



RWANDA

Rwanda is located just south of the equator and is one of the smallest countries in central Africa. It is surrounded by Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Tanzania. Rwanda's countryside consists of mountains, rolling hills and lush grasslands and is known as the 'Switzerland of Africa'.



Quick Facts...

	Rwanda	UK
Area (sq miles)	10,169	93,788
Population	8 million	60 million
% Urban	18.5%	89.6%
% Rural	81.5%	10.4%
Life expectancy	45	79

Background

There are three main people groups living in Rwanda: the Twa, Hutus and Tutsis. In the 19th century, the first European explorers visited Rwanda and Belgium ran the country until independence in 1962. Tensions between the Hutus and Tutsis have been a problem for many years and when the Hutu president's plane was shot down in 1994, a terrible wave of violence swept the country with over 800,000 people being killed. Since then Rwanda has been trying to rebuild itself and bring peace. Many people now see themselves as Rwandans and not just either Hutu or Tutsi.

Comparing with the UK

Rwanda is roughly the same size as Wales and has a small population. However, Rwanda is Africa's most densely populated country - even more so than the UK. 800,000 people live in the capital, Kigali, about the same size as Birmingham. London has a population of over 7 million!

Climate Facts...

	Rwanda	UK
Average temp in coldest/hottest months	19-21°C	4-17°C
Average annual rainfall	1000mm	1200mm

Natural wonders

Karisimbi Volcano is the highest point in Rwanda at 4,507 metres.

Nyungwe Forest is the largest remaining single tract of montane forest anywhere in East or Central Africa.

Lake Kivu, on the DRC border, is the largest lake in Rwanda and is known as an exploding lake due to the lake waters interaction with a volcano!

Poverty

In Rwanda over 200 children out of every 1,000 born do not reach the age of 5.

60% of people live on less than 50p a day.

Rwanda has one of the highest proportions of orphans in the world and thousands of children live on city streets.

Most Rwandans live in rural areas and grow their own food to survive. Land is in short supply and an increasing population makes the problem worse.

Culture

Football is very popular in Rwanda, people keenly follow it by attending the matches or by listening on the radio.

Mancala is a board game often played by Rwandans with 48 dried peas and a specially made board.

Rwandan food is usually made with locally grown ingredients, such as sweet potatoes, beans, corn, peas, millet and fruit.

Rural Rwandans rarely eat meat, as cattle are so important to them.

Stringed instruments such as the eight-stringed *lulunga* (similar to a harp) often accompany singing and dancing in Rwanda.

The national language is Kinyarwanda, but most Rwandans speak either French or English as well.

English	Kinyarwanda
Hello	Muraho
What's your name?	Witwande?
Thank you	Murakoze
How are you?	Amakuru?
I am fine	Meza

Send a Cow in Rwanda

Many children in Rwanda were left orphaned by the violence in 1994. Send a Cow brings such orphans together into self-help groups, to give them friends and practical support. As well as giving livestock and training, we also teach these vulnerable youngsters the kind of life lessons their parents would have passed on had they lived.



Did you know?

A new flag was unveiled in December 2001 to promote national unity and reconciliation.

Rwanda is home to the highly endangered species of mountain gorillas. They have been a major attraction for tourists particularly after the film '*Gorillas in the Mist*' in 1988 - because of their importance to Rwanda they now have their own bodyguards!

The first major regional soccer tournament since the violence in 1994 was held in Rwanda in 1997 - the Rwandan team won it!

In the region of Rusumo, farmers used to use cow dung to decorate the walls of their buildings, which they sculpted and painted in bold geometric designs.