

An Hour with Mountain Gorillas, Sunsets on Lake Kivu

A 7-Day Rwanda Itinerary

DURATION

7 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

June – September & December – February

the two dry seasons, with firmer trails for gorilla trekking and clearer views of the Virunga volcanoes; temperatures stay mild year-round (60–77°F / 16–25°C) thanks to the elevation, while March–May and October–November bring heavier rain and muddier trails

FROM

\$3,150 USD / person

for 2 people, incl. gorilla trekking permit, private transfers, guides, hotels & most activities

Rwanda in seven days: Kigali's genocide memorial and a city of art studios and craft markets, a cultural village at the foot of the Virunga volcanoes, a ranger-guided hour face to face with a wild mountain gorilla family, golden monkeys in the bamboo forest, and two nights on Lake Kivu's coffee-growing shoreline — with real lodges, licensed operators, and 2026 prices for every stop.

Day 1

Arrive Kigali — Genocide Memorial & City Tour

Land in the capital and spend the afternoon understanding Rwanda's history and its present, from a somber national memorial to the art studios and markets of a fast-growing city.

Private Airport Transfer — Primate Safaris

~20 minutes · From \$70 USD, private car for 2 (Kigali International Airport to city center)

A government-registered Rwandan tour operator meets every arrival at Kigali International Airport for the short drive into the city center.

Primate Safaris

Kigali Genocide Memorial

~2 hours, self-guided · Free entry (donation-based)

The resting place of more than 250,000 victims of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, with exhibits tracing the history and aftermath — a difficult but essential stop for understanding modern Rwanda, and free to visit.

Kigali City Tour — Inema Art Center & Kimironko Market

~3 hours, guided · \$65 USD/person

An afternoon with a local guide through Inema Art Center's contemporary galleries and studios, then Kimironko Market's stalls of Rwandan coffee, woven baskets and Imigongo geometric art.

Primate Safaris

Overnight — Kigali Serena Hotel

From \$240–320 USD/night, for 2 people

A 5-star hotel in central Kigali with a pool and gardens, a short drive from the airport and the city's main sights.

Kigali Serena Hotel

Day 2

Kigali to Kinigi — Gateway to the Volcanoes

A drive north into the Virunga foothills, with the afternoon spent at a village built by former poachers turned conservationists.

Private Transfer — Primate Safaris, Kigali to Kinigi

~2.5–3 hours · From \$150 USD, private car & guide for 2

The drive climbs steadily north through terraced hillsides toward the Virunga volcano chain, with the twin peaks of Bisoke and Karisimbi visible on clear afternoons.

Primate Safaris

Iby'Iwacu Cultural Village

~2 hours, guided · \$50 USD/person

A village founded by former poachers who now share traditional dance, storytelling, herbal medicine and a mock royal court reenactment — proceeds fund community projects around Volcanoes National Park.

Overnight — Five Volcanoes Boutique Hotel

From \$320–420 USD/night, for 2 people

A stylish hilltop lodge just outside Kinigi with volcano views from every room, a short drive from park headquarters where gorilla treks begin.

Five Volcanoes Boutique Hotel

Day 3

Gorilla Trekking Day

The trip's centerpiece: a ranger-guided trek through bamboo forest and volcanic slopes to spend an hour with a wild mountain gorilla family.

Mountain Gorilla Trekking — Volcanoes National Park

~1–6 hours round-trip depending on the family's location, ranger-guided · \$1,500 USD/person permit

A pre-dawn briefing at park headquarters in Kinigi assigns each group to one of the park's habituated gorilla families, then rangers and trackers lead the climb through bamboo and stinging-nettle forest — the permit (booked through the Rwanda Development Board) includes the park entrance, ranger guide and a full hour with the gorillas once found.

Rwanda Development Board

Overnight — Five Volcanoes Boutique Hotel

From \$320–420 USD/night, for 2 people

Second night at the lodge to rest after the trek, with a spa and volcano-view terrace.

Five Volcanoes Boutique Hotel

Day 4

Golden Monkey Trekking & On to Lake Kivu

A gentler primate trek through bamboo forest before the drive down to Rwanda's coffee-growing lakeshore.

Golden Monkey Trekking — Volcanoes National Park

~2 hours round-trip, ranger-guided · \$100 USD/person permit

An easier morning trek through bamboo forest on the lower slopes of Mount Sabyinyo to watch a troop of endangered golden monkeys — playful, fast-moving and often at eye level in the low bamboo canopy.

Private Transfer — Primate Safaris, Kinigi to Lake Kivu

~2 hours · From \$130 USD, private car for 2

The drive descends from the volcanoes to Rubavu on the shore of Lake Kivu, Africa's sixth-largest lake, passing terraced tea and coffee plantations along the way.

Primate Safaris

Overnight — Lake Kivu Serena Hotel

From \$220–300 USD/night, for 2 people

A lakefront hotel on manicured grounds in Rubavu (Gisenyi), with a private beach and pool looking out over Lake Kivu toward the hills of the DRC.

Lake Kivu Serena Hotel

Day 5

Lake Kivu — Boat Cruise & Coffee

A slower day on the water: a boat out to the lake's islands and an afternoon among the coffee bushes that give this shoreline its reputation.

Lake Kivu Boat Cruise

~2.5 hours, guided · \$45 USD/person

A wooden boat crosses the bay past fishing villages and Napoleon Island, known for its fruit-bat colony, with a swim stop in the lake's warm, bilharzia-free water on the way back.

Coffee Plantation Tour

~2 hours, guided · \$25 USD/person

Rwanda's volcanic, high-altitude soil around Lake Kivu produces some of East Africa's best Arabica — a local cooperative walks visitors from cherry-picking through washing, drying and roasting, ending with a fresh cup on the shore.

Overnight — Lake Kivu Serena Hotel

From \$220–300 USD/night, for 2 people

Second night on the lakeshore, with the evening free for the hotel's beach bar.

Lake Kivu Serena Hotel

Day 6

Return to Kigali

A final drive back to the capital, with the afternoon free for last-minute shopping and a farewell dinner.

Private Transfer — Primate Safaris, Lake Kivu to Kigali

~2.5–3 hours · From \$150 USD, private car for 2

The return drive retraces the tea-and-coffee hills back to Kigali, arriving in time for an afternoon of shopping before the last night in the capital.

Primate Safaris

Caplaki Craft Village

~1.5 hours, self-guided · Free to browse

A cluster of stalls near the city center selling wood carvings, Agaseke peace baskets and Imigongo cow-dung art panels — one of the easiest spots in Kigali to buy gifts direct from the makers.

Overnight — Kigali Serena Hotel

From \$240–320 USD/night, for 2 people

A last night back in the capital before the morning flight home.

Kigali Serena Hotel

Day 7

Departure

Closes the loop on a week that ran from a genocide memorial to an hour spent inches from a silverback, in time for an international flight home.

Private Airport Transfer — Primate Safaris

~20 minutes · From \$70 USD, private car for 2

A final short transfer to Kigali International Airport (KGL) — arrive at least 3 hours before an international departure.

Primate Safaris

Departure — Kigali International Airport (KGL)

Self-guided

A week that ran from a somber city memorial to a village of former poachers to an hour of eye contact with a wild silverback, closing out on the shores of Africa's sixth-largest lake.

Prices and business details researched and current as of 2026; always confirm directly with operators before booking. I-Journey — i-journey.com