

AFRICA · CULTURE · FOOD · NIGHTLIFE · CITY BREAKS · OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Nigeria

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and a cultural powerhouse, home of Afrobeats, Nollywood and a fiercely contested jollof rivalry with Ghana. Most visitors start in Lagos, with its art galleries, live-music venues and beach escapes, then add the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, ancient Kano or the cool Obudu Plateau. Travel takes planning, and local contacts help enormously.

**The UK Foreign Office (FCDO) advises against all travel to parts of Nigeria.**
Read the latest FCDO travel advice before planning a trip. Your travel insurance may be invalid if you travel against FCDO advice.
FCDO advice last updated 16 October 2026.

 CAPITAL Abuja	 CURRENCY Nigerian naira (NGN) £1 ≈ NGN 1,775	 LANGUAGE English, Hausa Yoruba, Igbo	 BEST TIME Nov–Feb
 DAILY BUDGET £45–£240 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type D, G 230V · UK plugs fit	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 6h 30m direct ~£600–£1,150 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+1 standard time

Nigeria's 220 million-plus people speak more than 500 languages, and the country divides broadly into a Yoruba south-west, an Igbo south-east, a largely Hausa and Muslim north, and a Middle Belt of many smaller groups. Most first trips centre on Lagos, the commercial capital, with excursions into Yoruba country: Abeokuta's Olumo Rock, the sacred grove at Osogbo and the old city of Ibadan. Abuja, the planned capital, is calmer and an easy flight away. Further afield, Cross River State offers Calabar's carnival and the Obudu highlands, while Kano anchors the north.

Nigeria rewards travellers who come with patience and connections. Lagos is expensive for accommodation and slowed by notorious traffic, but its restaurants, galleries and nightlife — especially in December, when the diaspora comes home — are as energetic as anywhere in Africa. Infrastructure is uneven: power cuts are common, generators hum everywhere, and road journeys can be long. Travel advice differs sharply from state to state, so check the FCDO guidance before planning any overland route. What surprises most visitors is the warmth of the welcome and the sheer volume of music.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

SACRED SITE

Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove

One of the last areas of primary forest in southern Nigeria, sacred to the river goddess Osun and filled with shrines and extraordinary sculptures by Susanne Wenger and the New Sacred Art movement. UNESCO-listed and best visited with a local guide.
- 2

NATURE

Lekki Conservation Centre

A patch of protected wetland forest on the Lekki Peninsula, crossed by one of Africa's longest canopy walkways. Come early to see monkeys, monitor lizards and birdlife before the heat and the weekend crowds arrive.

3

HISTORY

Kofar Mata dye pits, Kano

Dyers still plunge cloth into deep indigo pits said to date from the 15th century, beside one of the old gates of Kano. Nearby survive sections of the ancient city walls and the Emir's palace, Gidan Rumfa.

4

WILDLIFE

Yankari National Park

Nigeria's best-known game reserve, in Bauchi State, shelters elephants, baboons and antelope, but the real draw is Wikki Warm Springs, a clear spring-fed stream at a steady 31°C that is perfect for swimming.

5

NATURE

Obudu Mountain Resort

A former cattle ranch on a plateau at around 1,600 metres near the Cameroon border, reached by a road of dizzying hairpin bends. Rolling grassland, waterfalls and cool nights make it feel unlike anywhere else in Nigeria.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Lagos

≈ 15 million people

Nigeria's commercial and cultural engine: gallery-hop in Ikoyi and Lekki, eat suya on Victoria Island, catch live Afrobeat at the New Afrika Shrine and take a boat to Tarkwa Bay beach.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Kano

≈ 4.8 million people

One of West Africa's oldest trading cities, with stretches of ancient mud walls, the Kofar Mata dye pits, the Emir's palace and a vast market; check the FCDO advice first.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Ibadan

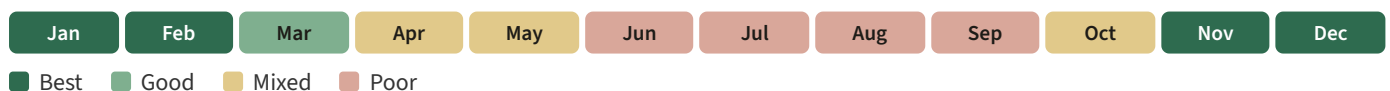
≈ 3.7 million people

A sprawling Yoruba city of rust-roofed hills, home to Nigeria's first university and Cocoa House, once the tallest building in tropical Africa; an easy train ride from Lagos.

Figures are rounded urban-area estimates and vary widely by source; the UN's latest method also ranks the sprawling Onitsha conurbation in the south-east among Nigeria's largest.

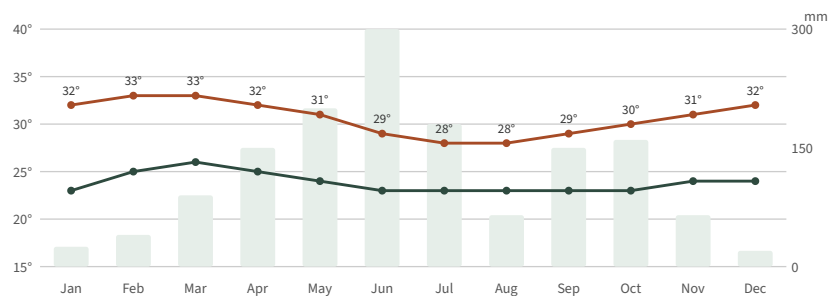
When to go to Nigeria

Best time: **Nov–Feb**.



Average climate in Lagos

— High °C
 — Low °C
 ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Mar, May	Durbar festivals At Eid, northern emirs ride out with hundreds of horsemen in brilliant robes and quilted armour. Dates follow the Islamic calendar; Kano's and Katsina's are best known, though sometimes cancelled at short notice.
Aug	Osun-Osogbo Festival The climax of a two-week August festival sees a votive maiden lead a huge procession to the river in the sacred grove, with drumming, dancing and offerings to Osun.
Dec	Calabar Carnival Throughout December, Calabar hosts costumed band parades, street parties and concerts, building to a grand carnival procession through the city late in the month.

How much does Nigeria cost?

SHOESTRING £45 per person / day ≈ NGN 79,857 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £110 per person / day ≈ NGN 195,206 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £240 per person / day ≈ NGN 425,904 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
--	--	--

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Jollof rice Rice cooked in a smoky tomato, pepper and onion sauce, ideally with the slightly charred base of 'party jollof'; Nigerians insist theirs beats Ghana's.	Suya Thin strips of beef rubbed with yaji, a fiery ground peanut and chilli spice mix, grilled over charcoal and served with sliced raw onion.	Pounded yam and egusi Smooth, stretchy pounded yam, eaten by hand, with egusi, a rich soup of ground melon seeds, leafy greens and meat or fish.
---	--	--

Getting around

Domestic flights are the practical way to cover long distances, linking Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Kano and Calabar. Modern trains run from Lagos to Ibadan and from Abuja to Kaduna. In Lagos, Uber and Bolt are the simplest way around, and the Blue and Red Line trains help on some routes. Yellow danfo minibuses and keke tricycles are cheap but chaotic. Rather than driving yourself, hire a car with a driver.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE   D G 230V — UK plugs fit	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 112 (ambulance, fire, police) Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +234	TIME ZONE UTC+1 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Not safe — drink bottled or treated water

DRIVING

On the right

TIPPING

Tipping is expected for good service: about 10% in restaurants without a service charge, and small sums for drivers, porters and guides.

ETIQUETTE

Greetings matter: always greet before getting down to business, show respect to elders and use your right hand to give and receive. Dress modestly, especially in the Muslim north.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Murtala Muhammed International Airport (LOS), Lagos; Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport (ABV), Abuja; Port Harcourt International Airport (PHC), Port Harcourt

Visas & entry for Nigeria

Shown for a British passport.

Visa required — apply before you go

You must have a visa to enter Nigeria as a visitor. Get your visa before travelling.

If you have a valid Nigerian residence permit (CERPAC or Green Card), you do not need a visa to enter Nigeria.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

Typhoid

Yellow fever

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Measles

Meningococcal disease

Polio

Rabies

Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required for all travellers (usually over 9 months or 1 year old). There is a risk of yellow fever in parts of the country — vaccination may be advised.

MALARIA

High risk of malaria

- There is a high risk of malaria in Nigeria: antimalarial tablets recommended.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Nigeria

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Boxing Day
Mon 28 Dec 2026	Boxing Day (observed)
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Wed 10 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Thu 11 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr Holiday (date may shift)
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sat 1 May 2027	Workers' Day
Mon 3 May 2027	Workers' Day (observed)
Mon 17 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Tue 18 May 2027	Eid al-Adha Holiday (date may shift)
Sat 29 May 2027	Presidential Inauguration Day
Sat 12 Jun 2027	Democracy Day
Mon 14 Jun 2027	Democracy Day (observed)
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Prophet's Birthday (date may shift)
Mon 16 Aug 2027	Prophet's Birthday (observed, estimated) (date may shift)
Fri 1 Oct 2027	National Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Yoruba

ENGLISH	YORUBA	SAY IT
Hello	Báwo ni	<i>BAH-woh nee</i>
Thank you	Ẹ şé	<i>eh SHEH</i>
Please	Ẹ jòó	<i>eh JAW</i>
Excuse me	Ẹ má bínú	<i>eh mah bee-NOO</i>
How much is this?	Èló ni èyí?	<i>EH-loh nee EH-yee?</i>

Know before you go

Check the FCDO travel advice before booking and again before any overland journey, as guidance differs sharply between states.

Carry a mix of card and cash: cards work in upmarket Lagos and Abuja venues, but markets and taxis want naira; change money only through banks or licensed bureaux.

Plan Lagos days around traffic: crossing between the mainland and Victoria Island can take two hours at rush hour, so group sights by area and stay near them.