

# La Palisse Gashora Hotel – Rwanda’s Hidden Treasure

Describing La Palisse Gashora Hotel as being in the middle of nowhere is correct and appropriate. There are no places within walking distance and the setting confirms that this is a place well off the beaten track. The deafening silence that one encounters is only broken by the occasional chirping and singing of the birds.

La Palisse is located in the Gashora sector of Bugesera district within the Northern Province of Rwanda. This area is Savannah country which is unlike most parts of the country that have a topography that comprises mostly of hills and valleys.



The flat plains in this area are perhaps the best explanation for the popularity of bicycles within local communities. There is no other part of the country there are as many bicycles as you will find here. The young men operating motor taxis at the Bugesera Taxi Park appear haughty and aggressive when compared to their counterparts in other parts of the country such as Kigali. This could be a result of having to do their business in an area with such a high density of bicycles. Unlike other parts of Rwanda, there is clearly no stigma associated with women riding bicycles around here. It is quite common to come across a woman cycling her way to or from the farm with a baby on her back and some produce secured on to the bicycle carrier.

First time visitors are often left feeling disillusioned as they marvel at the expansive recreation lawns and fields of La Palisse Gashora. Even as the five star establishments seek to sell their high quality ambiance to clients, La Palisse gives its own abundant and eco-friendly space. This makes it the perfect place for unwinding, relaxing and enjoying your inner peace. It is a great place to read a book, meditate, do some soul searching and much more.

Those arriving late in the afternoon are often greeted by a subdued welcome. You would be forgiven if you thought that you have dropped in on a Catholic mission in some remote part of the world. As you continue into the area, you begin to see groups of visitors in different parts of the leafy lawns as they go about their business. Some will be offloading camping gear from their 4 wheel drive vehicles while those who had arrived earlier will be engaged in all sorts of activities.



In most cases, visitors seem to prefer minding their own business and you should be prepared to stay by yourself should you decide to go alone. If you are using the bus, La Palisse is about an hour's ride from Kigali.

Once you get to the reception, you should be prepared to do some walking as you are shown around the rooms and cottages. These are built in the traditional dorm design and are roofed with a rugged thatch of grass. Snow white oil paint coats most of the outer walls and the distance between cottages is quite significant. It is actually difficult to see the neighboring cottages though you will catch a glimpse through the canopy of trees. It is quite obvious that the cottages are meant to ensure that occupants enjoy their exclusive space and peace.

The rugged exterior of the dorms can be quite deceptive as the interior is very comfortable. For just \$60, you get hot water, land line telephone, big comfortable beds that have functional mosquito nets, internet hotspot and a clean airy and well lit ambiance. You can also opt to take up a semidetached double which will cost you \$100. Either option is great for campers, honeymooners and adventure seekers.



Other facilities available include a pool, where a professional life guard tends to it so as to ensure it remains well chlorinated and everyone takes a bath before getting into the pool. There is also a sports center where you can do some aerobics or workout at the gym. The lawns also have a standard sized football pitch and several designated play areas for children.

You will almost always find a conference, party, retreat, workshop, picnic, family reunion or some other group function happening whenever you visit.

There is a large population of hippos and crocodiles in the lake but that does not seem to scare away the boats of fishermen who take to the lake each evening.

Your room fee caters for accommodation and a buffet breakfast. Lunch and dinner are a separate charge that will cost about 6000 Rwandan Francs.

There is great service though the language skills of many staff members are below expectations. Making simple inquiries about basics such as bathrooms can be quite challenging. If and when La Palisse Gashora decides to employ a staff that is linguistically competent, the hotel will be a destination that is almost perfect.

Date: 2012-12-31

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-la-palisse-hotel-in-rwanda-off-the-beaten-track-article2009>