

Culture and Customs of Rwanda

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by

JULIUS O. ADEKUNLE

*Culture and Customs of Africa
Topic Books, Series Editor*



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著者:Adekunle, Julius O.

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Rwanda has been in the news for the genocide of 1994 and its aftermath, but there is another side to this African country. This volume exposes Western readers to the fuller picture of Rwanda. Early European travellers attested to Rwanda's beauty, describing it variously as "the Switzerland of Africa" and "the Pearl of Africa." Rwanda has also been referred to as "the Land of a Thousand Hills" and "the Land of Gorillas." The spectacular volcanoes, mountains, and natural resources are significant assets. The nation has been dominated by two colonial powers, the Germans and Belgians. In spite of these political upheavals and acts of ethnic violence, Rwanda remains a country with rich culture and customs. Readers will learn that, despite the country's reputation for conflict, living together in harmony has been a part of Rwandan society, with its few ethnic groups, and traditional values supported a culture of peace. An overviewed is given of the traditionally pastoral and agricultural society. The chapter on religion includes discussions ranging from polytheism to Christianity. Other chapters cover the strong family and women's roles, the arts and oral cultures, celebrations, food, and dress.

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