

## **USEFUL INFORMATION FOR THE FOREIGN VISITOR**

By  
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### **HOW TO GET TO NIGERIA**

Getting to Nigeria is very easy, with several airlines serving the country from all over the world. You can come by air, sea or road. Gateway cities are Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Calabar and Kano if you come by air. By sea, you arrive at Lagos, Port Harcourt or Calabar. Or you may come by road from any of the neighbouring countries - Benin, Niger, Chad, Cameroon. And once inside Nigeria, you can travel to any part of the country by air or road.

### **WHEN TO VISIT**

You can visit Nigeria all the year round. But the traveller planning a visit should take the following into consideration:

- (i) Rain falls, particularly in the south, between May and September. It can be heavy in June and can cause inconveniences.
- (ii) Temperature ranges from 23-31 °C in the south, with high humidity.
- (iii) A cooler, but dusty harmattan season stretches from December to January.

### **ENTRY FORMALITIES**

Visitors from the Commonwealth countries as well as other nations require an entry permit, obtained in advance, and the application should be supported by a letter of invitation and a return ticket for the journey. Processing will take at least two days.

### **HEALTH REGULATIONS**

An international vaccination certificate against

yellow fever (10 years) is required. Cholera (6 months) is also required if coming from an infected area. Anti-malaria prophylaxis and TB inoculation are recommended.

### **CURRENCY REGULATIONS**

There are no restrictions on importation of foreign currency. A currency declaration is, however required both on arrival and departure, for large sums of money in excess of US\$5,000.00. Import or export of Nigerian currency is strictly limited to N5,000 (five thousand Naira only). Hotel expenses/bills must be paid for in foreign currency. Personal baggage up to 20 kilograms and belong such as cameras and typewriters for the use of bona fide visitors are admitted free of duty. In addition, 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 225 grams tobacco are allowed. The importation of illegal drugs is punishable by a Jail term.

### **BAGGAGE EXAMINATION**

International airports in Nigeria are staffed by wing customs officers who conduct normal checks of baggage on all international arrivals. Standard security checks are in operation at all Nigerian entry ports.

### **AIRPORT TAX**

Airport tax is collected at all airports. For domestic flights, the tax is N50 while for all international flights, the tax is US\$20 or its equivalent. The rates are subject to change from time to time. A visitor should find the rate at the time of travel.

## **CURRENCY**

The currency is the naira (N) which is divided into 100 kobo. Currency notes are issued in denominations of N5, N10, N20, N50 and N100. Coins are issued in 10K, 25K, and N 1. Except for hotel bills, foreigners can do their shopping and other businesses in the local currency. There are a number of Bureaux de Change and banks at each International airport where the visitor can convert from local to foreign currency, and vice versa.

Major banks with international branches operate electronic money transfer services. There are plans to introduce credit cards into the Nigerian banking system. These services will facilitate the visitor's transactions and enhance his/her convenience while in Nigeria.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **What To Wear:**

For official occasions, formal clothing is expected. Gentlemen may put on suits and ties while ladies appear in dresses. Given the warm tropical temperatures, however, light clothing is convenient all the year round. Informal dress is widely acceptable with emphasis on comfort.

Batik, a local fabric, with leather sandals and hat, are common. Batik is favoured even for formal occasions because of its comfort in tropical weather conditions.

**Laundry and Dry Cleaning:** Major hotels offer laundry and dry-cleaning services. Launderettes are not easily accessible but local laundry and dry cleaning shops can easily be found in most towns.

**Hair Care Shops:** Hair dressing and barbing salons are found in all the major hotels and shop- ping centres in the

country, catering to both male and female needs. They make both African and continental hair styles, and provide manicure and pedicure services.

**Business Hours:** Government Offices are open Monday to Friday 8 a.m - 4pm. But in the northern states, it is advisable to conclude all business before 1.00 pm on Fridays as Moslem workers have to go for the Jumat services at 2.00 pm, but return to work thereafter. Supermarkets, stores and other businesses are open from 8.30 am to 5. pm on weekdays and from 7.30 am to 1 pm on Saturdays. But a large Jumber of smaller shops, restaurants and bars are open from sunrise till near midnight every day. Some of the major banks (also open for services to the public from 8am - 4pm on Saturday.

**Language:** English is the official language and is widely spoken. Foreigners with no knowledge of the local languages can get around without any difficulty. However, communicating knowledge of any of the three principal indigenous languages: Hausa in the north, Yoruba in the south-west and Igbo in the south-east may be useful and endearing

**Health Services:** Private clinics are found even in the smallest towns. In major cities, private hospitals offer good facilities. As in many countries, costs for medical services or hospital care must be shouldered by the traveller. There are government hospitals throughout the country, but apart from emergencies, the hospitals are more geared to serving the local population.

**Pharmacies:** Chemist shops abound in Nigeria, even in supermarkets and are open during normal trading hours. Some open even on Sundays in supermarkets.

**Electricity:**

Main voltage in Nigeria is 220 volts (domestic) and 400 volts (industrial). If a visitor plans to bring any electrical equipment using 110 volts, then a converter is needed.

**Photography:**

No permit is required, but apply great caution. You may find lots of people who are offended by photography. Even when taking photos of crowd scenes, you should ask around if people may be offended. Photographing of bridges, military personnel and installations, harbours, television and radio stations, and the like, is prohibited, but you can take photographs at the airports. Time, Phone and Telex: Nigeria's local time is one hour above GMT. Telephone booths and phone cards are scarce and services sometimes tend to be erratic. Long distance (local) calls can sometimes be made from the hotel room, but International telephone, telegram and telex facilities are available at major offices of the National Telecommunication Company, NITEL. E-mail and

**PUBLIC HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS**

New Year's Day old-el-Fitri \*Qood  
Friday 'Easter Monday May Day old-el-Kabir  
Independence Day \*Id-el-Maulud  
Christmas Boxing Day

1 January 24 & 25 March or thereabouts  
9 April or thereabouts 12 April or  
thereabouts 1 May 1 & 2nd June or  
thereabouts 10 October 31 August or

thereabouts 25th December. 26th  
December.

"These are moveable dates and are therefore subject to ratification by the Government.

Internet services are available at the business centres within the cities.

**Mails:**

There are Post Offices in all State capitals. Local mails are delivered with N10.00 postage stamps. International mails range between N40 and N60.00, depending on the continent. Special services, such as registered letters and courier parcels are handled by NIPOST EMS Speedpost. These complement the efforts of other international courier companies which have offices in the major cities, hotels and airports all over Nigeria.

**Traffic Rules/Systems:**

Nigeria operates a right hand drive system, under a Federal Highway code. To drive in Nigeria, you need to obtain a driver's license. A foreigner may be required to produce an international driver's license

**Newspapers and Magazines:** Local newspapers and magazines in English are readily available. Foreign newspapers and magazines can be obtained at main news stands and bookstalls at the major hotels and airports.

**Metric Measure:**

Like most other countries of the world, Nigeria employs metric measures for many transactions. Cloth is sold by the

metre, meat by the kilo, petrol by the litre and the road distances on the highways are marked in kilometres.

### **Emergency Calls:**

In the event of an emergency, the visitor may secure help by dialling whichever is relevant among the following numbers:

Police  
199

Fire Ambulance  
999

Operator  
190

NITEL (fault)  
192

Enquiries  
194

Speaking clock  
191

### **Export of Antiquities:**

Reacting to the disappearance of several important Nigerian art pieces in the early 1960s and their subsequent reappearance in foreign lands, the Nigerian Federal Government, in 1963, passed a law controlling the export of antiquities. The law bans export of all forms of antiquities, including all ritual art objects, except with the express permission of the Department of Antiquities or the Curator, National Museum, Jos, Plateau state.

### **Where To Shop, What To Buy:**

Many visitors usually want to pick souvenirs of Nigerian art and craft, such as carvings on wood and calabash, textiles (batiks), raffia and cane works, and pottery. These are on sale at different crafts and arts centres. Particularly interesting is the experience of seeing the wood carvers, cane chairmakers and batik dyers at work at these centres. Notable places where one can shop for African prints, jewelries, pottery and other works of art and craft are the front shops of major hotels and international airports.

In Lagos, important shopping centres include Ikoyi Hotel, Eko Le Meridian, Falomo Shopping Complex, the National Museum's Craft Centre, National Theatre Shopping Mall and Tafawa Balewa Shopping Complex. For textiles, there are the Jankara market, Tie and Dye (Adire) Centre in Akerele Street, Surulere and Aswan! Market, Isolo, Lagos.

Elsewhere in the country, the tourist will find a variety of popular African textiles- Aso Oke in Iseyin (Oyo State), Sanyan in Ogbomosho (Oyo State), Akwete cloth (Imo State) and Fulani traditional wears in Kano and other parts of the North. There are many popular fashion houses in Lagos located mostly on Alien Avenue and Opebi Road, both in Ikeja, on Adeniran Ogunsanya Street in Surulere, and in several shops in Central Lagos. There are leather works in Jos (Plateau), pottery in Bida (Niger State) and Umuahia (Abia State) and raffia products in Akwa Ibom and Cross River States).

### **Areas of Art and Craft Work**

1. Wood and Cane works - (cane chairs, table flower vase, and masks, Lagos

2. Wood carvings and raffia works - bags, sandals, folders, wallets, tapestry etc - Ikot Ekpene.

3. Calabash carving/decorations- Oyo and Kano.

4. Leatherworks - bags, wallets, folders, sandals puffs and other solemirs. - Oyo, Kano, Sokoto, Jos and other parts of the North.

5. Brass works, bangles, wristlets, necklace, rings etc - Bida and Minna.

6. Bronze carving, casting - Igun Street, Benin City

7. Pottery - Jugs, pots, bowls - Bida, Ilorin, Abuja, Oke-Eri (Ogun), Umuahia.

For the visitor who is interested in other goods, the general markets which are found in every city offer a wide range of choices. Generally, in rural and urban markets, prices are not fixed and the ability to haggle for selling/buying price is often helpful. The merchant shrewd in the art of salemanship usually wins the battle, though most often the prices are reduced and the customer goes away feeling that he has won. The idea is that neither the buyer nor the seller loses face.

Some of the most notable markets around the country are:

Alaba Market, Lagos. Tejuosho Market, Lagos Aswani Market, Lagos. Onitsha Main Market, Onitsha Ariaria Market, Aba Kasuwa Kurmi Market, Kano Wuse Market, Abuja Watt Market, Calabar Gwagwalada Market, Gwagwalada, P.C.T. Jos Main market, Jos.

## **Where To Stay:**

Nigeria offers good accommodation in international -class hotels as well as in moderate hotels and guest houses. Hotels in Nigeria are being officially classified, but there are international chains such as Sheraton, Hilton and the Sofitel, offering luxurious accommodation. There are also other luxurious hotels whose charges are in the same range as the international hotel chains (See Appendix 13.4 Tipping: A service charge of 10 per cent is added automatically to restaurant and hotel bills, plus a 5 per cent government tax: so tipping is unnecessary unless service is exceptionally good and if you want to.

## **THINGS AND PLACES TO SEE**

When you arrive in Nigeria you begin a journey of enchantment. The country has a lot to offer every visitor. Places of interest across the country are as follows:

### **Lagos:**

The National Museum: This is one of the best in Africa and definitely worth seeing. The Benin bronzes are the star attraction. Others are the numerous wooden doorways, masks (some covering the entire body) and house posts. It is open every day, from 9 am to 6 pm, except Sunday.

The Tafawa Balewa Square: This is a huge arena adorned by gargantuan horses. You'll find most of Lagos airline offices and travel agencies on one side of the square and shops and restaurants on the other.

Portuguese and Brazilian Style Building: Some of the city's most interesting buildings are the old Portuguese houses

of the late 19th early the 20th centuries. Most notable is the dilapidated Ilojo Bar at 2 Bamgbose Street, which runs into Tinubu Square. It was built by a successful slave family who returned home to Nigeria from Brazil. The style is Gothic, with attractive arched doorways and windows and iron balustrades. Other fine examples of Brazilian architecture can be found in central Lagos.

### **Iga Idungaran:**

The official residence of the Oba (King) of Lagos, built during the 18th century. The old part of the Oba's Palace is built of mud, with bronze pillars and the original parlour. For inspection, call the Secretary (Tel: 656397).

### **The National Theatre:**

Opened in 1976 for the 2nd World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), is the huge oval building you'll find while approaching central Lagos from the airport. Call the Theatre (Tel: 830200) or consult the local newspapers for events such as dance, film and drama.

### **Muson Centre:**

This is a modern centre in the as in heart of Lagos where facilities are always in place for weekend or periodic concerts and music. It offers visitors the opportunity to watch international artistes. Popular music such as jazz, blues, gospel and classical music are performed here by popular Nigerian musicians and artistes.

### **Bar Beach on Victoria Island:**

This is the most popular beach not far from the Eko Meridian hotel. Because it is crowded at weekends, most expatriates prefer Tarkwa Bay (low undertow) and, Lighthouse Beach (strong undertow), both across the harbour. Speed boats are available on weekends and holidays. You will find them along Eleke Crescent on Victoria island, just across from the Russian and American Embassies.

### **Lekkl Conservation Centre:**

This was established, maintained and financed by Chevron Project for Environmental Support of the country. It conserves the animal and plant (including bird) species within the habitat. It has children's play ground and The several rest places.

Lekkl Beach: A long stretch of sandy beach It is brought by the breaking waves. Equally fascinating iday. are the huge sand and the coconut palms which provide shade for visitors. Periodic concerts and luge music festivals are staged here. It is always preferred by visitors because of its remoteness from is on the hustle and bubble of Bar beach, and because it has wide space and privacy.

### **University of Lagos Lagoon Front:**

This has been developed into a tourist attraction. It is a high- starts right from the gate and extends for over 1 1/2 km to the Vice Chancellor's lodge. Apart from the lagoon waters which are over-looked by the tower- ing Third Mainland Bridge, the forest contains vari- ety of trees, and numerous red-nosed monkeys found only in this environment in Lagos.

The monkeys can be sited at convenience from the Arts Block building. Other facilities are boat cruising, fishing and play ground for children. By the Lagoon front stands the University of Lagos Guesthouse, which offers international standard accommodation and swimming pool facilities for adults and children.

**Abuja:** Abuja, Nigeria's new capital city, offers unlimited opportunities for rock climbers. The Gawa Hills and Gwagwa Hills near Suleja, the Chukuku hills and the Agwai hills, and the famous Aso Rock hold strong attractions for all lovers of nature. Other attractions are the International Conference Centre, the National Mosque whose architectural design is still one of the best in the Muslim world, and the NICON Hilton Hotel, with about 700 highly furnished rooms and suites. As a fast growing city, there is much to be seen in terms of architectural design and landscape development. The architectural masterpieces include the National Assembly Complex, Eagle Square, the Ship House and the Federal Secretariat.

### **Akwa Ibom**

Ibeno Beach- an extensive beach which borders the Atlantic Ocean. Mobil Oil Tank farm; - Oron Museum and a one and half hour ferry ride to Calabar; Raffia works and Handicraft Centre at Ikot Ekpene. Adamawa Lamido's (Emir's) Palace, Yola Anambra Ogbunike and Ajali caves. Igbo-Ukwu archeological site and museum. - Rojeny Tourist Centre, Oba. with catering, sports and recreational facilities. Bauchi Yankari National Park and Games Reserve, including the Wikki Natural-Warm Spring. The Grave of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the first

Nigerian prime Minister of Independent Nigeria. Borno - Lake Chad sanctuary, - Kukawa (Tomb of the Shehus)

### **Cross River**

- Old Residency- now Calabar Museum
- Obudu Cattle Ranch and Hotels
- Agbokim and Kwa Falls

### **Edo**

- Oba's Palace and old city walls in Benin
- Benin Museum

### **Enugu**

- Nike Lake Resort.
- Coal mines at Okpara, Onyeama and Iva Valley
- Zoo and botanical gardens

### **Ekiti**

- Ikogosi Warm spring, a phenomenal belching out of warm water and meeting of cold water short distance away.

### **Imo**

- Oguta Lake
- Zoological gardens at Nekede.
- Mbari art in Aboh Mbaise

### **Kaduna**

- Emir's Palace at Zaria
- Gobarau Towers
- Nok culture- Terra cotta.

### **Kano**

- Bagauda-Tiga holiday centre
- Kano Zoological gardens.

### **Katsina**

- Kusugu well and the Legendary Bayajida swore
- Gobaru minaret.

#### Kebbi

- Lord Lugard's residence and office, Lokoja
- Graves of deposed and exiled Emirs of Kano, Zaria and Bida and those of Colonial officers and WAFF soldiers.

#### Kwara

- Aso-Oke weaving centre - Ilorin
- Pategi regatta - Mungo Park's ship o Jebba

#### Niger

- Kainji Dam - Gurara Falls
- Shiroro HEP Dam - Masagu brassworks , Bida

#### Ogun

- Olumo Rock, Abeokuta –
- Shrine of Brikisu Sungbo
- Tie and dye cloth (Adire) Abeokuta.

Ondo - Idanre Hills - Owo Museum of Antiquities - Ebomi Lake - Ibesi Akoko

Osun - Ife Museum and Ooni's palace - Erin-Ijesha water-falls

Oyo - University of Ibadan Zoological Gardens - International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

Plateau - Jos Museum, and Nok terra cotta heads and artifacts. - Jos wildlife Park and Zoo - Museum of tin mining, and the fields - Wase Rock, a towering volcanic, and the Plateau landscape

Rivers - Isaac Boro Amusement park - Slave Port (Brass and Bonny)

Sokoto - Gorony Dam - Othman Dan Fodio Tomb (Hubbare)

Taraba - Gashaka/Gumpti Games Reserves - Mambilla Plateau Tourist Centre.

#### NIGHT LIFE IN MAJOR CITIES

Night life in some Nigerian cities may not be as vibrant as what you would find in Bangkok, Rio de Janeiro or Las Vegas. But be assured that nights in Nigerian cities are not long dreary spells of darkness. However, Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, secular state and each city may want to put some limits to urban excesses within its jurisdiction. As a result, in some cities night life may be regulated due to sociocultural and religious differences. For example, while there may be a bustling night life with discoteques in some cities, such activities may be restricted or banned in some others. Some hotels may not serve alcohol while discoteque and gambling may be completely regulated.

Some hotel managements may in their hotels' club houses organise discoteque, or show foreign or local films on in-house entertainment television. Nigerian films/videos have been graded for particular audiences, so look out for such information before viewing them. Indigenous films may be in English or in local languages but, in the case of the latter, with English captions and interpreted lines.

Lagos offers excellent restaurants, discoteques, film houses and hotels for visitors. The city offers excellent restaurants serving a diversity of cuisines. The finest restaurants are in big hotels but other pleasant places can be found all over the city, particularly along Awolowo Road in Ikoyi, Akin Adesola in Victoria Island, Alien Avenue in Ikeja and Adeniran Ogunsanya Street in Surulere.



Best African cuisines, such as Eba and foffoo with vegetable soup such as Edikang Ikong, Egusi, Okro, Bangaa.n(l pounded yam with white soup or pepper soup and bush meat or fish are available in all the restaurants. Well treated 'goat head', Isi-ewu, and re fish pepper soup are special delicacies. Continental dishes are also served. Chinese restaurants where different oriental dishes are served are found in many locations in Lagos. id Snack bars with barbecue spots are also found in major streets of Lagos. Delicious snacks and drinks are served. Popular names are Mr. Biggs, Murphis Burger, KAS Favourites, and Sweet ie Sensation. There are also popular 'joints' in towns where suya is sold with traditional drinks like paimwine, and kunu.

Lagos has a poor cinema culture but a few cinema houses may be found in densely populated areas of Yaba, Agege, Mushin, Orile Iganmu and central Lagos. Although their popularity has dwined with the advent of video houses and clubs, many people, particularly the youths, still patronize them. Most cinema houses run three shows daily at 5.00pm, 6.00pm and 9.00pm. Sometimes, shows may last as late as 1.00pm and may commence as early as 12.00 noon. Indian, American and Chinese films are popular.

Live performances by indigenous stage dance troupes and theatre groups are organised on regular basis at the National Theatre, Iganmu and the is University of Lagos Auditorium. Interested persons ie can find out what is playing from newspapers, bill in boards, public walls, radio and Television or by calling the National Theatre (Tel- 830220). ar Discomania was part of the Lagos night in the to early 1970s, when discoteques and night clubs in were found at almost

every street corner. But over i- the last two decades, the novelty seems to have a, worn off. Some of the best night clubs are now in 5- top hotels but equally entertaining are such joints as ie Nightshift in Ikeja; Lord's in Maryland; Sunrise, Is Victoria Island and Peak in Surulere.

i- Seasonal shows, organised by private organi- zations in conjunction with popular radio and televi- s' sion stations have become regular features in most in Nigerian cities. These take place especially at the i. National Stadium, Tafawa Balewa Square and J- Lekki Beach, all in Lagos during major holidays and in festivals, such as Christmas, Easter and Sallah holidays.

Already established stars and up-coming ones are always on stage with different types of mus including traditional juju and fuji, High life, Regga Afro/rock, Rap and Blues. The Muson Centre Onikan, Lagos, also holds periodic music conce) with popular Jazz and classical musicians pianists on stage. For lovers of gospel music, que terly festivals are held every year at the Nation Stadium or the Tafawa Balewa Square. In recent years, some Christian organisations have ad organised gospel music shows on occasions lit Easter and Christmas, featuring both local and fc eign artists and drawing large crowds.

Lagos is certainly not as dangerous as hi been portrayed in some tourist guides. Democracy and the freedom that goes with it, are back and have further enhanced the usually liberal atmosphere of the city. But like everywhere else in tl-world, the visitor must excercise some care. Do n walk around alone. Carry your passport along all times, in case you are

required to identify yourself; otherwise, relax and have a pleasant night.

Another vibrant city in the south-west of Nigeria is Ibadan - one of the largest cities in Africa and the root of traditional juju and fuji music. It has an active night life close to that of Lagos. It is largely a traditional city and street parties are common at weekends. The University of Ibadan Theatre has a long history of periodic performances. Popular plays and shows are open to the public for a fee.

Enugu, in the south-west of the country, is quite peaceful at night and offers various places of relaxation apart from its major hotels.

The oil cities of Port Harcourt, Warri, Eket and Calabar also offer very peaceful and exciting nights. There are little or no restrictions. Parties and discoteques are alive till dawn, especially at the night clubs. There is the igae, Shell Club, run by Shell oil company in Port Harcourt and Mobil Pegasus clubs in Eket and Warri, which are the best in these parts of the country, in terms of management and equipment. Though the clubs cater primarily for oil companies, staff, visitors are usually allowed through consultation with the management.

Jos and Kaduna in the north also offer exciting night life. Jos has over 10 standard hotels which discoteques. It is one of the cities with the highest concentrations of foreign workers and tourists. In contrast, Abuja and Kano have very, slow night life. This is quite understandable. Abuja and the country's new capital, is still an infant city and would require a long time for such activities to pick up. The private organisers of musical concerts and other

shows have just started penetrating Abuja from Lagos. Kano, though a cosmopolitan city, is also one in which the tenets of Islam are rigidly upheld. Night life is slow and social activities are highly restricted. Alcohol and discoteques are banned here except inside the major hotels, where there are clubs. Visitors are strongly advised abide by the laws operative within the area.