Rwanda's history
For many centuries, the region of Central Africa now called Rwanda has been home to a well-defined group of people with a distinct culture. Colonized first by Germany in the late 1800’s and then by Belgium after World War I, Rwanda became an independent country in 1962. In 1994, the culmination of Rwanda’s four-year civil war dominated the world’s headlines; hundreds of thousands of people were killed. This horrific genocide is still what most people will think of when they hear the word ‘Rwanda’. To the surprise of first-time visitors, Rwanda is now one of the most peaceful and most secure countries in Africa, with a growing economy based on agriculture (especially coffee and tea), tourism, and a modest mining industry. It has also embraced information and communication technology (ICT) as the foundation of a future knowledge-based economy.

Language
The local language spoken in Rwanda is Kinyarwanda. French is widespread. English is spoken by many people who are in contact with visitors.

Visas for Rwanda
Nationals of Australia, Germany, Israel, New Zealand, Republic of South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States of America will be issued a single-entry, 30-day tourist visa upon entry at the airport visa for $30 without prior application. Citizens of other countries must submit an on-line application for a visa before traveling. Always check with www.migration.gov.rw or your local Rwandan embassy for the latest updates about visas.

Health and healthcare
It’s vital that you always check the latest recommendations with your own doctor or travel clinic before you travel. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required for entry into Rwanda. Malaria is widespread throughout Rwanda. So malaria precautions are generally essential, which means taking anti-malarial medicine and using a mosquito net when sleeping. The main hospital close to the CMU-R campus in the Kacyiru sector of Kigali is King Faisal Hospital; emergency telephone: +250 252588888.

Time zone
Rwanda’s time zone is Central Africa Time (CAT), which is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+2). Being on near the equator, there is no daylight savings time in Rwanda.

Electricity
220/230 volts and 50 hertz, with both continental European and UK plug types being common.

Weather and climate
Due to its altitude, Rwanda presents visitors throughout the year with a pleasant tropical highland climate; temperatures in Kigali range consistently from 18 to 30 Celsius Degrees (65F to 85F) with moderate humidity. The average daily temperature near Lake Kivu, at an altitude of 1,463 m (4,800 feet)
is 22.8 °C (73 °F). Being just slightly south of the equator, the sun rises every day at approximately 6AM and sets every day at approximately 6PM. There are two rainy seasons, but the rain is often brief and the sky is clear much of the time, even in the rainy seasons. The long rainy season lasts from about March to May, when the rain is heavy and more persistent; October to November is a shorter rainy season.

**Currency in Rwanda**
Rwanda’s currency is the Rwandan franc (RWF). Currently (Apr 2017), 1 USD = 838 RWF. The latest official exchange rate can be found by typing ‘usd to rwf’ in Google, but one can get better rates in private foreign exchange (forex) bureaus. The best rates for purchasing RWFs using USDs are given for $100 bills dated 2006 and later. Older $100 bills and bills of smaller denominations may be exchanged, but at a much less favorable rate. RWFs are available at ATMs throughout Kigali.

**Telephone service**
Rwanda’s International Dialing Code is +250. When making local calls within Rwanda, the international code is replaced with a leading 0. When calling from Rwanda, you need to dial the International Dialing Code for the country you are calling preceded by a ‘+’ (e.g., +1 for the United States), followed by the local area code and phone number. Before leaving the US, ensure the roaming feature has been activated on your mobile phone, as once in Rwanda it often does not work automatically. A simple phone can be purchased for approximately 15,000 RWF. A phone that works in Europe will work in Rwanda. The phone companies in Rwanda are MTN (www.mtn.co.rw), Airtel (www.africa.airrotel.com/rwanda), and Tigo (www.tigo.co.rw). A local GSM SIM card can be purchased from the office of one of these companies for approximately 800 RWF. A passport is required to purchase a SIM card. Phone time is prepaid.

Phone cards in various denominations can be purchased from street vendors. See the phone company websites for information about rates and data plans. It is very cheap to call the United States and Canada (and some other countries) from Rwanda using a local SIM card. Calling to Rwanda is much more expensive.

**Internet & Wireless connectivity**
Rwanda offers a sophisticated internet network and Wireless (Wi-Fi) is readily available at CMU Africa, [https://www.cmu.edu/computing/network/wireless/guests1.html](https://www.cmu.edu/computing/network/wireless/guests1.html) and at the Serena Hotel. Most of the hotels will offer Wi-Fi connectivity.

**Food and Water**
The diet for most local Rwandese people consists mainly of sweet potatoes, peas, corn, beans, millet and fresh fruit, including avocados, mangos, papayas, and bananas. There are a variety of restaurants in Kigali serving international cuisine. All types of food are available in the grocery stores. Visitors should only drink bottled water (including brushing teeth). Avoid salads outside of major hotels. A good list of restaurants in and be found at [http://eatinginkigali.com/](http://eatinginkigali.com/)

*For food ordering and delivery:* Food can be ordered from a number of restaurants with a variety of cuisines through Jumiafood Rwanda ([https://food.jumia.rw/](https://food.jumia.rw/)). Food can be ordered from the web site or by sending email to info@hellofood.rw or calling 0722553338/0788553338.
Transportation in Kigali
Blue taxis at the airport are plentiful and will take you to CMU or downtown for 10-15,000 RWF. A Regular car taxi will cost you 3-5,000 RWF for a trip from downtown to surrounding neighborhoods, 4,000 RWF for a local downtown trip. Expect those prices to be increased by 1-2,000 at night.

We do have CMU-R transportation in case you need to use it for CMU-R related appointments (call Alphonse: 0788522412).

Link to an updated map of Kigali: http://www.livinginkigali.com/map-of-kigali/
This Facebook page can also be resourceful https://www.facebook.com/groups/ExpatsinRwanda/

Shopping for Rwandan souvenirs & Tourism links
Azizi Life and Inema Arts are both located at Heaven Restaurant in Kiyovu. Caplaki is the Kigali’s largest souvenir-specific market and is located in Kiyovu- Rugunga. The following tour agents offer various packages for a primate experience in Rwanda. Songa Africa: www.songafrica.com/email: info@songafrica.com and Primates Safaris: www.primatesafaris.info/email: info@primatesafaris.info

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMU Africa Administrative Coordinator (Mika/Farida)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMU Africa Associate Director for Operations (Ines)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMU Africa Director of Business Strategy and Operations (Crystal)</td>
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<td>CMU Africa Director (Bruce)</td>
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<td>Hospital Emergency Contact (King Faisal Hospital)</td>
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