



When I decide to get on a plane and head to Africa for the first ever international trip, anxieties were running high. However, as soon as my feet hit the ground in Kigali, Rwanda, I was welcomed with such excitement, hospitality, kindness, and delicious food. There's a way in which I was able to learn more about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi that I would have never gotten to experience from America. I stayed in the homes of survivors, I walked where killings happened, and visited mass graves in remembrance. Rwanda and its people gave me the ability to witness first-hand the powerful work of grace and forgiveness. It is a trip that still stays with me to this day, and one that I am eternally grateful I was able to experience.

Meghan McNamara



Pamela & Carleigh  
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I'm unsure as to comment on 'highlights' of our trip to Rwanda in 2013. The entire trip was one highlight after another—it really was a life changing experience.

I fell in love with Africa and in particular—with Rwanda. The people, the generosity of spirit, the strength to progress in their story, the beauty of the green hills, the joyous and culturally rich dance and tradition, the clean roads and neighborhoods, the sincere faith.

I was able to visit Rwanda with my 15 year old daughter and another friend. We stayed in the homes of new friends and shared stories and meals. The conversations we had around the table changed the courses of our lives. My high school age daughter was inspired to push herself harder in her own studies and level up in course work after interacting with her Rwandan peers. Her current course of study in college—International Relations was set into motion while visiting the American Embassy in Kigali.



But, by far, the biggest gift of Rwanda was the sort of pilgrimage we did through various memorials. We were able to visit the mass grave of Immaculee's brother and we took flowers to the open grave at the Kigali memorial. We visited landmarks of Immaculee's story of surviving the Genocide of the Tutsi people of Rwanda including her husband's grave.

Thankfully, Rwanda is not just a story of genocide. It is also a story of reconciliation and progress. We visited a school full of children with high hopes and dreams. We visited churches, attended weddings and dinners, and festivals, businesses, industries, coffee shops and even had a wilderness adventure. The friendships I made, the conversations we had, the sites we visited are treasures I will have for the rest of my days.