

Bugesera



Bugesera Lodge is a charming weekend getaway about half an hour outside Kigali. The rooms are traditional round huts on the outside with modern double beds and bathrooms on the inside. Situated in the heart of the wetlands, it's a great place to go birdwatching and there is a half-kilometre floating bridge made entirely out of leaves which you can cross in the dry seasons. If you want to cross the bridge, it's best to set off early in the morning as the wetlands get very humid once the sun is fully up. You pay 100 francs each at the other side of the bridge, which goes towards upkeep. It's a nice activity to do before breakfast.

Also in the local area are two genocide memorials at Nyamata and Ntarama. Nyamata means 'place of milk.' During 1994, 10,000 people sought sanctuary in the local church, only to be murdered there. Today, Nyamata church and nearby Ntarama church remain as public memorial sites, housing the remains of around 50,000 people including the body of Roman Catholic Missionary Antonia Locatelli, who was murdered in 1992 for reporting an earlier massacre of Tutsi.



Be advised that touring these memorials can be very emotional. There is no fee for entering, but please make a donation to the donation box inside and be mindful when asking questions as many of the guides live locally and witnessed the events of 1994.

As well as historical sites, Nyamata is home to La Palisse Hotel which boasts one of the largest swimming pools in Rwanda. It is a nice place to relax, have a drink and a swim, though it can get very busy during school holidays.

The main road to Bugesera and Nyamata is paved, but the roads to the memorial sites and to Bugesera Lodge are mud tracks that are not always well maintained. Be prepared for a little light off-roading.