



Turning Pages

Rebero Edition



George Baguma

“

A book is a gift you can open again and again.”

Garrison Keillor

Turning Pages

Rebero Edition



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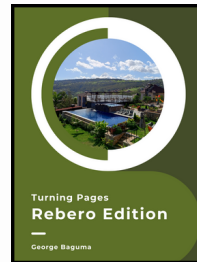
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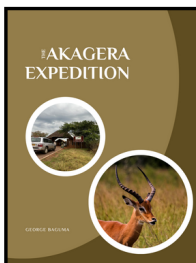
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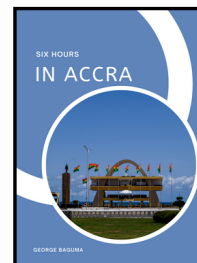
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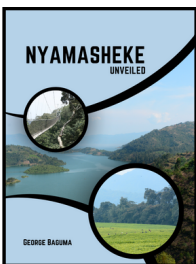
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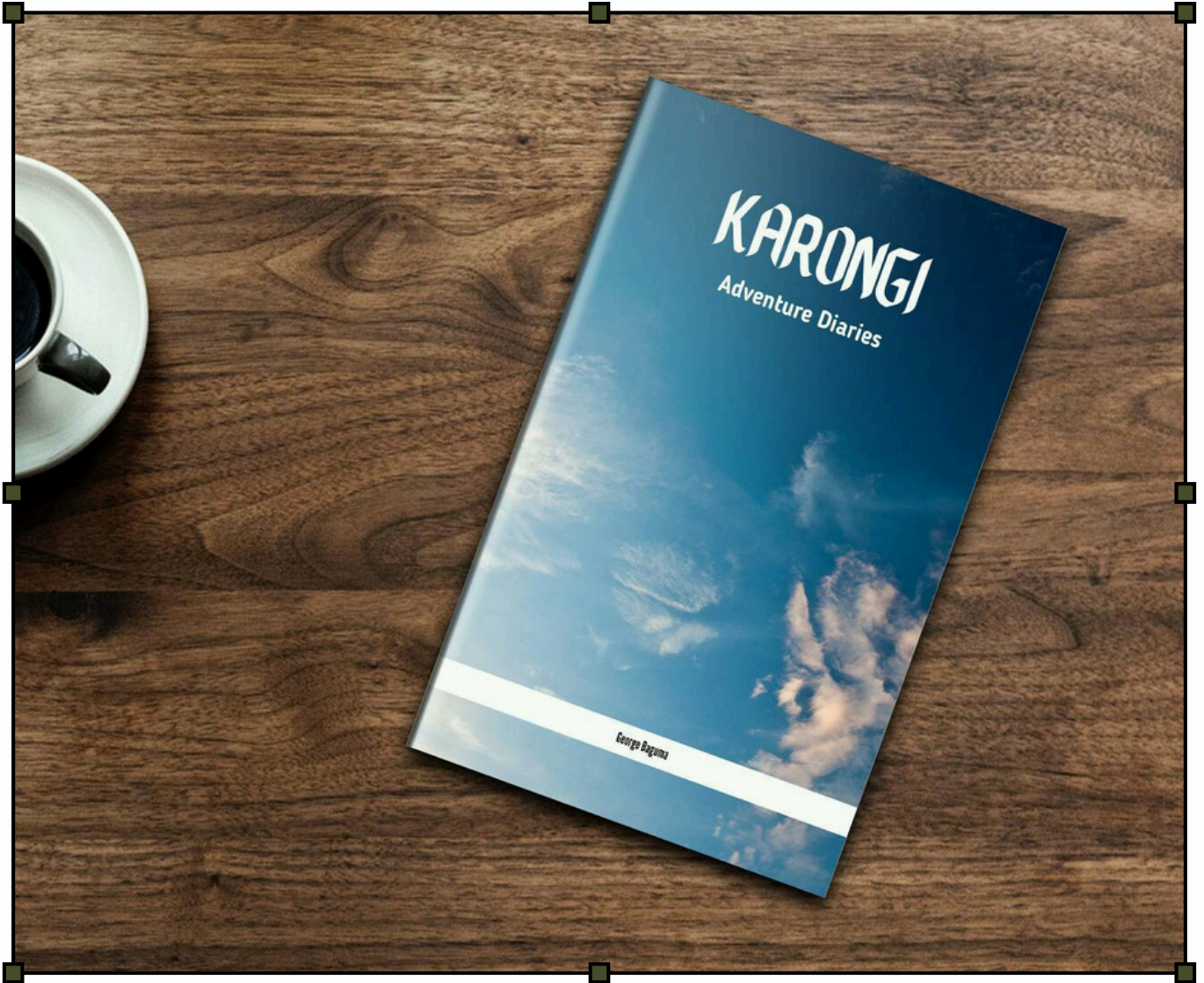
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Turning Pages: El Vista Edition

TURNING PAGES

BACKGROUND



Since I ventured into travel writing seven years ago, I have visited different destinations in Africa and documented my experiences, observations and encounters. In the process, I published numerous short stories on different electronic media outlets. Under the umbrella of Exposure Publishers, I am currently conducting a series of book club sessions dubbed *Turning Pages*. The project is designed to cultivate the culture of reading while promoting tourism. In partnership with different stakeholders, I have organized 75 book club sessions in Rwanda, Uga-



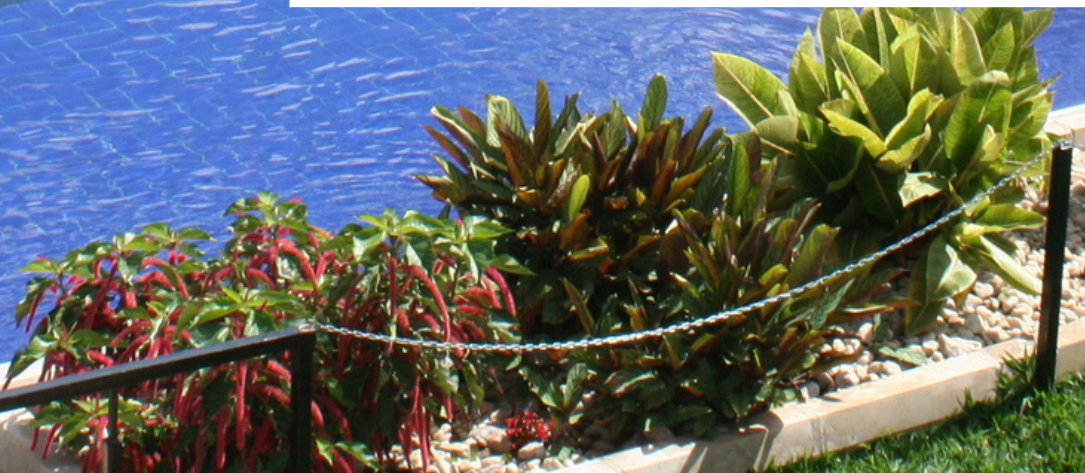
nda, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Togo and Ghana.

All the books used in this initiative are sourced from my growing collection of travel chronicles, dating back to 2016. Apart from promoting literacy and tourism, *Turning Pages* is providing impactful visibility for the benefit of local businesses.

Turning Pages book club sessions bring together culturally diverse readers from all walks of life. Each session commences with a brief preview of the featured book, followed by an engaging roundtable discussion that brews broader viewpoints. The books are given to the participants free of charge, courtesy of Exposure Publishers and its reliable partners.

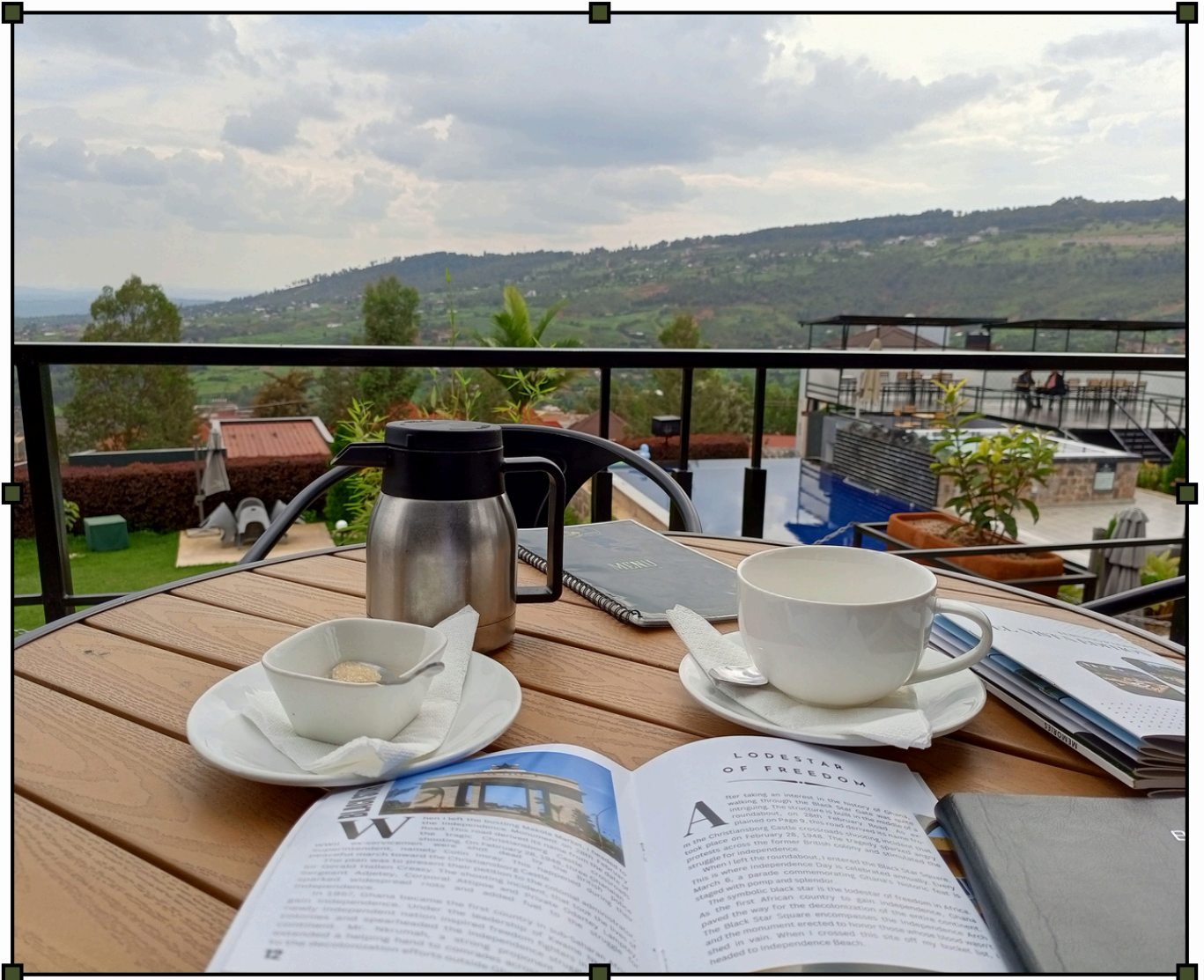
Book clubs serve as strong pillars of intellectual and social enrichment. As members share their thoughts and insights, they engage in critical thinking and in-depth analysis. Furthermore, they forge strong bonds and expand their networks.

As our community of readers grows gradually, our editorial line is arousing their thirst for exploration. The result is the emergence of a brood of global citizens united by their shared travel enthusiasm. By turning the pages of this publication, you have joined the community. Welcome aboard.




REBERO EDITION

INTRODUCTION



Unlike the last two editions, this one was 100 percent virtual. Yes, I chaired the meetings from Rebero Resort, but none of the twelve participants was physically present. At the end of the day, the experiment produced desirable results. There are pros and cons to engaging in virtual discussions as opposed to in-person gatherings. The biggest advantage of the former is the flexibility to involve readers regardless of their geographical locations. However, nothing beats the roundtable discourse experienced in traditional meet-ups. Either way, the



purpose was served.

Rebero Resort is quite serene. The tranquility and peace of mind experienced here are seldom found in the commercial hubs of Kigali's magnitude. The resort is recommended for those who prefer quiet suburbs without compromising proximity to the city center.

To ensure the privacy of the esteemed guests, the cottages are completely secluded. Some of the units have their own parking garages. Each one of these cozy nests is truly a home away from home.

For residents of Kigali, Rebero Resort's biggest draw card is its fine dining experiences. During the day, its infinity swimming pool and jacuzzi offer a blissful and rejuvenating treat.

Taking care of our physical and mental health should be at the top of our list of priorities. The wellness facilities found at Rebero Resort are designed to help us do just that.

As we delved into the discussions that led to the publication of this booklet, I savored my favorite aromatic beverages while soaking up the view of Nyabarongo River and the landscape stretching all the way to Bugesera. That was a sight to behold.

SESSION I

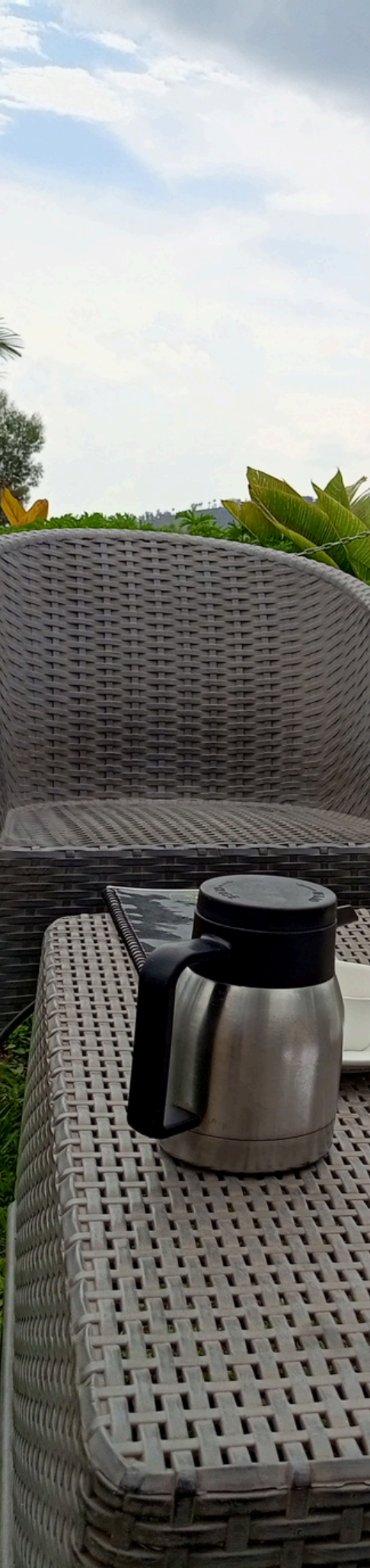
THE AKAGERA EXPEDITION



We kicked off the new edition by dissecting a book titled *The Akagera Expedition*. This is a detailed account of what transpired during my most memorable trip to Akagera National Park. Akagera is one of four national parks found in Rwanda and the only Savannah protected area in the country.

After our customary introductions, we navigated the pages of exploration and immersed ourselves in epic adventure. Through the power of imagination, we toured the vast wildlife habitat without lea-

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ving our chairs.

Five participants had been reading my chronicles, on different platforms, for years. The rest were random invitees I connected with on LinkedIn. Although all of them had read the book, we spent the first twenty minutes or so reviewing the material before the commencement of the discussions.

Akagera is the most popular national park in Rwanda among domestic tourists. As expected, all the Rwandan participants had been there before. After sharing their own experiences in the home of the Big Five, they gave me a message to convey to Royal Balloon Rwanda, one of the three businesses that sponsored my tour. While expressing their gratitude for the company's flexibility and new rates for domestic tourists, they requested a more pocket-friendly offer. "Consider the message delivered." I assured them.

Responding to queries from foreign participants who had never visited Rwanda, we provided general information about the destination and shared relevant links when necessary. Similarly, we learned one or two things about their own countries. This was a great opportunity to interact with readers and digest their feedback. Their input is highly appreciated.



SESSION II

SIX HOURS IN ACCRA



This session involved a Rwandan student, a Kenyan digital marketer and a Ghanaian tour operator. Later in the evening, I had an extra session with another Ghanaian who wasn't available during the group call. Since the book used in the said session features the capital of Ghana, I found it befitting to invite people who know the destination better than I do.

Six Hours in Accra uncovers key events in the aftermath of WWI and the ensuing momentum in decolonization efforts across Africa. In addition, the book showcases modern Accra as a vibrant metropolis.

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The half-day tour of Accra was flagged off at the Kwame Nkrumah Interchange. From the interchange, I dropped by Makola Market before proceeding to Black Star Square. Then I savored Ghanaian food at Labadi Beach.

After lunch, I headed to a neighborhood known as Tudu. While in the hood, I interacted with future soccer stars and gave them words of encouragement. Between walking under the scorching sun and playing soccer on a dusty street, I traced the genesis of the spark that ignited Africa's independence struggle and the rebirth of Pan-Africanism.

It is impossible to tour Accra's major tourist attractions in six hours. I chose to visit the city on Sunday because traffic flows faster on the day of the Lord. Unfortunately, I made it to the Kwame Nkrumah Water Park when the caretaker had gone to church, leaving the gate locked. The Osu Castle was also closed, and so was the Kwame Nkrumah Water Park. Despite the disappointments caused by temporary closures, I made the most of my limited time in Accra.

During the session, we expounded on the historical significance of the selected sites and got a better understanding of the stories behind them.

SESSION III

NYAMASHEKE UNVEILED



There was a time during the Covid-induced travel restrictions when I found myself stuck in Nyamasheke District. Since I was allowed to move within the district, I chose to tour the administrative area extensively while observing the guidelines given by the Ministry of Health. It was during this tour when I found out that getting stuck in Nyamasheke is not bad at all.

The first time I featured this book in one of the Turning Pages book club sessions, I invited the district's public relations manager and representatives of the biggest investors in the district.

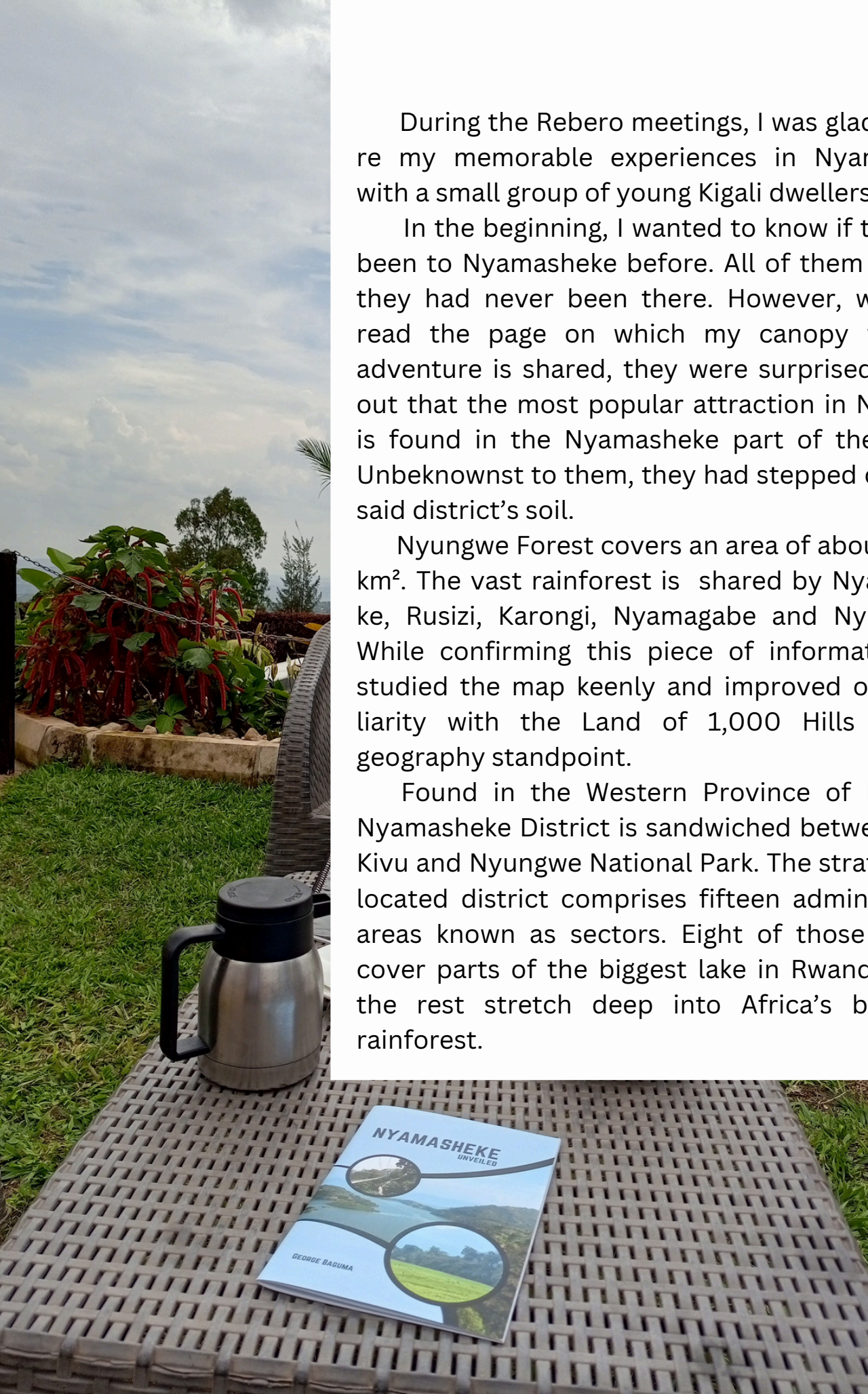
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During the Rebero meetings, I was glad to share my memorable experiences in Nyamasheke with a small group of young Kigali dwellers.

In the beginning, I wanted to know if they had been to Nyamasheke before. All of them claimed they had never been there. However, when we read the page on which my canopy walkway adventure is shared, they were surprised to find out that the most popular attraction in Nyungwe is found in the Nyamasheke part of the forest. Unbeknownst to them, they had stepped onto the said district's soil.

Nyungwe Forest covers an area of about 1,000 km². The vast rainforest is shared by Nyamasheke, Rusizi, Karongi, Nyamagabe and Nyaruguru. While confirming this piece of information, we studied the map keenly and improved our familiarity with the Land of 1,000 Hills from a geography standpoint.

Found in the Western Province of Rwanda, Nyamasheke District is sandwiched between Lake Kivu and Nyungwe National Park. The strategically located district comprises fifteen administrative areas known as sectors. Eight of those sectors cover parts of the biggest lake in Rwanda, while the rest stretch deep into Africa's best-kept rainforest.



SESSION IV

TURNING PAGES: EL VISTA EDITION



The El Vista edition was the second publication in the Turning Pages series. It is an overview of four book club sessions that were hosted and sponsored by El Vista Café. The sessions brought together fifteen travel enthusiasts, most of whom attended in person.

At El Vista Café, our interactive reading sessions revolved around the covered destinations and attractions. In addition, the four meetings put me in a position to connect with a small sample size of my audience and obtain invaluable feedback. Furthermore, the making

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of this special edition was a great opportunity to make new friends.

During our last meeting at Rebero Resort, we reviewed a book titled *Turning Pages: El Vista Edition*. This edition sheds light on a separate set of books fetched from the Exposure Publishers' collection. While the titles used at El Vista highlight my experiences as a tourist on the ground, the product of the vibrant discussions is supplemented by input from readers.

In their final remarks, the Rebero participants urged me to take the campaign to schools. As usual, I penned down the suggestion. There is a good chance that will happen in the near future. In the meantime, I have a couple of editions to work on over the next couple of weeks.

Throughout my awe-inspiring journey as a travel writer, I have relied heavily on the facilitation provided by hospitality establishments. The role played by these businesses in the successful implementation of my projects is undeniable. The *Turning Pages* series is a continuation of this long-standing tradition.

If you wish to participate in my upcoming book club sessions, do not hesitate to reach out through the contact details provided on the title page.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GRATITUDE TO SPONSORS

The books used in the making of *Turning Pages: Rebero Edition* wouldn't have been published without assistance from the following sponsors:

- **Ikaze Rwanda Tours & Travel**
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- **Ecoair Apartment Hotel**
- **Nyamasheke District**
- **El Vista Cafe**

