

Date: March 16th, 2020

Place: Kampala

Dear cycling enthusiast,

In light of the recent developments of the Corona virus outbreak and during what is already called a nuclear winter in the tourism industry, Red Dirt Uganda would like to explain the current situation in Uganda and Rwanda and how we are dealing with it.

It may sound weird, but Uganda seems to be the perfect destination for your cycling holiday in these interesting times. There are no confirmed cases of the Corona virus so travelling is very safe. And due to several travel restrictions and the low season, you will have a lot of peace and quiet. Good chance you will have the whole lodge, a family of gorilla's or even a whole national park for yourself.

That is if you are not a national of one of the [category 1 countries](#). If you are traveling from one of these countries and had planned a tour for either March or April, we advise you to reschedule your tour, since we expect that the travel restrictions won't change in the next two months. If your tour is booked later, we ask you to wait for a few weeks to see what's happening.

Worried about your wallet? Relax! Rescheduling your March or April tour is hassle-free and comes without any charge. And please know that for all other tours we have a 100% free rescheduling policy if you let us know at least one month before departure. Once made a down payment it will always move with you to your next tour, even if it's a different one. No questions asked!

Please check this list for a summary overview of the current situation in Uganda and Rwanda. You will find more detailed information on the next pages:

- Uganda has no confirmed cases of people infected with COVID-19. However, Rwanda has 5 confirmed cases.
- Travelling to Uganda and Rwanda has been restricted. Both countries have implemented a policy that travellers with COVID-19 symptoms, travelling from countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19, will be taken into quarantine in a health facility.
- Travellers to Uganda coming from one of the category 1 countries (Italy, San Marino, Iran, South Korea, France, China, Germany, Spain, Belgium, USA, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Austria and Malaysia) will have to go into a 14-day self-quarantine.
- Uganda Wildlife Authority and Rwanda Development Board (both responsible for gorilla trekking permits and national park entry) have declared that purchased permits can be rescheduled without any costs.

Current situation in Uganda

The Ugandan Health Ministry has released a [press statement](#) on March 11th, 2020 announcing that Uganda has no confirmed case of COVID-19. So far 26 persons who presented with signs and symptoms similar to that of COVID-19 have been tested. All tested negative.

To prevent the virus from spreading Ugandan government has implied travelling restrictions:

1. People travelling from the following category 1 countries (Italy, San Marino, Iran, South Korea, France, China, Germany, Spain, Belgium, USA, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Austria and Malaysia) will be subjected to self-quarantine for 14 days on arrival to Uganda even if they do not exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
2. For the following category 2 countries (Finland, Philippines, Indonesia and Pakistan) the Ministry of Health will observe the travellers very closely and advise any restrictions in the coming week.
3. The rest of the countries (category 3) will undergo the routine screening upon arrival.

The Ugandan Tourism Board has [recommended](#) on March 4th, 2020 that intended travellers to Uganda from affected countries maintain their bookings but delay their travel until a later date when the disease is globally contained.

The Uganda Wildlife Authority has released the following press statement on March 10th, 2020 announcing that it has reviewed its current reservation, booking and cancellation policies as follows:

1. Any request for cancellation will follow the existing cancellation policy/procedure
2. All late reschedules will not be charged for clients whose travels are affected by corona virus as long as the request is made before the tracking date. However no more than two reschedules will be allowed for any one activity.
3. All permits should be fully paid for at least one week to tracking date
4. All discounted permits can be similarly rescheduled without any fees
5. The above provisions will be in effect until March 31st, 2021, unless otherwise changed after a review process.

Current situation in Rwanda

Currently Rwanda has 5 confirmed cases of COVID-19 infected persons. The Ministry of Health has released the following [statement](#) on March 14th, 2020:

1. Schools, Universities and places of worship will be closed. Large gatherings (weddings & sports events) will be postponed and the number of attendees at burials need to be minimized.
2. Businesses and restaurant continue to operate, but adequate distance between customers must be maintained (at least 1 meter)
3. Unnecessary movement should be avoided and public transport must not be overcrowded.

And the following [statement](#) regarding Point of Entry policy on March 8th, 2020:

1. All travellers arriving in Rwanda will be screened.
2. Travellers presenting one of the COVID-19 symptoms and coming from countries with confirmed cases of the virus will be taken into isolation and tested. If tested positive travellers will be send to Treatment Centre. If tested negative a 14-day self-quarantine will be implemented.
3. Any asymptomatic traveller coming from countries with confirmed COVID-19 cases will be recorded in a register and electronic tools for continued daily monitoring for 14 days

Rwanda Development Board and Visit Rwanda have released a [statement](#) on March 9th, 2020:

1. Removal of the 7-day notice period prior to visit date for tourist to postpone their park permits
2. Removal of the 30-day requirement prior to visit date for tour operators to have submitted the final payment for reserved permits.
3. Tourists who wish to postpone their park permits because of flight cancelations or travel ban or being infected with COVID-19 have up to 2 years to postpone their bookings at no extra cost.
4. Tourists who purchased low season discounted permits for mountain gorilla trekking are free to postpone and consume them anytime within a period of 2 years
5. MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Events) tourists who purchased discounted permits for mountain gorilla trekking are free to postpone and consume them anytime within a period of 2 years.
6. This offer is available for 6 months and visits to the national parks or any other attractions following such permit modifications, must be conducted once and within two years.

Red Dirt local measurement

- Hand sanitizers will be available at the Red Dirt office and in all tour vehicles
- Red Dirt staff will be required to wash and sanitize their hands whenever arriving at the office
- Red Dirt staff is required to limit physical contact, such as handshakes and hugs.
- Red Dirt staff with one or more symptoms of COVID-19 such as runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever and/or difficulty breathing will be required to inform Red Dirt management and will not be allowed to work from the office or go on tour.
- All staff will be asked to work remotely from home as much as possible. Only essential working from the office will be accepted. Google docs & sheets, Slack and Whatsapp will be used for communication and file keeping.
- Red Dirt staff will be required to inform management on any persons, either staff members, clients or third parties that have COVID-19 symptoms.