

Nyungwe Destination

TOURIST MAP

RWANDA

Nyungwe Destination Tourist Map

Rusizi District

The **Nyungwe National Park** lies within five districts; Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru and Karongi Districts.

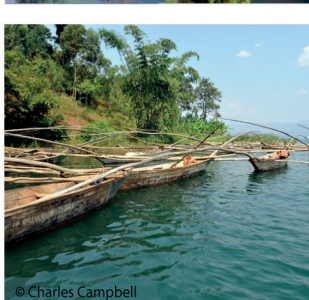
Rusizi, formerly Cyanguu, the capital of the Rusizi district, is located at the southern end of Lake Kivu. It is the closest town and a good base to explore the **Nyungwe National Park**. Rusizi, the seventh largest town in the country, offers flights to and from Kigali from Kameembe airport.

Rusizi River 117 km (73 miles) long. It delineates the southern border of Rwanda with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and, along with Lake Tanganyika; it forms the border between the DRC and Burundi. This natural site offers canoeing and bird watching.

Gihaya and Nkombo islands can be reached by boat and are rich in birdlife; cormorants and pelicans are frequently seen. Look out for the local fishing boat known as 'amato'. Cyanguu port will arrange the excursion for you.

Kameembe fishing Experience offers recreational tourism activities such as fishing and a Lake Kivu island boat tour, cultural dance and Island community based tourism. The site is well located one km from the Rusizi River and 3 kms from the Kameembe city center.

Bugarama Hot Springs, if you have a private vehicle, you can also head to the hot springs on the Burundi border, less than 60km south of Rusizi.



Nyamasheke District

Kirambo Market Place, one of Nyamasheke oldest trade centers. A colorful market located in the heart of Kirambo center, 7 kms from the district office. The market opens twice a week and has remained an important meeting place for the people living there.

Ibigabiro bya Rwabugiri

4 big trees symbolize King Rwabugiri's residence and mark this historic site. Situated behind the Kagano Catholic Church, the site was used by the King and his warriors as resting place returning from wars.

Kayenzi Peninsula, 1 km away from the famous Ijwi Island on the Rwandese Lake Kivu side. The site is easily accessible by boat from Rusizi and offers good birding activities.

Gisakura Tea Estate is an ideal area for bird watching where it's possible to see more than 40 bird varieties in an hour. A troop of about 50 Angolan Colobus monkeys has taken residence on the Tea estate. Hikes in Nyungwe National Park can be arranged from here, if you book in advance with a guide Uwinka Visitor Centre.

Kumbya peninsula, an unspoilt environment and great sanctuary for birds and animals. This site once a Protestant missionary retreat and spiritual base has allowed the 10ha peninsula protection from deforestation and erosion. It's located 90 minutes north of Rusizi on the Lake shore.

Nyungwe National Park

The **Nyungwe National Park** lies within the Albertine Rift Eco-region, is acclaimed for its biodiversity and for being one of Africa's most important conservation sites. The Park covers 1020km² and within this area, boasts a diverse ecosystem from rainforest, bamboo, grassland, swamps, and bog habitats. It protects one of the region's largest and oldest remaining patches of montane rainforest and is home to almost 300 species of birds.

Located south of Lake Kivu on the south-western slopes of the highland region that forms the great divide between the Congo and Nile drainage systems. Mount Bigugu is the highest mountain in the park, reaching an altitude of 2950m, and said to be the most remote source of the Nile. The park receives more than 2000mm of precipitation annually and provides water to some 70% of the country. Infrastructure and facilities as well as tours and trails are being developed to favour tourism in this part of Rwanda that is most certainly worth visiting.

Flora

The diversity of habitats; rainforest, bamboo, grassland, swamps, and bogs, bring a very rich centre of biodiversity to **Nyungwe National Park**. There are more than 240 tree species, 140 orchids and 1068 plant types, such as the giant lobelia. Of these plants 250 are Albertine Rift Endemics. The upper canopy of the forest can reach up to 70 metres in height. In high altitude areas, such as the south-eastern section of the forest, bamboo plants flourish. The density of bamboo makes the area fairly inaccessible. Within the park there are swamp areas with distinct vegetation. The largest marsh is 13km².



Mammals

There are 75 different mammal here such as: Cerval Cat, Golden Cat, Wild Cat, Side-Striped Jackal, Mongooses, Congo Clawless Otter, Genet, Civet, Duiker, Bushbuck, Hyrax, and more. Leopards are still around but unlikely to be seen.

Other Primates

Other than the 13 primate species recorded, there are other very shy, primates such as the small, nocturnal bush-babies, also known as galago, and the tail-less potto.

Primates

With 13 primate species recorded here, Nyungwe has one of the highest diversity of primate species in a single location. Unfortunately, several of these species are endangered.

Some species to be seen are;

The **Blue monkey**, related to the Golden Monkey. The **Vervet monkey** prefer the open woodland areas, **Grey-cheeked mangabey** prefer low altitudes of the forest and the canopy trees. **Dent's Monkey** is discrete and rarely seen by visitors although are fairly common to the Park. **L'Hoest's monkey** is the most commonly seen monkey spotted along the road in troops of 8 to 20. The **Red-tailed monkey** are facing extinction in **Nyungwe National Park**. They have been seen living in low elevation habitats around the tea estate and on the road to Banda.



Blue Monkey © RDB/Rwanda Tourism



Angola Pied Colobus © RDB/Rwanda Tourism

Other species

Some of the other species within the park will comprise hundreds of butterflies, including 40 endemics to Nyungwe Forest, a small number of snake species, due to the altitude but several colourful lizards and five species of chameleon.



Euphaedra Nymphalidae © RDB/Rwanda Tourism

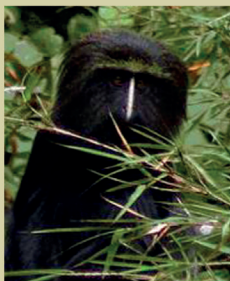
Chimpanzee, about 500 chimpanzees live here including a small community in the nearby Cyamudongo Forest. It is common to hear chimpanzees before seeing them. Listen for a single loud noise followed by several growing louder from deep within the forest.

400 Angola Colobus are known to inhabit **Nyungwe National Park** making them the largest group recorded in the world. Restricted to the Albertine Rift Eco-system, this primate is easily recognizable from any other due to its contrasting black fur and face surrounded by snow-white locks of hair on its face, shoulders and tail tip.

Owl-faced monkey, An Albertine Rift Endemic primate with a white stripe running from his nose to his lip that makes it look owl-like. A rarely seen secretive monkey living in the Bamboo forest in the south of the park.



Chimpanzee © RDB/Rwanda Tourism



Owl-Faced monkey © Wildlife Conservation Society

CYAMUDONGO FOREST

Is an isolated area annexed from the **Nyungwe National Park** but it remains a part of the park.

The vegetation much more dense, with fewer clearings than **Nyungwe National Park**. Cyamudongo covers an area of 4km², and is situated between Gisakura and Rusizi, close to the town of Nyakabuye, 20km from Bugarama.

Several primates inhabit the forest including Dent's Mona Monkey, L'Hoest monkey and a troop of more than 25 chimpanzees live in this patch of montane forest.

The forest still shelters a few rare species that are not to be found in **Nyungwe National Park**, such as a new purple orchid *Polystachia Bruechertiae*, which was discovered in 2008.

Guided hikes can be booked at **Uwinka Visitor Information Centre** in the **Nyungwe National Park**.



© USAID Nyungwe Nziza



Chimpanzee © RDB/Rwanda Tourism



Diachaetanthus sp. Melastomataceae © USAID Nyungwe Nziza

Nyungwe

Rwanda is a landlocked country situated in central Africa. Also known as "the land of a thousand hills." Rwanda has five volcanoes, twenty-three lakes and numerous rivers, some forming the source of the River Nile. The country lies 75 miles South of the equator in the Tropic of Capricorn, 880 miles "as the crow flies" west of the Indian Ocean and 1,450 miles east of the Atlantic Ocean – literally in the heart of Africa. Rwanda with a land area of 26,338 km², is bordered by Uganda to the North, Tanzania to the East, Burundi to the South, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the West.

Intact mid-elevation forests (1600-2000M) like Nyungwe are rare in Africa, but they are important habitat for many species. Nyungwe is one of the last places in Africa to maintain this type of crucial forest. At over 1000 km², Nyungwe is Africa's largest protected mountain rainforest. Nyungwe is the source of Africa's great rivers. Rain that falls on the east side feeds the Nile and on the west runs to the Congo. The Congo-Nile Divide is a mountain range that runs north to south through Rwanda.



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Hiking Nyungwe National Park

It's possible to visit for the day from Rusizi or Huye, but well worth spending more time especially if you are interested in primates or birds, as there are several species to see.

There are 3 Tourist Information Centres in the park, managed by RDB. They will arrange your hike and provide a guide for you. Hikes in the Cyamudongo Forest can be arranged here. There are also good walking options at Kitabi and Gisakura Reception Centres. These centres are open from 7am to 5pm daily.

The **Uwinka Visitor Center** is a great place to begin your exploration of the Park. The Center, funded by USAID, includes a reception desk showing trails in the park, level of difficulty and approximate time needed to walk each trail. The Center also includes an Interpretation Center with detailed panels summarizing the history, local culture, rainfall, flora and fauna of the Park.

There are a number of waterfalls and viewing points worth exploring and several camping sites within the park. A nice campsite at Uwinka are a good base to explore the forest. There is also an orchid garden, and picnicking huts.

The forest walks here are excellent, lasting from 1-8 hours and a 3-4 day overnight hike. New trails and camping sites are planned as part of the development project, as are new ways of both observing and enjoying the Park. While Cultural tourism is being developed near the edge of the Park.



© USAID Nyungwe Nziza

Banda Village,

A cultural destination accessible via a mountain road or downhill hike from the end of the Canopy Walk. The village offers local food tasting, nature hikes, basket weaving and the possibility of seeing a group of Mayebe chimps. Adventurous visitors can try the village's own banana beer, witness a traditional wedding ceremony and learn about traditional medicine. Local crafts can be purchased and an overnight camp is available for a memorable stay.

Birds and Birding

Home to 310 species of bird, **Nyungwe National Park** is the most important ornithological site in Rwanda with 27 Albertine Rift endemics are to be found in here, the highest concentration found in any single park in Africa.

It can be quite difficult spotting birds in **Nyungwe Forest National Park**, as the forest can be very dense and several bird species prefer to stay on the canopy than within the forest. Guides provided for hikes can be helpful in locating and identifying the birds.

These areas are reported as being particularly good viewing sites;

- The main road close to the campsite is a great place to watch a wide variety of birds within the dense forest
- The Gisakura Tea Estate
- Kamiranzovu Marsh/Swamp
- Bigugu Mountain
- Karamba area close to Gisakura
- Canopy walkway is also a very good bird-watching areas you have a good view of the canopy



Blue-headed Sunbird © RDB/Rwanda Tourism



Barred tailed Trogon © RDB/Rwanda Tourism



Ross's turaco © RDB/Rwanda Tourism

Canopy walkway

This walkway is constructed on the **Igishigishigi Trail** and leaves 1km from Uwinka. It leads to a 200m trail, suspended between giant trees. It offers a magnificent view of the upper canopy and is also a very good bird-watching area.

Karamba Trail

4km, 3hours. This magnificent circular trail is one of the easiest trails and one of the better routes for bird-watching. The trail leads to a view point where you may encounter several primates. Along the trail look for the white Satyrium orchid and giant tree ferns.

Muzimu Trail

5,2km, 3,5hours. Located northeast of the park, this trail offers a particularly beautiful panoramic view over the park and Lake Kivu. This scrub type, low lying vegetation offers a variety of wildflowers and birdlife.

Ngabwe Trail

4,7km, 3hours. The trail starts 3km past Kitabi entrance gate. It's a circular route near Mt Ngabwe which passes through a variety of vegetation types. A camping and picnic site will welcome you at the highest point on the trail. L'Hoest's, silver and colobus monkeys frequent this route.

Kamiranzovu Marsh Trail

6km, 3hours. Starting 12km from Uwinka and 6km from Gisakura, on a steep downhill through the forest until reaching the park's largest wetland. This low-lying marshy area is rich in orchids and swamp birds such as Grauer's rush warbler.



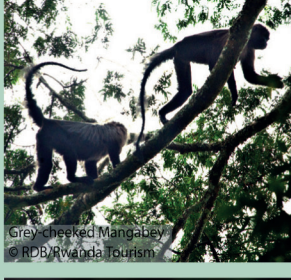
© Charles Campbell



Giant Tree Ferns © USAID Nyungwe Nziza



Double-collared Sunbird © RDB/Rwanda Tourism



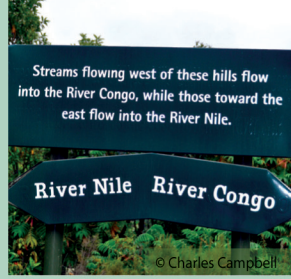
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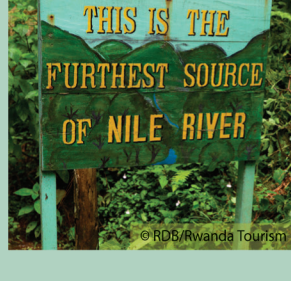
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Streams flowing west of these hills flow into the River Congo, while those toward the east flow into the River Nile.



© Charles Campbell



River Nile River Congo

Bigugu Trail

6,7km, 6hours. A rather difficult and steep trail will take you to the highest point of the park, Mt Bigugu at 2950m. It starts 4km from Uwinka following the Butare road. Along the trail you are likely to see the Red-collared Mountain Babbler and great varieties of wildflowers.

The Isumo/Waterfall Trail

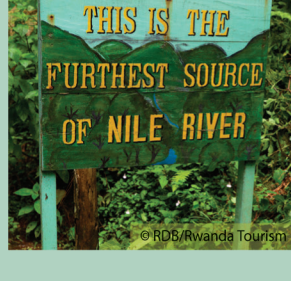
10,6km, 4hours. This round trip starts from Gisakura Guest House, routes through the tea plantation, into the forest and eventually to a small but pretty waterfall with good views of the forests canopy. Many monkeys and birds can be seen such as the Rwenzori turaco and yellow-eyes black flycatcher.

Congo-Nile divide Trail

42,2km, 3/4 days. This is the only multiday trail in the Nyungwe National Park. It will take three or four days to hike, depending on your fitness level. The trail passes through almost all the habitats in the National Park and is an ideal opportunity to experience the magnificent forest views and the diversity of birds, plant and animal life found here. It is recommended to start in the north and hike in a southerly direction. The trail starts near Musarara, 3hours north of Gisakura along a dirt road and ends on the main Rusizi-Huye road, 7km west of Uwinka Visitor Centre

Source of the Nile walk

4 hours each way. An easy walk. A 4 hour walk from the Gisovu Tea Factory, near Karongi. The Tea estate is not in the park and is a 3-4 hour drive from Uwinka. Arrange with Uwinka for a guide to meet you at Gisovu Tea Estate. Within 4 hours walk you will reach what has been identified as the 'true' Source of the Nile.



THIS IS THE FURTHEST SOURCE OF NILE RIVER