



Rwanda

Culture & Wildlife

# PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

## ITINERARY

## Rwanda • Culture & Wildlife

**11 DAYS • 10 NIGHTS**

Kigali - Muhanga – Nyungwe - Karongi (Kibuye) – Lake Kivu –  
Rubavu (Gisenyi) – Musanze (Ruhengeri) – Kigali  
This trip can also be tailor made.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park, the world's premier gorilla tracking destination.
- Track chimpanzees and other primates.
- Cross the canopy walk in Nyungwe National Park.
- Kayak on Lake Kivu, Rwanda's largest body of water.
- Mountain bike trails around Musanze.

## TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Wildlife Journey
Tour Start	Kigali
Tour End	Kigali
Accommodation	Hotel, Guest Houses (or Home Stay option)
Included Meals	11 Breakfasts, 10 Lunches, 10 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Medium

## CULTURE & WILDLIFE



On this exciting discovery of Rwanda you'll trek through beautiful national parks that are home to both mountain gorillas and chimpanzees. You'll see the country from Lake Kivu, a mountain ringed inland sea, the Mukungwa River and wonder at the Virunga Volcanoes from the mountain bike trails of Musanze.



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# RWANDA *an overview*

Rwanda is a land locked country in central Africa. The 'Land of a Thousand Hills' lies in the heart of Africa, with 5 volcanoes, 23 lakes and numerous rivers. You will taste and smell the spices from the colourful Rwandan markets, meet the locals and discover their traditions, kayak on the enormous Lake Kivu, track chimpanzees in the Cyamuringi Forest, cycle on the lower slopes of Mt. Sabyinyo, and of course; observe the impressive mountain gorillas.

## WHY PIONEER EXPEDITIONS?

Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really do off the beaten track and unique adventures. Our team at Pioneer Expeditions are driven by their passion for adventure travel which we love to share with our clients. We delight in searching the globe for new destinations, new experiences and creating the most incredible adventure holidays. From the moment you choose to travel with Pioneer Expeditions until the time you return home you are supported by our dedicated team. We listen to what you want and can create an itinerary around your specific needs, working with your budget and with a commitment to responsible travel.

## ITINERARY



### DAY 1: KIGALI

You will be met at the airport by your guide and transferred to your hotel in Kigali. Depending on your arrival time you may want to relax or opt to start your adventure with a tour of Kigali.

Take a guided walking city tour of Kigali to familiarize yourself with the area. The tour includes a visit to a busy local market and the sampling of some local produce. You will also have the opportunity to relax in a local milk bar, the Rwandan equivalent to a coffee shop! An afternoon visit to the Genocide Memorial Museum is also possible. While this is a tough experience it provides an opportunity to both understand the history of this tragic event and also to pay your respects at the memorial. Furthermore it outlines the current efforts being made to create a brighter future for all Rwandans.

*Overnight Heaven Boutique Hotel or similar*





*Overnight:*  
**Hotel**



*Meals:*  
**B, L, D**



*Distance:*  
**Approx. 20 min transfer**



*Activities:*  
**Explore Kigali**

## DAY 2: KIGALI - MUHANGA

Today you will have a genuine experience of local life that also provides valuable assistance to local people.

After breakfast depart by road for the village of Muhanga, the drive takes approximately 1½ hours from Kigali. When you arrive in Muhanga you will be introduced to your family or community group. This is an opportunity to learn about the daily lives of the local Rwandans. You will spend the morning assisting them with some of their daily tasks, such as working in the fields, and then have a traditional lunch with the group while learning more about their culture. After lunch you will spend time with your group working together on traditional local crafts, such as making baskets.

Share an evening meal with your hosts before retiring for the night. Accommodation will be provided in a local lodge, but if you prefer you can choose to experience a home stay.

(Please note that the home stay experience generally provides accommodation in one large room and although the accommodation and facilities will be basic efforts will be made by your host family to make your stay comfortable).

*Overnight in Muhanga Splendid (or community home stay option)*



*Overnight:*  
**Hotel/ Home  
Stay**



*Meals:*  
**B, L, D**



*Distance:*  
**Approx. 1½ hr drive**



*Activities:*  
**Community projects**

## DAY 3: MUHANGA - NYUNGWE

After an early breakfast set off for a morning drive of approximately 3 hours towards Nyungwe.

Your next stop is the Kitabi Eco Centre (KEC). The Centre is located on Mount Kitabi, and 2 km from the eastern entrance to Nyungwe National Forest. From the Kitabi Eco Centre you will get the chance to see spectacular panoramic views of the nearby green tea plantations that frequent this region and also the dark green trees of Nyungwe Forest. You will be served a traditional lunch before heading out for an afternoon guided trail walk of the area.

After your trail walk you can relax and enjoy a traditional evening meal before retiring for the night.

*Overnight in the Kitabi Eco Centre.*



*Overnight:*  
**Traditional  
lodge**



*Meals:*  
**B, L, D**



*Distance:*  
**Approx. 3hrs drive**



*Activities:*  
**Trekking**

## DAY 4: NYUNGWE NATIONAL PARK



Today you will visit Nyungwe National Park. A beautifully preserved forest that covers an area of over 1000sq km Nyungwe National Park is home to over 300 bird species, many butterflies, orchids, and 75 mammal species including 13 primates.

With your personal input your guide will arrange a hike that is the right option for you; there are several options for different abilities so everyone can experience the trekking in the park. You can choose to walk the Canopy Trail, approximately a 2 hour trail through the forest that includes the “canopy walk”.

This refers to a foot bridge located 50m high, and around 90m long, high above the forest. Not for the faint hearted but worth it for the views! In the afternoon check in at your hotel.



Overnight Top View Hotel or similar



Overnight:  
**Hotel**



Meals:  
**B, L, D**



Distance:  
**N/A**



Activities:  
**Trekking**

## DAY 5: NYUNGWE - KARONGI

An early start (around 5am) for your chimpanzee tracking experience! Drive to Cyamudongo Forest, a reserve located approximately an 1½ hours from Nyungwe which has an habituated population of chimpanzees. After meeting up with your tracker you will head out to into the forest in search of the chimpanzees and then spend an hour observing them in the forest. As our closest living relative, chimpanzees share 98.7% DNA, it's an exhilarating experience to observe them in the wild. Chimpanzees communicate with pant hoots, screams, and by hitting the tree buttress so you may hear them before you actually see them!



The length of the walk and the time taken to find the group will vary, so prepare for a long walk through the forest. The chimpanzees can be seen as they move through the tree canopy, or as they travel along the forest floor.

After your time with the chimpanzees you will drive on towards Lake Kivu for a late lunch. Your arrival time depends on the length of the mornings activities but you may have an opportunity to enjoy a sunset kayak on the lake and perhaps see the fishermen in their boats as they head out for the night.

*Overnight Rwiwa Village Lodge*



Overnight:  
**Lodge**



Meals:  
**B, L, D**



Distance:  
**Approx. 1½ hr. and  
2-3 hr. drives**



Activities:  
**Wildlife tracking**

## DAY 6: KARONGI – LAKE KIVU

Lake Kivu is Rwanda's largest lake and the sixth largest in Africa. After breakfast you will have a safety briefing on kayaking guidelines and procedures before heading out in your kayak. Lake Kivu naturally has no hippos, or crocodiles, making it a safe area for kayaking. It is also beautiful being surrounded by hills with very little obvious development. After a couple of hours of kayaking you will arrive at a small uninhabited island where fruit bats nest, sometimes they can be seen circling above the island. Take a leisurely lunch before you continue kayaking on to another uninhabited island where you will camp for the night. The crew of your support boat will have set up your tents and they will prepare your meal whilst you relax on the lakeshore.



*Overnight at camp*



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Overnight:  
**Camp**



Meals:  
**B, L, D**



Distance:  
**N/A**



Activities:  
**Kayaking**

## DAY 7: LAKE KIVU - GISENYI



After breakfast at your camp site there is another opportunity for kayaking on the lake towards Rushel Kivu Lodge (approximately a distance of 2 hours). At the lodge you will transfer your bags from your support boat to your vehicle and then continue on to Cyimbili by motor boat for lunch. This afternoon you can choose to either walk a section of the Congo Nile Trail OR take a tour of the coffee fields and production plant (option to be decided in advance). Coffee production is an important source of income for the local economy.

Continue your journey by motor boat towards Gisenyi and arrive in time to see the town fisherman heading out for the evening, and as they do so hear them sing. The fishermen spend the night on the water, their 3 vessels linked together with poles and nets to catch the fish, and hearing them singing as they paddled out for the night is a surprisingly moving experience. Gisenyi (renamed Rubavu in 2006) is a popular resort town with both Rwandans and visitors. (NB: The fishermen's schedule is subject to change due to their schedule and the weather). *Overnight Paradis Malahide Hotel or similar.*



Overnight:  
**Hotel**



Meals:  
**B, L, D**



Distance:  
**N/A**



Activities:  
**Kayak and explore**

## DAY 8: GISENYI - MUSANZE

After breakfast you will travel to Musanze by road, approximately a 2 hour drive. Musanze is the third largest town in Rwanda, and as the closest town to the Volcanoes National Park it's a convenient base from which to track the mountain gorillas. Set at a fairly high altitude (1850m) you will see the horizontal line along the volcanoes distinguishing where the farm land ends and the forest begins.

Meet with your mountain bike trail guide and familiarise yourself with your bike before heading out on a ride that will last approximately 1½ - 2 hours. Your guided route will take you through settlements and past fields. This is a great way to familiarize yourself with the landscape and say hello to the locals! Eco-bikes are available for the tour if preferred (please request in advance). After a local lunch you will have the afternoon at leisure. You can spend time relaxing at your hotel, exploring the town, or visiting the Karisoke exhibit to learn about Dian Fossey's work in the area. Enjoy an evening meal at your hotel.



*Overnight La Locanda*



Overnight:  
**Hotel**



Meals:  
**B, L, D**



Distance:  
**Approx. 2hr drive**



Activities:  
**Cycling**



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## DAY 9: MUSANZE

Morning at leisure, after the tour your guide will arrange a local traditional buffet lunch.

In the afternoon you will transfer to the Mukungwa River, approximately an hours drive away from town, for your canoe trip. On arrival there will be a safety briefing by your specialist guide who will then assist you into your canoes and head out with you down river.

The Mukungwa River banks are abundant with birds, over 40 species have been recorded, and it's a great way to observe the countryside at a relaxing pace and see Rwanda from a different perspective.



Overnight La Locanda



Overnight:  
**Hotel**



Meals:  
**B, L, D**



Distance:  
**N/A**



Activities:  
**Explore and Canoe trip**

## DAY 10: VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK - KIGALI



An early start today as you will track mountain gorillas!

Take an early morning short drive to Kinigi, where the Volcanoes National Park headquarters are located, you need to be there by 7am or you risk invalidating your precious permits! You will then be introduced to your park guide who will take time to explain where exactly you will be trekking, which gorilla group you have been assigned to track and the guidelines you needed to follow when in the mountain gorilla's presence.

Around 8am you will start trekking through the fields and farm land surrounding the park until you reach the border of the Volcanoes National Park.

Trekking is at elevations of 2500-3000m, so at times breathing can become a conscious effort as you move through the thick vegetation towards the gorillas. The distance you walk is entirely dependent on the mountain gorilla group movements. Excitement mounts as you approach the group and finally get to enjoy your time in

their presence. Your guide will reassure and calmed the gorillas with deep grunts, and you will be encouraged to do the same. After an hour with the Mountain gorillas you will trek back to Kinigi. After your trek you will enjoy a well earned lunch before making the return journey to Kigali. The transfer time to Kigali is approximately a 3 hours.

Overnight Heaven Boutique



Overnight:  
**Hotel**



Meals:  
**B, L, D**



Distance:  
**Approx. 3hr drive**



Activities:  
**Wildlife**

## DAY 11: KIGALI

End of your incredible trip. Today your guide will transfer you to Kigali airport in time for your flight home.



Overnight:  
**N/A**



Meals:  
**B**



Distance:  
**15 min transfer**



Activities:  
**Depart**



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# Important Information

## INCLUDED

- Mountain gorilla and Chimpanzee permits
- Accommodation as stated in the itinerary
- All meals as described (B= Breakfast, L= Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Your driver/guide
- Entrance fees to the parks
- Drinking water provided throughout
- Transportation and airport transfers stated

## NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Any additional/extra tours or park fees.
- Tips and gratuities for guide, driver, local guides and service providers.
- Extras at hotels (telephone calls, room service, portering, laundry, alcoholic drinks, etc.)
- Personal and/or medical expenses.
- £375 (\$450) supplement for Gorilla Permits in the High season: Jun - Oct

## ACCOMMODATION *at a glance*

### Community home stay option:

Your bed may be made traditionally out of grass covered by a mat, with normal bed sheets, blankets and pillows. The bed may be on a frame or on the floor. Typically, all guests share one room. A mosquito net will be provided for your bed. Your overnight hosts don't have electricity in their home; they use oil lanterns or solar lamps.

Your host's toilet will be a pit latrine, and you will be supplied with hand sanitizer and toilet paper. Soap and water will also be available for washing your hands. For bathing, your host family uses water in a bucket or basin to bathe in the outhouse. You are welcome to also take a bucket bath; your hosts may even heat your bath water for you!

Although many rural families go without food in the morning, a simple breakfast of black tea with bread and local fruit will be served for you to share with your hosts. You will be supplied with plenty of bottled drinking water.

### Kigali

Heaven- Boutique Hotel

<https://www.heavenrwnda.com/>



### Gisakura

Top View Hotel

<http://nyungwehotel.com/Default.aspx>



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**Kibuye, Lake Kivo**  
Eco Lodge- Rwiza Village  
<http://rwizavillage.org/>



**Gisenyi**  
Paradis Malahide Hotel  
<https://www.paradisemalahide.com/>



**Musanze**  
La Locanda  
<http://www.lalocandarwanda.com/>



# Additional Information

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ACTIVITY DURATION	2 – 5 hours per day
SEASON	All year
GROUP SIZE	2+
EXPEDITION SCHEDULE	We run this as a private, tailor-made departure on dates to suit you.
DIFFICULTY LEVEL	Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'Medium' level (2 – 5 hours of activities per day). This means that you will need an average level of fitness.

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## THE PIONEER BOOKING PROCESS

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Where do you go from here? Well, you can feel free to email us at [info@pioneerexpeditions.com](mailto:info@pioneerexpeditions.com) if you're interested in this trip, or any of our other expeditions from around the world. Visit our website [www.pioneerexpeditions.com](http://www.pioneerexpeditions.com) to unearth all of our other equally amazing trips and destinations.

**1. Contact us -**

We will be happy to answer any questions or enquiries you may have. From here we will begin to plan and put together your dream adventure holiday! Alternatively, on our website you will find our booking and enquiry forms; once filled in, we will be notified of your enquiry and will get back to you ASAP.

**2. Leave everything to us -**

Everything will be arranged and booked by us, but we will make sure to keep you updated every step of the way. In addition, we can arrange your international flights if needed, as we have access to competitive airfares. We can also arrange any additional tours or additional night's accommodation.

**3. Wait for your adventure to begin -**

Sit back and count down the days until your trip of a lifetime with Pioneer Expeditions. We'll handle all of the last minute preparations and provide you with everything you need. All practical information will be sent out to you, prior to your trip.

If you feel like altering this itinerary to suit your personal preferences, we can arrange all of that and more – just get in contact with us and let us know your requirements and wishes. From here, we can simply tailor-make your dream holiday.

