

TRAVEL TIPS

How to Plan the Perfect Adventure to Rwanda, According to a Travel Expert

A travel expert shares how to plan an adventure to Rwanda — including the best lodges to book to see gorillas, giraffes, and chimpanzees.

By [Mark Lakin](#) | Published on February 13, 2023



PHOTO: GUENT ERGUN/GETTY IMAGES

For many intrepid travelers, [Rwanda](#) is at the top of the list. Many visitors want to embark on gorilla trekking — in fact, one third of the planet's 1,000 remaining mountain gorillas live in Rwanda's [Volcanoes National Park](#). Seeing these endangered animals is a deeply moving experience, and a safari unlike any other. Elsewhere in the country, you also can track chimpanzees in Africa's oldest rainforest, Nyungwe Forest National Park, or spot the Big Five in Akagera National Park.

In less than 30 years since its genocide, Rwanda is a now prosperous, safe, well-functioning democracy where people of all ethnicities are welcomed and celebrated. Today Rwanda also firmly stands on the global platform of experiential luxury travel. It is one of [Africa's great safari destinations](#), but also one of its most inspiring conservation success stories.

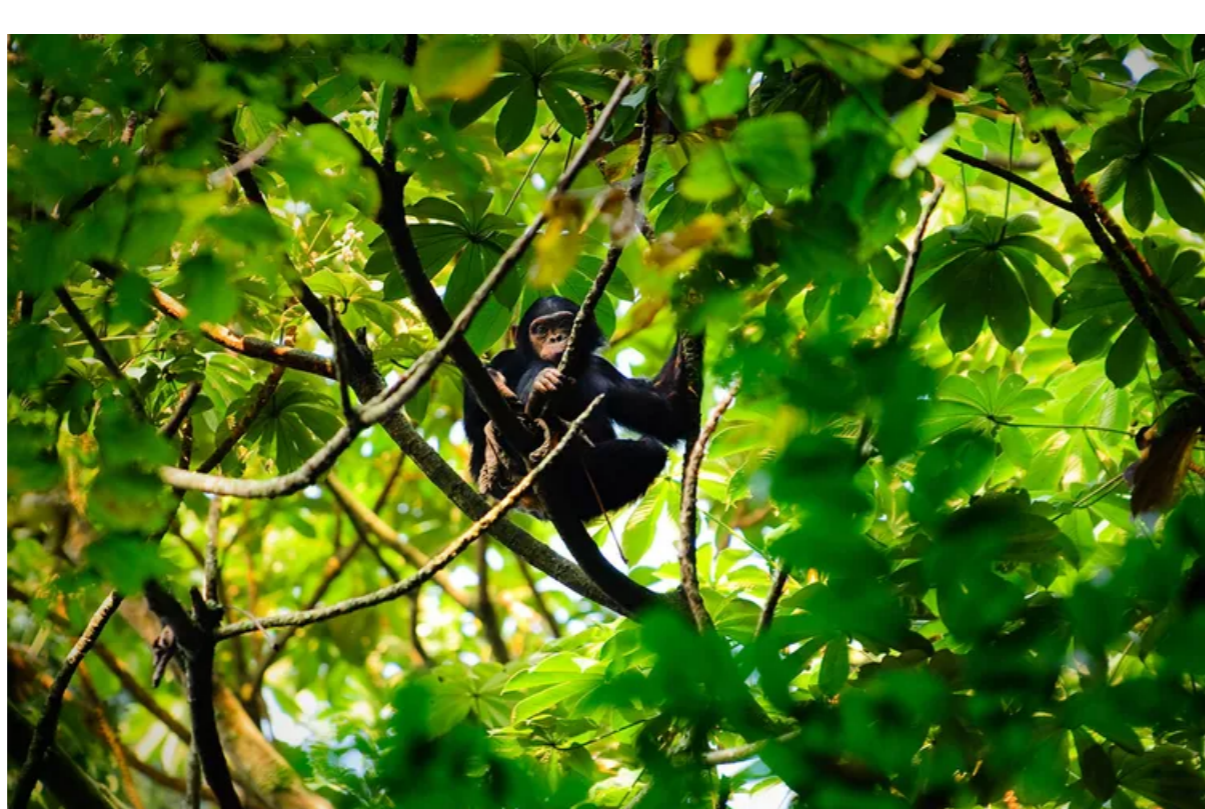


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For those in the know, Rwanda is simply one of the best destinations for luxury honeymoons, family trips, or friends finally taking that big bucket list trip. As the CEO of [The Legacy Untold](#), a luxury travel agency, and a member of T+L's Travel Advisory Board, I've helped many clients embark on unforgettable trips to this stunning, surprising country. Here's how I suggest planning your Rwanda adventure.

Start in Kigali

I always suggest clients spend a few days in the [thriving capital of Kigali](#). Visit the vibrant Kimironko Market where everything local is on offer from artisan textiles to live chickens. My recent highlight was immersing myself with local designers now showing on the runways of Milan, and having some bespoke pieces made to order.

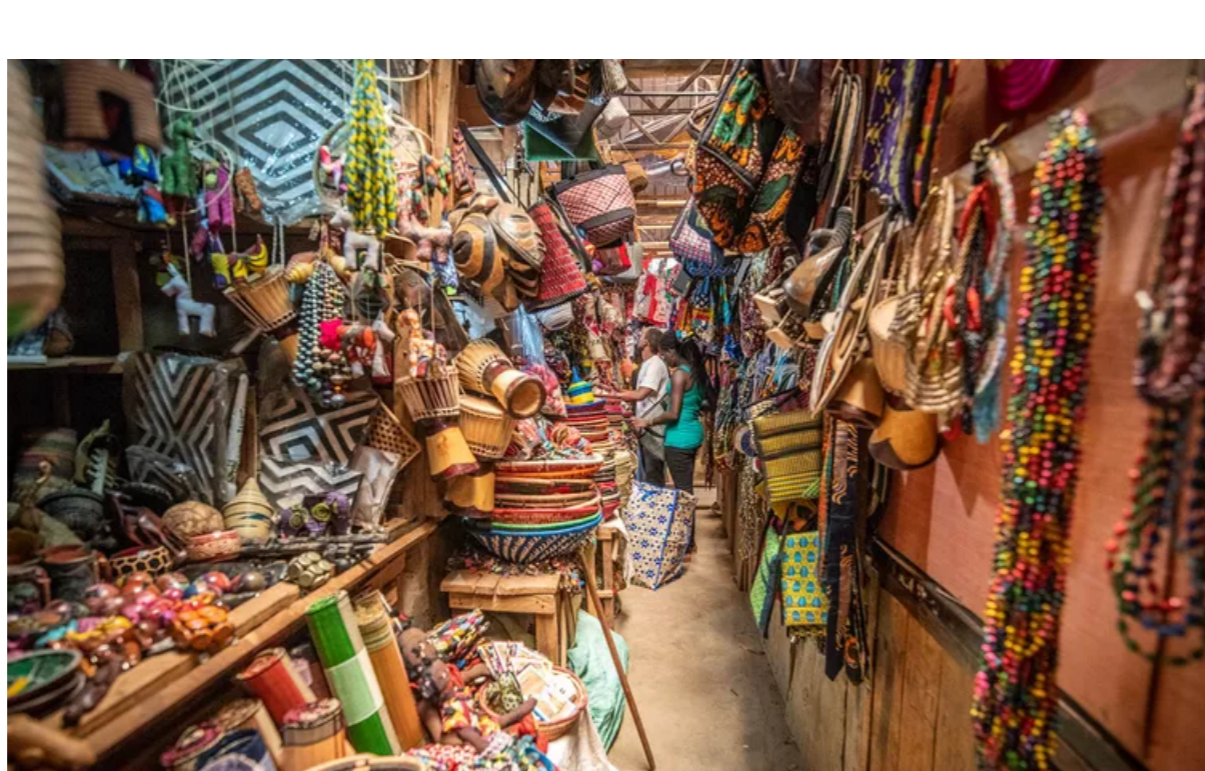


PHOTO: EDWIN REMSBERG/VWPIC/GETTY IMAGES

You can also visit with a genocide survivor, or tour the genocide museum and marvel at how far Rwanda has come in such a short amount of time. Eat at chic eateries and enjoy gastronomy that will tell the many stories of Rwanda through their incredible fresh farm to table food.

Where to Stay in Kigali

The hotel I always suggest is [The Retreat](#), which is family-owned and in the heart of the city. With two onsite restaurants, you'll also get a sampling of modern African cuisine. For true indulgence, book a luxury pool suite.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SINGITA

Gorilla Trekking in Volcanoes National Park and Beyond

[Singita Kwitonda](#) Lodge sits right on the edge of Volcanoes National Park. Each of its eight luxurious suites have a private heated plunge pool, indoor and outdoor fireplaces, and large timber framed windows that showcase the most cinematic volcano views.

[One & Only Gorillas Nest](#) is set within a forest of swaying eucalyptus trees, roses, wild flora, and fauna. This property is a more boutique resort than lodge, with onsite facilities like a spectacular gym, pool and spa facilities, drumming lessons, nature walks, biking, and multiple venues for special dining.

[Wilderness Bisate](#)'s six suites take a whimsical nod to traditional tribal techniques for building, dotting the natural amphitheater of an eroded volcanic cone and offering panoramic views of three volcanoes in the area.

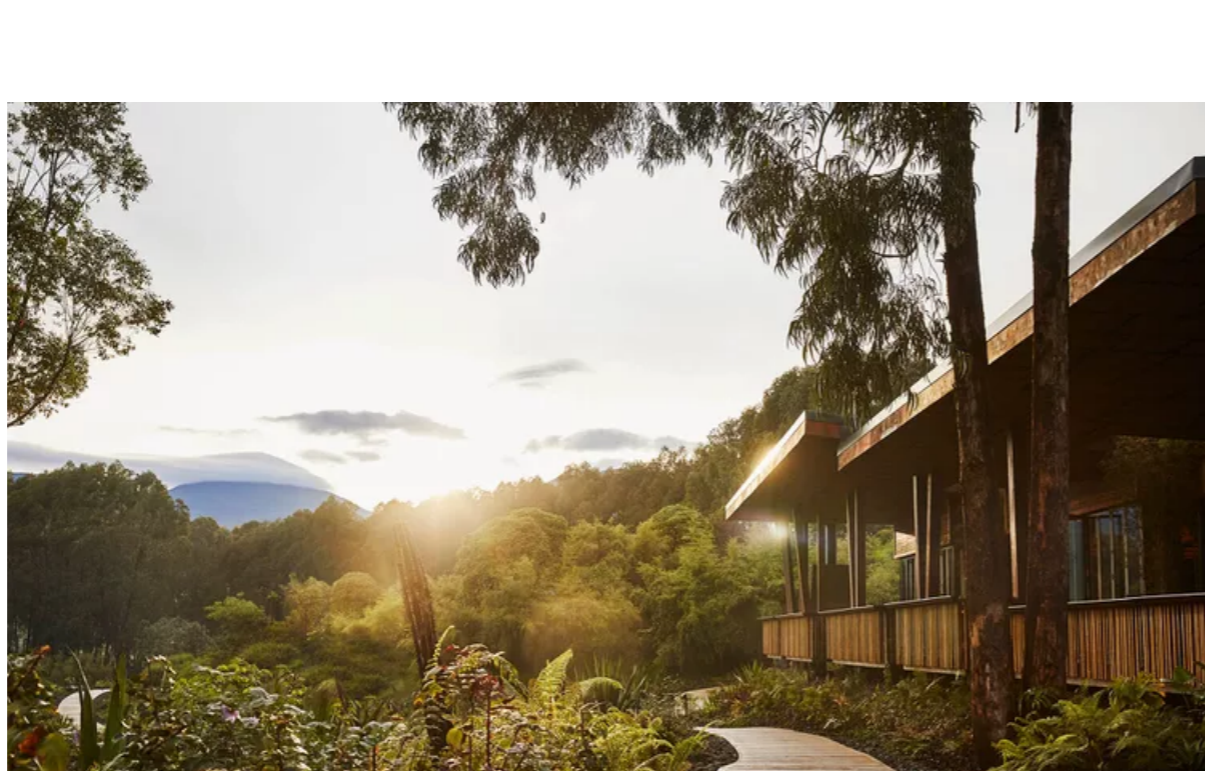


PHOTO: COURTESY ONE&ONLY

Go Deeper Into Akagera and Nyungwe Forest National Parks

Rwanda is so much more than gorilla trekking. While many travelers combine Rwanda with other countries like Tanzania, Kenya or South Africa, you could easily plan a two week itinerary just in Rwanda to soak it all in.

Akagera National Park has an incredible density of lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos and giraffes. Safari can be done by 4x4, motor boat and on foot, and the landscapes are incredible — ranging from craters with dramatic walls hundreds of feet high to the stunning Lake Rwanyakazinga. My clients are often safari veterans that remark on [how few tourists there are](#) in this remote part of Rwanda, making this a rare offering of spectacular wildlife that you will have all to yourself.

Nyungwe Forest National Park is Africa's oldest forest and it offers the chance to trek with chimpanzees. You can see chimps flying through the canopy and walking right in front of you. You can also explore the untamed jungles using sky-high translucent metal rope walkways spanning the treetops, or wander the high altitude tree plantations with the lady tea pickers, who still pick by hand the old fashioned way.

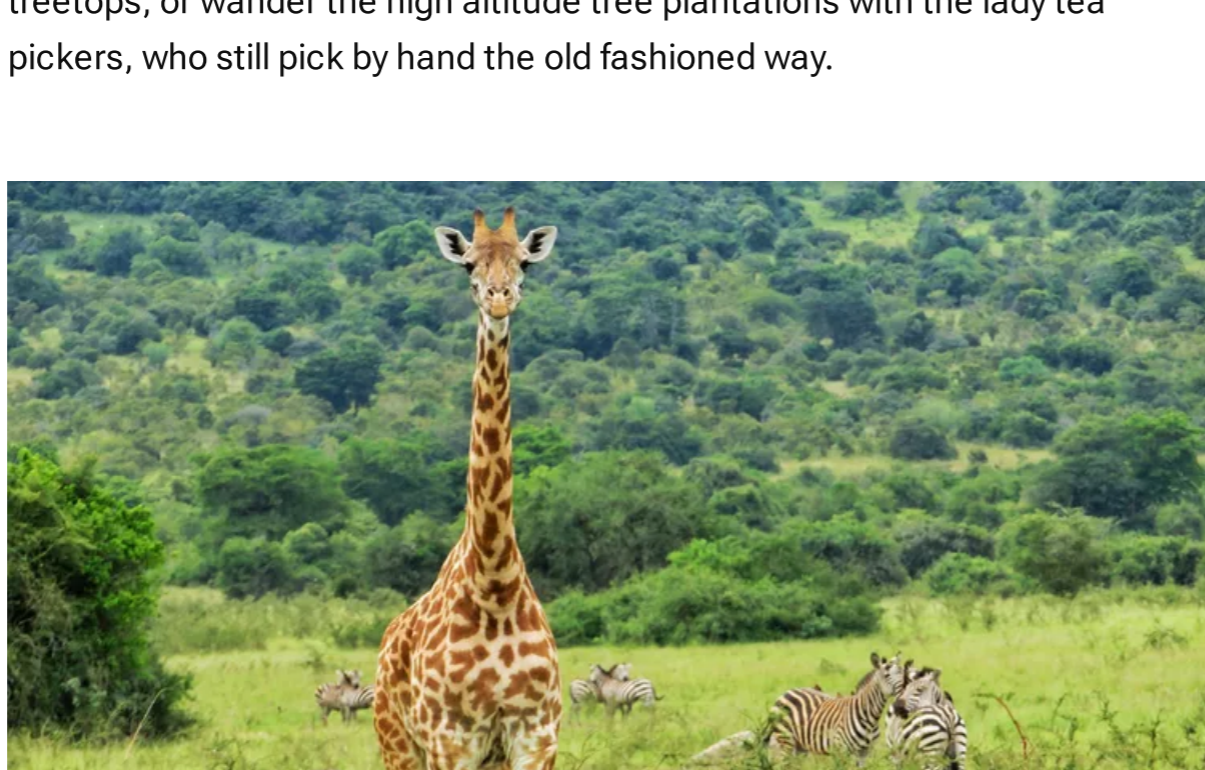


PHOTO: WIRESTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

Where to Stay in the National Parks

In Akagera, I recommend [Wilderness Magashi](#), which boasts perfectly situated lakefront accommodations for a Big Five safari. In Nyungwe, opt for the outstanding [One & Only Nyungwe House](#).

How to Book

Contact [Mark Lakin](#), a member of T+L's Travel Advisory Board

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Gorilla trekking: \$2,500 - \$4,500 per person per day (fully inclusive); Other destinations in Rwanda: \$1,000 - \$2,500 per person per day (fully inclusive). Learn more at www.thelegacyuntold.com.