

Kibuye



Kibuye, also called Karongi, is one of the most beautiful areas of Rwanda. A peaceful, relaxing town on the shores of Lake Kivu, surrounded by lush volcanic islands and a famous colony of fruit bats on Napoleon Island.

We suggest you stop off at Chutes Ndaba about half-an-hour before you reach Kibuye. Key it into your GPS as there isn't a sign, just a pitstop by the side of the road. Walk to the edge of the cliff and look out across an incredible valley with a waterfall plummeting down. The story is that Ndaba was a

honey collector who got too greedy. He saw a beehive halfway down the waterfall and tried to reach it by tying a rope and walking down, but he slipped and fell, washed away by the waterfall which is now named after him. It stands as a moral warning not to reach further than your means. Local children often surround sightseers, singing and playing music on homemade instruments. It's customary to give them a 1,000 franc note to share, but don't feel pressured to giving more.

We recommend staying at Rwiza Village, a set of wooden huts looking out across the lake. You can hire a boat around the islands for 30,000 francs per hour. It takes one hour to get to Amahoro Island (Peace Island) or two hours to visit the bat colony on Napoleon Island. Wear good shoes and take water. Amahoro is a gentle stroll, but Napoleon is a bit of a hike up a steep hill. We also recommend you take snacks as the restaurant at



Rwiza closes early and it's not advisable to risk the road out after dark. Also avoid Fridays as there is a cattle market next to the lodge. People come from DRC to sell livestock and it gets very noisy. If you're looking for a slightly more budget stop, try Hotel Bethany a little way along the bay. They have cheaper rooms up the hill and more expensive ones on the waterfront.

The ride out to Rwiza takes about 3.5-4 hours. The main highway is well paved, but watch out for speed cameras as they are everywhere. The final few yards up to Rwiza Village is a bit of an off-road obstacle course and some experience is required. The road to Bethany is also a dirt road but much better kept.

People regularly swim in Lake Kivu, but as with all lakes in Rwanda there is a risk of bilharzia so if you do swim in the lake take praziquantel (biltricide) before you return home. This medication is available at most pharmacies.