

Overseas Adventure Travel®

THE LEADER IN CUSTOMIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide®



Rwanda: Mountain Gorillas in the Land of
a Thousand Hills

2026

Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

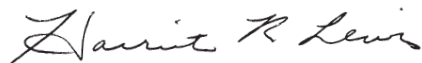
When you join us, you will slip seamlessly into local life as you explore off the beaten path in your small group. Like all our itineraries, this one is designed to give you an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who customize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis

Chair

Overseas Adventure Travel

CONTENTS

RWANDA: MOUNTAIN GORILLAS IN THE LAND OF A THOUSAND HILLS

Your Adventure at a Glance:

Where You're Going, What it Costs,
and What's Included **4**

Your Detailed Day-To-Day Itinerary **6**

Pre-Trip Extension **14**

Post-Trip Extension **17**

ESSENTIAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

Travel Documents & Entry Requirements... **21**

Travel Protection Required

Rigors, Vaccines & General Health **24**

Money Matters: Local Currency &
Tipping Guidelines..... **29**

Air, Optional Tours & Staying in Touch **32**

Packing: What to Bring & Luggage Limits... **37**

Climate & Average Temperatures..... **45**

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

Rwandan Culture **48**

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs,
Shipping & More **53**

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Rwanda **55**

Uganda..... **57**

Tanzania..... **59**

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading **62**

Suggested Films & Videos **63**

Useful Websites **65**

Useful Apps **66**



Akagera National Park

Rwanda: Mountain Gorillas in the Land of a Thousand Hills

Small Group Adventure

Rwanda: Kigali, Akagera National Park, Volcanoes National Park

Small groups of no more than 13 travelers, guaranteed

11 days starting from \$8,695

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE**

For departure dates & prices, visit www.oattravel.com/rwn2026pricing

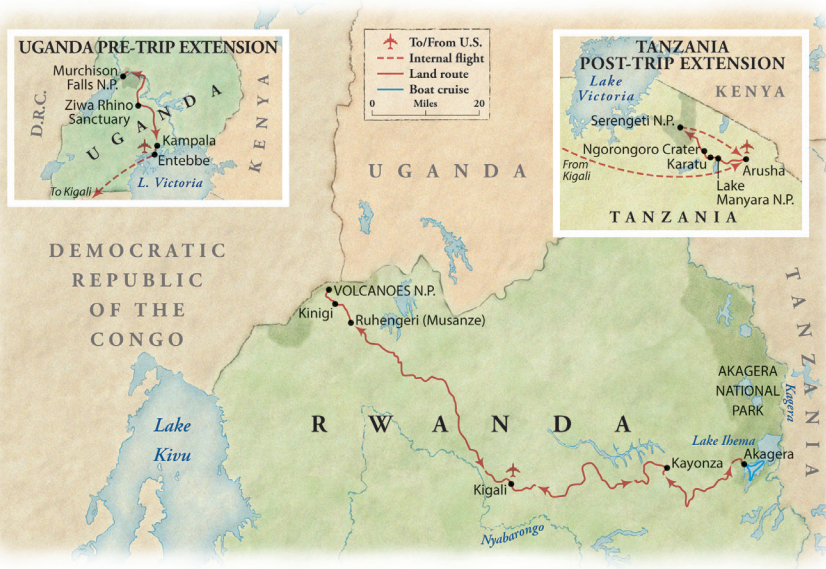
Welcome to Rwanda, land of a thousand hills. Go for jungle treks into the mist-shrouded slopes of Rwanda's Virunga Volcanoes to witness the antics of golden monkeys and to stare down the world's last habituated populations of mountain gorillas. Seek out the "Big Five" during game-viewing drives at Akagera National Park, spend 6 nights in safari lodges, and discover one of the most beautiful destinations in all of Africa.

IT'S INCLUDED

- 9 nights accommodation
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- 25 meals—9 breakfasts, 9 lunches, and 7 dinners
- 16 small group activities, including 2 jungle treks and up to 4 game-viewing drives
- All National Park, Gorilla Trek, and Golden Monkey Trek permit fees
- Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader and driver-guides
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, lodge and camp staff, driver-guides, and luggage porters
- Complimentary O.A.T. safari duffel bag and water bottle
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next adventure

Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.

Rwanda: Mountain Gorillas in the Land of a Thousand Hills



ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Fly to Kigali, Rwanda
2-4	Kigali
5-7	Akagera National Park
8-10	Ruhengeri
11	Return to U.S.

PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Uganda: The Pearl of Africa Revealed

PRE-TRIP: 6 nights from **\$3,995**

Tanzania: The Ngorongoro Crater & Serengeti Private Tented Safari

POST-TRIP: 6 nights from **\$3,495**

ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Entebbe** before your Uganda pre-trip extension from **\$210** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Kigali** before your main adventure from **\$200** per room, per night

WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderately Strenuous

Pacing: 3 locations in 10 days

Physical requirements: The gorilla trek on Day 9 may require hiking of up to 5 or 6 hours up and downhill along steep, slippery jungle terrain at an altitude of up to 9,000 feet

Flight time: Travel time will be 18-28 hours and will most likely have two connections

View all physical requirements at www.oattravel.com/rwn

RWANDA: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

Unbeatable Value: Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

People-to-People Experiences: Spend **A Day in the Life** of a Rwandan Reconciliation Village, a community where both perpetrators and victims of the 1994 genocide live side by side. We'll meet perpetrators and survivors alike, for a personal account of the fortitude required for Rwandans to put their old hatreds aside and work together to build a peaceful future founded on forgiveness and reconciliation. And in Kigali, we'll join a local family for a **Home-Hosted Lunch**, for a taste of home-cooked Rwandan cuisine, and a glimpse into daily life in the country's capital.

O.A.T. Exclusives: We'll learn about the education system of Rwanda as well as the hopes and dreams of its next generation during a meeting with teachers and students at the Rushubi Primary School in Ruhengeri, supported in part by **Grand Circle Foundation**.

Rwanda: Mountain Gorillas in the Land of a Thousand Hills

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

6 nights in *Uganda: The Pearl of Africa Revealed*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive Entebbe, Uganda

Day 3 Explore Entebbe • Sunset boat cruise on Lake Victoria

Day 4 Fly to Murchison Falls National Park • Afternoon game-viewing drive

Day 5 Morning game-viewing drive • River cruise to Murchison Falls

Day 6 Murchison Falls Delta boat cruise • Afternoon game-viewing drive

Day 7 View top of Murchison Falls • Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary • Rhino trek on foot

Day 8 Shoebill canoe safari • Transfer to Entebbe • Fly to Kigali to begin main trip

Day 1 Fly to Kigali, Rwanda

You depart today for your overnight flight from the U.S. to Kigali, Rwanda.

Day 2 Arrive Kigali

- Destination: Kigali
- Accommodations: Lemigo Hotel or similar

Evening: Upon arrival in Rwanda this evening, an O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport and escort you to your hotel in Kigali, where you will meet your fellow travelers, including those who just completed our *Uganda: The Pearl of Africa Revealed* pre-trip extension.

Day 3 Explore Kigali • Visit Genocide Memorial • Conversation about life during the Rwandan genocide

- Destination: Kigali
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Lemigo Hotel or similar

Activity Note: The visit to the Kigali Genocide Memorial includes many graphic images and may be disturbing to some travelers.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After a Welcome Briefing and short orientation walk with our Trip Experience Leader, we'll set off for a day of discoveries in the Rwandan capital. Kigali is not only situated in Rwanda's geographical center, but was also at the center of the horrific events of 1994, when more than a million ethnic Tutsis

(as well as moderate Hutus and Twa) were systematically murdered by their extremist Hutu neighbors over the course of 100 unspeakably brutal days.

We'll learn more about Rwanda's darkest hour in depth at the Kigali Genocide Memorial, which was conceived both as a tribute to the victims of the Rwandan genocide and to ensure that this history is never repeated. At the memorial, we'll gain firsthand insights into the Rwandan genocide during a conversation with a genocide survivor who will share a personal account of this horrifying period of history.

After our conversation, we'll tour the genocide memorial. Built over a mass burial ground for a quarter million victims, this moving memorial features various exhibit halls that trace the events of the 100-day genocide, reveal the colonial history of Rwanda and factors leading up to the slaughter, and highlight other instances of 20th-century genocides around the world that speak to mankind's capacity for cruelty.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: We'll continue exploring the streets of Kigali and see how the city has emerged as one of the cleanest, safest, and most attractive capitals in all of Africa. The 1994 genocide left Rwanda in shambles: Huge swaths of the educated workforce were killed or fled, looting was rampant, and cash crops withered from neglect. President Paul Kagame, who began serving as vice president in 1994 before being elected president in 2000, is largely credited with Rwanda's remarkable transformation from a genocidal battlefield into a thriving, peaceful nation once more.

We'll also walk around at the large Kigali City Market, where people from across Rwanda come to buy their daily necessities.

After our city tour of Kigali, we'll have a few hours to relax at our hotel.

Dinner: Enjoy a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant.

Evening: You are free to retire to your room, relax in the hotel's common areas, or gather at the bar for a cocktail to go over the discoveries of the day.

Day 4 Conversation about the Nyamata massacre and the Catholic Church **• A Day in the Life of a Rwandan Reconciliation Village • Home-Hosted Lunch • Controversial Topic: Life after the genocide**

- Destination: Kigali
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Lemigo Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Our day begins with a visit to Nyamata church, the site of a notorious massacre during the genocide of 1994. Our tour of the church will include a conversation with several genocide survivors about the brutal massacre that took place here in 1994, and how the Catholic Church's role in the bloodshed has shaken the Rwandan people's faith in this religious institution.

When the genocide of 1994 began, around 10,000 civilians sought sanctuary at Nyamata church, placing their faith in its Catholic stewards to protect them from the Hutu extremists. However, when the killers arrived at the gates, the church leaders offered no resistance—bloodthirsty soldiers easily forced their way inside with grenades, leaving the doomed souls within entirely to the scant mercy of the militia's depravity.

We'll gain a personal perspective on the grim events that took place here, and how they shook the country's faith in the Catholic Church, as we speak with up to three local people who lived through the genocide (depending on their personal schedules, they may not all be available on every departure).

Then, we'll learn more about Rwanda's commitment to healing and forgiveness when we head to the Bugesera district to begin our **A Day in the Life** experience at a Reconciliation Village, where survivors of the genocide live side-by-side with the very same people who perpetrated it. During a walk around the village, we'll see how the genocide's victims and perpetrators have learned to put the past behind them and live together as neighbors once again. Hutu and Tutsi residents work alongside each other as unified Rwandans to perform the daily tasks that keep the village running. We'll meet locals as they tend to vegetable gardens, raise livestock and poultry, and craft filters to provide potable water.

Lunch: Join some local families for a **Home-Hosted Lunch**. Using the ingredients that we selected during yesterday's visit to Kigali's bustling market, we'll prepare and share a traditional Rwandan lunch, which will likely feature local produce such as cassava, plantain, vegetables, roasted beef, arrow roots, chicken, beans, and fruit. As we eat together, we'll enjoy the opportunity to get our hosts' perspective of what life is like in an unusual community like this.

Afternoon: We'll join members of the village community to delve deeper into the **Controversial Topic** of the practical difficulties of nationwide reconciliation. While the nation's government has its eyes set on the future, many who survived are unwilling to forgive what happened in the past.

The official government policy toward the country's ethnic tensions is straightforward and clear: "*Ndi Umunyarwanda* (We are all Rwandan)." In an effort to let go of the ethnic divisions that led to the genocide, as well as the civil wars and violent clashes that preceded it, the country has formally banned the practice of separating the country's people along ethnic lines. However, while the residents of the Reconciliation Village are all firmly committed to burying their old hatreds and living harmoniously alongside their former enemies, many others in Rwanda are not so ready to forget about these divisions; there are many who still believe that justice cannot be served until those who perpetrated the genocide are tracked down and locked away. We'll spend some time in conversation with up to three residents of the Reconciliation Village (depending on their availability) to get their firsthand perspectives of how and why they decided to move on from their dark pasts, and how they perceive the prospects of a future peace in Rwanda at large.

Dinner: On your own in Kigali.

Evening: You are free to explore on your own, use the hotel's amenities, or relax in your room for our last night in Kigali.

Day 5 Journey to Akagera National Park • Visit Women's Opportunity Center • Night game-viewing drive

- Destination: Akagera
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Akagera Game Lodge or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll depart Kigali for our overland journey to Akagera National Park, situated along Rwanda's northeastern border with Tanzania. We'll stop along the way in the

small town of Kayonza to visit the Women's Opportunity Center. Designed as a mini-village with a series of pavilions built to blend into the landscape, the modern center is home to about 300 Rwandan women—most of whom are genocide survivors—and is also a gathering place for other rural farmers who come here to put their lives back together through education, agriculture, and food cooperatives. During our visit, we'll not only hear firsthand testimonies from the women at the center, but we'll also have the chance to participate in some of the training activities available to the farmers.

Lunch: We'll join locals in the dining room at the Women's Opportunity Center to enjoy a traditional meal together.

Afternoon: We'll continue our journey to Akagera, arriving at our safari lodge by mid-afternoon. Then, we'll set off on the first game-viewing drive of our Rwandan adventure. One of Africa's oldest national parks, Akagera is a 348-square-mile scenic game reserve of savannah, woodlands, and wetlands featuring a dozen lakes linked by channels and papyrus swamps teeming with crocodiles and hippos. The park will thrill both nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts alike, as we'll discover on an evening game-viewing drive.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: You are free to explore on your own, take advantage of the game lodge's facilities, or relax in your room.

Day 6 Full-day game-viewing drive with picnic lunch

- Destination: Akagera
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Akagera Game Lodge or similar

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: We'll set off on a game-viewing drive in the northern section of the park, keeping our eyes open for giraffe and zebra in open woodland, or small herds of elephant and buffalo that emerge from the dense woodland to drink at the park's many lakes.

Lunch: In the park.

Afternoon: We'll resume our game-viewing drive through Akagera.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: You are free to gather with your travel companions for a drink at the lodge's lounge area, or relax in your room.

Day 7 Morning game-viewing drive **• Behind-the-scenes tour of park headquarters • Lake Ihema boat cruise**

- Destination: Akagera
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Akagera Game Lodge or similar

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: We'll depart our lodge for a morning game-viewing drive to a different region of the park, keeping in mind to look skyward, too. With some 500 species within the confines of the park (the highest number of varied species per unit in the world), Akagera is a birding enthusiast's paradise. Then, our small group will enjoy a special "behind the scenes" presentation about Akagera's recent program of reintroducing animal populations. After the civil war of the 1990s, much of the park's wildlife disappeared—including all of its lions and rhinos. During this time, many protected areas of the park were also given over as farmland to accommodate returning refugees. The Akagera of today is almost unrecognizable from just 20 years ago, when it was on the verge of being lost forever.

Lunch: At the lodge.

Afternoon: After a couple of hours free to relax, we'll take a boat cruise on Lake Ihema. As we cruise along a shoreline tangled with trees, keep an eye out for basking crocodiles and giant hippos bobbing nearby. The lake is also a haven for birdwatchers: Red-breasted papyrus gonoleks lurk among the reeds, irises probe the mud, and statue-like shoebills wait patiently for prey.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: You are free to enjoy a nightcap with fellow travelers or retire to your room to pack up and prepare for tomorrow's journey to Ruhengeri.

Day 8 Overland transfer to Ruhengeri

- Destination: Ruhengeri
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Mountain Gorilla View Lodge or similar

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: We'll leave Akagera on our way to Ruhengeri (also known as Musanze), gateway to Volcanoes National Park (*Parc National des Volcans*) and home of the golden monkeys and mountain gorillas. We'll make stops along the way to take in the scenery and observe rural life in Rwanda, including a visit to a local market in the town of Kayonza.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Kigali.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll continue our drive to Ruhengeri. We may make other brief stops along the way, including a short break to admire the breathtaking views of the Virungas, five massive volcanoes looming in the distance.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: You are free to explore the lodge's facilities, which may include a relaxing bar, or take in the scenic views of the nearby volcanic mountain peaks in the evening light.

Day 9 Mountain gorilla trek • Conversation about gorilla conservation efforts with Gorilla Doctors

- Destination: Ruhengeri
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Mountain Gorilla View Lodge or similar

Activity Note: Today's mountain gorilla trek typically involves two to four hours of walking through thick brush over steep, rugged terrain at elevations ranging from 7,000 to 9,000 feet—and can include exposure to stinging nettles and fire ants. As overexposure to humans is harmful to mountain gorillas, contact is limited to one hour—and there is the possibility that they may become agitated and retreat back into the bush in less than our allotted time. Any travelers showing signs of obvious illness may be refused entrance by park authorities.

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: We'll take a short drive to the Kinigi Trekking Station in Volcanoes National Park, situated in Rwanda's border region with Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire). Visitors are required to register before entering the park; we'll complete our paperwork prior to departing the hotel so that we can avoid the long lines at the entrance and begin our trek as early as possible.

Skilled trackers will have gone on ahead to locate one of the ten habituated populations of mountain gorilla families we can visit. There are at least five more families residing high on the slopes of Virunga, but they can only be visited by researchers. After splitting up into

two smaller groups of eight (or fewer) travelers, each group will then set off. Our first glimpse of a gorilla may be a baby up a tree, or a female quietly munching on leaves—or perhaps a massive silverback pounding his chest. Every encounter with these gentle, endangered primates is different, but if we are fortunate, ours will be a memorable experience and we will have enjoyed what many consider the most sought-after adventure in the world.

Lunch: At the lodge.

Afternoon: We'll have some time to relax at our lodge. Then, a member of the veterinary team of Gorilla Doctors will meet us at the lodge for a conversation about efforts to provide medical care to ill and injured mountain gorillas, and the threat posed to these noble beasts by illegal poaching in Volcanoes National Park. When this reclusive species was first discovered in 1902, it was open season on them for decades. Through the 1970s, unethical scientists and trophy hunters sought the beasts out for prestige or for profit—many expected that the species would die out before the turn of the century. Our conversation with this expert who specializes in gorilla rehabilitation will provide us with a fuller understanding about the dedicated work of Gorilla Doctors and their efforts to preserve the world's mountain gorilla population, which has ebbed and flowed over time.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: You are free to relax from the day's activities at the bar, or retire early to rest up for tomorrow's golden monkey trek.

Day 10 Golden monkey trek • Grand Circle Foundation visit: Local Primary School

- Destination: Ruhengeri
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Mountain Gorilla View Lodge or similar

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: We'll depart to the Kinigi Trekking Station to embark on another memorable primate trek—this time to observe Rwanda's population of golden monkeys. Also rare and endangered, these playful, curious primates make their home in the bamboo forests at the base of the volcanoes and live in two habituated groups (or troops) of 30 to 100 individuals. They are very active, and once we spot them, we'll be able to follow their antics as they swing from tree to tree or jump from one bamboo branch to another using their extra-long tails for balance.

Lunch: At the lodge.

Afternoon: After some time to relax at the lodge, we'll visit one of two local schools in the area (when in session)—either the Nyabitsinde or the Rushubi Primary School (described below). Both schools are supported by **Grand Circle Foundation**—part of the World Classroom initiative.

Grand Circle Foundation

Rushubi Primary School

Total donated: **\$8230**

Partner since: **2019**

Our visit to this school allows us a glimpse at what education is like in this region of Rwanda, right on the doorstep of Virunga National Park. We'll meet the Head Teacher, who will enlighten us about education in Rwanda, and the daily operations of Rushubi Primary School. The government-operated school, staffed

with 19 teachers, provides a free education to more than 800 students—aged between 6 and 14—from the surrounding region.

Then, we'll head to one of the classrooms to meet some of the children for ourselves. Their teacher will introduce their young students, and we'll join them in the singing of a song, adding our own voices to their chorus. We'll spend some time with the class, helping them with their lessons, practicing English, and learning about their favorite subjects in school.

Next, we'll stop by the school library with a few of the other teachers, then gather with the children on the playground for recess, joining them for a quick game of soccer, handball, or other schoolyard games. As we tour the school and meet its teachers and students, we'll get a closer look at how Rwanda's next generation is being educated, and how your travel dollars help make a difference in their lives.

Dinner: Enjoy a Farewell Dinner at our lodge.

Evening: Your last night in Ruhengeri is free to explore on your own or retire early to rest up for tomorrow's flight home.

Day 11 Ellen Degeneres Campus of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund • Overland to Kigali • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Lemigo Hotel

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: Visit the Ellen Degeneres Campus of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. At this multi-acre, state-of-the-art research facility, we'll enjoy an interactive exhibit about the story of Dian Fossey and learn about the ongoing research and conservation efforts that resulted from the nearly two decades she spent living with and studying the mountain gorillas.

Then, we'll drive back to Kigali, where we'll have the use of a day room before our evening flights.

Lunch: At the hotel's restaurant in Kigali.

Afternoon: Enjoy the afternoon to relax at the hotel or do some last-minute shopping. Travelers taking the post-trip extension to *Tanzania: The Ngorongoro Crater & Serengeti Private Tented Safari* will depart for the airport early this afternoon. Other travelers will depart to the airport later in the afternoon for their return flights home.

END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

6 nights in *Tanzania: The Ngorongoro Crater & Serengeti Private Tented Safari*

Day 1 Fly to Arusha, Tanzania

Day 2 Overland to Lake Manyara National Park • Karatu

Day 3 Ngorongoro Crater • Karatu

Day 4 Overland to Serengeti National Park

Day 5 Morning and afternoon game-viewing drives

Day 6 Optional *Sunrise Safari & Hot Air Balloon Ride* • Serengeti game drives

Day 7 Fly to Arusha • Return to U.S.

PRE-TRIP

Uganda: The Pearl of Africa Revealed

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Roundtrip airfare between Kigali and Entebbe
- » 6 nights accommodation
- » 18 meals—6 breakfasts, 6 lunches, and 6 dinners
- » 7 small group activities
- » Services of an English-speaking O.A.T. Extension Guide, as well as step-on local guides
- » Gratuities for your Extension Guide, local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Once known as the “Pearl of the British Empire in East Africa,” Uganda is now widely considered one of the most beautiful countries on the continent. Join us and tour the dynamic Ugandan capital of Kampala, take a bush walk among endangered white rhinos, go on a bird-viewing canoe safari, and witness the splendor of Murchison Falls, where the Nile River explodes through a narrow gorge to create the most powerful rush of water in the world.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

You depart today for your overnight flight from the U.S. to Entebbe, Uganda.

Day 2 Arrive Entebbe, Uganda

- Destination: Entebbe
- Accommodations: The Boma Hotel or similar

Evening: Upon arrival in Entebbe, Uganda, this evening, an O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport and escort you to your hotel.

Day 3 Explore Entebbe • Sunset boat cruise on Lake Victoria

- Destination: Entebbe
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: The Boma Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll gather for a Welcome Briefing in the hotel, where we can introduce ourselves and meet our Extension Guide. Then, we'll take a short orientation walk of the area before setting off on a city tour of Entebbe. During our explorations, we'll stop at a local market, where we'll enjoy the opportunity to brush shoulders with locals, and witness traditional produce and crafts for sale.

Lunch: At the hotel.

Afternoon: After lunch, you'll have a couple of hours to relax in your room or explore the tropical grounds. Later, we'll drive to Lake Victoria, where we'll board a boat for a sunset cruise. After admiring the surrounding scenery and watching local fishermen bring in their final nets of the day, we'll raise a glass and toast the last rays of the sun as they set on the shimmering waters of Africa's largest lake.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: On your own—you're free to explore as you'd like, or ask your Extension Guide for recommendations.

Day 4 Fly to Murchison Falls National Park

• Afternoon game-viewing drive

- Destination: Murchison Falls
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Pakuba Safari Lodge or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart to the airport for our short flight to Murchison Falls National Park.

Lunch: At the lodge.

Afternoon: After some time to relax at the lodge, we'll set off on a game-viewing drive. Murchison is home to a wide variety of wildlife species, including more than 76 mammal and 450 bird species. There are everything from buffalo, antelope, lion, and giraffe to hyena, bushbuck, and warthog here, all widely spread out over the savannah grasslands, grazing or hunting for prey.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: On your own—you're free to enjoy the facilities of our lodge, have a drink at the bar, or cool off after a long day at the outdoor swimming pool and take in the scenic views of the Nile.

Day 5 Morning game-viewing drive • River cruise to Murchison Falls

- Destination: Murchison Falls
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Pakuba Safari Lodge or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll depart for a game-viewing drive, keeping our eyes out for herds of elephant, buffalo, large cats, critically-endangered Rothschild's giraffe, and prolific birdlife.

Lunch: At the lodge.

Afternoon: We'll set off on a scenic boat cruise to the base of Murchison Falls, watching out for crocodiles and hippos in the Nile and wildlife along its banks along the way.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: You are free to retire to your room, relax at the swimming pool, or gather at the bar for a cocktail to go over the discoveries of the day.

Day 6 Murchison Falls Delta boat cruise • Afternoon game-viewing drive

- Destination: Murchison Falls
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Pakuba Safari Lodge or similar

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: We'll drive out to the marina for another boat cruise to the falls. This time, we explore the Murchison Falls Delta, known for its rare wetland bird species. Afterward, we'll enjoy a game-viewing drive en route to our camp.

Lunch: At the lodge.

Afternoon: Later this afternoon, we'll set off on another game-viewing drive.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: Our final night in Murchison Falls is free for you to relax or begin packing for tomorrow's journey to the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary.

Day 7 View top of Murchison Falls • Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary • Rhino trek on foot

- Destination: Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Amuka Safari Lodge or similar

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: We'll depart Murchison Falls for our overland journey to the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary. But first, we'll stop to witness the dramatic vistas at the top of Murchison Falls, where some 11,000 cubic feet of water per second explode through a narrow gorge, creating the most powerful rush of water in the world.

Lunch: At our safari lodge within the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary.

Afternoon: After time to settle in to our rooms and explore the facilities of our safari lodge, we'll regroup for our rhino trek experience. Extinct for two decades due to poaching during the wars of the 1970s, rhinos have been reintroduced into this protected area of Uganda, and we'll have the rare opportunity to observe these magnificent creatures in the wild during our afternoon bush walk.

Dinner: At our safari lodge.

Evening: You are free to retire to your room, relax at the swimming pool, or gather at the bar for a cocktail to go over the discoveries of the day.

Evening: You are free to retire to your room, relax at the swimming pool, or gather at the bar for a cocktail to go over the discoveries of the day.

Day 8 Shoebill canoe safari • Transfer to Entebbe • Fly to Kigali to begin main trip

- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: The Boma Hotel

Breakfast: A light breakfast at the lodge.

Morning: Set off on an early morning nature walk along the Lugogo Wetlands, one of Africa's richest birding destinations. We'll keep our eyes especially peeled for Uganda's most sought-after sighting—the rare and prehistoric-looking shoebill stork. Then, we'll continue our birding and wildlife discoveries aboard a canoe in these lush wetlands.

Brunch: At the lodge.

Afternoon: We'll depart the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary for an overland journey to Entebbe, where we'll enjoy the services of a hotel located a short distance from the airport. You'll have some free time to pack or relax before dinner.

Dinner: At the hotel.

Evening: We'll transfer to the airport to catch our flight to Kigali, Rwanda, where we'll begin our main trip.

POST-TRIP

Tanzania: The Ngorongoro Crater & Serengeti Private Tented Safari

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Air transportation from the Serengeti to Arusha; and from Kigali to Arusha
- » 6 nights accommodation
- » 17 meals—6 breakfasts, 6 lunches, and 5 dinners
- » 9 small group activities
- » Services of an English-speaking O.A.T. Extension Guide, as well as step-on local guides
- » Gratuities for your Extension Guide, local guides, drivers, and luggage porters

Please note: Travelers purchasing their own international flights will be responsible for additional internal flight costs.

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Experience the greatest safari highlights of Tanzania while searching for the tree-climbing lions of Lake Manyara National Park, descending into the Ngorongoro Crater to seek out the “Big Five,” and camping out under the stars amidst the wildlife herds of the majestic Serengeti plains.

Day 1 Fly to Arusha, Tanzania

- Destination: Arusha
- Accommodations: Kibo Palace Hotel or similar

Morning: Transfer to the Kigali airport for our flight to Arusha.

Lunch: A boxed lunch will be provided to you during our transfer to the airport.

Afternoon: We’ll touch down in Kilimanjaro late this afternoon and transfer to our hotel in Arusha, Tanzania.

Dinner: At the hotel.

Evening: The remainder of the evening is on your own. You may choose to relax in your room after a long travel day, or grab a drink with fellow travelers at the hotel bar.

Day 2 Overland to Lake Manyara National Park • Karatu

- Destination: Karatu
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Country Lodge Karatu or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We’ll travel overland to Lake Manyara, a small park in Tanzania’s Great Rift Valley that Hemingway once called “the loveliest place I have seen in Africa.”

Then, we'll set off on our first game-viewing drive—where we'll keep a sharp eye out for the park's famous tree-climbing lions.

Lunch: Enjoy a picnic-style meal within the grounds of Manyara National Park.

Afternoon: We'll leave the park grounds and continue our journey to Karatu.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: On your own to use the lodge facilities, or retire early to your room to prepare for tomorrow's activities.

Day 3 Ngorongoro Crater • Karatu

- Destination: Karatu
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Country Lodge Karatu or similar

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: Visit Ngorongoro Crater, a massive caldera teeming with wildlife that has often been called the Garden of Eden. Because of a permanent supply of water and a precise balance of predator and prey, most of the wildlife remains here year-round. Along with rhino, buffalo, and hippo, our full-day game-viewing drive should reveal a wealth of large cat sightings, as the crater floor is home to the highest concentration of predators in the world—from lions and hyenas to jackals and leopards.

Lunch: Enjoy a picnic-style lunch inside the Ngorongoro Crater.

Afternoon: We'll leave the crater and make our way back to Karatu, where you'll have some free time. Perhaps you'll choose to embark on a walking safari through the waterfalls and elephant caves of Ngorongoro.

Dinner: At the lodge.

Evening: On your own to relax at the bar, explore the grounds, or retire early to your room for our final night in Karatu.

Day 4 Overland to Serengeti National Park

- Destination: Serengeti National Park
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Serengeti Tented Camp

Breakfast: At the lodge.

Morning: We'll depart Karatu and journey overland to Serengeti National Park. The Serengeti is one of the most storied locales in all of Africa and home to a diversity of wildlife species unrivaled on the planet. Staying in the heart of the legendary Serengeti means you'll spend your days spotting big game, and nights listening to the sounds of the wilderness as you drift off to sleep.

Lunch: Enjoy a picnic-style lunch at the Naabi Gate.

Afternoon: We'll depart for our tented campsite, enjoying a game-viewing drive en route. After crossing the Oldupai Gorge, the full majesty of the Serengeti will be revealed: Endless plains formed by volcanic ash and lava from Ngorongoro mountain. The nutritionally rich savanna grasses are ideal fodder for herbivores—from zebras and antelope, to the wildebeests that arrive in late winter to deliver their calves. Of course, where there is an abundance of prey, there are also predators: Lions, cheetahs, hyenas, and leopards all proliferate in the Serengeti.

Dinner: At our tented camp.

Evening: On your own. You may like to relax by the fire with your traveling companions to enjoy our first night under the starry Serengeti's skies.

Day 5 Morning and afternoon game-viewing drives

- Destination: Serengeti National Park
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Serengeti Tented Camp

Breakfast: At the camp.

Morning: Set out on a game-viewing drive along the vast expanse of the Serengeti, focusing on the central region, where big cats abound. During the morning, wildlife sightings are typically at their peak.

Lunch: At the camp.

Afternoon: Free for independent activities. You may opt to enjoy a tour of the kitchen at our camp and see how the cook and staff create such creative and flavorful regional specialties in the middle of the Serengeti. Later this afternoon, we'll set off on another game-viewing drive.

Dinner: At the camp.

Evening: On your own. You might like to relax by the fire or turn in early if you are taking the early morning optional activity the next day.

Day 6 Optional Sunrise Safari & Hot Air Balloon Ride • Serengeti game drives

- Destination: Serengeti National Park
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Serengeti Tented Camp

Early Morning: Perhaps you'll join our optional *Sunrise Safari & Hot Air Balloon Ride*. If you do, you'll rise extra early for a pre-dawn game-viewing drive. Then enjoy breakfast with sparkling wine under the shade of an acacia tree, and take flight on a hot-air balloon ride high above the Serengeti.

Breakfast: At the camp.

Morning: Travelers who opted not to take the optional tour will set off on a game-viewing drive through different sections of this massive park. We'll rendezvous with travelers on the optional tour later and continue our drive.

Lunch: Enjoy lunch in a picnic area within the Serengeti.

Afternoon: Continue our game-viewing drive through various regions of the park. Later, you can participate in a brief nature hike within the grounds of our campsite.

Dinner: At our tented camp.

Evening: On your own to reflect on your Africa experiences with your travel companions or to begin packing for tomorrow's flight.

Day 7 Fly to Arusha • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Breakfast: At the camp.

Morning: We depart our camp and make our way to Seronera Airstrip, a small airport that services Serengeti National Park. We'll watch for game along the way before setting off on a short flight to Arusha, where we'll transfer to a hotel and enjoy the services of a day room while we await our evening flight.

Lunch: At the hotel.

Afternoon: After lunch, we can relax in our day room. Then, we'll transfer to the Arusha airport for our return flights home.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Sunrise Safari & Hot Air Balloon Ride

(Day 6 \$600 per person)

If you choose to take this optional tour, plan on waking up before dawn as we'll begin with an early morning game-viewing drive. Then we'll retreat under the shade of a nearby acacia tree where we'll enjoy breakfast in the bush with a celebratory glass of sparkling wine. Following breakfast, our excursion continues with a breathtaking hot air balloon ride over the Serengeti. With a certified, professional pilot at the controls, we'll glide over the majestic savannas at dawn, when the morning light bathes the plains in a golden hue. There's simply no better vantage point from which to appreciate the sheer vastness of the Serengeti's more than 5,700 square miles of plains, riverine bush, and acacia woodlands. Once we land, we'll return to our camp to reunite with any travelers who chose not to take this optional tour.

Please Note: *This tour is pre-sold only and must be reserved at least 30 days prior to departure. It is also dependent on wind conditions.*

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** If you are taking the main trip only, you will need 2 blank passport pages.
- **Uganda pre-trip extension:** You will need an additional blank passport page, for a total of 3.
- **Tanzania post-trip extension:** You will need an additional blank passport pages, for a total of 3.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** You will need a total of 4 blank pages.
- **Optional Stopover in Amsterdam:** Add 1 blank page to the total listed above.

Please note: You might not use all of these pages on your adventure (when you return, some may still be blank) but local officials will want to see that you have them.

Visas Required

We’ll be sending you a detailed Visa Packet with instructions, application forms, and fees about 90 days prior to your departure. In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Rwanda: Visa required. We recommended you obtain it in advance.** Although this visa may be obtained upon your arrival, we recommend you obtain it in advance. Entry requirements can change at any time; obtaining your visa in advance decreases the likelihood that you will encounter problems at the border and may protect you if entry requirements subsequently change. If you are joining the optional Uganda pre-trip extension, Rwanda also requires proof that you've received the yellow fever vaccine. Please see "Yellow Fever—Documentation Required" for details.
- **Uganda (pre-trip extension): Visa required. This visa can only be obtained in advance;** you cannot obtain it upon arrival.
- **Tanzania (post-trip extension): Visa required.** Both the U.S. Department of State and the Tanzanian embassy highly recommended that you obtain your visa in advance, which will be issued as an e-visa. If you are joining the optional Uganda pre-trip extension, Tanzania also requires proof that you've received the yellow fever vaccine. Please see "Yellow Fever—Documentation Required" for details.
- **Europe Stopover (The Netherlands):** U.S. citizens will require an online visa-waiver to enter countries in the European Union. There is no set timeline for when this requirement will start – we will contact all impacted travelers before their departure once the start date is confirmed.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Travel Protection Required:

For new bookings starting 1/1/25, Overseas Adventure Travel requires all travelers purchase travel protection with Medical Evacuation coverage of at least \$200,000 and Medical Expense coverage of at least \$50,000, due to the remote nature of your adventure.

O.A.T. Travel Protection:

If you **purchase your Travel Protection Plan** through O.A.T., no further action will be needed, as the Medical Evacuation coverage and Medical Expense coverage meets these requirements.

Your Own Travel Protection:

If you purchase your own travel protection, we recommend you review the plan to ensure Medical Evacuation coverage of at least \$200,000 and Medical Expense coverage of at least \$50,000 is included. Once you confirm your plan meets the requirements, you will need to email the following information to **TravelCoverage@oattravel.com**:

- Traveler Name(s)
- Reservation Number
- Trip Protection Provider
- Policy Number
- Date of Purchase
- Copy of your Policy Documents

You can also contact our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814** to review this policy. You will be required to provide proof of coverage by 60 days prior to departure at the latest.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency).

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Is This Adventure Right for You?

Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure. We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

PACING

- 3 locations in 10 days
- International flights to Kigali depart around midnight
- Early morning game-viewing drives on safari days, rising as early as 5am

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids
- You must be able to walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 3-6 hours of physical activities each day
- Day 8 includes a 2-hour walk at an altitude of 6,000 feet; the gorilla trek on Day 9 may require hiking of up to 5 or 6 hours up and downhill along steep, slippery jungle terrain at an altitude of up to 9,000 feet, with exposure to stinging nettles and the possibility of fire ants; golden monkey trek on Day 10 includes about 3 miles of hiking at an altitude of 7,000 feet in similar terrain; Primate encounters are restricted to one hour and park authorities may refuse permits to travelers with obvious signs of illness
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience
- You may encounter animals on this trip. We make every effort to keep these encounters safe, however animals may behave unpredictably or dangerously at times. Please use caution when interacting with animals on this trip: Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and respect the animals

ALTITUDE

- 2 full days at altitudes between 6,500-9,000 feet

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 55-81°F
- Rainy seasons are from March-May and October-November, but rainfall can occur at any time of year, and rainproof clothing is advised

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Travel over very bumpy, dusty terrain during overland transfers and game-viewing drives
- Travel by 18-passenger coach, open-roofed 8-passenger safari vehicles, and safari boat

ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- We spend 9 nights in hotels and safari lodges, all of which feature private baths

CULTURAL INSIGHT

- We may see people living in poverty, which could be distressing for some travelers; travelers should also be aware that the Rwandan genocide is a common topic of discussion

Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **www.cdc.gov/travel** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

Vaccines Required

Yellow Fever

All travelers on the optional Uganda pre-trip extension will need to bring EITHER proof of a yellow fever vaccination OR an official vaccination waiver.

While the CDC offers a wide range of vaccination and medication suggestions, there is one in particular that we'd like to draw your attention to—the yellow fever vaccine. For some countries, the yellow fever vaccination is a legal entry requirement, like a passport. For other countries, it is a health recommendation to protect you from getting sick. On this adventure, this vaccination is a legal entry requirement for Rwanda (and Tanzania if you are joining the optional extension) and if traveling to Uganda—but fortunately, authorities will accept a doctor's waiver in place of getting the actual shot.

The requirement applies to us because we'll be entering Rwanda from Uganda, which is considered an endemic country. **This means you might be asked for documentation on the vaccine when you cross the border from Uganda to Rwanda.** Therefore EITHER proof of a yellow fever vaccination OR an official vaccination waiver is a requirement for this trip (as well as for the optional Tanzania extension).

You should discuss the vaccine with your doctor to see if he or she recommends it and if your health allows for it. (He or she can offer a suggestion tailored to your personal medical history.) If you and your doctor decide the vaccination is right for you, then he or she will issue you a Yellow Fever Card, also called an International Certificate of Vaccination. This is your proof of vaccination; you should bring it with you on the trip.

If you and your doctor decide the vaccination isn't right for you, then have your doctor issue an official vaccination waiver. An official waiver is a letter that meets these requirements:

- It must be on business letterhead paper.
- It must be signed by a doctor.
- It must be stamped using the same stamp that the doctor uses on a Yellow Fever Card.
- It must give the medical reason why you cannot get the vaccine, say how high the risk is, and cite an authority. (For example: Mr. Smith cannot receive the yellow fever vaccine due to a high risk of side effects as outlined in the Center for Disease Control's guidelines for people over the age of 65.)

Whether you receive a Yellow Fever Card or an official vaccination waiver, keep it on your person (in your backpack or purse) so it is easy to find when you arrive or when you cross the border. You may not show anything at all when you cross the border—it all depends on the local official. But if you are asked, you must be able to produce your Yellow Fever Card OR your waiver.

Medication Suggestions

- An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- Prescription pain medication in the unlikely event of an injury in a remote location
- Motion sickness medicine, if you are susceptible (the roads are very bumpy).
- Anti-malaria medication for Rwanda, as well as Uganda and Tanzania on the optional extensions. Check with the CDC and your doctor first because these medications can have strong side effects.
- Optional: Allergy and/or asthma medication. The roads can be very dusty which can trigger allergies or breathing complaints that may require prescription medications.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

- Tap water is not safe to drink. We recommend you use only bottled water for drinking and brushing your teeth throughout this trip.
- During your adventure, you will receive one complementary bottle of water each day at your lodgings, and during safari days, you’ll also receive a second complementary bottle of water in your safari vehicle. Additional bottled water is available for sale in the lodges. Prices vary, but generally fall in the \$3-4 range for a one-liter bottle. Carry a bottle in your daypack at all times.
- Bottled drinks and hot drinks that have been boiled are safe to drink.
- Before you buy a bottle, inspect it to make sure the cap is sealed properly. Carry a handkerchief to dry the tops of bottled drinks before and after opening.

- Please note that the boiled water can have a faintly smoky taste.
- At most lodges it is safe to use ice in your drinks, but check with your Trip Experience Leader first.

Food

- The food served at our lodges is safe, including salads and fruits.
- Exercise caution when eating at small local restaurants or buying food from street vendors. Eat only food that is well done and is still hot.
- Since the tap water is not safe to drink, you should be mindful about eating salads or fruits outside of our lodges—they may have been washed in tap water. (Fruit that you peel yourself should be OK.)
- Your Trip Experience Leader will advise you if he/she feels that something is unsafe for you to eat.

TIP: During this adventure you might be offered food that is strange and new to you. If you are offered food that you do not feel comfortable with, no one will feel offended if you politely decline; this is OK even during a home visit.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Bring enough cash to cover your needs for 80% of the trip and only expect to be able to use plastic (credit, debit, or ATM card) 20% of the time.** When budgeting, keep in mind that your biggest expenses will be tips, meals, and souvenirs. As a guideline, an average meal in this region costs between \$15 and \$20 per person including a tip.
- **A mix of small bills (\$1s–\$20s), in good condition, and printed after 2014.** You'll be able to pay in U.S. dollars in most places on this trip.
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Rwanda: Rwandan Franc (RFr)

Uganda: Ugandan Shilling (UGX).

Tanzania: Tanzanian Shilling (TSh)

How to Exchange Money

On this adventure, you won't need to exchange money because you can pay in U.S. dollars. But you will want a mix of small bills (\$1, 5, 10, and 20s), in good condition, printed after 2006. Large bills (\$50s and \$100s) will be hard to break, and bills in bad condition (dirty, worn, or torn) or printed before 2014 might be rejected, even by banks.

During the trip, if you choose to get local currency, the easiest way is to use a local ATM (your bank at home will convert and charge you in U.S. dollars). You can also exchange cash at some hotels and money exchange offices. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

TIP: Large bills (\$50s and 100s) will receive a better exchange rate, but when paying with U.S. dollars, a mix of some \$1, 5, 10, and 20s would be better. It makes tipping and bargaining easier when you have exact change.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card. Many banks will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. Don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

Rwanda: ATMs can be found in large cities like Kigali, but not all cards will work at all ATMs and most may only accept cards issued by local banks. We suggest that you bring a cash reserve to cover your expenses.

Uganda: ATMs are common in large cities, such as Kampala, but many be more difficult to find in rural areas. Keep in mind that ATMs are not always reliable so we recommend that you keep a cash reserve on hand.

Tanzania: In larger cities, ATMs are typically available for major international networks. However, outside of large cities, ATMs may only accept cards from local banks and generally do not allow cash advances on credit cards. It is best to bring a cash reserve large enough to pay for most expenses.

Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, as not all are accepted around the world. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

Rwanda: Although credit use is becoming more common, it is not accepted as frequently as in the U.S., or merchants may only accept certain brands of credit card. We recommend that you bring a cash reserve to cover your expenses.

Uganda: Credit cards may be accepted at some large hotels, but are not commonly used outside of Kampala.

Tanzania: Although credit cards are becoming more common, they are not as widely accepted in Tanzania as they are in the U.S. Many camps, lodges, and shops will be cash only and businesses that do accept credit cards may use a slow approval process that sometimes involve calling your credit card company to get authorization.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- Please note that the *Uganda: Entebbe, Murchison Falls, Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary* pre-trip extension is run by a local Extension Guide who specializes in Uganda instead of your Trip Experience Leader. His or her tip is included.
- **Housekeeping staff at hotels:** \$1–2 per room, per night
- **Waiters:** When dining on your own, tipping is only customary at higher-end restaurants in Rwanda, where the standard amount is 10%. For the optional extensions you would tip up to 5% of the bill in Tanzania and from 5%–10% of the bill in Uganda or Amsterdam—but only if a service charge isn't already on the bill.
- **Taxis:** Tipping isn't necessary, but if you want to give something you can round up the bill and let the driver keep the change.
- **Your Trip Price Includes:** Gratuities are included for local guides, drivers, lodge and camp staff, driver-guides, gorilla trek porters and luggage porters on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Please note: Tips are quoted in U.S. dollars for budgeting purposes; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (this is usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars. Please do not use personal or traveler's checks for tips.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Customized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Customization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Customization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our customization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Customization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

When booking your international flights, please also note that the tour will end on Day 11 of the base tour (Day 17 of the post trip) for your overnight flight back to the United States.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: www.rome2rio.com

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner).

Optional Tours: Reserve Before You Go

We strongly recommend that you reserve the following optional tours in advance. Unless otherwise noted, the deadline to do so is 45 days prior to your departure. Occasionally, space will be available for booking onsite, but this not guaranteed. Optional tours with O.A.T. can only be

purchased with a credit card (Visa or MasterCard) or a debit card with credit card functionality. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).

Sunrise Safari & Hot Air Balloon Ride

If you choose to take this optional tour, plan on waking up before dawn as we'll begin with an early morning game-viewing drive. Then we'll retreat under the shade of a nearby acacia tree where we'll enjoy breakfast in the bush with a celebratory glass of sparkling wine. Following breakfast, our excursion continues with a breathtaking hot air balloon ride over the Serengeti. With a certified, professional pilot at the controls, we'll glide over the majestic savannas at dawn, when the morning light bathes the plains in a golden hue. There's simply no better vantage point from which to appreciate the sheer vastness of the Serengeti's more than 5,700 square miles of plains, riverine bush, and acacia woodlands. Once we land, we'll return to our camp to reunite with any travelers who chose not to take this optional tour.

Please Note: *This tour is pre-sold only and must be reserved at least 30 days prior to departure. It is also dependent on wind conditions.*

This optional tour is offered during the *Tanzania: The Ngorongoro Crater & Serengeti Private Tented Safari* trip extension. The cost is \$600 per person.

Communicating with Home from Abroad

One of the advantages of a safari is the chance to “unplug” and unwind—but the trade-off is that you won't have the same access to the Internet, email, or phone service that you would back at home.

Cell phone or Internet service will be available in some places, but not all. Even basic telephone and email service is not always available in the bush, where you will be spending much of your time. You won't be completely out of touch—our bush camps and safari lodges do have satellite radio service. However, the satellite radio service is usually for emergencies only. Outside of the bush, you'll be able to send emails and make phone calls in large cities like Nairobi.

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is “unlocked”, meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is “unlocked” then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with “Pay as You Go” cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

Please understand that throughout Africa, good cell phone service is only available in large towns or cities.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype, FaceTime, or WhatsApp. We recommend you use WhatsApp to communicate with home while abroad and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as Skype or FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan's data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

Internet

Complimentary WiFi is available in most of your hotels and in the lobby of the lodges on this adventure. Keep in mind that you'll be traveling to remote areas, so the signal may be weak or inconsistent.

Receiving Calls from Home

To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your Final Documents. One copy is for you to bring, and one is to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

It is worth noting that **most of the time the phone number for a bush camp or bush lodge is for a central office in a nearby city**; they take a message and then relay it to you in the bush by the satellite radio service. Please explain to your friends and family that there might be a delay in reaching you when you are on safari, and it's best if they only try to reach you in case of an emergency.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

Rwanda: +250

Tanzania: +255

Uganda: +256

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-ons .
Size Restrictions	Standard airline size: Checked luggage should not exceed 62 linear inches (length+width+depth) and carry-on should not exceed 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	Must use a duffel bag as your checked luggage.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
Uganda pre-trip extension: Same as the main trip
Tanzania post-trip extension: Combined weight of checked and carry-on luggage is up to 33 lbs total .

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
<p>EXCESS BAGGAGE CANNOT BE TAKEN.</p> <p>Type of luggage: Use of a duffel bag is a requirement on this adventure. We ask that you use the complimentary O.A.T. safari bag that we will be sending you.</p> <p>For travelers on the Tanzania post-trip extension: Because you are limited to 33 lbs (combined checked luggage and carry-on) on this extension, you will have the option to store your excess luggage at a hotel in Arusha, which you will be able to pick up before at the end of your post-trip extension. If you choose to store your excess luggage, please pack a small additional bag with a lock.</p>

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

Your Luggage: Duffel Bag Required

On safaris, the room allowed for checked luggage is limited one piece per person.

- Use of a duffel bag is a requirement on this adventure.
- **We ask that you use the complimentary O.A.T. duffel bag that we will be sending you** because it has been approved for this safari by our regional office in Africa. Suitcases of any kind, hard-sided luggage, or luggage with an internal frame are not allowed. If you bring something other than a cloth duffel bag without an internal frame, your luggage may not fit in the safari vehicles we use on this adventure. We'd like you to have your luggage with you on the whole adventure—so a duffel bag is key.
- The O.A.T. duffel bag has wheels and measures 28" x 13" x 11"
- Previous travelers have recommended adding an identifier to your duffel bag, such as a scarf or colored tape, to set it apart from the others.

Important Note: *Non-biodegradable plastic bags are illegal in Rwanda and will be confiscated if found. And Tanzania has a similar ban against single-use plastic bags. Consider bringing an empty nylon bag folded into your main suitcase instead for laundry or dirty shoes. For more details, see the packing list section of this Handbook.*

TIP: When traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.

Carry-on Bag

You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during game drives.

TIP: We recommend that you pack a change of clothing in your carry-on bag in case of delays with your checked luggage.

Luggage Handling on Arrival

Airport porters are not allowed in the customs hall area. When you land, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and then clear customs. When you exit the airport building, your driver will load your luggage into the coach.

Locks

For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure. *TIP: Most camps or lodges do not have personal safes in the tents/rooms. Instead, valuables, passports, and money can be secured in lockable canvas bags that are put into a locked central safe. Camps and lodges provide the bags and the locks for this purpose.*

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

As you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions, we suggest several layers of clothing. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, look for fabrics that will dry out overnight. You can buy clothing designed especially for travel, with features like wrinkle-resistant fabric or built-in sun protection.

- **Layers for game drives:** Many game drives are in the early morning or late evening. Even at the height of summer, these times of day are cooler than the afternoon. Therefore we suggest bringing a piece that you can wear over your clothing for cooler mornings and remove as the day heats up (windbreaker, jacket, sweater, sweatshirt, etc.). And just a reminder: south of the equator, the seasons are reversed. Travelers on summer departures will want to bring more than one layer—it is winter in Africa.
- **Footwear:** You'll be on your feet a lot during the trip, and walking over some rough and slippery surfaces. We recommend you wear sturdy walking shoes or similar supportive sports shoes that offer good traction. Hiking boots are essential for trekking; look for a sturdy pair of waterproof hiking boots that offer good arch support. We also recommend you bring a pair of rubberized sandals (i.e., Tevas) for showering, wearing around the lodge, and general warm weather use.
- **Rain gear:** Be prepared for rain throughout the year as you trek through the rain forest. We recommend that you bring a good rain jacket or poncho, as well as quick-drying clothing and waterproof hiking boots.

Fashion Dos and Don'ts

- **Do wear muted earth tones** (beige, khaki, etc.) because they don't show dirt easily, coordinate well, don't distract animals, and don't attract tsetse flies like black and blue.
- **Don't** wear white or very brightly colored clothing. These colors have traditionally been used to keep animals away, and even color-blind animals can spot dark and light shades like black and white, which is why white is a danger signal for some species.
- **Do** wear clothes that are functional and casual. There's no need for formal or dressy clothing. In local communities, and to some extent in the lodges, your dress should be modest and conservative.

Recommended Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. Each travelers packing list may be different depending on the climate you are used to. We recommend using **www.weather.com** and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don’t forget a reusable water bottle—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Year-Round Clothing Checklist

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer. Long-sleeved shirts are essential for gorilla trekking.
- ☐ Trousers and/or jeans: Comfortable and loose fitting is best. Look for quick-drying material for trekking.
- ☐ Shorts: Cut long for modesty. Even during hotter months, you’ll want at least one pair of long pants for early morning game drives.
- ☐ Shoes: Comfortable walking shoes and hiking boots with arch support are a necessity on this adventure (hiking boots offer better support and traction than shoes). We also recommend that you bring rubberized sandals (i.e., Tevas) for showering, wearing around the lodge, and general warm weather use.
- ☐ Socks: Bring plenty of socks, you may find yourself wishing to change a couple times a day. Lightweight wool socks are typically recommended for trekking.
- ☐ Rain jacket/windbreaker with hood or poncho
- ☐ Gardening gloves and gaiters to protect from stinging nettles and muddy conditions while trekking
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor for sun protection
- ☐ Underwear: Most camps and lodges will not include “smalls” (underwear) in their laundry service. This is partly for cultural reasons and partly because many properties still do laundry by hand. It is usually OK for you wash them yourself in your room. For women travelers we suggest close-fitting brassieres, such as sports bras—the roads are very bumpy.
- ☐ Sleepwear
- ☐ Optional: Swimsuit and cover-up

Seasonal Clothing Recommendations

For spring and summer (September–March):

- ☐ Walking shorts
- ☐ A jacket or sweater. Even in summer it can be cool during early morning game drives.

For the rainy season (November–March):

Your laundry will take more than a day to be returned dry because most lodges don't have dryers.

- ☐ Hood/lens cap/waterproof bag for camera

For fall and winter (May–August):

It's colder than you think in winter, especially during early morning game drives or at night in a tented camp. Warm clothing is essential, so add these items your packing list.

- ☐ Long-sleeved shirts in a warm, heavy fabric for cool nights, i.e., flannel or knit
- ☐ A warm, insulated jacket in addition to a wool or fleece sweater. If you own a light or medium-weight insulated field jacket or parka, you can use that.
- ☐ Warm hat, gloves, and a scarf (especially useful on the game-drive vehicles)
- ☐ Warm sleepwear
- ☐ Long underwear. It keeps you warm but doesn't take up a lot of space or weigh much.

Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc. Lodges provide shampoo and soap but most lodges do not provide washcloths.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses; sunglasses
- ☐ Sunscreen: SPF 15 or stronger
- ☐ Insect repellent—the lodges may provide insect repellent but you may want to bring your own. We suggest using a kind with DEET between 30–35% strength.
- ☐ Flashlight or headlamp: Consider a small but powerful LED version or a version with an alternative power source (wind-up, solar powered).

- ☐ Lightweight binoculars: To avoid disturbing the animals' natural activities, we stop the vehicle at a respectful distance. By having your own binoculars, you'll be able to enjoy the experience more. Models such as 8 x 21 or 6 x 16 provide suitable magnification and illumination. 10 x models are usable, but are usually heavy, expensive, and require a very steady hand.
- ☐ Pocket-size tissues
- ☐ Moist towelettes (baby wipes) and/or anti-bacterial "water-free" hand cleanser
- ☐ Electrical transformer & plug adapters. We do not recommend electric shavers or hair dryers, as electricity is limited at many of our lodges.
- ☐ Camera gear with extra batteries or battery charger
- ☐ Optional: Eye drops. The dry air and dusty roads can cause itchy eyes.
- ☐ Optional: Surgical masks, to cover your mouth during game drives on dusty terrain

Medicines & First Aid Gear

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Travel first aid kit: Band-Aids, headache and pain relief, laxatives and anti-diarrhea tablets, something for upset stomach. Maybe a cold remedy, moleskin foot pads, or antibiotic cream.
- ☐ An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- ☐ Optional: A strong prescription pain medication for rare emergency purposes
- ☐ Optional: Motion sickness medicine if you are susceptible (the roads are very bumpy).
- ☐ Optional: Anti-malarial medication—discuss with your doctor first
- ☐ Optional: Medication for allergies or asthma if you are susceptible (the roads are dusty)

Do Not Bring Single-Use Plastic Bags

Single-use plastic bags are illegal in Rwanda (unless they are biodegradable) and will be confiscated if found. If you like to bring a bag for shoes or laundry, we recommend a lightweight nylon bag, packing cube, or reusable cloth tote instead. We also recommend a reusable toiletry bag instead of a Ziploc-style bag. Tanzania has a similar ban, and violations of it could result in fines or even imprisonment—travelers on the post-trip extension, please take note, and double-check your luggage *before* you depart.

Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Electricity in Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you’ll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because there are many different types of plugs in this region, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

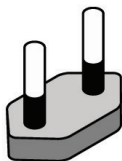
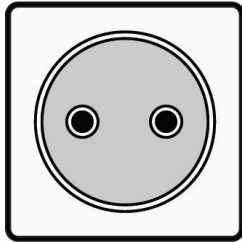
Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Rwanda: C

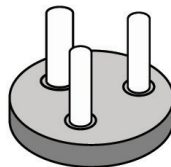
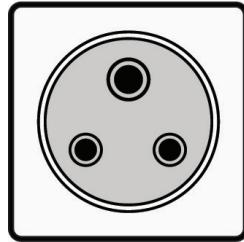
Uganda: G

Tanzania: D or G

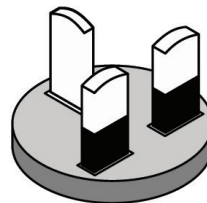
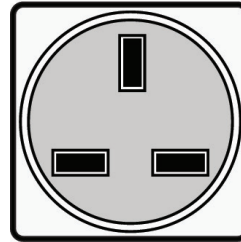
Type C



Type D



Type G



Availability

In the remote lodges, the electricity may be limited. It is possible to recharge camera batteries, but it may take longer than usual. Therefore, bringing two batteries—one to use while the other is recharging—is recommended. Electric current is usually adequate to run an electric razor, but not a hairdryer. The lighting at the lodges may not be as bright as you are used to; a small LED flashlight can be useful.

Note: Although you may have no trouble with electricity on this trip, prepare for the worst case scenario and bring things that can be battery operated. Always test batteries before you leave home and bring spares.

CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Rwanda: Due to its higher elevation and proximity to the equator, Rwanda enjoys a consistent, temperate climate throughout the year. The dry season typically occurs from mid-May to mid-September with heavier rain from October to mid-March. Rainfall is heavier in mountainous areas to the west and northwest where downpours are common.

Uganda: Uganda enjoys a tropical climate with steady temperatures throughout the year due to its location near the equator. Temperatures typically range from the mid-50s to mid-80s, except in the mountains which are much cooler. Rain can occur throughout the year, especially from March-May and September-November. January-February and June-August are considered the “dry season.”

Netherlands: As in most areas of northwest Europe, the weather in the Netherlands is frequently rainy and can be very changeable from day to day all through the year. During spring, a fine, warm spell may last for weeks, or a stretch of cool, unsettled weather may prevail. Daytime temperatures are generally mild, averaging in the upper 50s and low 60s, but weather shifts do occur on a regular basis. In summer, fine warm periods may last for weeks on occasions; but then again, the weather could also be cool and unsettled. By autumn, overcast skies occur more frequently, and the overall weather pattern consists of longer, heavier, rains and colder temperatures. Generally, the flat countryside of the Netherlands makes it a rather windy place in all seasons. In the past, the Dutch relied on this weather element to run the windmills that pumped the seawater from the low-lying lands.

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **www.weather.com** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	KIGALI, RWANDA			RUHENGARI, RWANDA		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	75 to 66	92 to 59	6	76 to 51	--	2.8
FEB	74 to 66	95 to 58	5	77 to 52	--	3.7
MAR	74 to 66	94 to 62	8	76 to 53	--	5.6
APR	73 to 66	96 to 66	10	75 to 55	--	6.8
MAY	74 to 66	93 to 62	7	74 to 55	--	6.0
JUN	74 to 66	85 to 51	2	74 to 53	--	1.5
JUL	76 to 66	77 to 44	1	75 to 51	--	0.6
AUG	77 to 67	76 to 43	4	76 to 53	--	1.9
SEP	77 to 66	87 to 52	6	76 to 52	--	4.9
OCT	75 to 66	91 to 58	8	76 to 52	--	6.4
NOV	73 to 66	95 to 64	9	75 to 52	--	5.8
DEC	74 to 65	95 to 61	8	76 to 51	--	3.3

MONTH	ENTEBBE, UGANDA			ARUSHA, TANZANIA		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	79 to 64	76	3.4	84 to 50	82	2.3
FEB	81 to 65	76	3.3	84 to 51	84	3.3
MAR	80 to 65	77	7.3	81 to 53	95	7.0
APR	79 to 65	79	10.4	77 to 57	95	14.5
MAY	78 to 64	79	10.0	72 to 52	--	8.3
JUN	77 to 64	78	4.6	70 to 48	--	1.3
JUL	78 to 63	77	2.9	69 to 49	--	0.6
AUG	79 to 63	78	3.1	72 to 48	--	0.8
SEP	80 to 64	76	3.1	76 to 47	--	0.8
OCT	80 to 64	75	5.0	80 to 51	94	1.4
NOV	79 to 64	76	6.8	81 to 51	98	4.4
DEC	80 to 64	76	4.8	81 to 50	91	4.0

MONTH	SERENGETI PARK, TANZANIA			AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	81 to 59	--	3.6	41 to 34	91 to 86	8
FEB	81 to 59	--	3.8	42 to 32	91 to 79	11
MAR	81 to 61	--	5.2	48 to 37	92 to 74	9
APR	79 to 61	--	5.0	53 to 40	90 to 66	12
MAY	77 to 57	--	2.4	61 to 46	87 to 62	12
JUN	77 to 55	--	1.1	66 to 52	89 to 66	9
JUL	75 to 55	--	0.5	69 to 55	90 to 68	12
AUG	77 to 57	--	1.0	70 to 55	91 to 65	11
SEP	81 to 59	--	1.1	64 to 51	93 to 72	10
OCT	82 to 59	--	1.5	57 to 46	93 to 78	9
NOV	81 to 59	--	3.5	48 to 39	92 to 85	7
DEC	82 to 61	--	4.1	44 to 39	92 to 88	7

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

Rwandan Culture

Rwanda has a rich history and ancient culture, noted for its colorful traditional dances, praise songs, and dynastic poems from centuries past. Unlike what you find in most modern African states, Rwandan culture is rooted in a people sharing a single language and cultural heritage—the Banyarwanda. The Banyarwanda, whose name means “those who come from Rwanda,” is comprised of three ethnic subgroups—the Hutu (comprising 84% of the population), Tutsi (15%) and Twa (1%). Historically, the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were identified with distinct aspects of the economy: the Hutu with the land, the Tutsi with cattle, and the Twa with the forests. Each group also developed many of their own distinctive rituals, traditions, and modes of dress.

Rwanda's local language is Kinyarwanda, although many Rwandans (especially older generations) also speak French, introduced during colonial rule by the Belgians. English and Swahili are also gaining a foothold. Christianity is the dominant religion in Rwanda, with about 98% of Rwandans members of either the Roman Catholic or Protestant church. Islam and other belief systems make up the other 2%. The role of the Catholic church during the genocide is still being debated, but hasn't seemed to dampen Rwandan's devotion to the faith.

Through much of Rwanda's past, a feudal kingdom established by the Tutsi had the minority group ruling over the Hutu majority—but there was never a history of major bloodshed between the two peoples. Most agree that the seeds of genocide were sown by the Belgians, who cynically promoted tribal differences to divide the country in order to control it. But peace prevails once again in today's Rwanda. The government discourages the Hutu/Tutsi/Twa distinction and has removed this classification from identity cards. The period of calm and healing has allowed Rwanda to grow into one of the safest and most progressive nations in all of Africa.

Music and dance remain important parts of every Rwandan ceremony, social gathering, and festival. A famous Rwandan dance called the *intore* consists of a dance of heroes performed by men, a ballet by women, and choreographed drums. An *intore* dance troupe performs around the world to help spread Rwandan culture. Traditional Rwandan crafts include woodcarvings, ceramics, and basketry.

While much of its ancient culture endures, Rwanda also looks to the future. It has implemented a number of pioneering conservation efforts, including being one of the first countries in the world to ban plastic bags. And in a world where most parliaments remain male-dominated, Rwanda leads the way in helping to close the gender gap. In monthly tallies of the percentage of women in national parliaments, Rwanda continues to be ranked number one. The U.S. is currently 87th.

Another tradition rooted in ancient culture is something called *Umuganda*, whose loose translation means “coming together in common purpose”. Through much of their history, when Rwandans needed a home, neighbors gathered to help with the construction. Today, this concept of *Umuganda* is written into Rwandan law, and the last Saturday of every month is set aside as a day of national “housekeeping”. It’s a time when every Rwandan—including the president—engages in a day of community service, which could be anything from sweeping the streets or building homes to planting trees.

Rwanda’s strong oral tradition has helped preserve many of its longstanding customs and traditions—although some have evolved and made concessions to the modern world. Women are no longer drowned for a premarital pregnancy, for instance. And it is no longer forbidden for Rwandan women to eat goat meat—which is good, because while the justification for this was that eating goat would cause a woman to grow a beard, most admit it was just something invented by greedy men who wanted all the meat. But Rwandans continue to take great pride in their colorful culture. They even have a saying that underlines the importance of continuing to pass down their story from generation to generation: “*Utaganiriye na se ntamenya icyo sekuru yasize avuze,*” which loosely translates to: “Whoever doesn’t talk to the father, will not know what the grandfather said”.

Keep an Open Mind

- This is not a typical tour, and the itinerary you follow is subject to change. This is Africa—weather, the political situation, migration of game, fuel availability, road conditions, and flight schedule changes may all impact your trip.
- In some cases, we may change the sequence of places visited, or we may not follow the trip itinerary exactly as published.
- Poverty is prevalent in Africa, so be prepared to witness a lower standard of living during our visits to local villages and schools.

Accommodations

- Our hotels and lodges are comfortable, but not luxurious.
- There can be occasional problems with electricity, hot water, and air conditioning (where it exists in the cities; there is not air conditioning in the safari camps).
- The roads within and between the parks can be dusty and very bumpy.
- Near the towns, some roads may be littered with trash.

- Water is scarce in the parks. We ask that you conserve water when washing, and shower only once each day.
- Some tented camps and lodges may be located outside the border to the national parks and game reserves. This allows us to offer a diverse range of activities, such as nature walks, in addition to entering the parks for game drives.

Meals

Each morning, we have a full breakfast including eggs, cereal, toast or bread with jam and butter, fresh or tinned fruit. Most lunches in the lodges are served buffet-style, and typically include meats, stews, vegetables, rice, potatoes, and dessert. Lodge dinners are usually served at table, and include soup and breads, a main entree such as chicken, meat, or fish, with a vegetable side dish, followed by dessert and cheese board.

Most of our meals are from the familiar Western cuisines, but we'll mix this up with characteristic African fare: you can try ugali, a maize meal dish, nyama na mtuzi, a meat stew, or sukuma wiki, fried green collards. Beverages such as tea and coffee are served at all meals.

During your adventure, you will receive one complementary bottle of water each day at your lodgings, and during safari days, you'll also receive a second complementary bottle of water in your safari vehicle. Additional bottled water is available for sale in the lodges. Prices vary, but generally fall in the \$3-4 range for a one-liter bottle.

Safari Vehicles

We'll travel in seven-passenger stretch Land Cruisers with pop-up or flip-top roof hatches for game viewing. There are six seats in the back, with a window at each seat; and one seat is in front, with a view through the front windshield. The Trip Experience Leader will ensure that seats are rotated. Agility and balance are required to board and disembark these vehicles, and we will change vehicles at border crossings per government regulations.

Reminder: The roads can be very bumpy, and there will be times when you are "off-roading" over rugged terrain for game-viewing drives. Some days we'll spend nearly all day (8-10 hours) in the vehicle, however, there will be breaks along the way.

Taking Photographs

When taking photos of people in most countries, be polite and ask permission to take a close-up. In many countries, you should not be taking photos of children or older women without permission. Do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

Please obey any signs regarding photos at museum or sites; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room – use a room safe as needed. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt.

Rwandan Cuisine

The cuisine of Rwanda is simple, and primarily based on traditional subsistence agriculture. Staples of the Rwandan diet include **plantains**, **beans**, **sweet potatoes**, **corn**, and **cassava**. Many Rwandans do not eat meat more than a few times a month. Fish is popular, especially **giant tilapia**. Known as “big fish,” one tilapia can easily feed three or four. Another popular fish is called **sambaza**, tiny fish that are caught at sunset using tightly woven nets and fried in a thick batter.

One of the most popular dishes in Rwanda is called **isombe**. It features an unusual combination of ingredients that begin with boiled and pounded cassava leaves. Vegetables like onions, leeks, eggplants, tomatoes, or bell peppers can be added to the mix, followed by a spoonful of peanut butter and a drizzle of oil is added to hold it all together. For snacks, Rwandans enjoy **avocados**, roasted **peanuts**, **popcorn**, and **fresh fruits** like pineapple, mangoes, bananas, papayas, and more. Some ubiquitous Rwandan ingredients include:

- **Bananas** have been a staple of the Rwanda diet for centuries and are cooked in endlessly creative ways.
- **Matoke**: A popular banana in Rwanda that is a green and unripe variety that has the consistency of a potato when cooked and is frequently added to soups, stews, wraps, and more.
- **Ugali**: A white, porridge-like food made from maize and either water or milk. Like white rice, ugali isn't too flavorful or exciting on its own, but is prepared in countless creative ways and is a regular feature of most Rwandan meals.
- **Ikiviguto**: This beverage is a form of fermented milk that can be served with varying levels of thickness and sourness. It's somewhere between a yogurt smoothie and a thick glass of milk with a tang.
- **Urwagwa**: Or banana beer, which is home-brewed using traditional skills passed down from father to son. *Urwagwa* is made by crushing bananas or plantains and letting them ferment underground with roasted sorghum flour added as the yeast component.

Ugandan Cuisine

Uganda's various tribal groups certainly have their own culinary traditions, but many of their favorite dishes rely on similar ingredients such as **matoke** (plantains), **corn meal**, **cassava**, **beans**, and **peanuts**. Then there is the influence of Uganda's Indian, Arabic, and Asian immigrant cultures, which have added their own flavor profiles to popular favorites.

- **Luwombo** (or oluwombo): One of the most beloved national dishes. Legend says that it was created in the 19th century by the personal chef of King Kabaka Mwanga of the Buganda Kingdom. It's a stew of chicken, beef, mushrooms, or fish steamed in banana leaves.
- **posho** or **ugali**: Served with luwombo. It is similar to polenta, this filling cornmeal porridge is eaten any time of day, as a main course or a side dish.
- **Chaloko**: A traditional entrée made with pinto beans, green peppers, tomatoes, and red or purple onions.
- **Chapati**: This popular side is a wheat flatbread that is ideal for wrapping around vegetables or sopping up the ubiquitous ground nut (peanut) condiment called **g-nut sauce**. Made from sweet and creamy red peanuts, it is perfect with roasted fish, sweet potatoes, and **matoke** (plantain).

Some Ugandan treats have clever names that may (or may not) hint at what's so tasty. If you're hungry on the go, visit a street vendor for some of these dishes:

- **TV chicken**: Named because the rotisserie oven that it's roasted in resembles a television.
- **Rolex**: **This** is not an expensive watch. It's very cheap and it is what it sounds like: rolled eggs. They are scrambled into an omelette with onions, tomatoes, and cabbage, then rolled up with a *chapati*.
- **Ugandan egg roll**: This is nothing like its Chinese namesake, but is quite literally a hard-boiled egg rolled up in a ball of mashed potatoes, and fried.
- **Nsenene**: If you are feeling adventurous hit up a pub and order some fried grasshoppers. They are perfect with cold beer.
- **Mandazi**: These are like donuts (minus the hole) and sweetened with coconut milk.
- **sim-sim cookies**: A brittle made with sesame seeds and honey.

Tanzanian Cuisine

Tanzanian cuisine is unique and widely varied. Along the coast, you'll find a decided Indian influence with spices and a wide use of coconut milk. As you move away from the coast, you will find a wider variety of fruits and vegetables, including **ndizi** (plantains), **bamia** (okra), **mchicha** (spinach), **njegere** (peas), **maharage** (beans), and **kisamvu** (cassava leaves). These are often be served as part of a platter with a grilled meat: **kuku choma** (chicken), **nyama choma** (beef), or **kiti moto** (pork). Dishes to try are:

- **Sambusa**: This is similar to a samosa in that it is a large fried dumpling only filled with spiced potatoes or meat.
- **Samaki** or kebabs: Are fish cooked in coconut milk.
- **Kashata**: This dish is perfect for anyone with a sweet tooth. It's a sort of peanut brittle in coconut milk with cardamom.

- **Kisusio soup:** This soup is for the more adventurous, made from boiled bones, scraps of meat, and blood.
- More unusual offerings include **firigisi** (grilled gizzards) or even grilled grasshoppers (**senene**).

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Rwanda

Look for *kitenge* (traditional colorful cloths), embroidered bags, bead jewelry, handcrafted candles, Amahoro baskets, gourmet coffee, pili pili oil, and artisan jams.

Uganda

In Uganda, look for gold, silver, and beaded jewelry, wood carvings, handmade bags, woven rugs, curtains, hats, traditional baskets, and spices.

Tanzania

The authentic woodcarvings called *mokonde* are made only in Tanzania, and are prized by collectors worldwide. Usually made of ebony, traditional *mokonde* art depicts spirit gods, ancestors, and half-human, half-animal figures. Today *mokonde* has been adapted to include figures of wildlife. You can find smaller figures for less than \$20. Depending on size, style, and quality, larger pieces cost from \$50 to \$500.

Bargaining

Some shops have fixed prices. In the open-air markets prices are usually flexible and negotiating is normal. The only rule is that if you make an offer, you should be prepared to buy at that price. Bring a mix of small bills so that you can pay in exact change. For bargaining in East Africa, our

Trip Experience Leaders suggest that you ask how much the item is, and start your bidding at a quarter of that price, working your way up to half the asking price. This is a good rule of thumb for getting the “right” price.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

When buying gemstones—such as Tanzanite set in jewelry—make sure to ask if it comes with a certificate *before* purchasing, as often transactions that have been completed cannot be reversed due to the TRA (Tanzania Revenue Authority) receipting system.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Rwanda

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 10,169 square miles
- **Capital:** Kigali
- **Languages:** Kinyarwanda only 93.2%, Kinyarwanda and other language(s) 6.2%, French and other language(s) 0.1%, English and other language(s) 0.1%, Swahili 0.02%, other 0.03%, unspecified 0.3%
- **Ethnicity:** Hutu (Bantu) 84%, Tutsi (Hamitic) 15%, Twa (Pygmy) 1%
- **Location:** Rwanda is bordered by Tanzania on the East and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the West
- **Geography:** almost all of Rwanda's land is under cultivation. Most of the country consists of mountains and hilly terrain, which means that except for the highest slopes of its volcanoes, almost all of its agriculture is terraced, much like in the Philippines or Nepal.
- **Population:** 13,246,394 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Roman Catholic 49.5%, Protestant 39.4%, other Christian 4.5%, Muslim 1.8%, animist 0.1%, other 0.6%, none 3.6%, unspecified 0.5%
- **Time Zone:** Rwanda is on Central Africa Time, seven hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 1pm in Rwanda.

National Holidays: Rwanda

In addition to the holidays listed below, Rwanda celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Eid al-Fitr. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

02/01 National Heroes' Day

04/07 Tutsi Genocide Memorial Day

05/01 May Day

07/01 Independence Day

07/04 Liberation Day

08/15 Assumption Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

Rwanda: A Brief History

The first known inhabitants of Rwanda were the Twa Pygmies, a people thought to be related to hunter-gatherers. From about 100 AD onwards, the Twa were gradually displaced by the Hutu, a tribal group that probably migrated here from the Congo Basin. The Hutu were well established by the 15th century, when they were conquered by the Tutsi, whose kings, or *mwamis*, established a form of feudal caste system where the Hutus were forced into slavery.

German explorers arrived in the area in the 1880s, and in 1890 until 1916 Rwanda (then called Ruanda) and Burundi (then called Urundi) were incorporated into German East Africa. After World War I the area was mandated to Belgium by the League of Nations and became known as the Territory of Ruanda-Urundi. The Belgians continued ruling through the Tutsi chiefs, whose power over the Hutu minority increased until 1959, when a Tutsi clan seized power and murdered Hutu leaders. After a massive Hutu uprising ensued with some 100,000 Tutsis killed, Belgium finally granted Rwanda independence in 1962.

The Hutu majority came to power after independence, resulting in resentment by the Tutsis who formed guerilla groups (the Rwandan Patriotic Front, or RPF), mounting raids on Hutu communities starting in 1990. This, of course, led to reprisals and counter-reprisals. Finally, in April of 1994, after a mysterious plane crash at Kigali airport killed both the Rwandan and Burundi presidents, a full-fledged genocide ensued, with roughly 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus exterminated in a three-month period. The Tutsi rebels finally defeated the Hutu regime in July, but then some 2 million Hutus, fearing retribution, fled to refugee camps in neighboring countries.

Having endured one of worst genocides in recorded history, Rwanda's recovery has been nothing short of remarkable. Since 1994, this small nation has made extraordinary economic progress, with a growth rate the second fastest in the continent. And in one more sign of progress—Rwanda's parliament includes the largest number of female members in the entire world.

Uganda

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 93,065 square miles
- **Capital:** Kampala
- **Languages:** English (official language), Ganda or Luganda, other Niger–Congo languages, Nilo–Saharan languages, Swahili, and Arabic
- **Ethnicity:** Baganda 16.5%, Banyankole 9.6%, Basoga 8.8%, Bakiga 7.1%, Iteso 7%, Langi 6.3%, Bagisu 4.9%, Acholi 4.4%, Lugbara 3.3%, other 32.1%
- **Location:** Uganda is bordered by Kenya on the East, the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the West, South Sudan on the North, and Rwanda and Tanzania on the South.
- **Geography:** Uganda consists of a plateau with mountains along the border. It is surrounded by three lakes: Lake Albert, Lake Edward, and Lake Victoria.
- **Population:** 45,853,778 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Protestant 45.1%, Roman Catholic 39.3%, Muslim 13.7%, other 1.6%, none 0.2%
- **Time Zone:** Uganda is on Central Africa Time, seven hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 1pm in Uganda.

National Holidays: Uganda

In addition to the holidays listed below, Uganda celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Eid al-Fitr. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/26 Liberation Day

02/16 Remembrance of Archbishop
Janani Luwum

03/08 International Women's Day

05/01 May Day

06/03 Martyr's Day

06/09 National Heroes Day

10/09 Independence Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

Uganda: A Brief History

Agricultural Bantu settlers are believed to be some of the first inhabitants of Uganda, dating back to 1,000 B.C. In the 17th and 18th centuries, several kingdoms were formed, including Bunyoro, Buganda, Busoga, Ankole, and Toro. By the 19th century, English Protestant and French Catholic missionaries arrived, whose influence can still be seen in modern-day Uganda. In 1894, the kingdom of Buganda became a British Protectorate and the British Colonial Office took control of the country in 1905.

In 1921, a legislature and executive council were formed to bring power back to the local people and by 1955, Ugandans made up more than half of the legislature. Britain granted independence to Uganda in 1962, and the first elections were held on March 1, 1961. Benedicto Kiwanuka of the Democratic Party became the first chief minister. Uganda became a republic the following year, maintaining its Commonwealth membership.

In succeeding years, supporters of a centralized state vied with those in favor of a loose federation and a strong role for tribally-based local kingdoms. Political maneuvering climaxed in February 1966, when Milton Obote, the Prime Minister, suspended the constitution and assumed all government powers, removing the positions of president and vice president. In September 1967, a new constitution proclaimed Uganda a republic, gave the president even greater powers, and abolished the traditional kingdoms.

After a military coup on January 25, 1971, Obote was deposed from power and the dictator Idi Amin seized control of the country. Amin ruled Uganda with the military for the next eight years and carried out mass killings within the country to maintain his rule. An estimated 300,000 Ugandans lost their lives at the hands of his regime, many of them in the north, which he associated with Obote's loyalists. Aside from his brutalities, he forcibly removed the entrepreneurial Indian minority from Uganda, which left the country's economy in ruins.

A border altercation involving Ugandan exiles who had a camp close to the Ugandan border of Mutukula resulted in an attack by the Uganda army into Tanzania. In October 1978, the Tanzanian armed forces repulsed an incursion by Amin's troops into Tanzanian territory. The Tanzanian army, backed by Ugandan exiles, waged a war of liberation against Amin's troops and the Libyan soldiers sent to help him. On April 11, 1979, Kampala was captured and Amin fled with his remaining forces to Libya.

Amin's reign ended after the Uganda-Tanzania War in 1979, in which Tanzanian forces aided by Ugandan exiles invaded Uganda. This led to the return of Obote, who was deposed again in 1985 by General Tito Okello. Okello ruled for six months until he was deposed. This occurred after the so-called "bush war" by the National Resistance Army (NRA) operating under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni, and various rebel groups, including the Federal Democratic Movement of Andrew Kayiira, and another belonging to John Nkwaanga. During the Bush War the army carried out mass killings of non-combatants.

Negotiations between the Okello government and the NRA were conducted in Nairobi in the fall of 1985, with Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi seeking a cease-fire and a coalition government in Uganda. Although agreeing in late 1985 to a cease-fire, the NRA continued fighting, and seized Kampala and the country in late January 1986, forcing Okello's forces to flee north into Sudan. Museveni's forces organized a government with Museveni as president.

Since assuming power, the government dominated by the political grouping created by Museveni and his followers, the National Resistance Movement (NRM or the "Movement"), has largely put an end to the human rights abuses of earlier governments, initiated substantial political liberalization and general press freedom, and instituted broad economic reforms after consultation with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and donor governments.

Between 1998 and 2003, the Ugandan army was involved in the Second Congo War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Uganda continues to support rebel groups, such as the Movement for the Liberation of Congo and some factions of the Rally for Congolese Democracy.

In August 2005, Parliament voted to change the constitution to lift presidential term limits, allowing Museveni to run for a third term if he wished to do so. Museveni remains the current President of Uganda, serving his sixth term.

Tanzania

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 365,755 square miles
- **Capital:** Dodoma
- **Languages:** Swahili is the official language; English and tribal languages are also spoken.
- **Ethnicity:** Mainland – African 99% (of which 95% are Bantu consisting of more than 130 tribes), other 1% (consisting of Asian, European, and Arab); Zanzibar – Arab, African, mixed Arab and African
- **Location:** Tanzania is bordered by Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia
- **Geography:** Mainland Tanzania's landscape is flat and low along the coast. In the interior, a plateau at an average altitude of about 4,000 feet makes up most of the country, and isolated mountain groups rise in the northeast and southwest.
- **Population:** 61,741,120 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Mainland – Christian 61.4%, Muslim 35.2%, folk religion 1.8%, other 0.2%, unaffiliated 1.4%; Zanzibar—majority Muslim
- **Time Zone:** Tanzania is on Eastern Africa Time, eight hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 2pm in Dar es Salaam.

National Holidays: Tanzania

In addition to the holidays listed below, Tanzania celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Eid el Fitri. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/12 Zanzibar Revolution Day

04/26 Union Day

05/01 Worker's Day

06/07 Saba Saba

08/08 Peasants' Day

10/14 Nyerere Day

12/09 Republic Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

Tanzania: A Brief History

Tanzania is home to the Olduvai Gorge, the site where some of the earliest human remains on earth have been discovered. For hundreds of thousands of years, hunter-gatherer societies inhabited the area, though details about them are lost in the mists of time. More recently, the interior of the country has been occupied by pastoral and agricultural societies.

The cattle-herding Maasai are notable among these. They are believed to have migrated from the southern Nile during the 15th to 17th century, and they continue to live in mainland Tanzania to this day. In the past, this tribe's reputation as fierce warriors may have prevented some intertribal clashes as neither the slave trade nor tribal warfare had much impact in their territory. Interestingly, while the Maasai may have captured the public imagination, they are not a majority tribe in Tanzania, which boasts a stunning diversity of over 100 tribal groups.

In contrast, the coastal region has a different migration story. Over one thousand years ago, sea-borne traders established a strong Arab presence on Tanzania's Indian Ocean coast, which includes the island of Zanzibar. A vast trade network sprang up, with Zanzibar as a key trading port between Africa, the Middle East, and India. (Sadly, this included a thriving slave trade.) The island's wealth and strategic location drew the attention of the Portuguese, who ruled it for about 200 years starting in 1502. But by the 1700s they were outed by the Sultans of Oman, who reestablished trade with the Arabic world and made Stone Town their capital in 1840.

Rivalry among European colonial powers brought historic change to the area in the late 19th century. Livingston and Stanley were among the first Englishmen to arrive in the interior, where Stanley's famous "Dr. Livingston, I presume" was uttered in 1871 by Lake Tanganyika. The British then made Zanzibar their protectorate in 1890 and abolished the slave trade. But on the mainland Britain yielded to Germany when the two countries signed an agreement giving Tanzania (then known as Tanganyika) to the Germans, while Britain got Kenya and Uganda. This agreement ended in World War I, when Germany and Britain fought intense land and naval battles in Tanganyika. Following Germany's defeat in Europe, Britain was put in charge of the League of Nations mandate for Tanganyika.

In the 20th century, the movement to end colonialism in Tanganyika took shape among farmers' unions and cooperatives. Julius Nyerere led the political party that grew out of this movement and became the country's first president when it made a peaceful transition to independence in 1961. The island of Zanzibar gained independence in 1963, in a transition that involved a bloody revolution during which the bulk of the Arab population was expelled. In 1964, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, and Pemba (another offshore island) joined to become the United Republic of Tanzania.

Tanzania's leaders stood at the forefront of African liberation movements during the 1970s and the early 1980s. They allowed Mozambique nationalists to use Tanzanian territory for training and attack bases as they fought for independence from the Portuguese. In 1979, Tanzanian troops helped overthrow the regime of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. President Nyerere also played a key role in the negotiations for ending white rule in Zimbabwe. Although it maintained good relations with the West, Tanzania followed a strongly socialist path in the decades immediately following independence.

Part of the reason Tanzania was able to take such a leading role was the relative lack of tension between tribal groups and the use of the shared language (Swahili) which was adopted early on in 1961. That is not to say that there isn't any friction—the past two decades have seen some strong political divisions, especially between Zanzibar and the mainland—but these internal squabbles are relatively mild compared to other African nations. In recent years the relative stability has helped Tanzania emerge as one of the anchors for the East African region, accepting refugees from the conflicts in Rwanda, hosting peace talks for Burundi, and forming an East African trade alliance with neighboring states like Kenya.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Rwanda

A Thousand Hills to Heaven: Love, Hope, and a Restaurant in Rwanda by Josh Ruxin (2013, Memoir)

The inspiring true story of an expat American family that open a restaurant in Kigali, Rwanda both as a creative endeavor and as a way to help the local community.

The Antelope's Strategy: Living in Rwanda After the Genocide by Jean Hatzfield (2011, Non-Fiction)

Hatzfield returns to Rwanda to learn about the relationship between the Hutus and Tutsis following the genocide.

Baking Cakes in Kigali by Gaile Parkin (2010, Fiction) A sweet and satisfying novel about a big-hearted baker in Kigali who doles out wisdom to the customers who come into her kitchen to order cakes but end up sharing stories about their lives.

We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda by Philip Gourevitch (1998, Non-Fiction)

A must-read collection of stories about the infamous genocide in Rwanda.

Gorillas in the Mist by Dian Fossey (1983, Memoir) The story of Dian Fossey's thirteen years living with gorillas in an African rainforest. Look for the 2000 edition, which was reissued for the 15th anniversary of Fossey's passing.

Uganda

Operation Thunderbolt: Flight 139 and the Raid on Entebbe Airport, the Most Audacious Hostage

Rescue Mission in History by Saul David (2017, Non-Fiction) Days after Idi Amin Dada is declared President, an Air France flight is hijacked and diverted to Entebbe Airport on the shore of Lake Victoria in Uganda for six days where Israeli Special Forces must stage a rescue mission to free the hostages.

Kintu by Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi (2014, Fiction) What happens when your family is cursed? This epic novel follows several generations of the same family, all descendants of Kintu Kata, a Ugandan man who unleashes a curse on his family in 1750. The author won the 2014 Commonwealth Prize for this debut novel and as since written other well-received books like 2020's ***A Girl is a Body of Water***, about a 12-year-old's trying to find out who her mother is.

The Teeth May Smile but the Heart Does Not Forget: Murder and Memory in Uganda by Andrew Rice (2010, Journalism/Narrative) Journalist Andrew Rice spent four years in Uganda researching this gripping story of a man's quest for the truth about the murder of his father during the brutal reign of dictator Idi Amin.

Abyssinian Chronicles: A Novel by Moses Isegawa (1998, Fiction) The story of a young man living in Uganda following the end of President Idi Amin's regime.

Eastern Africa: Kenya & Tanzania

City of Thorns: Nine Lives in the World's Largest Refugee Camp by Ben Rawlence (2016, Nonfiction). The Dadaab refugee camp is the third-largest refugee camp in the world, seen internationally as a looming humanitarian crisis. Rawlence outlines life in the camp, telling the stories of nine inhabitants and the struggles they face on their desperate bid for a better life.

Love, Life, and Elephants: An African Love Story by Daphne Sheldrick (2012, Memoir) The lively and engaging biography of a much-admired expert on African elephants—and the first person to raise one in captivity from birth. The book recounts her experiences helping her husband to create and run one of Kenya's national parks and her role in raising orphaned elephants to release back into the wild.

Running with the Kenyans: Passion, Adventure, and the Secrets of the Fastest People on Earth by Adharanand Finn (2012, Sport) An amateur runner from Britain, Finn uproots his family for a chance to train in Kenya, where many of the best professional runners come from. While some reviewers felt this book was more for the running enthusiast, others praised its mix of sports and travel writing.

Crazy River: Exploration and Folly in East Africa by Richard Grant (2011, Travel Narrative) Author Grant risks his life to travel the relatively unexplored Malagarasi River from Tanzania into Burundi, which he then follows up with a jaunt into Rwanda. At times adventurous, scary, and crazy.

It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower by Michela Wrong (2009, History/Politics) Journalist-turned-author Michela Wrong uses the dramatic true story of anti-corruption officer John Githongo as a way to shed light on tribal politics and corruption in Kenya.

Suggested Films & Videos

Rwanda

Kinyarwanda (2012, Drama) Powerful film about the Rwandan genocide told through a series of deeply personal intertwining stories of everyday people that together form one grand narrative.

Munyurangabo (2009, Drama) Life in post-genocide Rwanda seen through the lives of two adolescent boys who journey from Kigali to a family farm in the countryside. An intimate and beautiful little film shot on location in just two weeks using local actors—and also the first film in the Kinyarwanda language. English subtitles.

Sometimes in April (2005, Drama) A Hutu soldier struggles to come to terms with the aftermath of the genocide as his brother awaits trial for his involvement.

Beyond the Gates (2005, Drama) Also called *Stray Dogs*, this film depicts the insanity of the genocide based on the experiences of a BBC producer.

Hotel Rwanda (2004, Drama) Powerful true-life story of a hotel manager who housed Tutsi refugees during the Rwanda genocide of 1994.

Uganda

Queen of Katwe (2016, Drama) The inspiring story of a Ugandan girl living in a slum who learns to play chess and goes on to become a Woman Candidate Master at the World Chess Olympiad.

Who Killed Captain Alex? (2010, Action/Comedy) This low-budget action film is one of about 40 that have been produced in “Wakaliwood,” a slum of Kampala. Made for about \$200, it was masterminded by director Nabwana Isaac Geoffrey Godfrey, who has gained a cult following as the “Tarantino of Uganda.” Even if you don’t like the gleeful mayhem, you can’t help but be impressed by the resourcefulness of the production.

Last King of Scotland (2006, Historical Drama) Forest Whitaker won Best Actor at the 2006 Academy Awards for his role as Ugandan President, Idi Amin, in this film which follows the story of the Ugandan President’s personal physician and confidant.

Tanzania

Jane (2017, Documentary) An inspiring documentary about the life of Jane Goodall, the world’s foremost expert on chimpanzees, and her work at Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania.

Throw Down Your Heart (2008, Music) Did you know the banjo originated in Africa? Well-known banjo player Bela Fleck traces the instrument’s roots through Tanzania, Uganda, Gambia, and Mali, jamming with fellow musicians along the way. If you are more interested in the music than the film, some of the songs have been released as an album called **Throw Down Your Heart: Africa Sessions** (2020).

Useful Websites

Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

www.oattravel.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/
plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security

Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps or Maps.me

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

Rome2rio

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber or Bolt or Grab

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

What's App or Skype or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo or FLuentU or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

Tourlina

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

TripWhistle

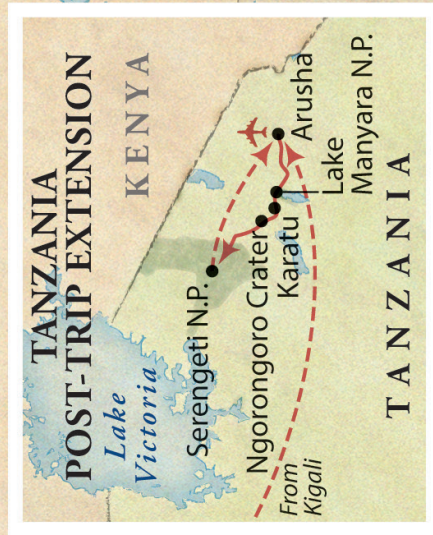
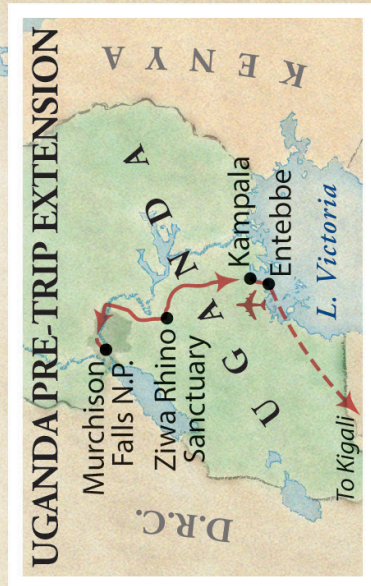
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

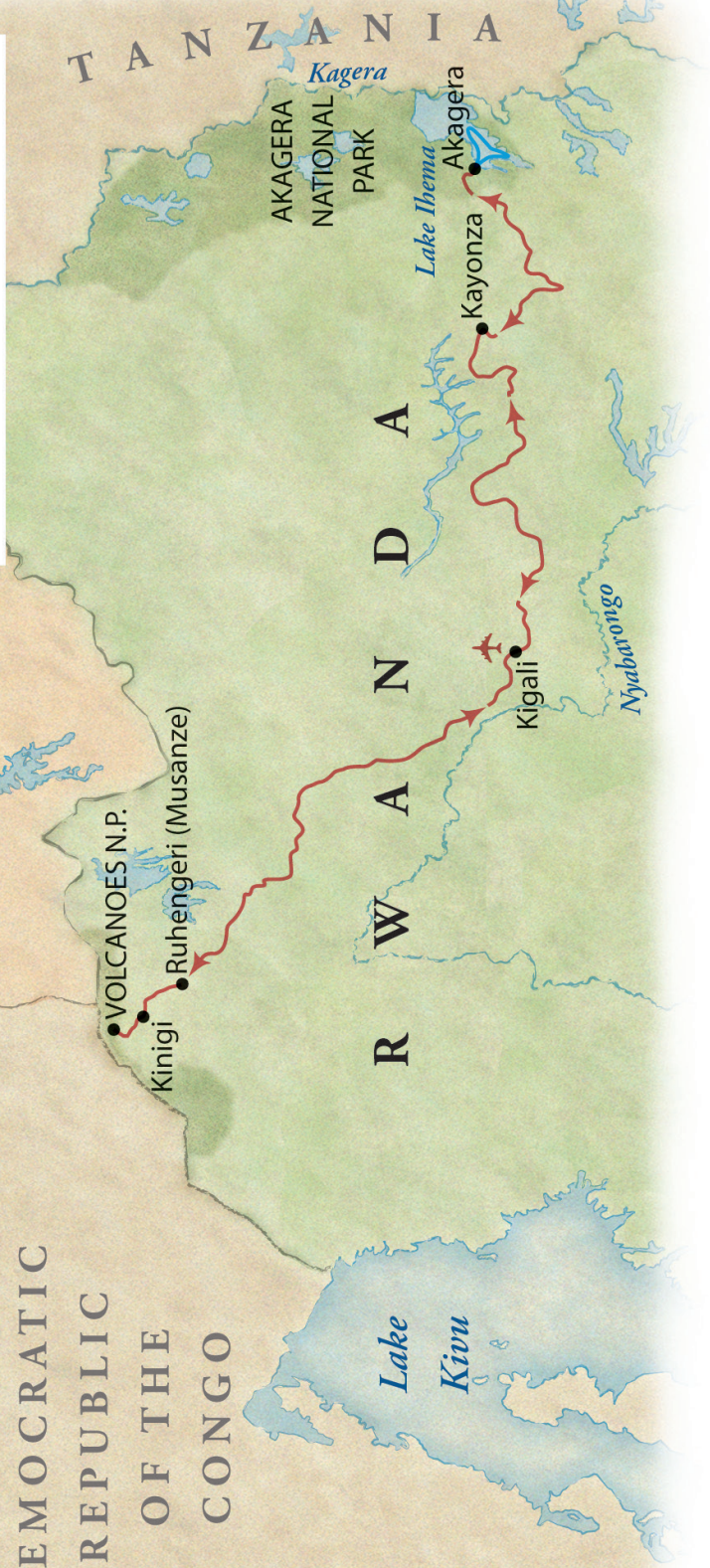
Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC
OF THE
CONGO



SHARE YOUR TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

We invite you to share your videos, slideshows, and photos of your past O.A.T. adventures to help inspire your fellow travelers. Go to www.oattravel.com/myplanner to upload your photos or videos, and they may be featured on our website.

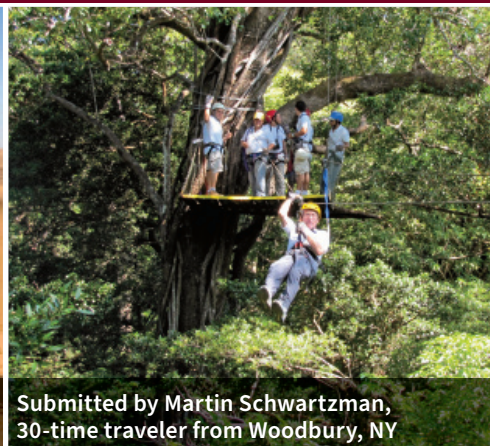
Most Popular Videos, Slideshows & Photos from our O.A.T. Adventures Created by O.A.T. Travelers



Submitted by Joy and Don Janke,
8-time travelers from Stevensville, MI



Submitted by Julia Schneider,
5-time traveler from Pinellas Park, FL



Submitted by Martin Schwartzman,
30-time traveler from Woodbury, NY



Submitted by Paul Stark, 17-time traveler
from Edina, MN



Submitted by David Fong, 16-time traveler
from Foster City, CA



Submitted by Steven dos Remedios,
23-time traveler from Oakland, CA



1-800-955-1925 | www.oattravel.com

CONNECT WITH US:  



World's Best
#4 Best Intimate-Ship
Ocean Cruise Line



Readers' Choice
Named to the Best
Tour Operators list



USA Today
#6 Best Educational
Tour Companies



"Best Tours"
Named one of the
"Best Tours"