

## Basic Kinyarwanda Terms

- Kinyarwanda is very easy to pronounce: like most Latin or Japanese words, we just read what we see!
- As in Japanese, one word could mean a whole sentence. (E.g: I am grateful for that=Ndabigushimiye; Great them on my behalf=Ubansuhurize.) This is because pronouns, articles, prepositions, auxiliaries, and objects are usually collated to the main verb.
- Using Kinyarwanda dictionaries or lexicons requires to know the word **stem**. E.g: u-mu-**gabo** (a man); i-n-**shuti** (a friend/friends)

### General Greetings, Etc.

Good morning: MwahRahMootZAY (Mwaramutse)

Good afternoon: MweeReeWay (Mwiriwe)

Hello (anytime): MooRahHoh (Muraho)

How are you?: AhMahKooRoo (Amakuru)

How are you? (reciprocated): AhMahKooRoo Yah Way (Amakuru yawe)

How are you doing?: OoMAYzay GOOtay? (Umeze gute)

What's up?: BEEtess? (Bite se?)

I'm fine: Nee MAYza (Ni meza)

I'm not good: MayZay NahBee (Meze nabi)

I'm fine: MAYzay NAYzah (Meze neza)

Thank you: MooRahKohZay (Murakoze)

Thank you very much: Murakoze cyane

You, too: NahWay (Nawe)

Goodbye (afternoon): MeeReeGway (Mwirirwe)

Goodbye (evening): MooRahMooKeyAy (Muramuke)

Goodbye (general): MooRahBAYho (Murabeho)

Yes: YAYgo (Yego)

No: Oya (Oya)

What's your name?: WitWAHNday? (Witwa nde)

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.: NEETwah \_\_\_\_\_. (Nitwa)

Good: MAYza (Meza)

Bad: BeeBee (Bibi)

No problem: NAHkeyBAzoo (Nta kibazo)

Welcome: MooRahKahZah NayZa (Murakaza neza)

Welcome (Swahili): KahReeBoo (Karibu)

Feel at home: MooReeSahnGah (Murisanga)

Excuse me (also means "have compassion"): ImBahBahZee (Imbabazi)

I am a Korean (man): NDOOmnyaKorayah (Ndi Umunyakoreya)

I am a Korean (woman): NDOOmnyaKorayah Kahzee (Ndi Umunyakoreyakazi)

I work for \_\_\_\_\_. : NhoRerAh \_\_\_\_\_ (Nkorera \_\_\_\_\_. )

We work for \_\_\_\_\_. : DooKohRerAh \_\_\_\_\_ (Dukorera \_\_\_\_\_.)

Have a good day: OoMoonSee MweeZah (Umunsi Mwiza)

Have a good night: EeJoro GweeZah (Ijoro Rwiza)

Have a good trip: OoRooGenDoh GweeZah (Urugendo Rwiza)

I speak a little Kinyarwanda: eeKeenYahrGwanda ChyeeAnJeeay NeeGeeKyeeyay (Ikinyarwanda cyanjye ni gike)

I'm trying: NdaGayraGayZah (Ndagerageza)

I don't understand that: SeemByoomVah (Simbyumva)  
Repeat: SooBeeRahMo (Subiramo)

### **Beverages**

Drinks: EeBeenYobGah (Ibinyobwa)  
Milk (general): AhMahTah (Amata)  
Drinking milk: EenChiuChiu (inshyushyu)  
Yogurt milk, like an Indian lassi: EeKeyVooGooToe (Ikivuguto)  
Powdered milk: AhMahTah YeeFoo (Amata Y'ifu)  
Water: AhMahZee (Amazi)  
Cold water: AhMahZee AhConeJay (Amazi akonje)  
Beer: EeBeeYehRee (Ibyeri)  
Local brew: oohRwaGwa (urwagwa)  
Tea: EeKEYAhYee (Icyayi)  
Coffee: EeKAHwah (Ikawa)  
Fruit juice: OoMooToeBay WeemBooToe (Umutobe w'imbuto)  
Coke: CoCah (Coca)

### **Food**

Food: EeBeeReebGah (Ibiribwa)  
Sugar: EeSooKAHree (Isukari)  
Salt: OoMoonYoo (Umunyu)  
Eggs: Ahmahgee (Amagi)  
Meat: EenYahMah (Inyama)  
Passionfruit: MaraKOOja (Marakuja)  
Bananas: EemeeNAYkay (Imineke)  
Plantains: IGeeToeGee (Igitoke)  
Corn cake: Kayk (Keke)  
Bread: OomooGAHtee (Umugati)  
Butter/margarine: AhMahVooTah (Amavuta)  
Donuts: AHmahndAHzi (Amandazi)  
Potatoes: EeBeeRAIYee (Ibirayi)  
Avocados: AhVohKah (Avoca)  
Sweet potatoes: EeBeeJoomBah (Ibijumba)  
Corn: EeKeyGorEe (Ikigori)  
Cassava (Manioc): EemYoomBahTee (Imyumbati)  
Sorghum: AhMahSahKah (Amasaka)  
Tree tomatoes: EeKeenYohMorOh (Ikinyomoro)  
Pineapple: EeNahNahSee (Inanasi)  
Beans: EeBeeHEEMboh (Ibishyimbo)  
Rice: OoMooCHELLee (Umuceli)  
Peas: AhMahShahZah (Amashaza)  
Carrots: KahRowTee (Karoti)  
Tomatoes: EenYAHNyah (Inyanya)  
Onions: OoBooToonGooRoo (Ubuntunguru)  
Chicken: EenKohKoh (Inkoko)  
Sheep: EenTahMah (Intama)  
Goat: EeHenAy (Ihene)  
Fish: EeFee (Ifi)  
Little fish (lake smelts, often fried): SahmBahZah (Sambaza)  
Corn or Cassava starchy accompaniment to many meals: OobhooGahLee (Ubugali)  
Banana mash: eegyeeToeKay (Igitoke)

Rice: OoMooChelEe (Umuceli)  
Soup: EeSooPoo (Isupu)  
Hot Chili: OoRooSenDah (Urusenda)

### Other Food/Drink-Related Terms

What are you looking for?: OoRahShahKeeKee? (Urashaka iki?)  
I am looking for/I want....: NDahShahKah (Ndashaka)  
Here is sold \_\_\_\_\_.: HAHno Hahree \_\_\_\_\_.: (Hano Hari)  
Plastic bottle (such as one that holds water) : AhgahCHOOPa (Agacupa)  
I don't have a plastic bottle: nthAhGahCHOOPa nfeEetay (nta gacupa mfite)  
There's still water in this bottle: HahRee MAhMahZee (Harimo amazi)  
The last glass (such as "one for the road"): AhGahShinGooRahChooMoo (Agashinguracumu)  
When is the food going to be ready? (Very important here!): BeeGayZay Hay? (Bigeze he?)  
It's going to take a while: BeeRahTeenDah (Biratinda)  
I'm hungry: NDah ShownJay (Ndashonje)  
I'm thirsty: MFeeTay EenYowTah (Mfite Inyota)  
Quench your thirst: SheeReenYohTah (Shirinyota)  
I'm full: Ndah Hahzee (Ndahaze)  
Bon Appetit: MoorYeohHairGway (Muryoherwe)  
Cheers (when toasting a drink) : DooSahnGeeRay CarGeeOhHay (Dusangire Karyohe)  
A little, Slowly: BooHorOh (Buhoro)  
A lot, much, many: ByeenShee (Byinshi)  
Cold: BeeCONEjay (Bikonje)  
Room temperature/Tepid: EeshyeeooShyay (Ishyushye)  
Hot: EensheeeoShay Cheeanee (Inshyushye cyane)

### Money

Money: AhMaFahRanGah (Amafaranga)  
I don't have money: INhaMaFahRanGah MFeeTay (Nta mafaranga mfite)  
There is no money: AhMaFahRanGah (Nta mafaranga)  
How much does this cost? :NahnGahHay? (Ni angahe)  
Where is the bank: BONGki Ni Hay Hay? (Banki ni he he?)  
Where is the currency exchange?: Forex Ni Hay Hay? (Forex ni he he?)

### People

White person: OoMooZoonGoo (Umuzungu)  
White people: AhBahZoonGoo (Abazungu)  
Small white person: KAHzoongoo (can be derogatory, when used between Rwandans)  
(Kazungu) Man: OoMooGahBoh (Umugabo)  
Woman: OoMooGohRay (Umugore)  
Girl: OoMooKohbGah (Umukoobwa)  
Boy: OoMooHoonGoo (Umuhuungu)  
Baby, Toddler: OomWahNah (Umwana)  
Friends/Lovers: MooKoonZee (Mukunzi)  
Friend: EenShooTee (Inshuti)  
My friend: EenShooTee WahnJeeYay (Inshuti wanjye)  
Children: AhBahNah (Abaana)  
Men: AhBahGahBoh (Abagabo)  
Women: AhBahGohRay (Abagore)

Boys: AhBahHoonGoo(Abahuungu)  
Girls: AhBahKohbGah (Abakoobgwa)  
Person: OoMoonToo (Umuuntu)  
People: AhBahnToo (Abaantu)

### Common Expressions

What?: EeKey (Iki)  
Why?: KooKee? (Kuki)  
How?: BeeTay (Bite)  
Who? (singular): Nday (Nde)  
Who? (plural): BahnDay (Bande)  
When?: ReeAhLee? (Ryali)  
But: AhReeCoh (Ariko)  
Or: CheeahnGwa (Cyangwa)  
Very: CHAHNee (Cyane)  
Is: Nee (Ni)  
And: Nah (Na)  
Also: KahnDee (Kandi)  
Always: EeTayKah (Iteka)  
Never: NhabGwo (Ntabwo)  
I want: NDah SHAHkah (Ndashaka)  
I don't want: DTABgoneSHAHkah (Ntabwonshaka)  
I don't want: SeenShahKah (Sinshaka)  
Isn't that so? (If you say it): See Byoh? (Si byo?)  
Isn't that so? (In response to something someone else has said): Nee Byoh? (Ni byo?)  
Where is the bathroom?: AhHo KweetOoMah Nee Hay? (Aho kwituma ni he?)  
Do you need to go to the bathroom? (singular): OoRah ShahKah Kwee TooMah? (Ura shaka kwi tuma?)  
Do you need to go to the bathroom? (plural): MooRah ShahKah Kwee TooMah? (Mura shaka kwi tuma?)  
Bless You (after a sneeze): KeeRah (Kira) or, more formally, MooRahKeeRay (Murakire)  
You're welcome (after the "Bless You"): TooAySay  
You are cute: OoRee MweeZah (Uri mwiza)  
It is pretty: Nee HayZah (Ni Heza)  
It's good: Nee Byeeza (Ni byiza)  
That's right/Isn't that right?: Nee Beeyo (Ni byo)  
You are crazy (this should be reserved for good friends only, otherwise, an insult!): Oorah SahZay (Ura Saze)  
You are crazy (Swahili): WayWay Cheesy  
Unity: OOBOMway(Ubumwe)  
Peace: AhMahHorOh (Amahoro)  
Hope: KweeZerAh (Kwizera)  
Compassion/mercy: EemBahBahzi (Imbabazi)  
Cooperation: OoMooBahNo (Umubano)  
Truly: KahBeeSah (Kabisa)  
Organization (like a humanitarian organization): OoMoorYahnGoh (Umuryango)  
God: EeMahNah (Imana)  
God Bless You: EeMahNah AhGooHay OoMooGeeSha (Imana aguhe umugisha)  
I'm tired: EndAHNahnEEway (Ndananiwe)  
Listen: Oomvah! (Umva)  
Go ahead: KohMayZah (Komeza)  
I love you: NDah GooKoonDah (Nda gukunda)

What are you saying?: OoTeeKey? (Uti iki?)  
What are you doing?: OoRahKohReeKee? (Urakora iki?)

### Directions and Transportation

Where are you going?: OogeeayHAYhay? (Ugiye hehe?)  
I am going to \_\_\_\_\_.: Ngeeay \_\_\_\_\_. (Ngiye \_\_\_\_\_.)  
Where are you coming from?: Oovooyeay hay? (Uvuye he?)  
I am coming from \_\_\_\_\_.: Nvooy \_\_\_\_\_. (Mvuye \_\_\_\_\_.)  
Where are you?: Ooreehay? (Uri he?)  
Where is \_\_\_\_?: Nee Hay Haree \_\_\_\_? (Ni he hari\_\_?)

To the city: MooMooGee (mu mugi)  
To the house: MooRooGoo (mu rugo)  
To the [\_\_\_\_] hotel: KooRee Hotelee [name of hotel]: (Kuri hoteli [\_\_\_\_])

Let's go: TooGenDay (Tugende.)  
You guys go: MooGenDay (Mugende.)

Where is it?: NeeHayHay? (Ni hehe?)  
It's not far? : Nee HahFee? (Ni hafi?)  
It's far?: Nee KooRay? (Ni kure?)  
Go Straight: KoMayZEemBayRay (Komezza Imbere)  
Left: EeBooMoSo (Ibumoso)  
Right: EeBurgyo (Iburyo)  
Backward, behind: EenYooMah (Inyuma)  
Over there: HarEeYah (Hariya)  
Inside: Moh (mo)  
It's here: Nee Hahno (Ni hano)  
It's there: Nee HahReeYah (Ni hariya)  
Stop!: HahGahRahRah (Hagarara)

Road: OoMooHAHNdah (Umuhanda)  
Bus: BeeSee (Bisi)  
Taxi: TahGeeSee (Tagisi)  
Bicycle: EeGahRay (Igare)  
Car (Motorcar): EeMohDohKah (Imodoka)  
Plane: EenDayGay (Indege)  
Airport: EeKeyBooGah CheenDayGay (Ikibuga cy'indege)

### Family

Family: ooMoorYahnGo (Umuryango)  
Mama: Mama  
Papa: DahTah (Data)  
My wife: OoMooGorAy WahnJeeYay (Umugore wanjye)  
My husband: OoMooGahBow WahnJeeYay (Umugabo wanjye)  
My child: OomWahNah WahnJeeYay (Umwana wanjye)  
My children: AhBahNah BanJeeYay (Abana banjye)

### Miscellaneous

Rain: EemVooLah (imvura)  
Rainy season: IgEeHay CheemVooLah (Igihe cy'imvura)

Mosquito: OoMooBoo (umubu)  
Mosquitoes: EeMeeBoo (imibu)  
Card: Eecartah (Ikarita)  
Hospital: EeVooReeRo (Ivuriro)  
Prison: GayRayZah (Gereza)  
Office: EeBeeRo (Ibiro)  
Work: AhKAHzi (Akazi)  
Pharmacy: FarooMahSee (Farumasi)  
Health Center: EeVooReeRoh (Ivuriro)  
Hospital: EeBeeTahRoh (Ibitaro)  
Gas station: AhHo KoonyeeWeshErAyZah liSahnSee (Aho kunyweshereza lisansi)  
Village: ooMooDooGooDoo (Umudugudu)  
Toilet Paper: EemPahPooRoh Zoh Moo MooSahRahNay (Impapuro zo mu musarane)  
Matches: EeKeeBeereeTee (Ikibiriti)  
Candle: BooJee (Buji)  
Subsidized housing: OOmooDOOgoodoo (Umudugudu)  
Community work: OOmooGahnDah (Umuganda)  
Lodging: AhmahCHOOmbee (Amacumbi)  
Telephone: TooVooGahNee (Tuvugane) (Literally, "Let's Talk")  
Lake: EeKeeYahGah (Ikiyaga)  
Mountain: OoMooSohZee (Umusozi)  
Volcanoes: EeBeeRoonGah (Ibirunga)  
Baskets: AhGahSayKay (Agaseke)  
Hug: HoBee (Hobe)

## Numbers

0 OhBooSah (Ubusa)/ Zayroo (Zeru)

1 ReemWay (Rimwe)

2 KahBeeRee (Kabiri)

3 GahTahToo (Gatatu)

4 KahNay (Kane)

5 Gahtahno (Gatanu)

6 GahTahnDahToo (Gatandatu)

7 KahReenDwee (Karindwi)

8 OoMooNahNay (Umunane)

9 EeCheeEnDah (Icyenda)

10 EeChooMee (Icumi)

11 ChooMeeNahReeMway (Cumi na rimwe)

100 EeJahNah (Ijana)

200 MahGahNahBeeLee (Magana Abili)

300 MahGahNahTahToo (Magana Atatu)

400 MahGahNahAhNay (Magana Ane)

500 MahGahNahTahNoo (Magana Atanu)

600 MahGahNahTahnDahToo (Magana Atandatu)

700 MahGahNahLeendWee (Magana Alindwi)

800 MahGahNeeNanEe (Magana Inani)

900 MahGahNah OorGwenDah (Magana Urwenda)

1000 EeGeeHoomBee (Igihumbi)

1500 EeGeeHoomBee Nah MahGahNahTahNoo (Igihumbi na magana atanu)

2000 EeBeeHoomBee BeeBeeRee (Ibihumbi Bibiri)

2500 EeBeeHoomBee BeeBeeRee Nah MahGahNahTahNoo (Ibihumbi bibiri na magana atanu)

On Monday: KooWah MbayRay (Ku wa mbere)
On Tuesday: KooWah KahBeeLee (Ku wa kabili)
On Wednesday: KooWah GahTahToo (Ku wa gatatu)
On Thursday: KooWah KahNay (Ku wa kane)
On Friday: KooWah GahTahNoo (Ku wa gatanu)
On Saturday: KooWah GahTahnDahToo (Ku wa gatandatu)
On Sunday: KooWah ChoomWayRoo (Ku wa cyumweru)

5000 EeBeeHoomBee BeeTahNoo (Ibihumbi Bitanu)

**Time**

Today: NoNay (None)  
Tomorrow: AyJoh HahZahZah (Ejo hazaza)  
Yesterday: AyJoh HahSheeZay (Ejo hashize)  
Soon: VooBah (Vuba)  
Now: OoBoo (Ubu)

Morning: EeGeeToneDoh (Igitondo)  
Afternoon: NeeMoonSee (Ni mumsi)  
Evening: OoMooGohRohBa (Umugoroba)  
Night: EeJohRoh (Ijoro)

January: MooTahRahMah (Mutarama)
February: GahShyanTahRay (Gashyantare)
March: WerOorGway (Werurwe)
April: MahTah (Mata)
May: GeeChooRahSee (Gicurasi)
June: KahMayNah (Kamena)
July: NeeYahKahnGah (Nyakanga)
August: KahNahMah (Kanama)
September: NzayLee (Nzeli)
October: OoKwahKeeRah (Ukwakira)
November: OoGooSheenGoh (Ugushyingo)
December: OoKooBohZah (Ukuboza)

Last week: EeChoomWayroo GeeSheeZay (Icyumweru gishize)  
This week: EeKee ChoomWayroo (Iki cyumweru)  
Next week: EeChoomWayroo GeeTahHah (Icyumweru gitaha)  
Last year: OomWahKah OoSheeZay (Umwaka ushize)  
This year: OoYoo MwahKah (Uyu mwaka)  
Next year: OomWahKah ooThaHah (Umwaka utaha)

**IKARITA Y'U RWANDA**