transportation : 5,000 Rwf
- Kigali City Tour Price for non-Rwandans with RDB transportation and guide : \$40USD
- Kigali City Tour Price for non-Rwandans with guide and own transportation : \$20 USD



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Annex B

Pricing Structure for Nyungwe National Park – 2017

Tourism Activity	Length	FNR	FR	RC	EAC		Students/ Children		
					N	FR	R	EAC	FR
		USD	USD	RWF	USD	USD	RWF	USD	USD
Guided Nature Trails	1 day	40	30	3,000	5	30	1500	5	20
<i>Additional Days (50%)</i>		<i>20</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>1,500</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>750</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>10</i>
Guided Birding Walk	1 day	50	40	5,000	10	40	2000	5	20
<i>Additional Days (50%)</i>		<i>25</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>2,500</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>10</i>
"Canopy Adventure" Guided Walk	1 day	60	50	5,000	10	50	3,000	5	25
"Tropical Waterfall" Guided Hike	1 day	50	40	5,000	10	40	2,000	5	20
Congo Nile Guided Hike	3 days	100	70	10,000	20	70	5,000	10	35
Chimpanzee Trekking with Guides	1 day	90	60	5,000	10	60	2,500	5	30
Other Primate Treks with Guides	1 day	60	40	5,000	10	40	1,500	3	20
Camping	Per tent site Per night	30	20	5,000	10	20	2,500	20	15
Family Annual pass (3 times per year)		-	750	80,000	80,000	750	-	-	-
Individual Annual pass (3 times per year)		-	250	16,000	250	16,000	-	-	-

Notes:

1. Primates trekking not allowed for under 15 years
2. A group of 10 or more people gets a 30% discount on all products except chimpanzees
3. Children of less than 7 years of age do not pay.
4. Graduate students are excluded from students' category; they pay the normal fee.

FNR= Foreign non-resident EAC = East African citizen FR= Foreign resident
FR = Foreign Rwandan resident RC= Rwandan citizen or national



Annex C:

Pricing Structure for Volcanoes National Park – 2017

Products	Length	Foreign Visitor	Foreign Resident	Rwandan Citizen	EAC members		Students / Children		
					Nationals	Foreign Resident	Rwandese	EAC	Foreign Resident in Rwanda
Mountain gorillas	1 day / pp	\$1500	\$1500	\$1500	\$1500	\$1500	\$1500	\$1500	\$1500
Gorilla Exclusive Package	1 day / pp/per group	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000
Behind the Scene Package	1 day / pp/per group	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000	\$15000
Golden Monkeys	1 day / pp	100\$	65	4000R wf	65	80	2000	45	45
Dian Fossey Tomb	1 day / pp	75\$	60	4000R wf	55	65	2000	45	45
Bisoke	1 day / pp	75\$	60	4000R wf	55	65	2000	45	45
Natural walk	1 day / pp	55\$	40	3500R wf	35	45	2000	35	35



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Muhabura	1 day / pp	100\$	75	5000Rwf	60	80	3.000	45	45
Gahinga	1 day / pp	75\$	60	4000Rwf	55	65	2.000	45	45
Buhanga Eco-park	1 day nature work	40\$	30	3000Rwf	25	35	2.000	25	25
	1 day picnic (including camping)	60\$	50	5.000Rwf	40	55	3.000	35	35
Muhabura-Gahinga(Rwanda dawn on you at Gahinga – Muhabura trail)	1 pers for 2 days (including the camping site)	200\$	160	20,000 Rwf	130	165	10.000	100	100



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Karisimbi	2 days tracking with camping site	400(1) & 300(group) ¹	250(1) & 200(group)	30.000(1) & 25.000(group)	200 (1) 160 (group)	300 (1) 250 (group)	15.000 (1) 12.500 (groupe)	180 (1) 150 (group)	180 (1) 150 (group)
Caves	1day/pp	50	30	4000rw f	4000rw f	30	2000	2000	---

- For the caves Student in Study tour pay also 2000 Rwf
- ¹ Group means from 2 people



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