

## ○ discovering RWANDA

A nation of sophisticated cultural and artistic history, Rwanda swirls instinctively to centuries-old rhythms of drums, song, dancing and oral poetry. Rwanda is a landlocked, resource-poor country bordered by Uganda to the north, Tanzania to the east, Burundi to the south and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west. Known as “the land of a thousand hills,” Rwanda is proud of its green landscapes, breathtaking mountain views, and great animals of the wild that roam free in the vast national parks.

Rwanda once evoked these marvelous images of mountain gorillas and amazing landscapes, until the country was devastated by the 1994 genocide.

The country has been beset by ethnic tension associated with the traditionally unequal relationship between the dominant Tutsi minority and the majority Hutus. Although after 1959, the ethnic relationship was reversed, when civil war prompted around 200,000 Tutsis to flee to Burundi and lingering resentment led to periodic massacres of Tutsis. The most notorious of these was the genocide of 1994, which led to the killing of about 1 million Rwandans and the displacement of some 800,000 people.

The genocide led to a change in the country’s demographic structure: women today account for about 54 per cent of the Rwandan population, and many households are headed by women and orphans. These households, including those affected by HIV/AIDS, are most vulnerable to hunger and poverty.

---

Note: Recognizing that information on Rwanda is readily available on the Internet, we encourage you to learn as much as you can about the political background, history, geography, economics and culture of this amazing country. This document provides a general overview, with some specific information that will help short-term teams appreciate Rwanda even more and understand our work. Going to Rwanda as part of a short-term team is different from a leisure trip or traveling for business. The information provided here can help you prepare for a potentially life-changing experience. Sources used for some country facts include CIA: The World Factbook and BBC News.



Agriculture is the backbone of the economy, employing about 90 percent of the population engaged in mainly subsistence farming. But the sector is very fragile. Rough terrain, erosion and climatic hazards – combine with geography and the lack of modern technology – create serious constraints to agricultural development.

The country is striving to rebuild its economy. Tourism, minerals exports, and coffee and tea production are among its main sources of foreign exchange.

---

### QUICK FACTS

**Full Name:** Republic of Rwanda

**Population:** 11.4 million (July 2011 est.)

**Capital:** Kigali

**Area:** 26,338 sq km (10,169 sq miles)

**Major Languages:** Kinyarwanda (official), French (official), English (official), Swahili

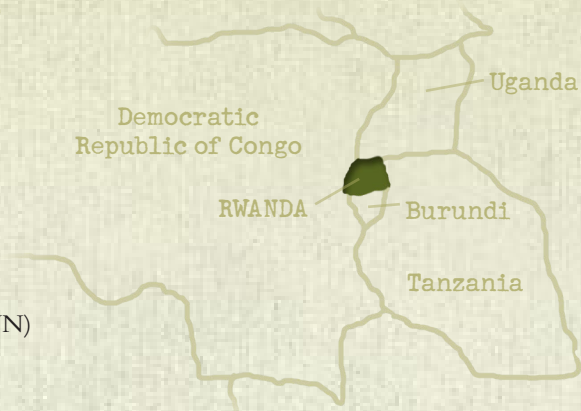
**Life Expectancy:** 56 years (men), 59 years (women) (UN)

**Monetary Unit:** Rwandan franc

**Main Exports:** Coffee, tea, hides, tin, ore

**Religions:** Roman Catholic, Protestant, Adventist, Islam, indigenous beliefs

---

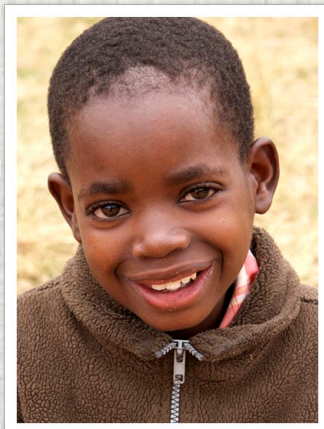


### WEATHER

There are four discernible seasons: the long rains from mid-March to mid-May; the long dry season from mid-May to mid-October; the short rains from mid-October to mid-December and the short dry season from mid-December to mid-March. The average daytime temperature is 75 degrees Fahrenheit, except in the mountainous regions where temperatures are between 54 and 59 degrees. It rains more frequently and heavily in the northeast where the volcanoes are blanketed by rainforest.

### PASSPORT / VISA

A passport is required for all travelers to Rwanda. All information regarding obtaining a passport can be found at the U.S. Department of State's National Passport Information Center: [www.travel.state.gov/passport](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport). This site will detail current fees, acceptable forms of identification, downloadable applications, and passport acceptance facility locations. It takes approximately 6 -10 weeks for processing. Please allow additional time for gathering necessary documentation (photos, birth certificate, etc.).



For an additional fee, the process can be expedited. Information can be found on the above website on "How to Get Your Passport in a Hurry." For those who already have a passport, be sure that the passport is valid six months beyond the intended stay in Rwanda.

In addition to a passport, some countries require a visa for entry. A visa is a special permit issued by a country's government to allow a foreign citizen into the country. At this time, a visa is not required for Americans travelling to Rwanda. If you have a passport from a country other than the U.S., you may need to take extra measures to ensure smooth entrance into and exit from Rwanda. Consult the host country consulate to find out what measures need to be taken.

For the most up-to-date information about travel from the United States to any foreign country, please visit the Department of State's website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

### VACCINATION INFORMATION

In addition to applying for a passport, you will also need to research vaccination requirements for your trip well in advance as some vaccinations take time or need to be given in a series to be effective. The best advice regarding vaccinations and any other medications can only come from a qualified physician. Please make an appointment with your family doctor and share with him/her where you are going, how long you will be there and what activities you will be participating in. In consultation with your doctor, you can decide which vaccinations and/or medications will be best for you.

A certificate of yellow fever vaccination is currently required for entry into Rwanda. Yellow fever vaccinations are given at local government health departments and special travel health clinics. For information about how to receive the yellow fever vaccination in your area, please visit [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). To better familiarize yourself with travel health, please visit the Center for Disease Control's website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) prior to your visit with your doctor.

### MISCELLANEOUS

#### Time:

EST + 6 hours.

PST + 9 hours.

#### Electricity:

The visitor will generally find standard European plugs with two circular metal pins. Electrical current is 230 volts, 50 Hz.

#### Weights and Measures:

Metric

### LUGGAGE

Luggage should be limited to one checked bag and the allowed carry-on for each team member. While most airlines will allow two checked bags, large amounts of luggage are difficult to transport while in-country. Any extra bags should be used to transport ministry supplies. Please refer to your teams training materials for a packing list.



### CULTURAL TIPS

In addition to learning a few words in the native language, paying attention to a few cultural clues can help you build a foundation for a wonderful cross-cultural friendship. These tips are like a map for you during your time in Rwanda. They will not give you the answers to all situations, but they may help you understand why people behave the way they do.

It is important to note that the government of Rwanda no longer identifies a person as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. In the past, these ethnic groups

were used as tools for murder and discrimination. In a desire to bring peace and create unity, the Government of National Unit (the current government) believes that the country is made of Rwandans (or Rwandese) who share the same culture, language, background and life. Please do not ask a person what tribe they belong to.

While the events and lingering effects of the genocide may be an intriguing matter to outsiders, it is a





very sensitive and personal matter to the Rwandan people. Many who did survive lost loved ones, witnessed brutal killings or hid for weeks and months in order to survive. It is important to develop a relationship with a person before mentioning the genocide; even then, the focus should be on listening and empathizing. And, some may be more willing than others to share their stories and experience. Utmost discretion is advised in these conversations.

Nothing defines Rwandese culture better than the warm hospitality of its people. Visitors are often welcomed with traditional Intore dancers and singers. It is always a good idea for your team to be prepared to sing a song as you may be asked to do so.

Always acknowledge people with a verbal greeting and/or a handshake. Never walk by someone without even the briefest of greetings. Shaking hands is extremely important in the Rwandese culture.

### CLOTHING

Our dress code is a sign of respect for the people you will be working with, as well as to convey a conservative Christian lifestyle. The general rule of thumb for dress in Rwanda is conservative. Wearing appropriate clothing will open the door for establishing good relationships with the community members.

While in the community and during tourism days, teams members should wear long pants (Capri pants okay) and loose fitting T-shirts. If the team is attending a church service, women should wear long skirts and loose-fitting blouses, and men should wear long pants and collared shirts. Except when in the team's guesthouse or accommodation, team members should always wear close-toed shoes.

Out of respect for cultural sensitivity, we request your cooperation in submitting to FH's policy in regard to piercings, tattoos and radical haircuts. For more details about this topic, please talk to your team leader.

*Please do not bring the following:*

- Shorts
- Tight or revealing clothing (pants, jeans and shirts)
- Low-cut shirts (scoop neck or V-neck)
- Tank tops
- Excessively low-rise jeans or excessively baggy pants
- Shirts that reveal the midriff
- Clothing that has inappropriate or questionable words or pictures
- Clothing with rips, holes or stains

### ELECTRONICS

You may bring cameras (disposable, standard or digital), iPods, cell phones and other small electronic devices; however, you assume all risks of damage, loss or theft of your belongings. Keep in mind that you will be kept quite busy, and there will not be a lot of time to use many electronic devices. Also, electricity may not always be available to recharge electronic equipment, including cameras and camcorders. Please bring extra batteries. When in public, don't display expensive electronic items or any items that may just appear expensive.

### PHOTO POLICY

All photos or videos should be taken with utmost discretion. Upon arrival in the country, your Team

Coordinator will explain the country's photo policy. Some considerations:

- Make sure the focus is on relationships and the ministry, not pictures.
- When possible, ask before taking pictures.
- Designate a photographer. Rather than taking the same picture on 12 different cameras, take the picture with one or two cameras and share when you get back.
- Be sure that any picture you take conveys dignity for the person in the picture. If you will not remember the names of the people in the story or the significance of the photo, re-consider the need for taking a photo.

## FOOD

Your Team Coordinator will have arranged breakfast, lunch and dinner for your team. You will have the opportunity to sample a variety of food while in Rwanda, both traditional dishes and some American favorites. While some dishes may be unfamiliar, please come with an open mind and be willing to try new foods prepared for you. You are welcome to bring additional food for between-meals snacks.

Avoid eating foods that have not been provided or approved by Food for the Hungry staff. Eating something from a local vendor or street market could lead to sickness. If you have any food allergies or special dietary needs, please communicate those to FH/US ahead of time. Our field staff will need time to arrange other options for you.

Your Team Coordinator will also have a supply of bottled water for your team. Only drink the bottled water. The bottled water will also need to be used for brushing your teeth and taking any medicines. Please do not drink anything but bottled water. If you are served ice in a drink, please verify that the water is okay by consulting with your Team Coordinator.

## TRANSPORTATION

Your Team Coordinator will have arranged transportation the entire time your team is serving with Food for the Hungry. In Rwanda, most travel is done by FH vehicle with an FH staff member as the driver. Generally, FH teams do not use public transportation.

Driving in Rwanda may be a new experience for you. The roads are likely to be bumpy and winding. You may feel that the vehicle you are in is uncomfortably close to the vehicle or pedestrian beside it. Streets may seem overwhelmingly crowded. Traffic signs may not always be followed. Remember that you are in good hands. Your driver is a professional and used to the traffic conditions. Keep your hands, feet and belongings inside the vehicle at all times. If you experience carsickness, especially during long drives from Kigali to the communities, sit in the front or take an appropriate medicine for motion sickness.

## COMMUNICATION

You will likely be without telephone and/or e-mail access during your time in Rwanda. While these services may be readily available in a city like Kigali, your schedule will be packed with activities. This will help you to focus your energy and attention on the transformative work of the Lord and to help maintain a cohesive group dynamic. We encourage you to leave your cell phone at home and inform your family and friends that you will be unavailable until you return to the States.

If there is an emergency in the country or community where you are serving, your Team Coordinator will contact your family and appropriate people at your home church. Before you leave the U.S. you will be

*Foods you are likely  
to eat in Rwanda:*

- ✓ Avocados
- ✓ Bananas
- ✓ Beans
- ✓ Cassava
- ✓ Goat meat
- ✓ Passion fruit







given a U.S. phone number and other details, which you will pass on to your family and close friends. If there is an emergency in the U.S. while you're on the field, your family member or friend may call that number. Your Field Liaison will assess the call and facilitate communication with you or the field staff as necessary.

### **MONEY**

While with Food for the Hungry, all transportation, food, lodging and water are covered by FH. You will only need money for tourist activities, souvenirs and shopping you will do in-country and while traveling. A suggested amount for this purpose is \$100 USD. Bring bills that are crisp and new (no more than 5 years old) to ensure acceptance. If you will be exchanging a lot of money, bills higher than \$20 are recommended to get a better exchange rate.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

In recent years, a number of powerful books, documentaries and movies have been created to bring attention to the horrific 1994 genocide that killed about 1 million people. The following resources provide background and stories from that time. Please be warned that these resources may be graphic.

#### **Books:**

- *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed with Our Families* by Philip Gourevitch. An unforgettable firsthand account of a people's response to genocide and what it tells us about humanity.
- *Left to Tell: Discovering God amidst the Rwandan Holocaust* by Immaculee Ilibagiza. In this first-person account of faith in the darkest of times, Immaculee Ilibagiza tells how she barely escaped the 1994 Rwanda genocide by hiding in the bathroom of a pastor's home for three months along with seven other women. Prayer and her faith in God got her through it all she says, and she tells how her faith in God also allowed her to travel the difficult path from trauma to forgiveness.

#### **Documentaries:**

- *"Ghosts of Rwanda"* – In addition to interviews with key government officials and diplomats, this documentary offers groundbreaking, eyewitness accounts of the genocide from those who experienced it firsthand: from Tutsi survivors who recount the horror of seeing their friends and family members slaughtered by neighbors and coworkers, to the diplomats on the scene who struggled to convey the severity of the crisis to Washington, to the UN peacekeepers stationed amid the carnage who were ordered not to intervene in the slaughter of about 1 million people.



### Movies:

- “*Hotel Rwanda*” – A 2004 movie based on the true story of hotelier Paul Rusesabagina who used his political position, social skills and quick wit to rescue thousands of lives from the Rwandan genocide.
- “*Sometimes in April*” – This HBO film depicts the story of Rwanda’s genocide, not only as it occurred in 1994 but also as the country was still experiencing healing and justice in 2004. The story follows two Hutu brothers through the genocide. Both survive, though one brother loses his Tutsi wife and children and the other, a radio announcer, loses his freedom when he is put on trial for fomenting hatred against the Tutsi through his radio program. The estranged brothers are trying to put the past behind them – one brother by admitting his guilt and the other by forgiving that brother, whose actions led to the death of his wife and children.
- “*Gorillas in the Mist*” – This 1988 movie tells the true life story of naturalist Dian Fossey and her work with mountain gorillas in Rwanda and Uganda. The film is based on a book written by Fossey describing her time in Africa studying the gorillas. It is marketed with the tagline “At the far ends of the earth she found a reason to live, and a cause to fight for.”

### FH/ RWANDA

Food for the Hungry started its work in Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 war and genocide. Early activities focused primarily on humanitarian response. Over time, however, FH/Rwanda embarked on long-term development projects to help transform children, families and communities physically and spiritually. FH/Rwanda’s strategies for addressing all forms of poverty include:

- Food and livelihood security, with special focus on orphaned and vulnerable children, widows and families.
- Promotion of behavioral change communication to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS infection and stigma.
- Working with health centers and local leaders to train families on health and nutrition.
- Increase access to education.
- Increase the entrepreneurial and economic capacity of poor households to become self-sufficient.

### *Prayer Requests*

- Please pray for Rwanda’s president as he leads in a post-genocide. Pray for continued security in this country, and for peace and unity between all ethnic groups.
- Pray that God would raise up spiritual leaders to guide this nation. Pray for wisdom as these leaders address the physical, emotional and spiritual needs that have resulted from the genocide.
- Pray for FH/Rwanda activities, that God would use these outreaches to lift many Rwandans out of physical and spiritual poverty.
- Pray that our FH/Rwanda staff would have compassion, wisdom and sensitivity so they can effectively reach out to the poor and most vulnerable in Rwanda, especially children who have been orphaned from HIV/AIDS or the genocide.
- Pray that the people will become educated about HIV/AIDS and begin practicing abstinence, faithfulness and other healthy practices.