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meaning of travel

Tour Notes

Burundi – The Heart of Africa

Tour Duration – 8 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Adventure ●●●○○ | Culture ●●●●● | History ●●○○○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

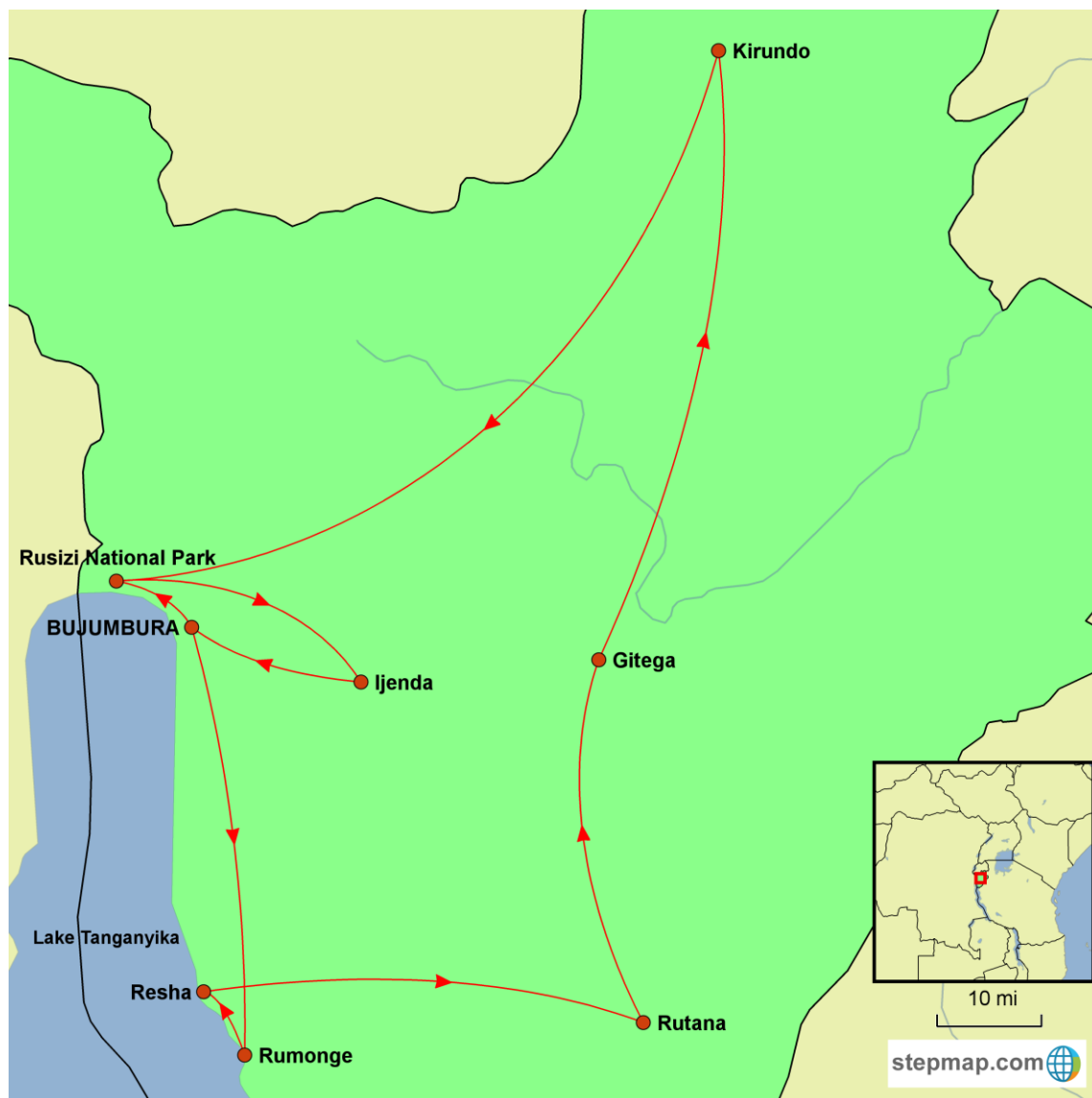
- ✓ Explore the vibrant capital Bujumbura
- ✓ Search for wildlife in Rusizi National Park
- ✓ Cruise on Lake Tanganyika
- ✓ Witness a performance from the world-famous Burundian drummers





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Tour Map



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Comfortable hotels, private facilities
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: 12
Start Point: Bujumbura – you can arrive any time on day 1
End Point: Bujumbura – late afternoon / evening departure on day 8
Transport: 4WD and private buses
Country Visited: Burundi



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Burundi – The Heart of Africa

A small Central African state, bordered by Congo DRC, Rwanda and Tanzania, Burundi has in the past been overshadowed by tumultuous and tragic events beyond its frontiers. However, as an antidote to the safari-chic fantasy of upmarket east African game lodges Burundi is a refreshing reminder that the real wealth of the continent lies in its people, their culture, their resourcefulness and their energy. This is Africa.

Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Bujumbura

Arrive in Bujumbura and transfer to hotel accommodation. The rest of the day is left at leisure to relax after your flight. Overnight at Club du Lac Tanganyika or similar. No meals nor guided arrangements included today.

Bujumbura

Burundi's capital lies at the north-eastern corner of Lake Tanganyika and, with an estimated population of 800,000, is Burundi's largest city and its administrative, communications, and economic centre. It is also Burundi's main port and ships most of the country's chief export, coffee, as well as cotton, skins, and tin ore. Bujumbura grew from a small village after it became a military post in German East Africa in 1889. After World War I it was made the administrative centre of the Belgian League of Nations mandate of Ruanda-Urundi. The city's name was changed from Usumbura to Bujumbura when Burundi became independent in 1962. The city centre is a colonial town with a large market, the national stadium, a large mosque, and the cathedral for the Archdiocese of Bujumbura.

Day 2: Bujumbura

Today, Rusizi National Park's wetlands form an ideal habitat for hippos, water-adapted Sitatunga antelope, and a wide variety of birds. Taking a boat trip on the Rusizi River and Lake Tanganyika, there's time to visit a nearby fishing village. Later, we explore a little-known and intriguing African capital. Learn about pre- and post-colonial history, and some of the challenges Burundi has faced. Later, we tour the suburb of Kinama, gaining insight into daily life. Overnight at Club du Lac Tanganyika or similar. (BL)

Rusizi National Park

Not far from Bujumbura itself, Rusizi National Park is centred on the Rusizi River and as such is home to a number of wetland species including Hippos and Sitatunga. An area of the park consists of the channels and islands of the Rusizi delta as it flows into Lake Tanganyika. Set aside as a protected area of 9000 hectares in 1980, today the park consists of less than 6000 hectares, due to population pressures in adjacent areas.



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Day 3: Bujumbura – Teza Tea Plantations- Kibira Nature Walk

Today, we drive to Teza to see the tea plantations and observe one of the main products the country exports and Burundian tea production. Later we take a nature walk around Kibira National Park. In the afternoon, we drive back to Bujumbura. Overnight at Club du Lac Tanganyika or similar. (BL)

Day 4: Ijenda - Rumonge – Resha

Our first stop is 'La Pierre de Livingstone et Stanley', a stone monument claiming to mark the site where explorer Dr. David Livingstone met journalist Henry Morton Stanley, on 25th November 1871. At Rumonge there's a first-hand opportunity to explore the increasingly contentious production of palm oil, before continuing to Resha for the night. Overnight at Tanganyika Blue Bay or similar. (BL)

Day 5: Resha - Lake Tanganyika – Nyakuza – Karera – Gitega

We continue to visit the southernmost source of the Nile in Rutovu near Rutana, only discovered in 1937. Continue to Visit the 'Gorge of the Germans' at Nyakazu before heading to the 'Chutes de la Karera', an impressive series of waterfalls said locally to have healing powers. Afterward, drive to the town of Gitega. Overnight at Hotel Tropitel or similar. (BL)

Lake Tanganyika

Part of the Rift Valley lake system, Lake Tanganyika is the longest freshwater lake in the world (420 miles) and extends into Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Numerous rivers flow into the lake, including the Rusizi, and in turn, it flows outwards into the Lukuga which forms part of the Congo Basin. It is home to around 400 different species of fish including many cichlid species which are found only here. It was first 'discovered' by the explorers Burton and Speke in 1858 during their search for the source of the Nile, and saw action during World War I when British and German forces engaged in gunboat battles on the lake.

Day 6: Gitega – Kirundo

The country's largest city, since January 2019 Gitega is again Burundi's official capital. We visit the National Museum, a rather down-at-heel institution that nonetheless houses the country's largest historical and ethnographic collection – in one room... However, museums and political administration are not Gitega's headline acts. That billing rests with the world-famous Gitega Drummers whose performance on the royal field of Gishora is a sight not to be missed. Later, we transfer to Kirundo for the night. In the evening, we will visit the Intore Warrior Dancers for a show. During the royal times, the Intore warriors defended the King and paraded in dance before the delighted people when returning from victory. The dancer wears the skin of a leopard and an elaborate headdress, bells on their ankles, and a necklace of ivory. Overnight at Rama Hotel or similar. (BL)

Day 7: Kirundo - Bujumbura

Today it's an early start for a sunrise trip by dugout canoe on Le Lac aux Oiseaux in Lake Rwihinda National Reserve. After a picnic lunch, we drive back to Bujumbura for an overnight at Club du Lac Tanganyika. (BL)

Day 8: Bujumbura - Airport - Departure from Burundi

After breakfast, drive to the handcrafts market "Chez Natalie" to buy last-minute souvenirs for family and friends back home. Relax at the beach enjoy lunch then after, transfer to the airport for onward or homeward flights at the end of our Burundi tour. (BL)



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Tour Inclusions / Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers
All accommodation
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary
Drum fee
Bottled mineral water in vehicle

Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes
Travel Insurance
Visas
Drinks
Tips (Discretionary)
Items of personal nature

Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At the time of writing the FCDO advise against all but essential travel to Burundi, and against all travel to some parts of the country. It is likely travel warnings will remain in place for some time to come, and we are only able to accept a booking on the basis that you are aware this is the case and confirm that you are still happy to travel irrespective of the current FCDO advice. Full details of the advice can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/burundi>

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before



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the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

On this tour you can expect to stay in small but clean and comfortable accommodation. With a few exceptions you can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom and when necessary air-conditioning will be provided. In general you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drinks

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch and Dinner £8-£10

Drinks

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer (Imported) £3

Water £ 1

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is common practise in Africa. If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. For our group tour, a reasonable amount would be around \$30-40 for the guide and around \$25 for the driver.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: We recommend that you bring cash as ATM machines are not that reliable and do not always accept international cards

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Cards are not widely accepted outside of expensive restaurants and lodges

Local Currency: Burundi franc



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Recommended Currency for Exchange: US dollar, followed by the Euro. Please note that high denominations of dollars such as \$100 and \$50 notes attract better rates of exchange.

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

At the time of writing British, US and Australian nationals require a visa for a tourist visit to Burundi. For further details please visit the applicable website shown below

British Nationals - www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

US Nationals - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Australian Nationals - www.smartraveller.gov.au/

Other nationals should check the latest requirements with the authorities in their home country, or with the destination's nearest embassy or consulate.

Should you require any documentation to support a visa application, such as a letter of invitation, upon request this will be provided by Undiscovered Destinations after receipt of your balance payment.

As it is the travellers' responsibility to ensure that they meet all entry requirements it is essential that you check the rules and any other conditions at the time of booking and again when making your balance payment. In addition, we would strongly advise that you make a final check around two weeks before your arrival. This is important as requirements can change at short notice. Undiscovered Destinations, when possible, will provide guidance about entry rules, but in the first instance please contact the relevant authorities, including the applicable embassy or consulate for assistance.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country.



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We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Africa, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. Anti-malaria medication is also required and the use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended. A Yellow Fever Certificate is compulsory if travelling from [countries with risk](#) of yellow fever transmission.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

The wet seasons are roughly from February to the end of April, and -September and October. It is possible to travel in the rainy season although journeys can sometimes be more difficult.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy. At times you will be at altitude, and so a fleece / light jacket will be appreciated.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have.

Footwear

Lightweight trail boots or shoes with grip are recommended for walking safaris, plus trainers or sandals for general travelling.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.





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Electric Supply & Plugs

Generally electrical supply is 240V/50 Hz. British three-pin plugs or European style two pin plugs are mainly used. We recommend that you bring a multi-adapter.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated 27 November 2023.

