



Hello Friends!

It's with great joy and excitement that I send along this letter formally welcoming The Friendship Amongst Women to Rwanda from January 23-February 2, 2015 (with a Gorilla Excursion February 2-3, 2015). Together, you will have the unique opportunity to experience Rwanda. You will enjoy its vibrant culture and beautiful biodiversity, and gain an intimate introduction to the communities and individuals that will help you learn about this country.

In this packet you'll find all the information you need to make sure you are adequately prepared for your trip, including:

- ✓ Last Minute Details
- ✓ Airport and Travel Process
- ✓ What to Bring and Packing List
- ✓ Group Process
- ✓ Important In-Country Details

Thank you and on behalf of AltruVistas, we look forward to meeting you in Kigali very soon!

Warmly,
Malia Everette

LAST MINUTE DETAILS

1. Make sure you have a valid passport and keep a copy of the first page it in your luggage.
2. Please make sure all your general inoculations are up to date. Call your doctor if you are not sure.
3. Please carefully review the enclosed materials
4. Your final payment and liability form are due.
5. Call Malia Everette at 510-290-0573 if you have any personal questions!

VISA & PASSPORT

Please be sure you have a current passport. If not, you will not be allowed to leave the United States. Passports should be valid for a period extending at least 6 months beyond your tour departure date. If you have not sent us your passport information, please do so immediately.

LANGUAGE

Kinyarwanda, French, and English are the official languages of Rwanda. However, Kinyarwanda is the most widely spoken. French and English speakers are mostly found in urban areas such as the capital, Kigali. There are also a handful of other languages, similar to those of other East African regions.

PAYMENT AND INCLUSIONS

The price of this tour is \$???, and includes double room accommodations, program activities, transportation to and from all activities, 2 meals daily, qualified trip leaders and guides, and base tips during meals.



Extra beverages, individual tips (to hotel staff and driver), personal expenses, and optional activities are not included in the cost of this trip.

We recommend that you bring \$100 for general tips, another \$25 a day for meals and beverages, and and of course your spending money for gifts.

CUSTOMS & IMMIGRATION

Upon arrival into Kigali, you will be met by our representative (please look for the Friendship Amongst Women/Altruvistas sign) who will assist you with arrival formalities and transfer to your hotel. If you arrive early please meet us at 3pm for hotel check in.

ARRIVAL INFORMATION

Relax after your flight before meeting your fellow travelers at our hotel for our Orientation Meeting, facilitated by our Altruvistas coordinator and in-country guide. Following the meeting, the group will enjoy a welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

WHAT TO BRING

In addition to what you would normally pack for a journey. The following suggestions are meant to

help you better prepare for this trip. Please do not over pack as space in our vehicles will be limited!

A MONEY BELT IS RECOMMENDED

We recommend you keep your money, your passport and plane tickets in a money belt for safety and peace of mind. Keep a minimal amount in pockets for minute-to-minute needs, and only access your belt in private. While crime levels vary depending on location, it's recommended to exercise a high degree of caution overall in Rwanda to avoid mugging and petty theft.

CLOTHING

Rwanda is a very conservative society. You will find that most people dress modestly, especially women, so short shorts/skirts and tight revealing tops that are normal for hot weather in America would cause more attention. Also, light colored, cotton clothing will help keep you comfortable in the warm climate.

If you plan to participate in the gorilla trekking, be sure to bring sturdy clothing as there are many stinging nettles. Your shirt can be light-weight, as it is still quite warm but it should be long-sleeved. Thick gloves will also help to protect your hands while hiking. Hiking boots with knee-high socks would be the footwear of choice, but if you really can't bring hiking boots, running shoes will work as well. Since it is a rainforest, bring a lightweight, hooded rain jacket.

Tip: You may want to wear used clothing that can be "donated" to locals with limited means. For example, you could pack one T-shirt for every day

of the trip and deliberately leave them behind in your hotel room. Wearing and leaving behind extra pairs of shoes is another helpful option. But make sure to still leave a tip, your "donation" is an added bonus!

PACKING LIST (SUGGESTIONS ONLY!)

- ✓ Air tickets and ID.
- ✓ Currency (cash, and/or international bank issued travelers' checks, ATM and Credit Cards)
- ✓ Money belt to carry money, plane ticket and passport
- ✓ Hand sanitizer
- ✓ Notebook and pens - for recording visits, information, etc.
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Any batteries you need for cameras, watch, etc.
- ✓ Contact lenses kit, glasses (and prescription)
- ✓ Any medication you use, packaged in original containers
- ✓ Tissues, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrush/toothpaste
- ✓ Sun-hat, visor, sunglasses and sunscreen
- ✓ Water bottle (so you can fill it as you choose)
- ✓ Day pack
- ✓ Mini-travel alarm clock
- ✓ Basic First Aid Kit with Pepto Bismol and Kaopectate or Immodium AD
- ✓ Bathing suit (you can use the hotel's towels)
- ✓ Earplugs (in case you are a light sleeper and your roommate snores)
- ✓ Rain gear (waterproof jacket and hat) or folding umbrella (just in case of a cold front)
- ✓ Clothing: underwear and swimming gear; one pair of cotton trousers; one pair of shorts of decent length; one cotton shirt; summer dresses; a few T-shirts or short-sleeved cotton shirts; light sweater or jacket for air conditioning, one pair of sneakers or shoes plus socks; sandals, a set of more formal "smart casual" clothes for meetings. Remember a light weight jacket.



BAGGAGE

Travel as lightly as possible. You, and the group as a whole, will have a much easier time if you keep your baggage to a minimum. Most US airlines, these days, allow a maximum total weight of 50 pounds per bag. Please check with your air carrier as any additional luggage may be subject to charge by the airline. If you know that you are going to be overweight, please budget extra money.

GROUP PROCESS

There are many advantages to traveling with a group. First of all, as a group you will have access to people and organizations that you would not meet otherwise. Secondly, you will benefit from the questions and input of your fellow travelers, and have the opportunity to discuss issues with people from various backgrounds and experiences. Finally, upon your return home, you will have a network of people to communicate with, as they are the ones to have shared in this unique travel experience with you. It is also very important to remember that throughout your visit you will be viewed as a representative of both the group, your respective organizations or communities. Therefore, your

words and actions can reflect on the group. Please remember that we are guests of the country and approach each new situation with an open mind.

For reasons of safety or for the interest of the group, there will also be times when the group leaders will advise against a particular action. Please respect their requests. Remember that we plan to repeat these trips again in the future. We will try to have periodic group meetings and discussions throughout the trip to help process the experience. Remember you have agreed to our code of conduct.

PUNCTUALITY & FLEXIBILITY

On past trips people have wandered off to take a photograph or speak to someone, making the whole group wait for them. People were late in the morning, missed breakfast, then stated that they were hungry and needed to get something mid-morning. Please try to be at the meeting place on time, and if you are going somewhere, make sure that the group leader knows where you are. Paying attention to your punctuality will ensure that the group isn't late and/or you won't be inadvertently left behind.

Traveling to Rwanda will require a high degree of patience and flexibility on everyone's part. The itinerary is subject to change due to the busy schedules of persons we plan to meet. Thus, events may have an air of spontaneity and things may proceed in ways which you are not accustomed to. Please remember that all of this creates a logistical challenge for the organizers of



this delegation, and that some things are beyond our control. Be open also for magic to happen. We will go over the group process together in Kigali at our Orientation meeting. The rule of thumb is as a group member, you will be fully participating all the time. If you don't feel up to it, our only request is that you communicate with your guide so we know and can manage the group's flow and make sure you are well.

TOURISM AND GIFT GIVING

One of the negative side effects of tourism is the creation of an economic state dependent on tourists. Giving money or gifts sporadically to individuals on the street does not help to solve their economic problems; it is often a short-term solution to a long-term problem. For example, in a case where you give a child on the street money or gum, you may then find yourself immediately surrounded by others asking for a similar thing. It is nearly impossible to fulfill each person's need. Also, if you do give money or gifts randomly, a cycle of dependency is created that can escalate into further economic inequalities and social problems like prostitution and thievery. However, there are ways you can be helpful and supportive. We

strongly encourage you to give donations to institutions and organizations, instead of individuals. We believe that these institutions will distribute things equally. If you are interested in giving money or gifts to a specific place, please speak to your trip leader. In past trips, groups I have worked with have given gifts to the people who helped to arrange our program, such as the drivers and area-specific guides. We suggest that you give gifts that you bring with you to your trip leader, who can then arrange a way to distribute them equally.

DONATIONS

The heads of organizations, community leaders, etc. with whom we speak are all volunteering their time. We give every speaker a small honorarium and build in their fees into the group package. Please refrain from handing out money or donations on the street (especially to children), as this creates a bad precedent and further corrupts relations between locals and tourists. If you'd like to bring donations, please feel free to call for ideas, but here are a few.

GIFT SUGGESTIONS

You may also want to give personal gifts to the friends you make. Some good gift ideas are:

- ✓ Soccer balls (there are fair trade versions) but one of my favorite projects is the One World Futbol Project www.oneworldfutbol.com
- ✓ Baseballs, gloves and balls, games, jump ropes, building blocks, jacks, crayons and flashlight key-rings for small children
- ✓ Small solar calculators and hair accessories are great for teens
- ✓ Posters or calendars from your community, workplace, or organization
- ✓ Pens, pencils and writing pads
- ✓ Tapes, books, or magazines



- ✓ Mementos from your group, school, union, state or community such as postcards, T-shirts, baseball caps, etc.

COMMON PHRASES

ENGLISH – FRENCH – KINYARWANDA

Hello - Salut/bonjour/Muraho

Good morning - Bonjour - Muraho moze

How are you? - Ca va? - Miliwe

I am fine. - Ca va bien. - Ni meza. (formal) Ni byiza. (casual)

Thank you (very much) - Merci (bien) - Murakoze (cyane)

What is your name? - Quel est votre nom? - Witwande?

My name is... - Je m'appelle ... - Nitwa...

Nice to meet you - Enchanté - Nishimiya
Kukumenya

Enjoy your meal - Bon appétit - Muryoherwe

Goodbye - Au revoir - Murabeho

Yes - Ou - Yego

No - Non - Oya

Foreigner - Etranger - Muzungu

Water - Eau - Amazi

Hot - Chaud - Gishush

Cold - Froid - Ikonje

Where are you? - Vous êtes où / tu es où - Uri he?

Here - Ici - Hano

Let's go - On y va - Tugende

CULTURAL TIPS

A gesture deemed rude is to point with your finger or hand as Rwandans point with their chin/mouth. It is also rude to make eye contact with a superior elder because distance indicates relationship status. For example, friends of the same sex often hold hands. On that note, public contact between members of





opposite sex is inappropriate. Greetings are very important. It is rude not to return a greeting or start a conversation without a one.

Rwandans are very reserved and private. Loud public confrontations and obvious displays of emotion are frowned upon. Rwandans generally do not eat or drink in public unless in a restaurant or bar. Smoking is not against the law, but many people would be disturbed and may complain. Also, because of the civil war and genocide in the past, many are still sensitive to it. Because of this, asking Rwandans about their ethnic origins and politics is impolite.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

1. Hotel

Upon check-in the Hotel you will be issued a hotel card. Breakfast will be served at the hotel and you can eat anytime in the morning at your leisure.

2. Program

You will find the program very full. If you feel tired or don't feel well, just let the tour leader or guide know

so that the group doesn't wait for you and we can take care of you.

3. Currencies

The currency of Rwanda is the Rwandan Franc. One Rwandan Franc is equivalent to approximately 0.0015 US Dollars. One US dollar is equivalent to approximately 677.967 Rwandan Franc. Check the latest exchange rates prior to departure for a more precise value.

4. Tipping

Tipping in Rwanda is not customary most of the time, but it is appreciated. But when tipping, it is best done in the local currency of Rwandan Franc. You can tip in USD, but it is difficult to exchange and the currency rate is bad. Do not tip in foreign coins.

5. Safety

Rwanda is generally safe for tourists and they are usually welcomed warmly. The exception would be certain places along the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. Gorilla trekking near the Democratic Republic of the Congo is considered safe because of continuous Rwandan army presence. There is still some political instability and outbreaks of violence, so be sure to stay away from large crowds and demonstrations for your safety. Keep up with safety advisory warnings as well.

Petty crime is not uncommon, so take care with your valuables. Be aware, as petty theft occurs most in broad daylight. Use common sense and take precautions, especially at night. Try not to be

out walking past dusk. The same precautions that one might take in any large populated city should also be exercised in Rwanda.

6. Electrical Current

The two-pin plug of Type C is most used, but the three-pin plug of type j is also used. The voltage is generally 230V-240V/50Hz. Most adapter kits have this option.

7. Climate

Rwanda has an annual temperature of around 24°C (75°F). It has two rainy seasons: the middle of September to December and from the end of January to May.

8. Immunizations

We recommend making an appointment with your doctor and to confirm your inoculations are current. To have the most benefits, see your health-care provider 4-6 weeks before the trip to allow for effective vaccination if needed. Be sure you are up to date with routine vaccines which include; influenza, chickenpox, polio, measles/mumps/rubella, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus, hepatitis A & B and rabies. The government of Rwanda requires proof of yellow fever vaccination for all travelers, except infants. Other than for yellow fever, CDC recommends vaccines for Hepatitis A&B, Typhoid, Malaria, and Rabies.

Taking care of yourself is probably the best protection against getting sick. Part of this is getting enough rest. We hope that you get a reasonable amount of sleep before your trip so you do not get a tired start. Also note that you do not have to attend

all planned events. If you are exhausted, you can stay in bed and rest for an afternoon

For more information on travel inoculations and precautions, contact the **Center for Disease Control's (CDC)** traveler's hotline at 404-332-4559 web site at www.cdc.gov

9. Communications

Most hotels of mid-range and higher offer Internet connection. There are also many Internet cafés with hourly fees in urban areas. Many restaurants and cafés offer free Wi-Fi as well. You can also use Internet on your own device using a dongle, which can be purchased in Kigali or, by using hotspots. MTN hotspots are widespread and you can access them using your mobile phone credit if you have bought an MTN SIM card.

SIM cards are widely available from street vendors and shops. You can even get them at Kigali International Airport. Make sure to check whether your local SIM can make international calls and text messages. Mobile handsets are also cheap and available from street vendors and shops as well. To make an international call you need to dial 000 before the country code. The international dialing code for Rwanda is +250 and there are no area dialing codes.

10. Contact Information

AltruVistas

Malia Everette, Founder, 510-290-0573

Rosalyn Acosta, Operations Dir., 415-680-3474

Embassy/Consulate

U.S. Embassy Rwanda

2657 Avenue de la Gendarmerie (Kacyiru)
P.O. Box 28 Kigali, Rwanda
Phone: (250) 252 596 400
Consular E-mail: ConsularKigali@state.gov
<http://rwanda.usembassy.gov/>

Please note that your final itinerary with hotels contact numbers will be sent out about 3 weeks before departure!

11. Resources

Articles/Websites:

- Women Use Fair Trade to Improve Economic Development Across Africa
<http://www.empowermagazine.com/global-women-use-fair-trade-to-improve-economic-development-across-africa/>
- In Rwanda, Looking to Art to Soothe
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/01/travel/in-rwanda-looking-to-art-to-soothe.html?_r=0
- Rwanda Rebuilds After Genocide with Focus on Community Health Care
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/rwanda-rebuilds-genocide-focus-community-health-care/>
- As in all African countries, Rwanda has a rich tradition of celebrations involving music and dance
<http://www.our-africa.org/rwanda/people-culture>

Film:

- **Hotel Rwanda**
Based on real life events in Rwanda during the spring of 1994, hotelier Paul Rusesabagina, who attempts to rescue his fellow citizens from the ravages of the Rwandan Genocide. Sophie Okonedo and Nick Nolte also appear in principal roles. The film documents Rusesabagina's acts



to save the lives of his family and more than a thousand other refugees, by granting them shelter in the besieged Hôtel des Mille Collines. Hotel Rwanda explores genocide, political corruption, and the repercussions of violence.

- **Ghosts of Rwanda**

PBS FRONTLINE special two-hour documentary to mark the 10th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide -- a state-sponsored massacre in which some 800,000 Rwandans were methodically hunted down and murdered by Hutu extremists as the U.S. and international community refused to intervene -- examines the social, political, and diplomatic failures that converged to enable the genocide to occur.

- **Rwandan Women Help Heal Their Nation**

After genocide ripped their nation apart in the 1990s, the women of Rwanda have led the healing process and have helped usher in a much-needed era of stability. By depicting the multifaceted efforts of women activists to build a sustainable peace between the majority Hutus and minority Tutsis, this Wide Angle documentary explores the challenges facing Rwanda.

Books:

- **We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories From Rwanda** By Philip Gourevitch

An unforgettable firsthand account of a people's response to genocide and what it tells us about humanity. This debut book chronicles what has happened in Rwanda and neighboring states since 1994, when the Rwandan government called on everyone in the Hutu majority to murder everyone in the Tutsi minority. Though the killing was low-tech--largely by machete--it was carried out at shocking speed: some 800,000 people were exterminated in a hundred days.

- **Gorillas in the Mist** by Dr. Dian Fossey

The riveting account of Dian Fossey's thirteen years in a remote African rain forest with the greatest of the great apes. Fossey's extraordinary efforts to ensure the future of the rain forest and its remaining mountain gorillas are captured in her own words and in candid photographs of this fascinating endangered species. As only she could, Fossey combined her personal adventure story with groundbreaking scientific reporting in an unforgettable portrait of one of our closest primate relatives.

- **Rwanda: History and Hope** by Margee M. Ensign and William E. Bertrand

Fifteen years removed from a mass genocide that resulted in the deaths of nearly one million people, Rwanda today presents a model for hope, justice, innovation and human development. In fact, Rwanda is now a leader in

achieving economic, political and social progress in this beleaguered continent. A new model of governance has emerged in this poor, African country. This model, which draws on century's old Rwandan customs called Ubudehe and IMIHIGO, is inclusive, transparent, empowers the poor, and holds leaders accountable for improving the well being of people in their districts.