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THE GUARDIAN Life

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Wardrobe Refresh?

What to buy and how to shop now

MODEL SPOTLIGHT
NIGERIANS WALKING INTERNATIONAL RUNWAYS

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Your **WEEKLY GUIDE** to the best of Nigeria

EZEKIEL ADAMU:

Giving African boxers global recognition

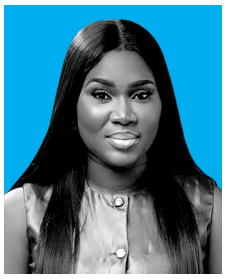
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THE GUARDIAN **Life**

Everything you need to live well



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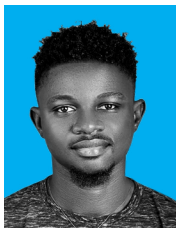












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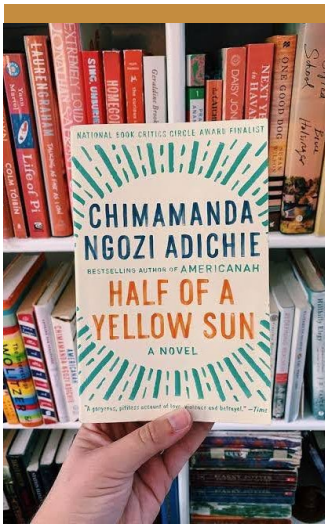
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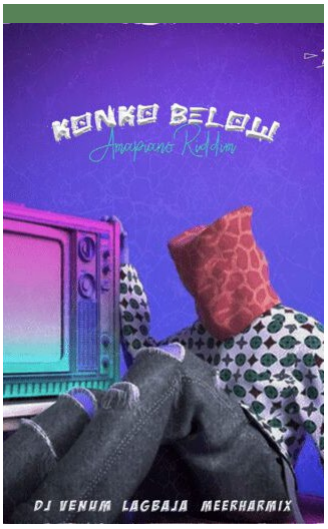
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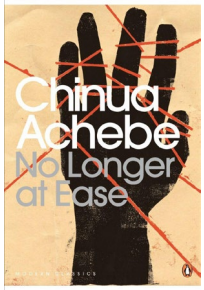
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SEAMANS
SCHNAPPS
THE TRUE SPIRIT OF OUR CULTURE
Heritage in a bottle. Honour in our hands
SEAMANS
SCHNAPPS
Premium
TIMELESS BLESSINGS
SEAMANS
SCHNAPPS
Original No.1
Prayer Drink
Now with
AUTHENTIS
TRUESEAL
Drink Responsibly
18+

10 works of fiction on Nigeria's Independence

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare



1. No Longer at Ease

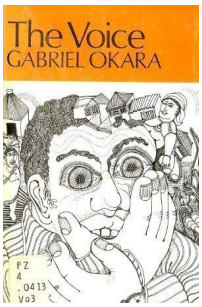
Author: Chinua Achebe
Year of publication: 1960

Chinua Achebe published No Longer at Ease in 1960, the same year Nigeria became independent. That timing makes the novel an especially fitting place to begin an Independence Day reading list. Its central character, Obi Okonkwo, returns to Nigeria after studying in England and takes up a job in the civil service. He comes home with ideas about what he can contribute to a new Nigeria, but quickly discovers that life is more complicated than he imagined. Family expectations, money, tradition, and the pressures of his new position begin to pull him in

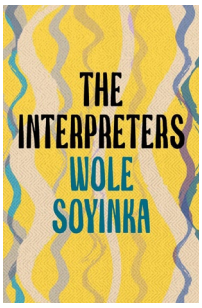
2. The Voice

Author: Gabriel Okara
Year of publication: 1964

In The Voice, Gabriel Okara looks at a Nigeria caught between old ways of life and the changes brought by colonialism and independence. The story follows Okolo, a man searching for what he believes is



truth in a society where money and power often seem to matter more. His search takes him into conflict with people who have become comfortable with the new order. Written only four years after independence, the novel reflects a period when Nigerians were asking what freedom from colonial rule should actually look like. Okara is interested in more than politics. He looks at the values people carry with them



3. The Interpreters

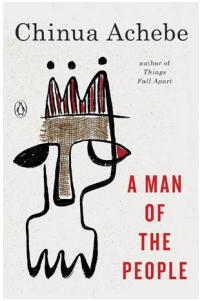
Author: Wole Soyinka
Year of publication: 1965

Wole Soyinka's The Interpreters takes readers into Nigeria's early years of independence, following a group of young, educated Nigerians trying to make sense of the country around them. They work in different fields, including journalism, education, and the arts, but share a growing frustration with the direction of the new nation. Soyinka does not treat independence as the end of Nigeria's problems. Instead, he asks what happens when a country gets political freedom but still has to deal with ambition, corruption, old loyalties and the power struggle. The characters are

4. A Man of the People

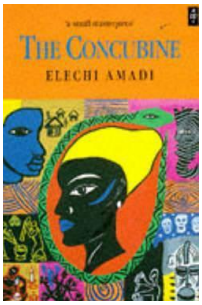
Author: Chinua Achebe
Year of publication: 1966

Achebe's A Man of the People is set in the political world of Nigeria's First Republic, where the excitement of independence is beginning to give way to disappointment. At the centre of the story is Odili, a young teacher whose life becomes entangled with Chief Nanga, a popular politician who knows how to win over a crowd. Nanga presents himself as a man of the people, but his political life reveals another side of power. Achebe uses



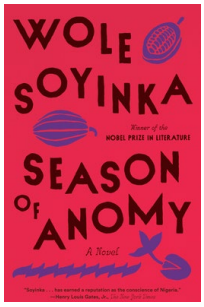
their relationship to poke fun at political ambition, corruption, and the distance between politicians and the people they claim to represent.

5. The Concubine



Author: Elechi Amadi
Year of publication: 1966

Elechi Amadi's The Concubine does not tell the story of Nigerian independence directly. Instead, it takes readers much further back, into the life of a traditional village before colonial rule. At the centre of the novel is Ihuoma, a beautiful and respected woman whose relationships become entangled with beliefs about fate and the spirit world. Amadi gives considerable attention to the customs, relationships and beliefs that shape the community around her. That makes the novel an interesting companion to books dealing directly with independence. It reminds readers that Nigeria did not begin



6. Season of Anomy

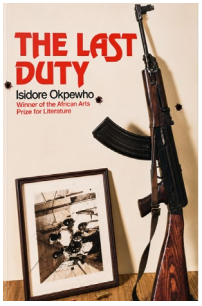
Author: Wole Soyinka
Year of publication: 1972

By the time Wole Soyinka published Season of Anomy, Nigeria had gone through a military coup, political violence, and a devastating civil war. The optimism surrounding independence had been replaced by a much more complicated reality. The novel reflects that mood. Through an allegorical story of a society struggling with violence, exploitation and political disorder, Soyinka questions the direction Nigeria has taken. It is not a straightforward account of the Civil War, but the events of the period hang heavily over the work. The book asks what kind of change is possible when the structures of power remain unjust and when violence becomes part of political life. For an Independence Day reading list, Season of Anomy offers a useful reminder that independence was not the end of Nigeria's story. It was the beginning of a difficult experiment in governing itself.

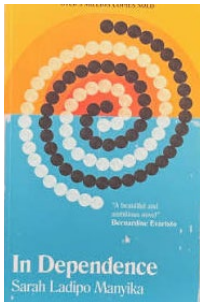
7. The Last Duty

Author: Isidore Okpewho
Year of publication: 1976

Isidore Okpewho's The Last Duty takes readers into the Nigerian Civil War and, rather than focusing on military leaders or political speeches, looks at what the conflict does to ordinary people. The



story centres on a small community caught up in the war, where fear, suspicion and personal interests begin to shape relationships. The characters have their own grievances and desires, but the conflict around them changes what they are willing to do. The Civil War is an important part of Nigeria's independence story because it exposed deep questions about belonging, ethnicity, power, and the meaning of the Nigerian nation. Okpewho brings those large questions down to the level of individual lives. Published sixteen years after independence, the novel shows how quickly the hopes of a new nation could give way to division and conflict.



8. In Dependence

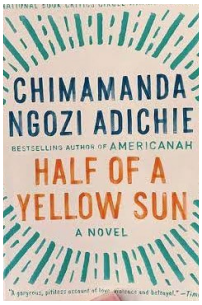
Author: Sarah Ladipo Manyika
Year of publication: 2008

Sarah Ladipo Manyika's In Dependence begins around the time Nigeria is preparing for independence and follows Tayo, a young Nigerian who travels to Britain to study. His personal life unfolds alongside some of the biggest changes in Nigeria's history, from independence to political instability and the events that follow. The novel moves between Nigeria and Britain, allowing Manyika to explore the complicated relationship between a former colony and its former colonial power. Tayo's experiences also bring questions of race, love, belonging, and identity into the story. The title itself is a clever play on the idea of dependence: even after political independence, how much of the old relationship remains? Rather than looking at 1960 as a single day of celebration, Manyika explores what independence meant in the lives of people who had to navigate the new Nigeria for themselves.

9. Half of a Yellow Sun

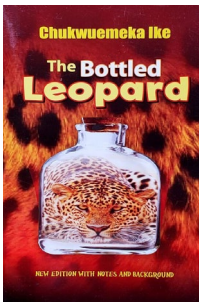
Author: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Year of publication: 2006

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun begins in the years after Nigerian independence, when the country's future still seems open, before political tensions eventually lead to war. Through Ugwu, Olanna, and Richard, Adichie tells the story of people whose lives are transformed by the Nigerian Civil War and the creation of Biafra. The characters fall in love, build careers and form friendships, but the political crisis gradually reaches



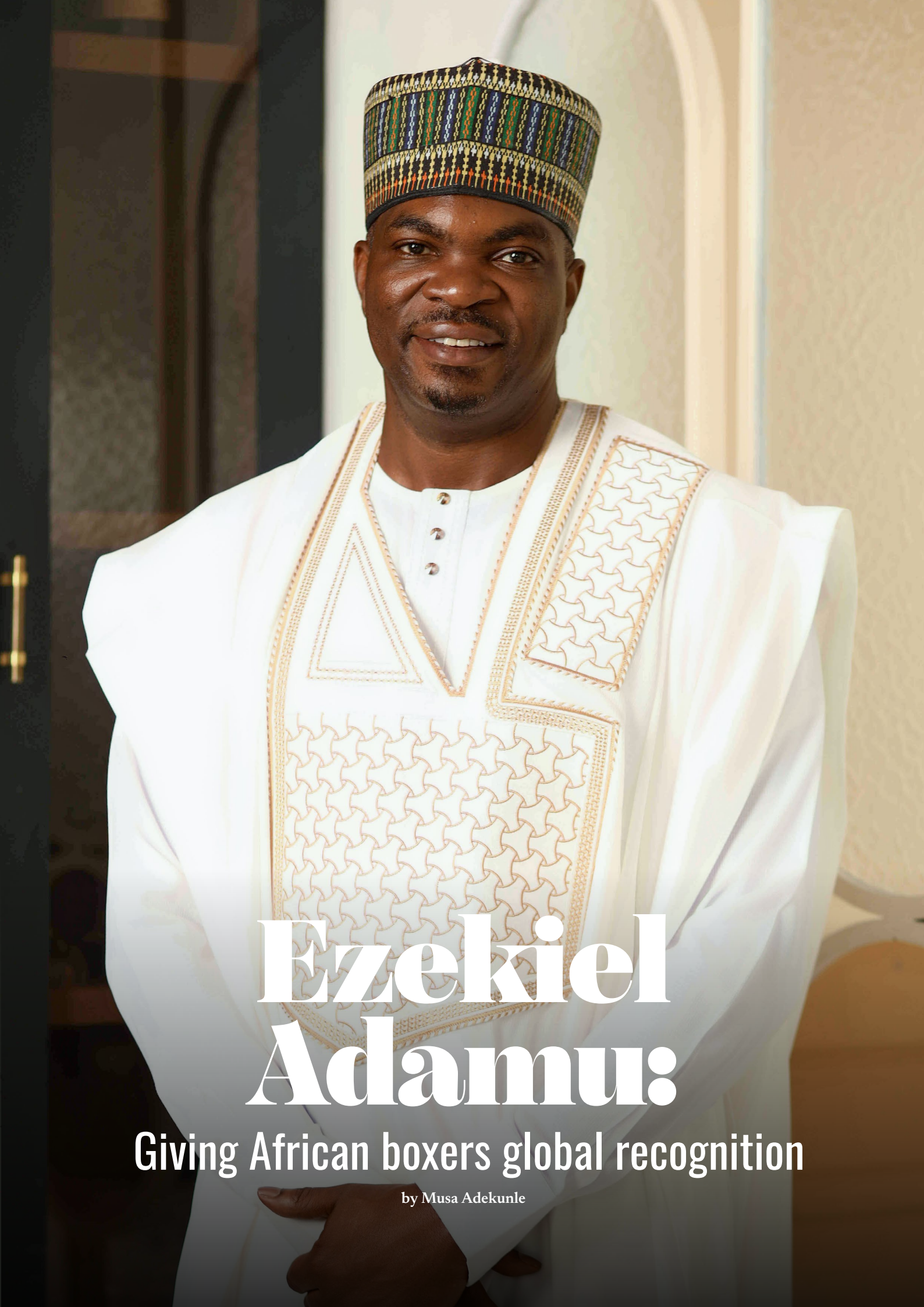
into every part of their lives. Adichie is particularly interested in the human cost of a conflict that is often discussed through dates, battles, and political leaders. The novel also returns to the question of what went wrong after independence and why the promise of a united Nigeria became so difficult to sustain. It is a powerful fictional entry point into one of the most painful chapters of the country's early history.

10. The Bottled Leopard



Author: Chukwuemeka Ike
Year of publication: 1985

Chukwuemeka Ike's The Bottled Leopard looks at Nigerian society through humour, satire and the world of education. By the time the novel was published, Nigeria had been independent for 25 years and had already experienced coups, military rule and considerable political upheaval. Ike uses his characters and their experiences to poke at some of the contradictions of Nigerian society, particularly around education, ambition and the desire for success. It is not a novel about the events of October 1960, but it belongs to the generation of Nigerian fiction asking what the country had done with the freedom it gained. That makes it useful for an Independence Day list. Rather than simply celebrating the achievement of independence, the novel invites readers to think about the society that developed afterwards and the gap between national aspirations and everyday life.



Ezekiel Adamu:

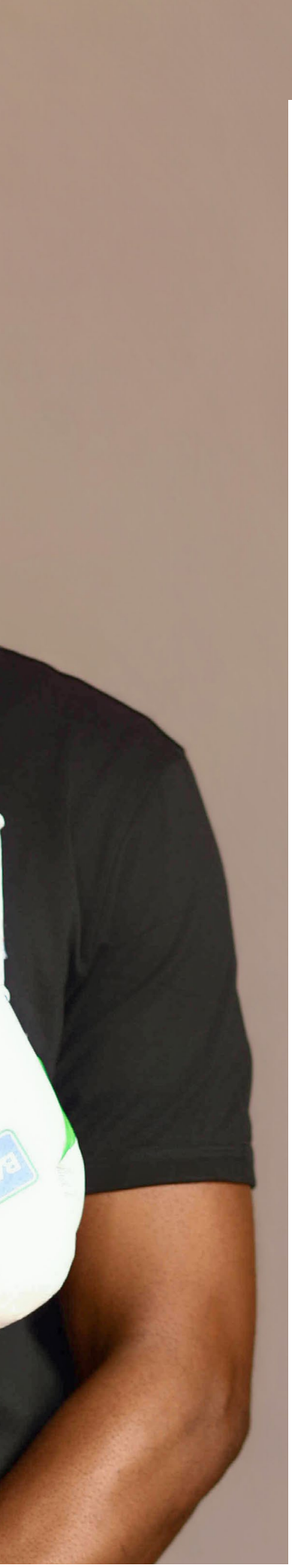
Giving African boxers global recognition

by Musa Adekunle



NEED TO KNOW

- Ezekiel Adamu is the founder of Balmoral Group, an events and hospitality business, and the first son of sports administrator Dr Amos Adamu.
- Adamu holds a degree in Computer Science from the University of Luton, now the University of Bedfordshire, and a master's in Financial Decision Analysis from the University of Portsmouth.
- He received an honorary Doctor of Science in Business Management and Corporate Governance from European-American University in 2021.
- His early ventures included a car wash in the United Kingdom. He also worked at Schlumberger Nigeria before leaving to pursue entrepreneurship.
- He heads Balmoral Group Promotions, the company behind Chaos in the Ring, which brings together professional boxing, celebrity fights and live entertainment.



Photos by Joseph Iso

Ezekiel Adamu is the promoter behind Nigeria's most talked-about celebrity boxing contests. Through Balmoral Group Promotions' *Chaos in the Ring,* he staged Portable's fight against Carter Efe and the singer's rematch with Charles Okocha, bringing familiar entertainment personalities into the ring.

His latest show at the Federal Palace Resortl, Lagos, on October 1 featured Carter Efe against Speed Darlington and Phyna against Nkechi Blessing. The celebrity contests shared the programme with professional bouts, bringing different audiences together for a night of boxing and entertainment.

The combination draws on his experience in the events business. Before the boxing shows, Balmoral's work included drinks festivals, concerts, beach soccer and family entertainment. Adamu now brings that experience to a platform designed to attract new boxing audiences and give professional fighters greater visibility.

Speaking exclusively with *Guardian Life,* Adamu discusses building Balmoral, investing in Nigerian fighters, the business behind celebrity bouts, balancing work with family and his ambitions for a broader sports and entertainment company, among other issues.

> *"I don't think I chose boxing. Boxing chose me."*
>
> — EZEKIEL ADAMU

What was life like before Balmoral, and what first pushed you towards business?

During my NYSC, I worked as a systems analyst for about a year. After that, I went on to start Balmoral. Balmoral started between 2007 and 2008.

What sparked your interest in event venues?

I grew up in a sports family. My dad used to run sports for almost two decades as well. I had the opportunity to travel around the world for big sporting events. I saw marquees and tents that looked like houses. Sometimes, the way they set them up looked like a proper home, and the next day, it was no longer there. That was what fascinated me about going into venues. With everything I do, I like to expand and improve. That's the reason we have a network of venues.

What was your first big risk in the business?

I think starting was the first one. Even getting up and saying we were starting an operation was a risk. When we started, I had ideas. We started with an event centre in Oregun. At that time, people preferred street parties. The bragging rights were about having a big party and blocking seven streets so people couldn't get to their homes in the morning. When I started the event centre, I didn't get a single customer for the first year. Getting that first customer was a big moment. It was a 50th birthday celebration.



> *"We're building a boxing audience and getting people to see boxing as entertainment, not as a violent sport."*
>
> — EZEKIEL ADAMU

How has running the business been so far?
It's been almost two decades. Connecting the dots and looking back, I would say it's been rewarding. It's been challenging, but I understand now that a challenge is an opportunity to grow. You need that friction to grow. It's like working out or going to the gym. If you don't work out, you don't build muscle. The more you work, the better you get. I see work as a way of building yourself and developing your qualities as a person.

What drew you to boxing, and why did you decide to invest in Nigerian fighters?
I've done quite a lot of events and tried my hand at different ventures. I've done family entertainment and football events. I don't think I chose boxing. I think boxing chose me. We had an event that was supposed to be an experiential event, and we brought boxers together. Since then, all we've been doing is trying to give our professional boxers opportunities to advance to the next level and take them to the rest of the world. For me, it's a calling. It's the opportunity I saw here in front of us. We have a very youthful demographic, and they don't have the opportunities. Sports transcend everything, so using sports to push them is a no-brainer. I think it's a call to duty.

What challenges have you faced building a boxing business in Nigeria?
The truth is that I'm coming into an environment that has no structure. There's no commercial value at all. We're coming into a sport where we're having to build everything from scratch. There are huge opportunities to make a difference in people's lives, especially with the talent we have here.
Everything that works seamlessly elsewhere, you have to struggle to get done here. Even basic things are a struggle. Sanctioning is a struggle. The boxers' training camps are a challenge. Everything that should be seamless is a challenge here. The great thing we have is our people and the talent. The infrastructure and support are not there.

How do celebrity fights fit into your plans to build a wider audience for Nigerian boxing?
For me, it's about building an ecosystem that works properly. What we're doing at the moment is building the audience for boxing. To build that audience, you have to make it mainstream. Football is what it is now because it has become mainstream.

> *"Making time for the people who matter to me has been my biggest challenge to date. I'm blessed with a good family that understands what I do."*
>
> — EZEKIEL ADAMU



Boxing globally is also a mainstream sport. That's why we're bringing influencers into boxing. We're building a boxing audience and getting people to see boxing as entertainment, not as a violent sport. We didn't reinvent the wheel. We saw how it was done in other places and emulated what worked there. Nigeria has a youthful demographic, and we're a mobile-first economy. The influencers also see it as an opportunity to reach a new audience, while we get a new audience into boxing. It's not just about putting people together. We need people who drive major engagement and help us bring a new audience into the sport.

What support does your platform provide for professional boxers?
Our usual mindset for young people is that they work hard and hope they get an opportunity to travel outside the country, get training and appear on the global stage. I think what we've done in a short period is completely change that. Our athletes and fighters don't necessarily have to leave the country to earn good money and have global visibility. They can have that visibility right here in Nigeria. Even some talents who have travelled don't have the visibility we have. What athletes and talent need is exposure. If you're the best fighter or footballer and nobody sees you, it's like winking in the dark.

What does it cost to stage a major boxing event in Nigeria?
A full production depends on the scale of the event. It's between half a million and about a

million dollars. It depends on the production and everything that comes with it, the media and all of that.

What attracts investors and partners to your vision?

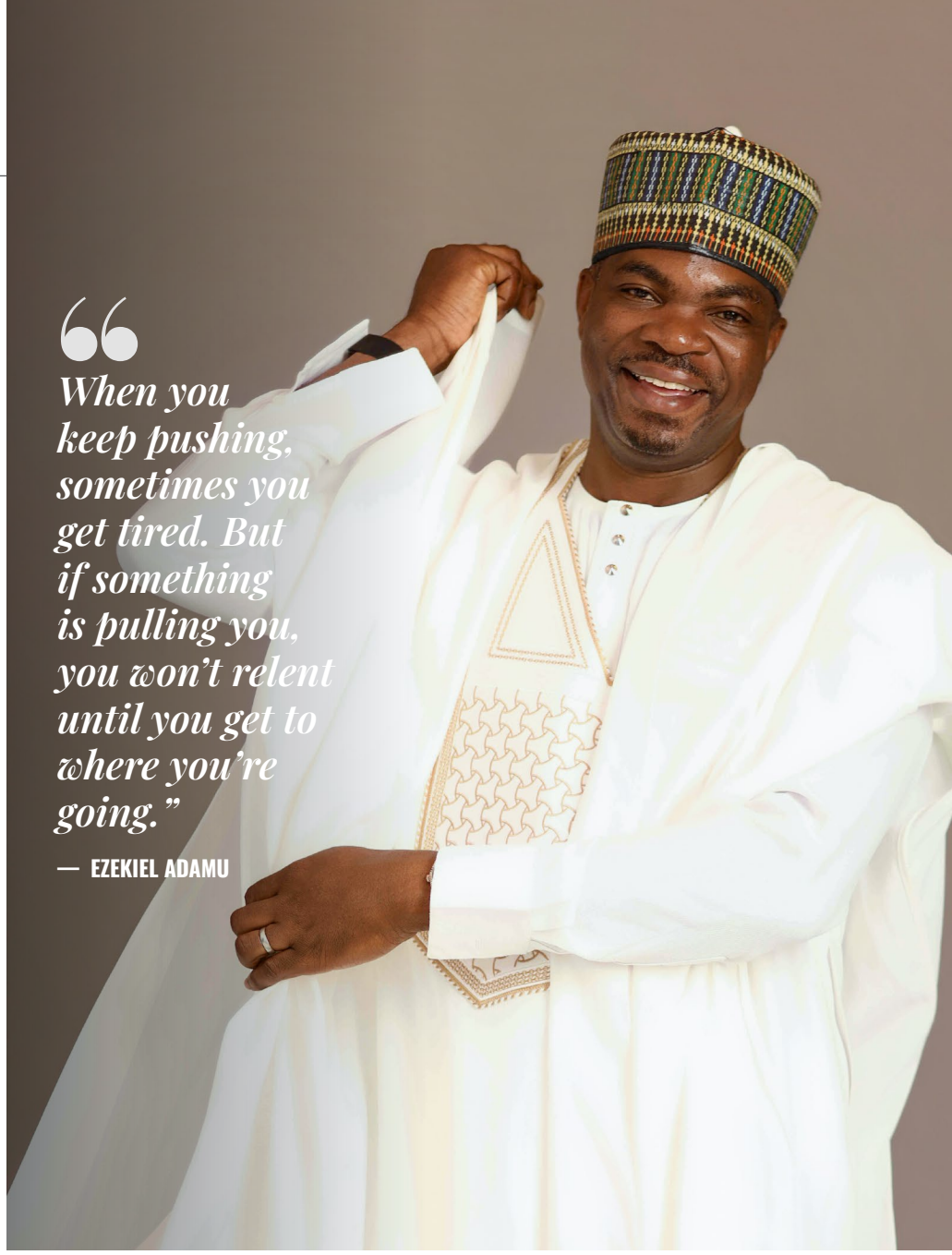
It's the momentum we're building. There are two types of people. You have people who talk about what they want to do. I tell people what I want to do, and I invite them into the vision. I believe that, along the way, you get investors and partners who share that vision to come and join you.

What has building your business demanded of you personally?

Making time for the people who matter to me has been my biggest challenge to date. I'm blessed with a good family that understands what I do. If I had a wish, it would be to spend more time with my family while building this venture. It's something I've never done before, especially the sports side, but it's enjoyable when you see the results you add to other people's lives.

What advice would you give someone who wants to go into boxing?

I'll tell you what I've learnt from business. Experience matters, but you also have to go through the process. Expect challenges. You have to love it. It's a difficult sport, and you have to love what you're doing. If you're going into it saying, "I want to make money," like any business, I don't know how that works. We all want to make money, but you also need to love it and have something pulling you. Let something pull you towards what you're doing instead of pushing you. When you keep pushing, sometimes you get tired. But if something is pulling you, you won't relent until you get to where you're going.



How far do you want to take this business?

We've only been doing boxing at this level for one year. If we've been doing this for a year, imagine where we'll be in the next three to five years. Our vision is not just boxing. Eventually, we want to go into all sports. I believe that sometime next year or the year after, we'll go into football as well. We're already having that discussion with DAZN, and we'll be broadcasting it to a global audience.

For me, the vision is to build a global sports entertainment and media outfit with strong infrastructure. Eventually, we want to be the first sports and entertainment company listed on the stock exchange. The vision is to build a company with a market capitalisation well over $50 billion, using talent while also supporting talent and building infrastructure across Africa.

I believe we've come up with a product Nigerians love, and we'll continue to build infrastructure around it. Beyond the entertainment, there's the professional side, a storytelling element and a global audience, which helps Nigeria's image. If we do this consistently, we get fighters coming here, drive tourism and create employment for people working on the events. I think it's a full ecosystem.

History behind Nigeria's *hairstyle names*

by Dorcas Ayoola



Fashion has always repackaged what already exists, and Nigerian hair culture is a clear example. Hairstyles that generations of Nigerian women grew up wearing, with local names and deep cultural roots, are increasingly appearing on Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest under sleeker, international names.

While this may seem like simple rebranding, it reflects the influence of globalisation, the beauty economy and social media algorithms, which favour names that travel easily across markets. A style may suddenly gain global attention after being worn by celebrities like Beyoncé, Zendaya or SZA, while its original Nigerian identity fades from view. For stylists, international names also make it easier to market to wider audiences and, in some cases, position a familiar technique as something newer and more premium.





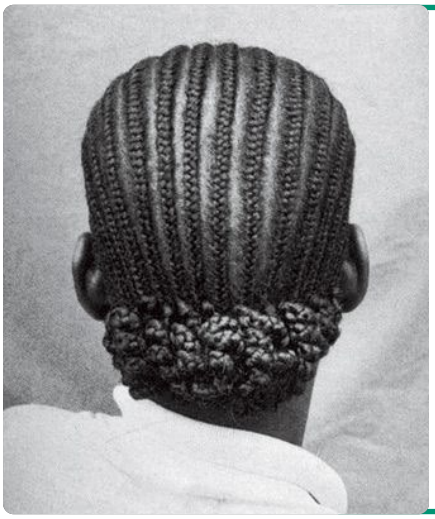
One Million Braids - Micro Braids

"One million braids" was a literal description of just how many tiny braids covered the head, popular through the 1990s and 2000s and prized for its fullness and staying power, often lasting two to three months.
The technique - extremely fine, tightly braided extensions - hasn't changed much at all. What changed is the vocabulary; "micro braids" is now the global search term, even though Nigerian stylists have been perfecting the method for decades, usually with a level of patience and precision the trend videos rarely capture. A full head can still take six to ten hours.

Shade Adu - Fulani Braids

What Nigerians once called Shade Adu now goes by Fulani braids, a name that ties the style back to the Fulani people of West Africa, whose traditional braiding, thin cornrows, a central braid running front to back, and beaded embellishments have directly inspired the look for generations.
It's one of the more accurate renamings on this list, since it correctly credits an actual ethnic group rather than inventing a marketing term out of nothing.





All Back - Cornrows

All back told you exactly what it was: hair braided straight back from the hairline with no parting pattern, no design, just the everyday, low-maintenance style for school, work, or an easy week. The broader term cornrows is now used instead, though cornrows is actually the older, more historically loaded word. It traces back centuries to West and Central Africa, where braid patterns communicated ethnic identity, age, marital status, and even social rank. All back was really just one specific pattern within that much older tradition, and its rise as an umbrella term is one case where global usage has quietly restored a richer history rather than erasing one.

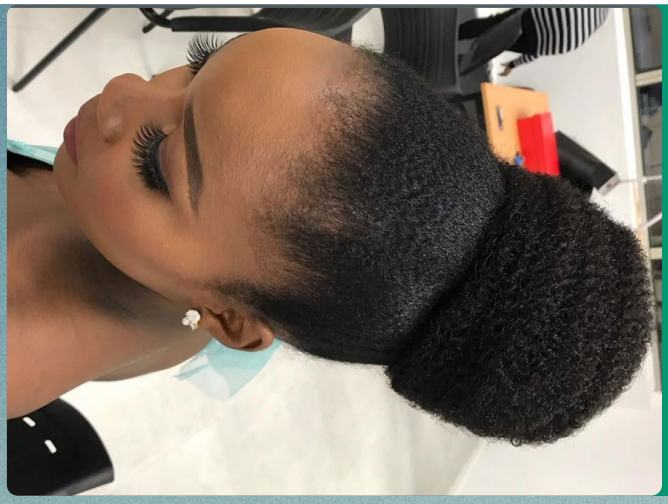


Feathers - Dolly Braids

Feathers, a playful, voluminous style with braids flaring out at the ends, followed a similar path into dolly braids, which push that doll-like fullness even further with curled or crimped ends, an intensified version rather than a genuinely new idea.



Photo credit: Pexels



Packing Gel - Sleek Ponytail

Packing gel needed no further explanation to anyone who grew up with it; hair brushed and laid neatly into a ponytail, often with plenty of gel, for a smooth finish suitable for job interviews, church, or anywhere that called for looking done.
The technique behind today's sleek ponytail is identical. What's different is the polish, silk scarves for laying edges, precision styling gels, and sometimes a clip-in ponytail extension for extra length, turning a five-minute style into a full glam look.

Shuku - Braided Ponytail

Shuku is a Yoruba-origin style in which the hair is braided upward into a raised ponytail at the crown, historically finished with thread wrapping rather than a simple elastic band. It remains one of the most recognisable traditional Nigerian hairstyles for both children and women. Little about the construction has changed in its modern form, but the rebranding as a "braided ponytail" strips away the Yoruba name entirely, replacing it with a purely descriptive English phrase that carries none of the original's linguistic or cultural weight.





Pick and Drop - Boho / French Curl Braids

Pick and drop, individual braids left with a section of curly or straightened hair hanging loose at the end, built for a softer look than fully braided extensions, live on today as boho braids and French curl braids. Boho braids lean into a looser, more textured aesthetic throughout, while French curl braids point specifically to the curl pattern at the ends, but both are direct descendants of the original style, just marketed with more specific vocabulary.

Watermelon Braids - Goddess Braids

Watermelon braids, thick, oversized braids named for their chunky, rounded shape, share an obvious lineage with what's now called goddess braids, which typically add loose, curly pieces mixed between the thick braids for a fuller, more romantic effect. The boldness and scale of the original style remain the throughline.





Ghana Weaving - Feed-in Braids

Ghana weaving, named after Ghana though practised widely across West Africa including Nigeria, involves gradually adding extensions into cornrows so each braid starts thin at the root and thickens toward the end, creating a smooth, flat-to-the-scalp finish. “Feed-in braids” is really just a technical description of the same method, and both terms are still used interchangeably today, making this one of the milder examples of renaming on the list.

Bob Marley - Box Braids

Long, individual, square-parted braids using extension hair were informally called Bob Marley in Nigeria, likely a nod to the reggae icon’s own long, braided image. Today the dominant global term is box braids, referencing the square-shaped parting used to section hair before braiding, and it’s arguably become one of the most internationally recognised protective styles across the African diaspora.





Police Cap - Lemonade Braids

Many Nigerians once knew this side-swept cornrow pattern as a police cap, a nickname for its resemblance to the angled shape of an officer’s cap. The style itself is far older than any of its names, part of a braiding tradition that goes back millennia. But it exploded globally under a new label, lemonade braids, after Beyoncé wore the style, designed by hairstylist Kim Kimble, in the “Formation” and “Sorry” sequences of her 2016 visual album Lemonade. Almost overnight, a single celebrity moment gave an old pattern a new, internationally searchable name, and women were still asking for it in salons years later.

Fixing - Sew-In

Fixing described attaching extensions to natural hair using thread, a technique that demanded real skill since the thread had to be tight enough to hold without damaging the scalp. The internationally recognised term now is sew-in, though that word more precisely refers to attaching a weft of hair with needle and thread onto braided tracks, a related but technically distinct method. In this case, the vocabulary shift has somewhat blurred two related techniques into one catch-all term.







Nigeria's cities are full of buildings that have become landmarks in their own right. Some are tall enough to dominate a skyline, others are recognisable because of their shape, while some have been around for so long that generations of Nigerians have grown up seeing them.

Iconic Nigerian architecture

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

Lagos has its old towers, churches and cultural buildings, many of them now surrounded by newer developments. Abuja has the grand government buildings and religious centres that have come to define its carefully planned skyline. In Ibadan, buildings such as Cocoa House still recall a period when the city was at the centre of the country's agricultural economy.

Some of these structures are decades old. Others are relatively new. Together, they offer a look at how architecture has changed across Nigeria and the different ambitions behind the buildings that have shaped its cities.





1.



Federal Palace Resort, Lagos

Opened in 1960, the Federal Palace Hotel in Victoria Island was built as Nigeria prepared for independence and became an important part of the celebrations.

Its Independence Hall hosted the official independence celebration, while its boardroom is associated with the signing of Nigeria's Declaration of Independence.

A state banquet was also held at the hotel in November 1960. Since then, the hotel has hosted visiting dignitaries, diplomats and major events, becoming part of Lagos' history. Its significance goes beyond its architecture: the Federal Palace Hotel remains one of the places closely connected to Nigeria's transition from colonial rule to independence.

2.

UNILAG Senate Building, Lagos

The Senate Building at the University of Lagos is one of those structures that students and visitors to Akoka would find difficult to miss.

Designed in 1980 and completed in 1985, the 14-storey building has a striking concrete facade covered with deep external sun-shading elements. The building houses executive offices, administrative spaces and the university's Senate chamber.

Its design is very much of its period, with the strong geometric lines and exposed concrete associated with modernist architecture. More than 40 years after it was completed, it remains one of the most recognisable structures on the UNILAG campus.



3.



Cathedral Church of Christ, Lagos

The present cathedral was designed in the Norman Gothic style, with its foundation stone laid in 1924 and construction completed in 1946. Its pointed arches, stonework, stained-glass windows and tall tower give it the appearance of a European church, even though it stands in the middle of one of Nigeria's busiest commercial districts.

The history of the church on the site goes back further. An earlier Christ Church had been established there in the 19th century.

Today, the cathedral is surrounded by modern offices and high-rise buildings, but its older architecture remains one of the clearest reminders of what this part of Lagos looked like before the modern skyline took shape.

4.

National Theatre, Lagos

The National Theatre is probably one of the easiest Nigerian buildings to recognise from a photograph alone. Its huge curved exterior, often compared with a military cap, stands in Iganmu and has been part of the Lagos landscape since the 1970s. Construction began in 1973, with the design inspired by the Palace of Culture and Sports in Varna, Bulgaria. The building was completed in 1975 and later became one of the major venues for FESTAC '77.

Inside, it was designed for much more than theatre performances. The complex included an auditorium, exhibition halls, cinemas and other spaces for cultural events.
The building has had its share of repairs and changes over the years, but its distinctive shape remains familiar to anyone who knows Lagos.



5.



Abuja National Mosque, Abuja

The golden dome of the Abuja National Mosque is one of the defining sights of the capital. Completed in 1984, the mosque stands along Independence Avenue and has four minarets surrounding its large gold-anodised dome. The complex also contains facilities including a library and conference spaces.
Its central location makes the building particularly noticeable. The dome can be seen from several parts of Abuja, especially around the city's central districts.

The mosque has been part of Abuja's landscape since the capital was still taking shape and remains one of the buildings most closely associated with the city.

National Christian Centre, Abuja

6.



The National Christian Centre is another Abuja landmark that is difficult to overlook. The interdenominational church was completed in the early 2000s and dedicated in 2005. Its design combines neo-Gothic elements with a more contemporary style, particularly in its large arches and tall central space.

The interior is just as striking as the exterior, with stained-glass windows, a pipe organ and a broad nave.
One unusual feature is the rotating altar, which was designed to give different sections of the congregation a changing view during services.
Together with the National Mosque nearby, the centre has become part of the architectural character of central Abuja.

7.



World Trade Centre, Tower 2, Abuja

Tower 2, also known as the Abuja World Trade Centre Commercial Tower, stands about 120 metres high and has 24 floors. It was completed in 2017 and has a glass exterior that gives it a distinctly modern appearance.

The tower sits in Abuja's Central Business District as part of the wider World Trade Centre development.

Compared with the low-rise buildings that dominate much of Abuja, its height makes it particularly noticeable. It is also part of the city's gradual move towards a more recognisable high-rise skyline.

Cocoa House, Ibadan

8.



Completed in 1965, the 26-storey building rises about 105 metres above Dugbe. It became the first skyscraper in West Africa and was financed from agricultural commodity revenues, particularly cocoa.

Its original name was Ile Awon Agbe, meaning House of Farmers. The building was a reflection of the economic importance of agriculture at the time. Cocoa was a major source of revenue for the old Western Region, and the decision to build such a tall structure in Ibadan was a statement of that prosperity.

Cocoa House remained Nigeria's tallest building until NECOM House was completed in Lagos in 1979.

9.



Ship House, Abuja

Ship House, the headquarters of the Ministry of Defence in Abuja, is one of them. Located in Area 10, the building was designed with a form that resembles a ship, complete with stepped sections and projecting parts.

The unusual design makes it stand out among the more conventional office buildings around it. It is still used as the headquarters of the Ministry of Defence and remains one of the more memorable government buildings in Abuja.

10.



Mapo Hall, Ibadan

Mapo Hall sits on one of the most prominent points in Ibadan. Construction began in 1925 and the hall was commissioned in 1929. It was designed and constructed by engineer Robert Jones and reportedly cost £24,000 at the time.
Its large columns, broad facade and position on Mapo Hill give it an imposing appearance. From the hill, visitors can also look across a large part of the city.

The building has served as a civic space for decades and has become closely associated with Ibadan. Even as the city has expanded around it, Mapo Hall has remained a familiar part of the landscape.

11.



Emir's Palace, Kano

The Emir's Palace in Kano is large in a very different way from the skyscrapers of Lagos and Abuja.

Its scale comes from the size of the compound, its courtyards, gates and collection of buildings rather than from its height.
The palace dates to the reign of Emir Muhammadu Rumfa, who ruled Kano between 1463 and 1499. It forms part of the historic landscape of Ancient Kano City and reflects the architectural traditions of the Hausa royal compound.
The gates and different sections of the palace were designed around the functions of the royal household and administration.
It is a reminder that some of Nigeria's most impressive architecture existed long before concrete towers and glass facades became common.

12.



NECOM House, Lagos

The 32-storey building was completed in 1979 and rises 160.3 metres above Marina. Its tall telecommunications spire is the feature that gives the building its familiar shape, and it has made NECOM House one of the easiest buildings to pick out on the Lagos skyline.

The building was originally known as the NITEL Building and was built as a telecommunications centre. At the time, a structure of this size was a major statement in a city that was rapidly developing.

13.



First Storey Building, Badagry

The First Storey Building in Badagry is not massive by today's standards. In fact, beside many of the buildings on this list, it is remarkably small.

The building was completed in 1845 after its foundation was laid in 1842. It was built for the Church Missionary Society and became associated with Samuel Ajayi Crowther, who lived there while working on the Yoruba translation of the Bible.
Its two-storey structure is a reminder of an earlier period in Nigeria's history, when buildings of this kind were still unusual.
Located close to the Badagry waterfront, it remains one of the town's most important historic landmarks.

Eko Champagne Pearl Tower, Lagos

14.



The Lagos skyline has been changing quickly, and Eko Atlantic has become one of the clearest examples of that change.

Champagne Pearl Tower is one of the residential buildings that make up the Eko Pearl Towers development. The 30-storey building was completed in 2017 and designed by Tabet Atelier d'Architecture.
Its glass, steel, aluminium and reinforced concrete exterior gives it the sleek appearance associated with modern high-rise developments.
The location is part of its appeal. Standing along the Atlantic waterfront, the tower looks out over an area of Lagos that has been transformed significantly in recent years.

15.



Kingsway Tower, Lagos

Kingsway Tower is one of the newer additions to the architecture of Ikoyi. Completed in 2019, the mixed-use building was designed by South African architectural firm SAOTA. It contains retail spaces, restaurants and offices.

Its most obvious feature is the patterned screen covering much of the facade. Apart from giving the tower its appearance, the screen helps reduce direct sunlight. The design also incorporates greenery into the building.

The tower's curved podium and patterned exterior give it a very different look from many of the older buildings around Ikoyi, reflecting the neighbourhood's changing skyline.

Central Bank of Nigeria Headquarters, Abuja

16.



The headquarters of the Central Bank of Nigeria occupies a prominent position in Abuja's Central Business District.

The large office complex has extensive glazing and a strong vertical form, making it noticeable among the government and commercial buildings around it.

It is not as immediately unusual as Ship House or the National Theatre, but its size and location give it a significant place in the capital's built environment.

As the headquarters of Nigeria's central bank, the building is also closely associated with one of the country's most important financial institutions.

Guardian Woman
EMPOWERMENT • ENTREPRENEURSHIP • LEADERSHIP • MENTORSHIP



Beatrice Eneh:

We have to stop over-mentoring and start funding women

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

Beatrice Nnadili Eneh is an entrepreneur with global experience across multiple industries, including oil and gas, logistics, supply chain management, manufacturing, beauty and hospitality. She is Co-founder of Aerix Group and Executive Director of Aerix Safety, where she has trained over 500 women in the Niger Delta in PPE manufacturing. Her passion for the beauty industry led to the creation of Beauty in the Motherland (BITML), a platform focused on strengthening Africa's beauty ecosystem. She holds an MEng from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an MBA from Lancaster University Management School and a BSc from the University of Uyo. In this interview, she speaks on BITML's third edition having trained and empowered more than 600 people in the beauty industry, while connecting entrepreneurs with mentors, investors, buyers and business opportunities.

You have trained over 500 women in the Niger Delta to acquire skills in PPE manufacturing and empowered more than 600 people in the beauty industry. What have these experiences taught you about the role of skills acquisition and economic empowerment in helping women achieve greater independence and influence?

Women everywhere are rewriting the rules, changing the narrative and claiming their seats at different spheres of impact. Yet, there is still a massive population that remains untapped, women who dream of doing more, who want to build nations and economies, but are limited by lack of resources and someone willing to take a chance on them. When I look back at the women we trained in the Niger Delta and the hundreds we have walked alongside in the beauty industry, the biggest lesson I have learned is that empowerment is not just about teaching a skill; it is about handing a woman a mirror to see her own strength. Once she is economically empowered, she stops waiting for permission and takes a chance on her dreams. I chose a long time ago to be a sister and a mentor because I believe the future is incredibly inclusive. But to get there, those of us who have found our voices must hold the door open for the women still trying to find theirs. My goal is to give every woman the advantage, and I will continually pursue it.

> *"I want to see African women moving beyond running micro-businesses to owning the supply chain."*
> — BEATRICE ENEH

Beauty in the Motherland is in its third edition. Aside from being a hub where renowned beauty brands converge to scale their businesses, what other impact has BITML achieved?

The greatest triumph of Beauty in the Motherland has never been about the sheer volume of our numbers, though seeing thousands walk through our doors is breathtaking. For me, my co-founder and our entire team, the true gift is the clarity that attendees leave our conference halls with. Year after year, we bring industry powerhouses together to mentor, teach and equip thousands of dreamers for free. It warms my heart knowing that attendees do not just leave with heavy shopping bags from their favourite vendors; they walk out with sharpened vision, business roadmaps and the inner conviction that their ideas deserve to be heard.

Beyond that, we created a space where human connection is the real currency. Corporate executives, international buyers and seasoned mentors who you would never run into simply walking down an everyday street meet within our halls. We have watched life-changing partnerships form over a shared cup of coffee, employment opportunities handed out on the spot, supply contracts signed across exhibition tables and dreams funded in real time.

Through the BITML Pitch Competition, supported by partners such as the Enterprise



Development Centre and Shecluded, we have taken that influence further. We do not just hand founders a microphone; we teach them structure. They are trained, drilled on business strategy and taught how to defend their numbers. Winning the ₦6 million seed capital is beautiful, but the true influence is seeing these founders' step into rooms full of investors and speak with absolute authority. That transformation is the heart of this movement.

What has been the biggest challenge since the beginning of Beauty in the Motherland?

The most daunting challenge at our inception was getting people to believe in the scale of what we were building. When you set out to build a platform of this magnitude on African soil, you are not just hosting an event; you are asking an entire ecosystem to dismantle decades of operating in silos. You are convincing domestic and international brands to trust you with their capital, reputations and time. In the beginning, the beauty sector was too often treated like a seasonal lifestyle hobby rather than a capital-intensive, multi-billion-dollar economic engine. Behind the elegant halls were sleepless nights, logistics that seemed impossible to untangle and moments of quiet prayer where all we had was our conviction and belief in the vision. Managing supply chains, negotiating venue set-up, aligning hundreds of vendors and building institutional credibility from scratch required sheer grit. But what kept us anchored was knowing we were not building this for ourselves. We were building a table large enough for the entire continent to sit at.

Would you say the objectives that made you set up Beauty in the Motherland are being met?

Definitely. We started this platform because our industry was fragmented. Brilliant formulators were working in isolation, and Africa was largely seen merely as a consumer market rather than a creator of wealth. Today, that synergy is alive and tangible. Seeing veteran founders and emerging indie creators sit side by side, sharing meals, swapping suppliers and holding candid business conversations is living proof that we are doing something right. We have built an international bridge. Foreign brands now deliberately purchase exhibition booths because they recognise that Lagos is where the continental consumer pulse beats loudest, while our homegrown brands are reaching thousands of new, loyal audiences and recording total sell-outs.

Women creating wealth

...with Eniola Peters

The Guardian Woman Festival is gearing up for the 2027 edition, hosted by Federal Palace Resort. This will hold under the theme **"Women as Wealth Creators,"** spotlighting women's economic power, financial independence, entrepreneurship and their role in driving sustainable growth.

Eniola Peter a seasoned HR professional with over 12 years of experience, speaks on empowering women and youths to reach their full potential while harping on the festival's theme.



Take us through your career path?

My career has really been a journey of discovering my passion for helping people find their place and thrive. After university, I naturally found myself helping friends and people around me get jobs. I discovered recruitment and realised I genuinely enjoyed connecting people to opportunities that aligned with their skills and aspirations. That passion eventually led me to work with Jobberman, where I gained deeper experience in recruitment, talent management and understanding the relationship between people and organisations.

Over time, I noticed a recurring gap: many talented people were struggling to get jobs, not necessarily because they lacked ability, but because they lacked workplace readiness, confidence, the right positioning and employability skills. That observation inspired me to establish MEG Consults, an HR and Career Development firm focused on helping individuals and organisations thrive. Through MEG Consults and initiatives like Ready Set Work, I have trained and mentored thousands of young people, helping them become more prepared for the world of work. My journey has also expanded into empowering women through Women in Career Advancement Network (WICAN), and through my work with Chayil Lady Ministry, where I focus on helping women grow in identity, purpose, career and life.

> *"Wealth creation gives women a voice, confidence and greater capacity to influence their communities"*
>
> — BEATRICE ENEH

What does women creating wealth mean to you?

To me, women creating wealth goes beyond earning money. It means women having the capacity to create value, own assets, build businesses and careers, make financial decisions and create opportunities that outlive them. It is also about moving from merely earning income to building something sustainable, that gives you choices, provides for your family and creates opportunities for others. I believe wealth creation gives women a voice, confidence and greater capacity to influence their communities.

How are you creating sustainable wealth as a woman?

I am building sustainable wealth by intentionally creating multiple streams of value, rather than depending on one source of income. Through MEG Consults, I have built a business around my expertise in HR, recruitment and career development. I also invest in intellectual property through my books, training programmes, conferences and communities.

WICAN and my other initiatives allow me to build communities and platforms that create economic opportunities for women, while my work in youth employability allows me to invest in the next generation.

For me, sustainable wealth is not just about what I can earn today. It is about building systems, businesses, intellectual property, relationships and impact that can continue to create value tomorrow.

What is your charge to other women on living purposefully?

My charge is simple: do not live a life that is merely busy; live a life that is intentional. Purpose is not always one big, dramatic discovery. Sometimes it unfolds through the things you are passionate about, the problems you are uniquely positioned to solve and the people whose lives you are called to impact.

Give yourself permission to grow, evolve and start again when necessary. Don't measure your journey against another woman's timeline. And most importantly, don't wait until everything is perfect before you begin. Start with what you have, where you are, and keep becoming. Because a purposeful woman doesn't just ask, "What can I get from life?" She also asks, "What can my life give?"

Interested organisations can explore sponsorship, partnership and programme-hosting opportunities by contacting Guardianwomanfestival@guardian.ng, Ricketts: +234 802 301 5115 or Olayinka: +234 808 695 1129.

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Unekwu Abdullahi:

Information is not enough, young people need navigation

by Geraldine Akutu

Unekwu Noel Abdullahi is the founder of Navigating With Noel, a youth development organisation that has equipped over 500 young people across Africa and the diaspora through mentoring, skills training, and community. A former earth scientist who spent two decades with Chevron Nigeria, he now leads Disc Consult, an AI transformation consultancy based in Plano, Texas. He is a pastor, and he and his wife Lucy have been married for over twenty years. In this interview, he shares his philanthropic journey and passion to equip the youths for success.

What inspired you to create Navigating With Noel, and can you talk more about it?

It began with a question I could not answer. In 2011 I was on a missionary trip to Ghana. My team and I were sharing the gospel with young men caught up in internet fraud, what we call "Yahoo Yahoo." We told them to turn away from it. Then one of them looked at me and asked, "What do we do now? This business is all we know."

That question hit me like a punch. I realised those young men were not only spiritually lost; they were economically trapped. They had real skills, technical, communication, marketing, and they were pointing all of it in the wrong direction because nobody had shown them a legitimate alternative. I saw something that day that has shaped everything since: faith without practical opportunity is incomplete evangelism. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do for a young man is teach him a skill that legally puts food on his table.

I also understood that question personally. From the age of four I was raised by my elder brother, a military officer who gave me structure, discipline, and a picture of what a responsible man looks like. Later, God placed spiritual fathers in my path who did the same for my inner man. I did not become who I am because I was brilliant. I became who I am because somebody navigated with me. Those young men in Ghana had nobody. So, we bought a few computers, with the support of my principal Pastor Afolabi Oladele, and we started a small knowledge centre right there in Ghana.

The gospel came with a computer. It did not transform hundreds of lives, but it taught me a great deal. Years later, serving as a youth pastor in Lagos, I was surrounded by bright, educated, jobless young people. Degrees but no opportunities. Potential but no pathways. My partner and I put a substantial amount of our own money, not donor funds, not venture capital, into a startup to train and employ them. That one did not succeed in the traditional sense either. I do not call those years failures. I call them expensive education. Ghana taught me about need. The Lagos startup taught me about sustainability. Those lessons converged into Navigating With Noel. NWN carries the same urgent mission as those early experiments, but this time it was built to scale and built to last. Christ-centred but skills-focused. Character and competence together, because technical skill without character simply produces a more sophisticated criminal.

> *Every young person will be mentored by something, whether social media, peer pressure, or a deliberate guide.*
>
> — UNEKWU ABDULLAH

Can you share some of the challenges you encountered from the beginning and how you were able to surmount them?

The first was funding. For most of our existence, NWN has been almost entirely founder-funded. I paid for it out of my own pocket because I believed in it, and I hold to the principle that if you are not willing to personally sacrifice for a vision, you cannot expect others to believe in it. But a vision that depends permanently on one man's wallet is not a vision, it is a hobby with good intentions. We are now deliberately restructuring: documenting our impact properly, building a board with real governance, and opening up to grants, CSR partnerships, and programme sponsors.

The second was the model itself. The right vision with the wrong model will frustrate you. Before NWN worked, two earlier attempts did not. We had to learn that mentoring one person at a time is powerful but does not scale, that training people is not the same as employing them, and that something spiritual still has to be financially sustainable. NWN is on its fourth iteration for that reason.

The third was people and distance. Volunteers are enthusiastic in January and invisible by March, and I live and work in the United States while much of our community is in Nigeria. We solved both the same way: by building systems rather than depending on my presence. Country directors, assigned coaches, defined roles, service-level expectations, and a leadership team that can run programmes whether or not I am in the room.

Talk about some of the remarkable achievements the foundation has made since it started.?

Six years in, we have impacted over 500 young people, delivered more than 50 programmes, and built a digital community of over 5,000 members across Africa and the diaspora. We have delivered over 1,000 hours of structured learning. But the numbers I am proudest of are the smaller ones. Our Life Ready Individual programme takes young people through six months of structured mentoring, with a personal coach assigned to each one based on a personality assessment, not guesswork. We have created pathways into legitimate employment and entrepreneurship.

We have taken sessions into secondary schools for International Youth Day and the International Day of the Girl Child. We have run financial literacy work like our "Ponzi, Pyramids and Promises" webinar at a time when young Nigerians were losing their savings to schemes. And we have built something that outlasts me: a board of trustees, a structured leadership team, country and regional directors, and an alumni body we are now organising into a proper network. That is the real achievement. NWN is no longer just Noel.

What values and principles have led to your success?

Christ-centredness first. I do not separate my faith from my work. It is the same man in the pulpit, in the boardroom, and in a mentoring session. Character and competence together. This is not a slogan for us; it is a lesson we learned

66 songs that shaped our music





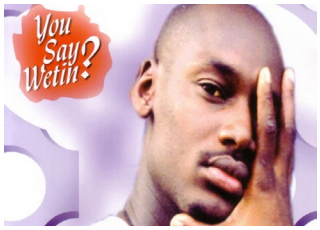
01

Sweet Mother — Prince Nico Mbarga & Rocafil Jazz (1976)
Rating: 9/10
There's hardly any Nigerian who does not know this gem while growing up. It's one of the most enduring classics from Nigeria's 70's highlife boom. Only a few Nigerian songs have achieved this level of social ownership. He brought to the fore the virtue of motherhood, celebrating Nigerian mothers with his scintillating harmonies and guitar riffs. Across weddings, birthdays, beer parlours, family parties, radio, buses: "Sweet Mother" escaped its original moment and became communal property across much of Africa.



02

Water No Get Enemy — Fela Kuti & Africa 70 (1975)
Rating: 9/10
Fela Anikulapo-Kuti was known during his lifetime as a warlock of sorts; he used his music to confront every facet of society he felt was plagued. It's normal to doubt if there's any record that he made that can actually rival the transcendental nature of Water No Get Enemy. Minus the graceful jazzy pianos and fiery Afrobeat groove underneath the song, its evergreen, proverbial, and, somewhat poetic, messaging kept it strongly in rotation. It was one of those Fela's records that did not tackle the polity; but rather philosophized about it.



03

African Queen — 2Baba (2004)
Rating: 9/10
Barely before people could even process the breakup of their favourite RnB boy band, Plantashun Boiz, Innocent 'Tuface' Idibia, one-third of the crew, broke out as a solo act with African Queen. Despite the record causing a ruckus between Tuface and Faze over intellectual property, Tuface soared to become a major countrywide act thanks to the song's arresting melodies and flattering lyrics. It is also the greatest song produced by the late OJB Jezreel. Its appearance in the 2006 Hollywood comedy flick, Phat



04

Joromi — Sir Victor Uwaifo & His Melody Maestros (1965)
Rating: 9/10
There's no other song about mermaids anywhere in the world that sounds as groovy as Victor Uwaifo's ageless bop, Joromi. The Nigerian highlife maestro found the supernatural inside a guitar progression that makes one drop all their inhibitions aside and actually muse on the nature of the popular 'Mami wata' (mermaids). Joromi draws from Edo storytelling, and Uwaifo -- a former legendary wrestler -- seized the spotlight in early post-independence Nigeria. The record still sounds alive today,



05

Essence — Wizkid feat. Tems (2020)
Rating: 9/10
The world needed something stronger than just vaccine shots to get through the emotional turbulence of 2020's global Coronavirus pandemic. The world-wide lockdowns in that era caused a lot of musicians to reach the tip of their souls in birthing evergreen classics; there's been no other year since then with the same volume of timeless hits. And, there's also been barely any song that caused a global cultural milestone for Nigerian music as profoundly as Essence did.



06

Ojuelegba — Wizkid (2014)
Rating: 9/10
There's a certain type of Lagos struggle that is difficult to explain if you have not lived around it. Just last month, thousands of commuters were stranded across the Lagos to Ibadan expressway due to a crippling gridlock. Every bonafide hustler in this city of Yellowed buses must definitely know the Ojuelegba suburb. It's definitely one of the most popular districts now after Wizkid immortalised it in his magnum opus, Ojuelegba. Wizkid, already a superstar at the time, looked backwards at the days when he was still moving around Ojuelegba chasing studio sessions



07

Zombie — Fela Kuti & Afrika 70 (1976)
Rating: 9/10
If Water No Get Enemy was Fela philosophising about society, Zombie was him entering a gidigbo tussle with it. Released in 1976, the record was a vicious mockery of the Nigerian military, comparing soldiers who blindly followed orders to zombies without minds of their own. Even the arrangement sounds militaristic in places; the chants, horns and sharp commands are deliberately theatrical, deliberately Fela. It is one of the most daring protest records ever made in Nigeria, and history gave it even more weight after General Obasanjo's soldiers invaded and burnt Kalakuta Republic the following year.



08

Calm Down — Rema (2022)
Rating: 9/10
One Benin boy sat down somewhere and told the world it needed to calm down. Everyone listened, from Lagos to Mumbai. This was the song that properly showed how far Rema's unconventional pop instincts could travel. Produced by Andre Vibez and London, the record is built around a very simple romantic chase, with Rema stretching words, bending melodies and singing almost like he is talking to himself. The Selena Gomez remix took it even further, eventually becoming the first African artist-led track to cross one billion streams on Spotify and peaking at No. 3 on the Billboard Hot 100.

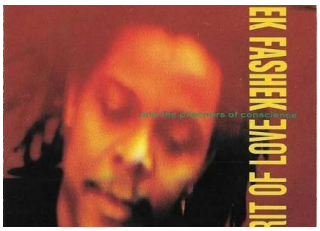


09

***Osondi Owendi* — Chief Stephen Osita Osadebe (1984)**

Rating: 9/10

There are songs that people know, and then there are songs that almost become proverbs. Osondi Owendi was wisdom capsules in the most scintillating highlife groove that exists. Released in 1984, Osadebe built the record around an old Igbo philosophy — what pleases one person may disgust another — and stretched that simple truth across one of the most graceful highlife arrangements ever recorded. Decades later, the phrase still appears casually in Nigerian conversation, and the song has been revisited by younger musicians including MC Loph and Flavour.



10

***Send Down the Rain* — Majek Fashek (1988)**

Rating: 9/10

There was something almost mystical about Majek Fashek, and Send Down the Rain did very little to kill that reputation. Released during his 1988 Prisoner of Conscience era, the reggae classic arrived with Majek sounding like somebody standing between a congregation and the heavens. Then came the stories of rain actually falling during performances of the song, and the mythology practically wrote itself. It became one of the biggest Nigerian songs of its period and helped turn Majek into the country's defining reggae superstar.

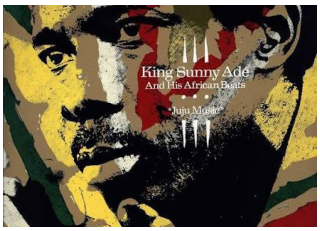


11

***Love Nwantiti (Ah Ah Ah)* — CKay (2019)**

Rating: 9/10

Ckay's Love Nwantiti became that gift that kept on giving – not just to the young artist himself; but also to the entire country. After surfacing, in 2019, the song went uber-viral on social media. Produced by Tempoe, the song is a mesmerizing love bop that became a global hit. Its "ah-ah-ah" refrain travelled across continents, while several international remixes further stretched its lifespan, from El Grande Toto to Franglish to Kuami Eugene. By 2022, it had peaked at No. 26 on the Billboard Hot 100 and No. 2 on the Global 200.



12

***Ja Funmi* — King Sunny Adé & His African Beats (1982)**

Rating: 9/10

King Sunny Adé's Ja Funmi remains one of the finest displays of what happens when Jùjú music is given enough space to breathe. Taken from his landmark 1982 album, Juju Music, the song gathers talking drums, guitars, shekere, steel guitar, congas and several other layers into one large, hypnotic spin that KSA is known for. By now, KSA had already expanded jùjú's vocabulary with layered guitars, pedal-steel, synthesisers and large-stage ensembles; his Hawaiian-tinged guitar sound heralded his Jùjú apostolate to the world.



13

***Oliver Twist* — D'banj (2011)**

Rating: 8/10

By 2011, D'banj and Don Jazzy had already built one of the greatest pop partnerships Nigerian music had ever seen. And their bold musical experiments kept them at the helm of business across the 2010s. When Oliver Twist dropped in 2011, everyone yapped about it, especially with the cameo appearance by Kanye West in the official music video. The co-sign felt like their victory lap. D'banj spends the record listing women he finds attractive — from Beyoncé to Rihanna and Genevieve Nnaji — basically admitting that, like the Charles Dickens' famous character the song is titled after, he always wants more.



14

***One Love* — Onyeka Onwenu (1986)**

Rating: 9/10

This writer only got to see Onyeka Onwenu perform barely two years before her passing. And, fortunately, this song was one of the gems she gracefully rendered that day. There are only a handful of Nigerian pop records that sound almost like unofficial national anthems. Onyeka Onwenu's One Love is one of Nigeria's unofficial anthems. The record came out at a time when there was palpable tension in the country's geopolitics; it beckoned Nigerians to find common ground.



15

***Fall* — Davido (2017)**

Rating: 9/10

Released in 2017, the record initially felt like another giant Davido hit at home before developing an extraordinary second life abroad. By 2019, it had become the longest-charting Nigerian pop song in Billboard history at the time, while gaining particularly strong traction across American radio and Shazam. Fall arrived without the sort of international collaboration people once assumed African musicians needed to cross over. It just kept travelling on its own. There's something almost annoyingly effortless about Fall.



16

***Gongo Aso* — 9ice (2008)**

Rating: 9/10

Perhaps Asake's recent Grammy win was because people in the recording academy were not really familiar with the reign of Yoruba pop. Back in the early 2000s, voices like 9ice redefined what Yoruba pop fusions could sound like; and he crooned hits that united everyone across the country under the frenzy of the dancefloor. Gongo Aso was a pure hypnotic cruise, tucked with Yoruba proverbs, street slang and ID Cabasa's colourful production. It became one of the biggest songs of 2008.



17

Sawale **— Cardinal Rex Lawson & His Mayor's Dance Band (Mid-1960s)**
Rating: 9/10
It is difficult to talk about Nigerian highlife -- one of the country's most pristine genres -- without eventually arriving at Cardinal Rex Lawson. His 60's hit, Sawale, is one of those songs whose melody has survived so long that many younger Nigerians probably met it somewhere else first. Lawson's original carried the effortless highlife swing that made him one of the great stars of the 60s highlife era, with those breezy horns and guitars almost transporting the listener into another time.



18

Seun Rere **— Christy Essien-Igbokwe (1981)**
Rating: 9/10
The legendary Christy Essien-Igbokwe had one of those voices that could sound motherly without ever losing its pop appeal. On Seun Rere, taken from her celebrated 1981 album Ever Liked My Person?, she turns the simple Yoruba admonition to "do good" into something deeply memorable. It is a song for children, parents, classrooms and anybody still trying to navigate life with some decency. More than four decades later, it remains firmly inside Nigerian cultural memory; younger acts have remade it, while the song has even found new life in contemporary screen projects.



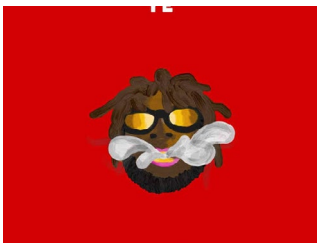
19

Shakomo **— The Remedies (1998)**
Rating: 9/10
The late '90s were when Nigerian youth began seriously wrestling pop culture away from the older regime, and few records captured that rebellion better than Shakomo. The Remedies, comprising Eedris Abdulkareem, Eddy Montana and Tony Tetuila, arrived carrying oversized hip-hop swagger, American rap influences and enough Nigerian attitude to make the whole thing feel new at home. Shakomo helped open the gates for the urban-pop revolution that would explode properly in the following decade.
The song also carries its own messy



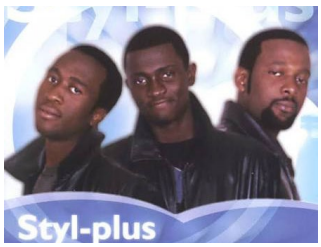
20

Fire in Soweto **— Sonny Okosun (1977)**
Rating: 8/10
Sonny Okosun was something closer to what Macklemore is right now in the US pop scene. Released in 1977, barely a year after the Soweto uprising in South Africa, Fire in Soweto carried his anger against apartheid into a fiery blend of Afro-pop, reggae, highlife and rock. It became a major international hit and helped establish Okosun as one of the continent's strongest musical voices against racial oppression. Okosun's voice remains charged with urgency throughout.



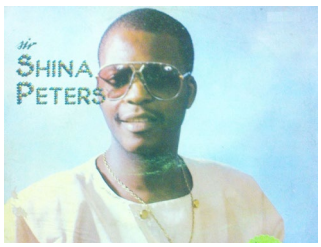
21

Ye **— Burna Boy (2018)**
Rating: 8/10
What started as a freestyle inside Shina Peller's nightclub, Quilox, quickly became one of Burna Boy's most successful, career-lifting releases. For years, Burna Boy was that immensely gifted musician Nigerian pop seemed unsure what to do with. Then Ye happened. Produced by Phantom and released on his 2018 album Outside, he sings about survival, death, money, enemies and the exhausting hustle of being Nigerian, but wraps all that tension inside that triumphant, horn-driven groove.



22

Olufunmi **— Styl-Plus (2003)**
Rating: 9/10
Before there was streaming-era Afrobeats romance, there was a period when Nigerian boys could barely enter a university hostel without hearing Styl-Plus pleading for somebody's love. Olufunmi was the crown jewel of that era. Released in 2003 and produced by Mekoyo, the record helped Styl-Plus become perhaps the defining Nigerian RnB group of the early 2000s. Everything about it leans into heartbreak without ever collapsing into corniness.



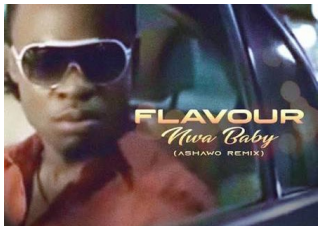
23

Afro-Juju **— Sir Shina Peters & His International Stars (1989)**
Rating: 9/10
Sir Shina Peters practically detonated inside Nigerian popular culture with Ace (Afro-Juju Series 1) in 1989. Its defining song, Afro-Juju, was fast, colourful and almost reckless in its energy. Peters and producer Laolu Akins pulled Jùjú music into conversation with Afrobeat, electronic keyboards, saxophones and the more urgent pulse of late-'80s Nigerian dance music. The Ace album reportedly went double platinum, while Peters himself became one of the biggest entertainers in the country almost overnight.



24

Konko Below **— Lagbaja (2000)**
Rating: 9/10
Nobody quite made Nigerian music feel like theatre the way Lagbaja did at the turn of the millennium. As a child, his masked persona often scared many children like this writer. Yet, that mystique moved powerfully behind his music – part mischievous, part melodramatic. Released in 2000 on his Me album, Konko Below piles heavy percussion, guitars, horns and that infectious chorus into a pinching groove. Lagbaja was polished from the same potash of Afrobeat, highlife, jazz, funk and Yoruba traditional music, and Konko Below is one of his classic tunes that brought all those instincts onto the same dance floor.



25

Nwa Baby (Ashawo Remix) — Flavour (2010)
Rating: 9/10
When it comes to waist-whining grooves, the Enugu-bred singer Flavour is Nigeria's merchant of seductive igbo pop. On Nwa Baby (Ashawo Remix), he went back to Cardinal Rex Lawson's Sawale, borrowed its immortal melodic centre and dressed it for another generation. Flavour's voice slips effortlessly between old-school highlife phrasing and the more sensual pop style that eventually made him a superstar. Its chorus is a recipe for an instant party-starter, more than a decade later.



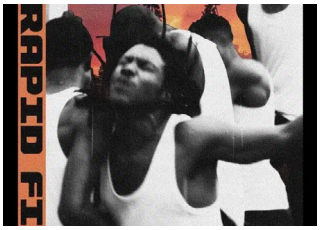
26

Skin Tight — Mr Eazi feat. Efya (2015)
Rating: 9/10
There was a time when Afrobeats production seemed obsessed with filling every available pocket with drums. Then Mr Eazi and Juls came around in a different direction. Released in 2015, it became one of the records that established his Ghana-Nigeria "Banku" fusion and influenced the softer direction African pop took afterwards. Skin Tight, featuring Ghanaian vocal powerhouse Efya, is incredibly sparse. Efya glides into the record so naturally that the whole thing feels like two lovers talking inside a rhythm.



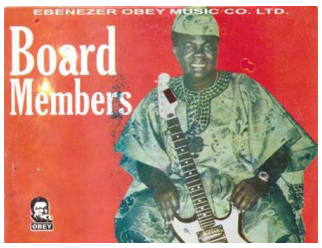
27

Fantastic Man — William Onyeabor (1979)
Rating: 9/10
William Onyeabor was making electronic African music at a time when synthesisers still looked like alien technology to much of the Nigerian music scene. On Fantastic Man, released in 1979 on his Tomorrow album, he turns an almost childish request for affirmation — basically, "tell me how good I look" — into nearly seven minutes of funky synths, drum machines and deadpan seduction. There's something incredibly futuristic about the record even today.



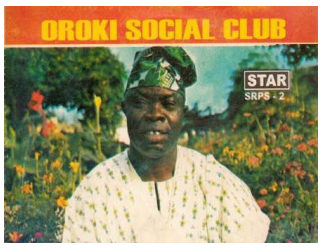
28

Rapid Fire — Santi feat. Shane Eagle, Amaarae & Tomi Agape (2018)
Rating: 8/10
Before alté became a convenient tag for almost every Nigerian artiste operating outside mainstream Afropop, there was Santi building his own strange universe around dancehall, RnB, rap, fashion and grimy, almost VHS-like visual storytelling. Rapid Fire, released in 2018 and produced by Genio Bambino, perhaps captured that world at its most accessible. Shane Eagle, Amaarae and Tomi Agape move in and out of the record, while Santi holds everything together with his hazy, patois-inflected delivery.



29

Board Members — Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey & His International Brothers (1972)
Rating: 9/10
Ebenezer Obey could spend an eternity inside a groove and somehow never lose you. His 1972 Board Members recording is a proper relic of Nigeria's post-war social-club era, when successful businessmen, community associations and elite Yoruba circles became important patrons of Jùjú musicians. Obey sings names, observations and praise poetry while his guitars quietly weave themselves into knots underneath him.



30

Oroki Social Club — Haruna Ishola (1971)
Rating: 9/10
Haruna Ishola did not need electric guitars or shiny pop arrangements to command Nigeria. Oh, but he did. And, quite interestingly, too. Released in 1971, Oroki Social Club became the Apala legend's biggest-selling release, celebrating the famous Osogbo social club while leaning heavily on percussion, praise singing and that thick, commanding voice of his. Ishola's popularity is useful evidence against the flat-earth idea that Nigerian pop only became commercially viable when it began westernising itself.



31

Ijoya — Weird MC (2006)
Rating: 9/10
Weird MC returned to Nigeria after years abroad and dropped a record that threw hip-hop drums, Yoruba percussion and one of the most aggressive female rap performances of that era into the same pot. Produced by JJC and Don Jazzy, the 2006 hit became her great mainstream breakthrough and helped her After Da Storm era dominate radio and music television. More importantly, Weird MC was doing all this inside a rap industry where women were rarely allowed to occupy the centre for long.



32

Denge Pose — Baba Fryo (1997)
Rating: 8/10
There was a period when Ajegunle dictated how Nigeria danced. Baba Fryo's Denge Pose sits squarely inside that history. The record turned a simple posture into a national craze, powered by the Galala movement that was bubbling through Lagos' tougher neighbourhoods in the 1990s. Fryo's ragga delivery, physical performance style and unmistakable street energy helped create a completely different type of Nigerian pop star from the polished highlife and RnB figures that came before him.



33

***Love Me Jeje* — Seyi Sodimu feat. Shaffy Bello (1997)**

Rating: 9/10

Few Nigerian love songs from the '90s have aged this gracefully. Released in 1997, Love Me Jeje found Seyi Sodimu and Shaffy Bello folding Nigerian phrasing into a smooth R&B and hip-hop framework at a time when the country's new urban-pop identity was only beginning to take shape. There is an innocence to the song that makes it almost impossible to dislike. Nearly three decades later, Tems went back to its famous refrain for her own Love Me JeJe, dragging the original into another global chapter.



34

***Johnny* — Yemi Alade (2013)**

Rating: 9/10

Everybody knows a 'Johnny.' That was probably half the genius of Yemi Alade's 2013 smash. Produced by Selebobo, Johnny takes the very familiar story of a cheating man and turns it into colourful theatre, with Alade chasing the titular philanderer through one lie after another. The song exploded far beyond Nigeria, becoming especially enormous across East, Central and Southern Africa and turning Alade into one of the continent's most recognisable pop stars. Its Clarence Peters-directed video eventually amassed well over 100 million YouTube views.



35

***Bumper to Bumper* — Wande Coal (2008)**

Rating: 9/10

It is difficult to pick one song from Mushin 2 Mo'Hits because that album practically behaved like a greatest-hits compilation on arrival. There's hardly any Nigerian album that packs the same punch as it does. One of its lead singles, Bumper to Bumper, was first released in late 2008 before appearing on the 2009 album. Don Jazzy builds a ridiculously buoyant Naija pop groove while Wande bends his voice around it. By 2009, the song was everywhere.



36

***Oleku* — Ice Prince feat. Brymo (2010)**

Rating: 9/10

In 2010, it felt like every Nigerian rapper had a verse for Oleku. Ice Prince had already started making a name for himself at Chocolate City, but this was the record that pushed him into another level. Built around Jesse Jagz's instantly recognisable production, the song had the kind of beat that made you want to rap along, while Brymo's chorus gave it the emotional lift that made it stick. The song quickly became one of the most remixed Nigerian records of its time, with rappers across the country taking their own shot at the beat.



37

***Star Signs* — Odunsi (The Engine) feat. Runtown (2018)**

Rating: 9/10

Odunsi's Star Signs sounds like someone excavated an expensive Nigerian pop record from the 1980s and handed it to a bunch of Lagos nepo kids raised on the internet. Taken from his 2018 debut album rare., the self-produced song leans into glittery synths, funk, RnB and the kind of retro-pop sheen that separated Odunsi from the Afrobeats centre at the time. Runtown's presence was particularly important to unify the mainstream with the alte soundscape.



38

***Do Me* — P-Square feat. Waje (2007)**

Rating: 9/10

P-Square had mastered spectacle by the time Do Me appeared on their 2007 album Game Over. The record also became an important mainstream introduction for Waje, who was still relatively unknown at the time. Interestingly, its standalone digital release came later in 2008, which explains some of the conflicting dates around the song. But Nigerians had already met it through Game Over. Do Me remains peak P-Square; massive, dramatic and built with dancing in mind from the first second.

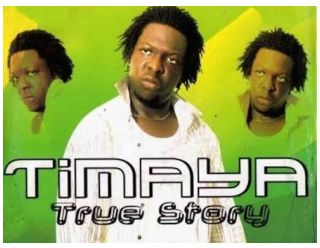


39

***Yahooze* — Olu Maintain (2007)**

Rating: 9/10

Olu Maintain turned money, champagne and an extravagant lifestyle into a pop fantasy, while Puffy Tee's production mixed Fuji elements with the polished sound of mid-2000s Nigerian pop. The song arrived at a time when the word "Yahoo" already carried a very specific meaning in Nigeria, so its celebration of wealth was always going to attract questions about where that money came from. Released in 2007, Yahooze became a national craze, complete with its own dance, and picked up major domestic awards the following year.



40

***Dem Mama* — Timaya (2005)**

Rating: 9/10

Dem Mama revisited the 1999 Odi massacre in Bayelsa, where Nigerian security forces devastated the community. Over a dancehall-inflected rhythm, Timaya sings about murdered parents, orphaned children and the pain of carrying a tragedy that could easily have been forgotten outside the Niger Delta. The song later appeared on his 2007 debut album, True Story, which explains why some catalogues place it later than its original release. Dem Mama established something important about Timaya early on: he could make music that moved people without asking them to forget what the song was about.



41

Diana — Daddy Showkey (1996)
Rating: 9/10
Daddy Showkey's gravelly voice, unmistakable Ajegunle identity and fusion of reggae, dancehall and the emerging Galala sound gave him a presence that was impossible to miss. Diana, released in 1996, became one of his signature records and helped establish the ghetto-pop identity that would define much of his career. Showkey made Ajegunle part of the story, turning the neighbourhood from somewhere an artist might be expected to flee into a source of identity and creative power.



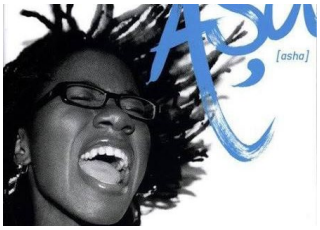
42

Jaga Jaga — Eedris Abdulkareem (2004)
Rating: 8/10
Sometimes a protest song only needs one phrase that everyone can understand. Eedris Abdulkareem found his in Jaga Jaga. Released in 2004, the song took aim at corruption, poverty, failing institutions and the everyday disorder Nigerians were living with, reducing all of it to two words: the country was "jaga jaga." Then-President Olusegun Obasanjo publicly criticised the song, turning it into an even bigger national conversation. Eedris had already shown with The Remedies that Nigerian rap could find a mainstream audience.



43

Happy Birthday — Evi-Edna Ogholi (1988)
Rating: 9/10
For a certain generation of Nigerians, a birthday did not really begin until Evi-Edna Ogholi started singing. Released in 1988, Happy Birthday took a familiar celebration and gave it a distinctly Nigerian soundtrack, becoming a fixture at children's parties, family gatherings and cake-cutting ceremonies across the country. Its appeal was never complicated: a warm reggae rhythm, a simple birthday wish and a melody that was easy for everyone in the room to join.



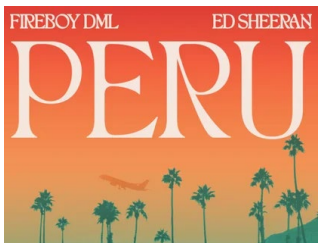
44

Jailer — Asa (2007)
Rating: 9/10
The Neo-soul chanteuse, Asa, broke through at a noisy point in Nigerian pop and somehow made quietness command attention. On Jailer, from her 2007 debut album, acoustic guitar, reggae, soul and Cobhams Asuquo's delicate musicianship hold up one of her finest metaphors, 'The oppressor and the oppressed are both trapped inside the same broken system.' Her writing moves through power, hypocrisy, government and everyday human behaviour without sounding like a lecture.



45

Branama — Kefee (2003)
Rating: 9/10
When Branama arrived in 2003, the Sapele-born singer took thanksgiving out of the conventional choir arrangement and pushed it into something colourful, rhythmic and unabashedly celebratory. The song and its parent album became a huge breakthrough beyond the South-South, transforming the former church singer into one of Nigeria's most recognisable female stars. Reports from the period credited the album with astonishing cassette and CD/VCD sales, while Branama became so closely attached to her that she spent the rest of her career carrying the nickname "Branama Queen."



46

Peru — Fireboy DML (2021)
Rating: 8/10
Released in July 2021, the Shizzi and Kolten Perine-produced song came together with a loose, freestyle-like energy, as Fireboy sings about travelling, attention and the increasingly surreal reality of becoming an international star. Even the title was less about the South American country than a playful reference to fellow Nigerian singer Peruzzi. By the time Ed Sheeran appeared on the remix later that year, Peru had already become a major hit, but the remix pushed it into an even bigger international space.



47

Michelle — Etcetera (2003)
Rating: 8/10
Years before anybody was throwing the word "alté" around Lagos, Etcetera was already stubbornly refusing to sound like everybody else. He recorded Michelle in 2003 with OJB Jezreel, carrying soft rock and alternative-pop instincts into an industry increasingly dominated by R&B, hip-hop and the emerging Nigerian pop sound. The song took years to properly catch on, eventually becoming one of the records that defined Etcetera's career and earning attention during his late-2000s run with X3M Music.



48

Peace Be Unto You (PBUY) — Asake (2022)
Rating: 9/10
Asake's 2022 run was the kind that made it feel like there was barely enough time to catch your breath before another hit came along. Peace Be Unto You was one of the records where his formula became impossible to miss: Fuji-like group vocals, Yoruba street language, amapiano log drums, gospel-inspired layering and Magicsticks' production all working together without any one influence taking over. The song topped Nigerian charts during that run before appearing on his debut album, Mr. Money With The Vibe.



49

***Dami Duro* — Davido (2011)**
Rating: 9/10
Davido had already introduced himself with Back When, but Dami Duro was the record that properly kicked the doors open. Released in October 2011 and produced by Shizzi, with Davido also credited as co-producer, the song carried all the youthful arrogance that would later become central to his pop persona. Dami Duro became one of the defining Nigerian hits of the early 2010s and turned Davido from another promising rich kid with a microphone into a genuine pop force.



50

***My Car*—Tony Tetuila feat. Pastor Goody Goody (2001)**
Rating: 9/10
Only Nigerian pop could turn a traffic accident into a song this memorable. Tony Tetuila has recalled that the idea for My Car came after his Mercedes was hit on the road, with people around him repeatedly asking him, as a celebrity, to simply forgive the drivers responsible. He took the frustration into the studio, where Pastor Goody Goody added the now-famous "somebody wey" bridge. Released through Kennis Music in 2001, the song became one of the biggest Nigerian pop records of the early 2000s, mixing comedy,



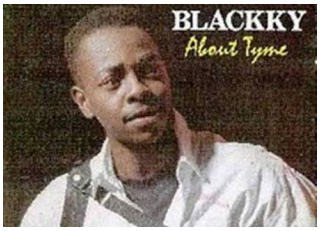
51

***Under Pressure* — Ras Kimono (1989)**
Rating: 8.5/10
There was a period when reggae was almost as important to Nigerian popular music as highlife, and Ras Kimono was right at the centre of it. "Under Pressure" carried the frustration of ordinary Nigerians living through hardship, corruption and a generally difficult economy, without losing the bounce that made reggae enjoyable in the first place. Kimono's rough, distinctive voice gave the record even more character. It remains one of those songs whose subject matter has



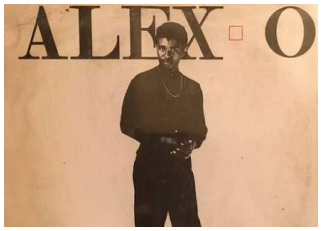
52

***Time Na Money* — Mike Okri (1989)**
Rating: 8/10
This is one of those Nigerian songs where the title alone became bigger than the record. Time Na Money was ageless wisdom cloaked in sweet Naija pop. Its core message was: stop wasting time, get serious with your life. Mike Okri made it catchy enough that nobody felt like they were being preached to. Nearly four decades later, the central phrase still sits comfortably inside everyday Nigerian speech, and the song remains one of the warmest reminders of our late-'80s pop era.



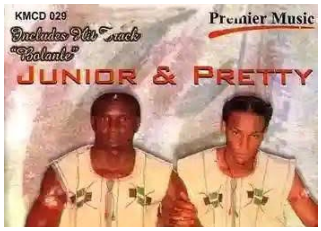
53

***Rosie* — Blackky (1990s)**
Rating: 8/10
Blackky was one of the people who made dancehall feel Nigerian before a much younger generation turned it into a more obvious part of Afropop. Rosie was playful, hyper-melodic and full of that dancehall swagger that shaped much of Blackky's music. It also carried Blackky's unmistakable vocal character, somewhere between singing, chanting and sweet-talking his way through the groove. For many Nigerians who came of age in the '90s, this was simply good pop music before anybody needed to overthink what genre it belonged to.
Blackky's debut About Tyme arrived in 1991, with Rosie becoming the defining hit of his career.



54

***Celebrate* — Alex O**
Rating: 7.5/10
Long before the current machinery of Nigerian pop, Alex O represented a different idea of the Nigerian pop star: glamorous, romantic and unmistakably shaped by the synth-heavy music of the late '80s and early '90s. Celebrate was that type of music made simply to feel good, and it captures an important period when Nigerian pop was slowly building an identity outside highlife, reggae and funk.



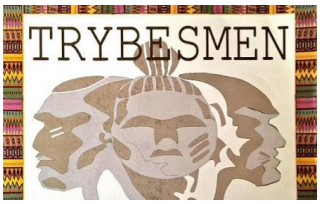
55

***Monika* — Junior & Pretty**
Rating: 8/10
Junior and Pretty made rap sound like something that could have grown up down your street. Monika had humour, storytelling and a vivid Nigerianness that distinguished their music from the American hip-hop being copied elsewhere at the time. The record easily became a cultural staple, especially for a period when Nigerian hip-hop was still trying to discover what being Nigerian inside the genre



56

***You and I* — Plantashun Boiz**
Rating: 8.5/10
The 2000s was the era of the boy-bands, and it rained unforgettable harmonies left, right and centre. The Plantashun Boiz trio had plenty of them. You and I is a tender, uncomplicated RnB-pop jam, carried by the chemistry between 2Baba, Blackface and Faze. At the time, love songs like this helped create a softer side to the rapidly developing Nigerian pop industry.



57

***Shake Bodi* — Trybesmen (1999)**
Rating: 8/10
Trybesmen were among the groups that stopped Nigerian hip-hop from remaining an imitation exercise. Shake Bodi packed rap, bounce, Nigerian lingo and a character that emphasized that a hip-hop song here still needed to connect with a Nigerian dancefloor.



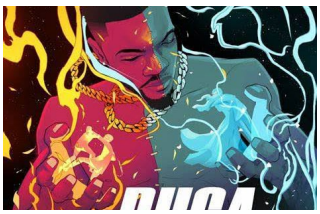
58

Kini Big Deal — Naeto C (2008)
Rating: 8.5/10
You had to be there to understand how cool Naeto C looked to every young person when Kini Big Deal landed. The scarves, the swagger, the expensive-looking video, the slang: everything felt aspirational, felt very larger-than-life. More importantly, Naeto C was one of the rappers who realised Nigerian rap could retain all the gloss of American hip-hop while sounding increasingly Nigerian in language and attitude. Kini Big Deal became a massive street phrase in itself, and by 2008 it was one of the records defining a new, confident Nigerian



59

Lagos Party — Banky W (2009)
Rating: 8.5/10
Lagos Party is almost a period drama now. You hear it and immediately remember that peculiar late-2000s Lagos nightlife: clubs, champagne, red carpets, sharply dressed people and an entertainment industry suddenly becoming very conscious of itself. Banky W turned the city's social life into RnB-pop, with enough humour and familiarity for Lagos itself to become one of the characters in the record. It was loved as "big boy's music"; and did exceptionally well on radio and eventually became one of the clearest musical postcards from the 2010s.



60

Buga — Kizz Daniel & Tekno (2022)
Rating: 8.5/10
There was a period when reggae was almost as important to Nigerian popular music as highlife, and Ras Kimono was right at the centre of it. "Under Pressure" carried the frustration of ordinary Nigerians living through hardship, corruption and a generally difficult economy, without losing the bounce that made reggae enjoyable in the first place. Kimono's rough, distinctive voice gave the record even more character. It remains one of those songs whose subject matter has sadly refused to become outdated.



61

No (2023) — Mavo
Rating: 8/10
The "Burti" lord, Mavo, belongs to a generation that treats the internet almost like another instrument. No is short, instinctive and packed with the kind of language that moves between music, social media and everyday youth slang almost immediately. There is an intentional looseness to it too; nothing feels over-arranged or desperate to prove musical sophistication. Today, Mavo is leading the Nigerian pop scene at the underground level and is already a notable pop act across



62

Mad Over You — Runtown (2016)
Rating: 9/10
Mad Over You was one of those records that seemed to change the temperature of Nigerian pop almost overnight. The drums were softer, the melodies floated, and Runtown sounded completely relaxed over a rhythm heavily coloured by Ghanaian influence. It remains one of Runtown's finest performances, especially because he never oversings it. Released towards the end of



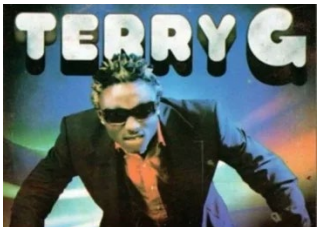
63

Feel Good — MohBad (2021)
Rating: 9/10
MohBad had a peculiar gift for making pain sound like enjoyment. Feel Good carries that contradiction beautifully. He sings about enemies, poverty, Ikorodu, working hard, praying hard and simply hoping there will come a day when the pain disappears; then he turns around and gives you a chorus that feels almost celebratory. But even without hindsight, it was already a strong record about



64

Alubarika — Patoranking feat. Timaya (2014)
Rating: 8/10
Before My Woman, My Everything and the bigger crossover moments, there was Alubarika. It was the record that convinced the first wave of Patoranking's fanbase that the young bard was a winning horse. Patoranking introduced himself to much of Nigeria with gratitude. In the song, he talks about moving from nothing to something, hustling from place to



65

Free Madness — Terry G
Rating: 8.5/10
There was really nobody behaving like Terry G when Free Madness took over. The bells, chants, noisy synths, manic ad-libs and his almost possessed energy sounded like somebody had dragged church instrumentation into a Lagos street party and refused to behave. It was rough music and proudly so. Terry G helped create a language for a more chaotic strand of Nigerian street-pop, and you can still hear



66

Ole — Sound Sultan
Rating: 9/10
Sound Sultan was one of those rare Nigerian pop artists who could be very funny while saying something deeply serious. Ole attacks the Nigerian culture of stealing public wealth without turning into a boring political lecture. That was always his strength. He understood satire, and he chewed it up everytime. Ole remains classic Sound Sultan; playful, observant and painfully Nigerian. It remains one of his stickiest tunes, and a song Nigerians feel grateful for in remembrance of him.

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RELATIONSHIP



Is cheating a dealbreaker? Interestingly, there isn't one universal answer

by Oyindamola Adebiyi

The idea that cheating should automatically end a relationship is widely accepted, but whether it is a dealbreaker depends on the boundaries the couple agreed to. Zikoko's 2026 State of Love report, based on more than 10,000 Nigerians, found that five in 10 respondents admitted to cheating, while 53% were in relationships without clear labels. Rather than suggesting that commitment no longer matters, the findings point to changing ideas about what commitment means.

So before deciding whether cheating is a dealbreaker, perhaps we should ask a more fundamental question: what exactly did the people in the relationship agree to? And who gets to tell people when to stay or leave after being cheated on?

What counts as cheating?

For most people in monogamous relationships, the answer seems obvious. If you flirt, invest emotionally, or have sex with someone else, you cheated.

But relationships aren't always that straightforward. Some couples explicitly agree to be monogamous; others have unique relationships. Some are comfortable with sex outside the relationship but not emotional intimacy. Others might consider kissing someone else a betrayal and draw the line somewhere else.

You might want none of those arrangements for yourself, and that's fine. But disliking an arrangement and declaring it invalid for everyone else are two different things. The important part is whether the parties involved actually agreed to it. If people in a relationship have mutually agreed that they can have sex or emotional attachments with other people, doing it isn't a betrayal.

That doesn't mean there are no boundaries. Non-monogamous relationships can still have rules. And if someone breaks those rules, the fact that the relationship isn't traditionally monogamous doesn't make the breach any less significant.

The same applies to relationships that haven't been defined at all. If you've been seeing someone for three months and neither of you has discussed exclusivity, you may have very different ideas about what you're doing. One person may think you're effectively together. The other may still be dating other people. It's messy, but an assumption automatically an agreement.

Cheating can be a dealbreaker. It just isn't everyone's

None of this means we need to stop calling cheating a betrayal. If monogamy is the standard in your relationship, your partner breaking that agreement is a completely valid reason to leave. You do not need anyone else's permission to make that decision. But choosing to stay is also a decision people are entitled to make.

Zikoko recently spoke to married Nigerians who stayed after their partners cheated. Their reasons varied. One couple both cheated and eventually rebuilt their marriage. Another person described remaining in a marriage despite repeated infidelity because of the life they had built and the children they shared. Others stayed while acknowledging that the betrayal had permanently changed their relationships.

These stories show that there isn't one prescribed response to infidelity, but it also doesn't say you should tolerate infidelity.

We are very good at turning our personal boundaries into universal laws. "If I would leave my husband for cheating, then you should leave yours." And "If I could forgive, you should too."

But "I would never accept that" is not the same as "nobody should accept that." A relationship does not have to take the same route as yours to be valid or worthy of respect.

Maybe the real dealbreaker is breaking the agreement

So, instead of treating infidelity as an automatic relationship dealbreaker, couples should first establish what their relationship actually means. Conversations about exclusivity, what counts as cheating, boundaries around flirting or emotional intimacy, and changing expectations can help prevent misunderstandings. The key is knowing your own boundaries and making sure the person you are with understands and agrees to them.

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FASHION



These Nigerian models are making their mark on the SS27 season, and you definitely need to know them

by Ashim Ojeh

As the SS27 fashion season continues in Milan, our attention has turned to the African models bringing designers looks to life, especially the familiar faces who seem to appear twice, thrice, and sometimes countless times throughout the season.
As a result, we have curated a list of African models who have been making their presence known across the fashion capitals that you should know.

Faith Jonson
Faith Johnson has quickly become one of the most exciting Nigerian models to emerge on the international fashion scene. She made her international runway debut in 2025 during the Big Four fashion weeks and went on to have a standout SS26 season, earning recognition as both a Breakout Star and Top Newcomer by Models.com.
For SS27, Johnson has walked for major houses including Alexander McQueen, Altuzarra and Calvin Klein, and most recently, Prada. Having emerged as one of the most recognisable new faces of the past year, her trajectory is one to watch as she continues to carve out her place in the industry.

Ama Okolo
Chosen as a Top Newcomer in 2025 by Models.com, Ama Okolo is a Nigerian model currently making a name for herself on the global stage. Based in London, Okolo made her official international runway debut for Prada at its Spring/Summer 2025 show in 2024 and has since walked for major fashion houses including Vivienne Westwood, Schiaparelli and Valentino, among others.

For the SS27 season, she has already walked for Erdem and Prada, as well as appearing in the Harris Reed SS27 collection presentation. With Milan still underway and Paris to come, whether she makes another appearance this season remains to be seen. Either way, Okolo's presence is a notable moment for Nigerian representation on the global fashion stage.

Mayowa Adagunduro
Another Nigerian model we think deserves to be on your radar is Mayowa Adagunduro. She made her runway debut in 2023 and has since walked countless shows on the international fashion circuit. That same year, she was named one of the Top Newcomers by Models.com, and she continues to establish herself as a familiar face on the runway.
For SS27, Adagunduro has already walked six shows, including Tommy Hilfiger, Erdem, Carolina Herrera and Anna Sui.

Nyekachi Douglas
Nyekachi Douglas is a Nigerian fashion model and beauty pageant winner who gained recognition after winning the Miss World Africa title in 2019. For the SS27 season, Douglas made a standout appearance for KSENIASCHNAIDER, during London Fashion Week. Although this is her only runway appearance so far this season, she remains one to watch on both the international and Nigerian fashion scenes.

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more

Refresh your wardrobe for under ₦300,000

by Dorcas Ayoola

There comes a point when even a wardrobe full of clothes begins to feel uninspiring. The outfits are still there, neatly arranged and ready to wear, but nothing feels fresh anymore. For many women, this familiar experience is often a sign that it is time for a wardrobe refresh.

The challenge, however, is that updating your style is no longer as simple as it once was. Rising prices have made fashion significantly more expensive, and even basic wardrobe staples now require careful budgeting. A quick shopping trip can easily become overwhelming when shoes, bags, clothing and accessories all come with growing price tags.

Fortunately, looking stylish does not always require spending beyond your means. With strategic shopping and thoughtful outfit planning, it is still possible to create fashionable looks without completely exhausting your budget. The key is choosing versatile pieces that work well together while reflecting your personal style.

Whether you prefer polished and feminine outfits, relaxed oversized silhouettes or a preppy aesthetic, a carefully curated shopping list can help you achieve a refreshed look for less than **₦300,000.**

With the festive season approaching and social plans gradually increasing, now is also the perfect time to shop intentionally. Fashion should enhance your confidence, but financial responsibility should always remain part of the equation.



Here are three stylish looks to consider.

The polished it-girl

For women who appreciate sophistication with a contemporary edge, this look delivers elegance without appearing overly formal.

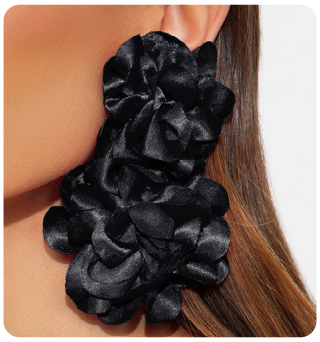
A pleated skirt creates a flattering feminine silhouette, while a ribbed top provides structure and balance. Knee-high boots add personality and elevate the entire outfit, making it feel fashionable and modern. The leather bag introduces a refined touch, while statement earrings complete the look.

This combination works well for lunch dates, casual events, social gatherings and occasions where looking effortlessly put together is essential.

Shopping list:

-	Think Fondly Earrings	—	₦14,200
-	Pleated Skirt	—	₦28,400
-	Amaya Ribbed Top	—	₦25,600
-	Miss CEO Knee-High Boots	—	₦71,000
-	Leather Bag	—	₦35,500
	Total Cost:		₦174,700

After purchasing this look, you will still have **₦125,300** remaining from your **x** budget.











The baggy girl

For those who prioritise comfort without sacrificing style, the baggy trend remains one of the most practical fashion choices.

Baggy jeans paired with an oversized graphic T-shirt create a relaxed silhouette that feels effortless and modern. Sneakers ensure all-day comfort, while a baseball cap adds a casual streetwear influence. A faux leather bag introduces structure to the outfit, and delicate earrings provide a subtle feminine finish.

The result is a versatile look suitable for everyday wear, weekend outings, travel days and casual meetups with friends.

Shopping list:

-	Baggy Jeans	—	₦28,500
-	Oversized Graphic/Statement T-shirt	—	₦28,000
-	Feelin' My Vibe Sneakers	—	₦42,600
-	Casual Baseball Cap	—	₦25,600
-	Dare Me Faux Leather Bag	—	₦35,500
-	Modo Earrings	—	₦14,200
	Total Cost:		₦174,400

This leaves you with **₦125,600** from the original budget, giving you room for additional wardrobe essentials.













The preppy casual girl

For women who enjoy casual dressing with a polished finish, the preppy aesthetic continues to be a timeless and reliable choice.

A striped shirt paired with denim shorts creates a youthful foundation, while white loafers add sophistication. Quarter-length socks contribute to the outfit's classic preppy appeal, and a crossbody bag provides practicality for everyday wear. A pendant necklace and hoop earrings complete the look without making it feel overly styled.

The outfit is ideal for brunch dates, weekend outings, vacations and relaxed social events where comfort and style are equally important.

Shopping list:

-	Off to Class White Loafers	—	₦42,600
-	Bowery Denim Shorts	—	₦49,700
-	Newport Striped Shirt	—	₦35,500
-	10 Park Quarter-Length Socks	—	₦18,500
-	Lillian Lux Crossbody Bag	—	₦42,600
-	Pendant Necklace	—	₦14,200
-	Gleam On Hoop Earrings	—	₦18,500
	Total cost:		₦221,600

After completing this look, **₦78,400** remains from the initial **₦300,000** budget.

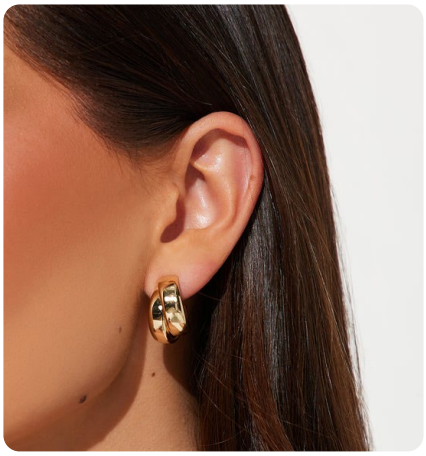














Three looks, one budget

The beauty of this exercise is that style and smart spending can coexist. Each outfit comes in below the **₦300,000** budget, proving that refreshing your wardrobe does not have to mean overspending. The Polished It-Girl costs **₦174,700,** leaving **₦125,300.** The Baggy Girl costs **₦174,400,** leaving **₦125,600.** The Preppy Casual Girl costs **₦221,600,** leaving **₦78,400.**

If you decide to purchase every item featured across all three looks, the total comes to **₦570,700.**

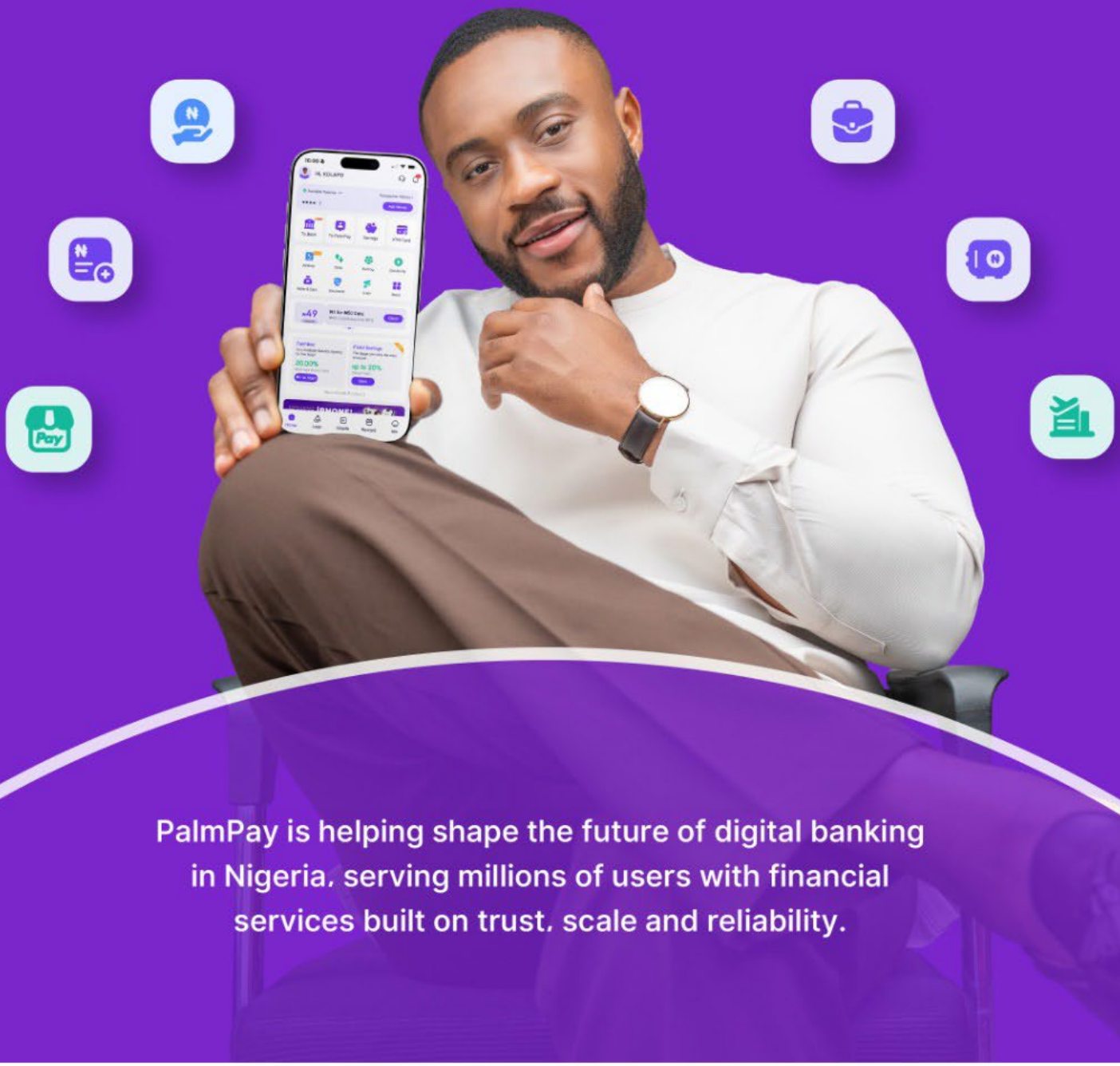
Ultimately, fashion is not about buying everything you see.



It is about making intentional choices, investing in versatile pieces and building a wardrobe that works for your lifestyle. Looking good will always be important, but having money left to enjoy the rest of the year is a style statement too.

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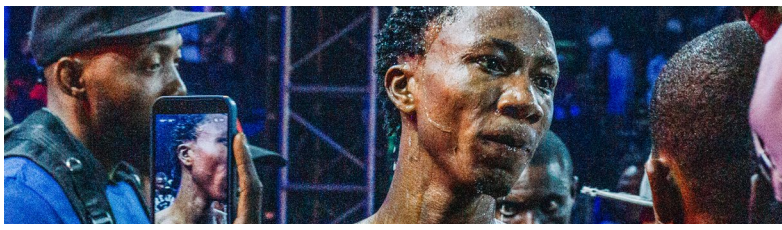
A night of boxing, showbiz at Chaos in the Ring

by Musa Adekunle









Professional boxers entered the ring first at the Federal Palace Resort on Thursday evening. One bout followed another as **Chaos in the Ring** got underway on Nigeria's 66th Independence Day.

The professional card built towards the championship fight between Nigeria's Godday "Zodsolo" Appah and Ghana's Seth "Freezy Macbones" Gyimah. Appah came in as the defending WBO African Light Heavyweight Continental champion, with Gyimah aiming to take the belt.

Their fight went the full 10 rounds. Neither boxer secured a knockout, leaving the judges to decide the result. They awarded the contest to Gyimah, who left Lagos with Appah's title.

After the professional bouts, the programme moved to the celebrity fights. Carter Efe and Speed Darlington faced each other in a four-round contest, bringing their rivalry into the ring.

Carter Efe controlled the bout, and the referee stopped the fight after Speed Darlington stopped moving. The technical knockout gave Carter Efe the win.

Phyna and Nkechi Blessing followed, closing the night's fights.

Phyna stopped Nkechi in the fourth and final round with a knockout, then took home the ₦50m prize and a brand-new car.

The final fight brought the evening to its climax. After hours of professional boxing and celebrity contests, Phyna's victory sent the event into its closing moments.

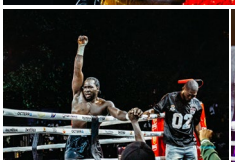
By then, Friday had begun.

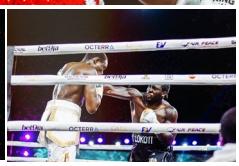
Chaos in the Ring had stretched well beyond Thursday evening, carrying its Independence Day programme into the early hours with a Ghanaian champion, celebrity rivalries and Phyna's final-round win.























Why you keep having the same argument with your partner

by Dolly Ohanyere

Dolly Ohanyere is a lawyer, relationship and marriage counsellor, NLP practitioner, and founder of The Healthy Marriage Hub and The Rediscovering Room. She writes on relationships and emotional growth from a faith-based perspective and believes that marriages can thrive.



If you have been in a relationship of any length, you know this feeling. You have had this argument before. The details may be different - the money, the time, the in-laws, the chores, the children, etc. but the feeling at the end of it is always the same. Nothing was resolved, and you are both exhausted by a conversation you have had a hundred times.

Here is what most people do not understand about recurring arguments: they are not really about what they appear to be about. The argument about who forgot to call is rarely about the phone call. The argument about money is rarely about the specific amount. The argument about accountability is rarely about what was done. The argument about time is not really about the diary. Underneath every recurring argument is an unmet need, an unspoken fear, or a value that is not being honoured, and until you address the underlying issue, the argument does not end. It simply pauses and then restarts when the next trigger appears.

Communication in relationships is not just about what you say. It is about what you mean, what you hear, what you assume, and what you leave unspoken. Most couples talk constantly and communicate rarely. They exchange information, they state positions, they defend themselves, but they do not often get underneath the words to the real conversation that needs to happen.

The shift that changes everything is this: moving from positions to needs. Instead of "You never listen to me" - which is a position and an accusation- try "I need to feel heard when I am talking to you." Same feeling, but completely different conversation. One produces defensiveness; the other produces connection.

The recurring argument is not a sign that your relationship is failing. It is a sign that there is a conversation you have not yet had. Find that conversation. Have it honestly. The argument will stop.

Communication habits that are quietly damaging your relationship



1. Listening to respond instead of to understand

While your partner is speaking, most of us are already preparing our response. We are thinking about our defence, our counter-argument, our point. That is not listening; that is waiting. Real listening holds space for the other person to be fully heard before you say anything.



2. Using 'Always' and 'Never'

These words are rarely literally true, and they always put your partner on the defensive. "You never support me." "You always do this." These statements close conversations rather than open them. Replace them with specific, recent, observable behaviour.



3. Bringing up the past

Using historical grievances as ammunition in a current argument is one of the most damaging communication patterns. It tells your partner that nothing is ever truly resolved and that anything they do can be retrieved and used against them. Deal with one issue at a time.



4. Going silent

Withdrawing from a conversation - giving the silent treatment, leaving the room, shutting down- is not conflict avoidance; it is a form of communication. It communicates: I am not safe enough here to stay. Name what you need instead. "I need twenty minutes, and then I want to come back to this."

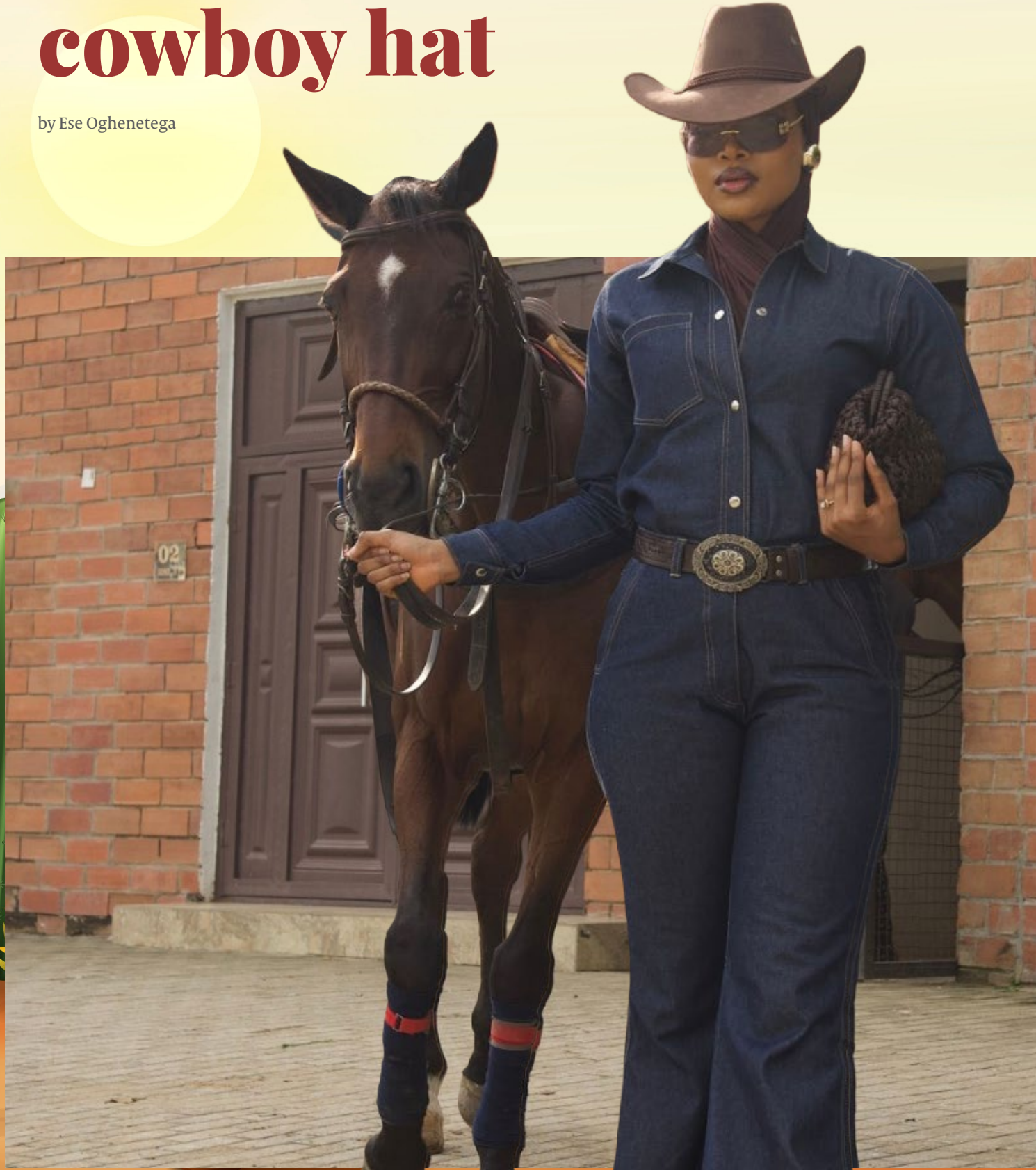


5. Speaking about feelings as facts

There is a difference between "I feel unimportant when you cancel our plans" and "You do not care about me." The first is your experience. The second is a verdict. Speak from your experience rather than issuing verdicts about your partner's character.

Chic look in cowboy hat

by Ese Oghenetega



Unlike in the past, when cowboy hats were mainly for Westerners, they have now become a fashion statement without border limitations. Nigerians have created some style statements with it and inspired others to rock it too.



Check out chic ways to look exquisite in a cowboy hat.



Add some stylish designs to it

You can show off your creative side by giving your cowboy hat a more stylish look. Try it out with a blazer, long-sleeve, jumpsuit, palazzo, or more structured pieces. This combination gives you a blend of Western and contemporary vibe.



Rock it with denim

Cowboy hats on denim are an evergreen combination. They fit perfectly together and give you a vintage look. You can combine it with heeled boots and minimal accessories if you desire a more sophisticated appearance. However, note that the less jewellery, the better for a cowboy look.



Blend it with a f lowy dress

One feature of the cowboy look that makes it acceptable to many is its versatility. Beyond rocking the cowboy hat on denim, you can slay with it on a flowy dress. It could be a midi or maxi dress. When you choose this combination, consider the fabric texture and ensure that it complements your cowboy hat.



Explore a monochrome look

If you desire a chic way to look sophisticated in a cowboy hat, then try out a monochrome look. Rock a single colour for your look and use natural shades like brown, cream, and black. It makes you appear polished and luxe.



Keep your style simple

In your quest to look sophisticated, embrace simplicity. Your cowboy hat is already a fashion statement, let it stand out in your outfits. A simple outfit and minimal jewellery are enough to capture people's attention. At times, simplicity defines luxury and a classy look. Above all, how you carry yourself in your cowboy hat reveals your personality and stylish nature.


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How Nigerians have watched films

Before Netflix, YouTube and multiplexes, Nigerians gathered around travelling screens, cinema halls and television sets. From film vans and packed cinemas to VHS tapes, VCDs and streaming, the way Nigerians watch films has changed. The desire to watch them together has not.



On September 26, 2026, more than 51,000 people gathered at Tafawa Balewa Square in Lagos to watch *Black Market*.

The screen was enormous. The crowd was larger. By the end of the night, the screening had secured the Guinness World Records title for the largest attendance at a film screening. More than 51,000 viewers were officially recognised, surpassing the previous record of 43,624, set in the Philippines in 2015 during a screening of *Felix Manalo*.

For more than a century, Nigerians have found ways to gather around moving pictures. Sometimes the screen came to them. Sometimes they travelled to find it. At other times, the cinema came home in the form of a television, a VHS cassette or a VCD.

When the screen came to town

Cinema arrived in Lagos at the beginning of the 20th century. One of the earliest recorded public film screenings in Nigeria took place at Glover Memorial Hall in August 1903.

As cinema spread, watching films was not always about finding a cinema hall. Travelling film shows took moving pictures to communities where permanent cinemas were unavailable or difficult to reach.

The colonial government also recognised the usefulness of film. In 1939, the British Colonial Film Unit was established, producing films that were shown to African audiences through mobile cinema. In Nigeria, some of these films dealt with health, hygiene and agriculture, while others carried official colonial messages.

For communities without regular access to a cinema, the arrival of a film van could be an event in itself.

Dr Raphael James, Director-General of the Centre for Research, Information and Media Development, remembers watching a mobile cinema as a child in the early 1980s while visiting his aunt in Onitsha.

News spread through the neighbourhood that a mobile cinema was coming. A white sheet was hung between two poles in the village square as families gathered with chairs and children found places close to the screen. Vendors sold roasted groundnuts and akara while a generator powered the projector.

The film was an Eddy Ugboma production connected to Edifosa, based on the life of the notorious robber Ishola Oyenusi.

For James, the experience was about more than the film.

"It was more than entertainment; it was an event, a communal ritual filled with magic and anticipation," he recalls.

The film ended, but the evening continued. Children re-enacted scenes and imitated the characters on their way home.

"The experience wasn't just about the film. It was about togetherness," James says. "About seeing your neighbours laugh, gasp, or debate the story afterwards."

That communal experience became part of the memory of cinema itself.

When the cinema came home

By the 1980s, television had become a fixture in many Nigerian homes, while the video cassette recorder offered another way to watch films.

A living room could become a cinema. A VHS cassette went into the machine, the family

settled down and the film began.

For Mary Adebayo, a school teacher, film nights were usually on Fridays. Her family rented films from a neighbourhood shop, sometimes getting them in two parts.

A rental cost between ₦20 and ₦40, she recalls, but the film was not always available immediately. If someone else had rented it, they had to wait for it to be returned.

The waiting was part of the experience.

Once the film arrived, the family would eat snacks after dinner and sit together to watch. If the DVD was damaged, there was a fine to pay.

Those nights remain memorable for Adebayo because everyone was in the same room, watching the same thing.

The shift to home viewing also came as many traditional cinemas faced economic difficulties and changing viewing habits. But while some cinema halls declined, Nigerian audiences were developing a strong appetite for films they could watch at home.

The rise of Nollywood

In 1992, Living in Bondage became a defining moment in Nigeria's home-video era. Directed by Chris Obi Rapu, the film demonstrated the potential of producing Nigerian stories directly for the growing video market.

The model suited the way audiences were already watching. Filmmakers did not necessarily have to wait for a cinema release. Films could be produced, duplicated and distributed through video shops, distributors and informal networks.

The 1990s brought a new generation of Nigerian films into homes, covering everything from family and romance to money, ambition, religion and crime.

VHS gradually gave way to VCDs and DVDs. Markets such as Alaba became important distribution centres, while films travelled through shops, homes and informal networks.

A film could move quickly from one household to another. Someone bought it, another person borrowed it and someone else copied it.

The system helped Nollywood reach large audiences, but it also made piracy widespread.

Still, the home-video era had changed Nigerian cinema permanently. Nollywood had found an audience that did not have to wait for a cinema to see its own stories.

The films we watched together

The technology changed, but the social experience remained important.

Philip Onos, a retired headmaster, remembers the cinema vans that came to his village. Their arrival was announced beforehand, and people gathered around the large van carrying a projector and generator.

Everyone wanted to sit close to the screen. "We fought to sit in front because people at the back were at a disadvantage," he recalls.

Blessing Ade, a doctor, remembers another kind of shared viewing: Superstory at home.

Her family completed their chores before 8 pm and gathered around the television. Afterwards, the children sometimes acted out what they had watched for their parents.

Power cuts could interrupt the programme. When NEPA took the light, they sometimes ran to a neighbour's house whose generator was still running.

"We must have missed a significant part," she recalls.

The details are different, but the memories have something in common. Watching films and television was often a family or community activity.

When cinema came back

By the 2000s and 2010s, modern cinemas began appearing in shopping malls and entertainment centres across Nigerian cities.

The experience had changed. There were comfortable seats, large screens, surround sound, air conditioning and popcorn.

Going to the cinema became an outing again. A film could be a date, a weekend plan or an afternoon with friends.

Nigerian films were increasingly part of that experience too. After years of living rooms, video shops and market stalls, Nollywood was returning to the big screen.

But another screen was already changing how people watched.

The phone.

Screen in your pocket

The internet made films easier to access. You no longer needed a cinema ticket, VCD or DVD. A laptop, tablet or smartphone could become the screen.

YouTube gave audiences another way to find Nigerian films and film-related content, while streaming platforms made it possible to watch films and series whenever and wherever there was an internet connection.

The audience became more individual.

A family could sit in the same room while each person watched something different. One person could watch a film in Lagos while another watched something completely different in Abuja.

For James, that convenience is a major difference between today's viewing culture and the mobile cinema he remembers.

"Back then, seeing a movie was a communal event, planned, anticipated, shared," he says. "You didn't just press play. You walked, gathered, waited."

Today, he says, viewers can watch alone, rewind, skip scenes or binge an entire series.

"The convenience is unmatched," he says.

"But something subtle is lost: the collective breath of a crowd, the shared silence before a twist, the walk home filled with animated retellings."

For him, what is missing is not the screen but the gathering around it.

"What's missing isn't the screen. It's the circle."

Black Market

On September 26, Tafawa Balewa Square became a cinema once again.

This time, there was no small mobile screen arriving in a neighbourhood. Thousands gathered around one enormous screen for Black Market.

More than 51,000 people were officially recognised for the screening, giving the Nigerian film the Guinness World Records title for the largest attendance at a film screening. The figure surpassed the previous record of 43,624, set during the 2015 screening of Felix Manalo at the Philippine Arena.

For a generation accustomed to watching films on phones and laptops, the sight of thousands of people gathered around one screen was striking.

But perhaps it was not entirely unfamiliar.

Technology has changed many times. The film van gave way to the cinema hall. The cinema hall gave way to the television. VHS became VCD, VCD became DVD, and DVDs gave way to streaming.

Yet Nigerians still gather when the occasion calls for it.

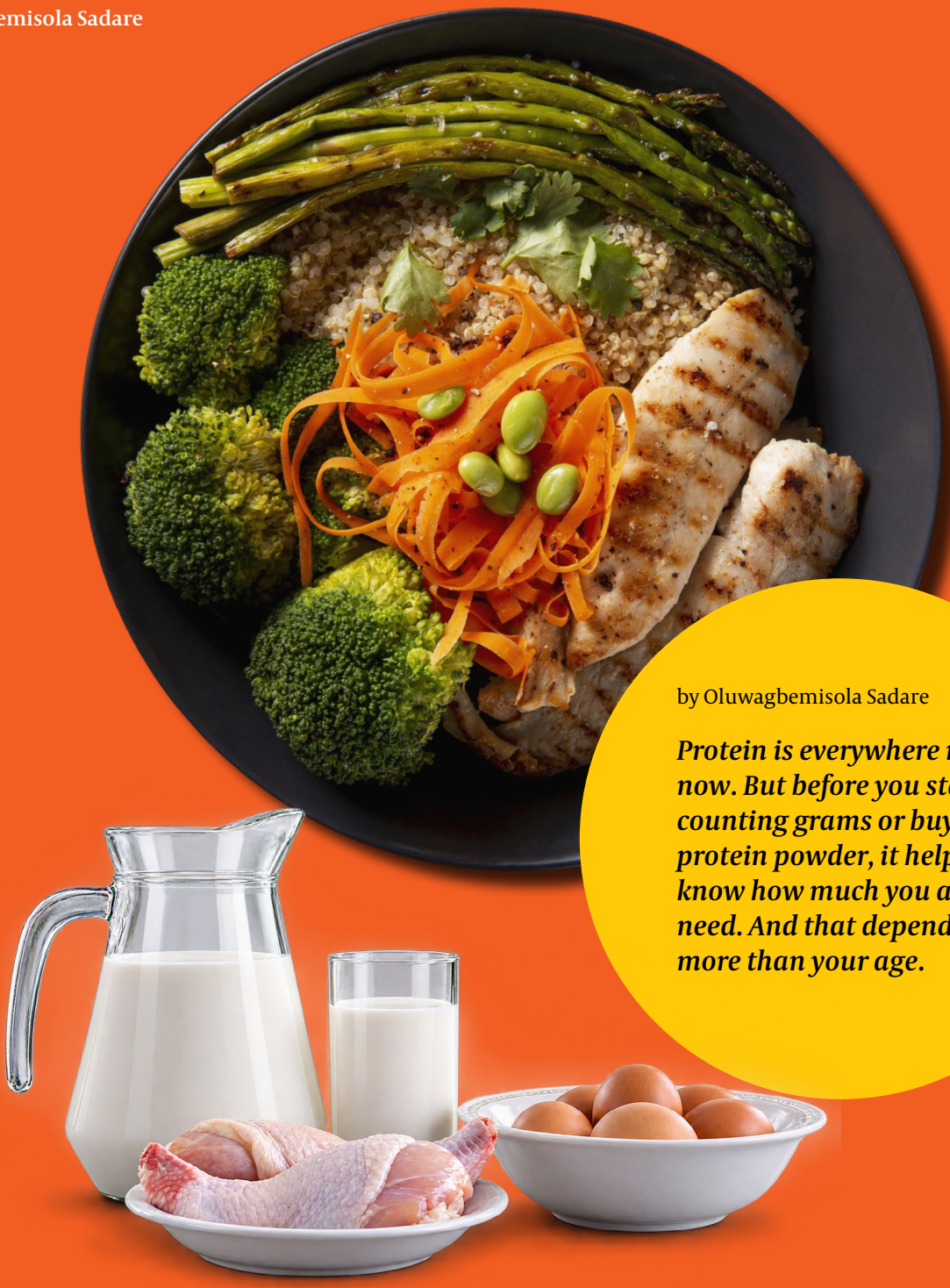
More than a century after moving pictures first appeared before Nigerian audiences, Black Market brought thousands of people back to a shared screen.

The screen has changed. The way we reach it has changed. But the pleasure of watching a story unfold alongside other people has proved harder to replace.



How much protein do you really need?

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare



by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

Protein is everywhere right now. But before you start counting grams or buying protein powder, it helps to know how much you actually need. And that depends on more than your age.

There was a time when protein was mostly associated with bodybuilders and gym regulars. Now, it is difficult to open social media without seeing someone talking about it. Protein bars. Protein shakes. High-protein yoghurt. Protein cereal. Then there is the question of how much protein you are supposed to be eating.

The honest answer is that there is no magic number. For a healthy adult who is not very active, the recommended amount is about 0.8g of protein for every kilogram of body weight each day. If you weigh 60kg, that is about 48g. At 80kg, it is about 64g.

But those numbers are a starting point. Someone who exercises regularly may need more. So might an older person, particularly if they are trying to maintain muscle. And that is where age starts to matter.

Children and teenagers

Children need protein because they are growing. The American Academy of Paediatrics puts the daily requirement at about 13g for children aged one to three, **19g for ages four to eight and 34g for ages nine to 13.**

Teenagers need more. Girls aged 14 to 18 need around 46g a day, while boys need about 52g. But this does not mean your child needs a protein shake after school.

A plate of beans, an egg, some fish, chicken, milk or yoghurt can all contribute. For children, it is more important to look at the whole diet than to become fixated on one nutrient.

20s and 30s

You do not suddenly need a huge amount of protein because you have turned 25 or 30. For most people, 0.8g/kg a day is the basic recommendation.

But exercise changes things. If you run, play sports, lift weights, or are working on building muscle, you may need somewhere around **1.1–1.5g/kg a day,** according to guidance from Mayo Clinic.

For a 60kg person, that is roughly 66–90g. You can get there without turning your kitchen into a supplement store. Two eggs at breakfast. Beans and rice at lunch. Fish with plantain at dinner. Milk or yoghurt somewhere in between.

40s and 50s

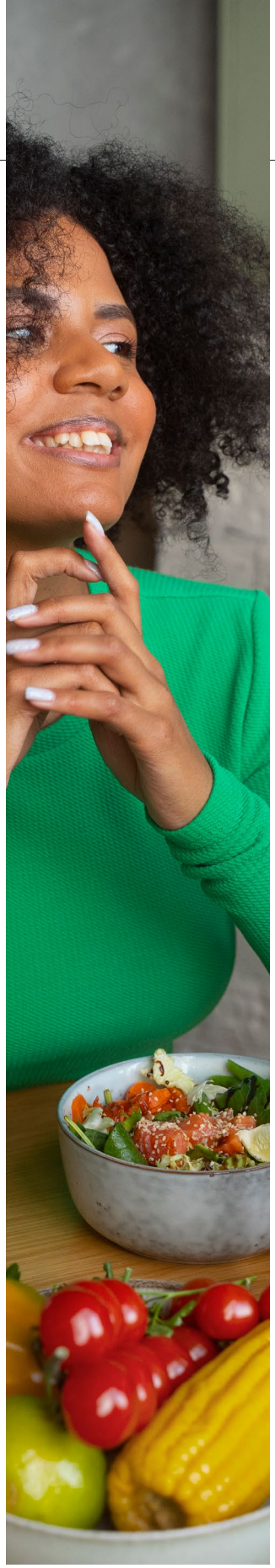
We start losing muscle as we get older, although the rate is different for everyone. Staying active, particularly with some form of resistance exercise, can help.

Mayo Clinic notes that muscle loss can start in the 40s and 50s. For many people in this age group, **1.0–1.2g/kg a day** is a reasonable amount to aim for, particularly if they are active. For someone weighing 60kg, that is **60–72g a day.**

One thing worth changing is how you spread it out. If breakfast is tea and bread, lunch is mostly rice and stew, and dinner is when you finally eat a large piece of chicken or fish, you may be making things harder than they need to be. Try to get some protein into each meal instead.

After 65

The European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism recommends around 1.0–1.2g/kg a day for healthy older adults. People who are unwell, undernourished or recovering from an injury may need more. So, if you weigh 60kg, that is around 60–72g a day.



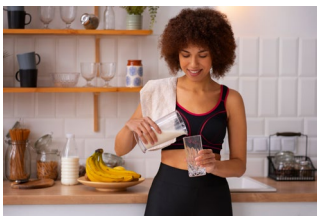
Professor Stuart Phillips, a researcher at McMaster University who studies muscle and protein, has also looked at how protein is used by older adults. One of the practical takeaways is that it makes sense to spread protein across your meals rather than eating almost all of it at dinner.

That could mean eggs or yoghurt in the morning, beans or fish at lunch, and chicken, meat, or another protein source at dinner.

No need for protein powder

Protein powder is convenient, but it is not compulsory. There is protein in foods you are probably already eating: beans, eggs, fish, chicken, meat, milk, yoghurt, soy, groundnuts, moi moi, and akara.

Dr Walter Willett, professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard, has also highlighted foods such as beans, soy, nuts and whole grains as useful sources of protein alongside other nutrients.



How to count

1–3 years: 13g a day
4–8 years: 19g
9–13 years: 34g
Teen girls, 14–18: 46g
Teen boys, 14–18: 52g
Healthy adults: about 0.8g/kg
Active adults: around 1.1–1.5g/kg
Adults 65+: around 1.0–1.2g/kg

Remember that these figures are guides; pregnancy, breastfeeding, intense exercise, illness and recovery from surgery can change what someone needs. People with kidney disease should also speak with their doctor before increasing their protein intake.

A healthy diet still needs carbohydrates, fats, fibre, fruit and vegetables. Your body needs more than one nutrient.

Inside Abuja's thrift economy

by Ajuluchukwu Brown



Photos by Ajuluchukwu Brown

There is a particular posture that has become increasingly familiar in Abuja's informal fashion economy. A shopper bends down. The hands sift through a pile of trousers, shirts, dresses or leggings. One piece comes out. The fabric, label, stitching, colour and perhaps a small stain around the collar are inspected. It goes back into the pile. Another comes out. The search continues.

"Bend down, select." "Okirika." What was once largely associated with roadside second-hand clothing has become a full-fledged retail culture in Abuja, driven by a simple economic reality, people still want to look good, but the money available to achieve it is increasingly limited.

Across Nyanya, Karimo and

Kubwa, thrift sellers have built markets around that reality. Their major trading days differ; Karimo is particularly active on Tuesdays and Fridays, Nyanya on Wednesdays, and Kubwa on Sundays, but the rhythm is similar. Clothes hang from umbrellas and improvised structures, while shoes, bags and piles of clothing occupy tables, stands and open spaces.

Shirts, trousers, gowns, leggings, tracksuits, gym wear, vintage pieces, children's clothes, handbags and school bags are all part of the trade. Prices can start from about N500 and rise to N20,000 or more, depending on quality, brand, condition and grade.

But behind every N3,000 shirt or N5,000 pair of trousers is a business involving bales that can cost hundreds of thousands of naira, sometimes more than N1 million, with no guarantee that their contents will deliver the expected returns.

The economy of the bale

Aniekan Ben Emmanuel, CEO of Swiftwears and a thrift vendor with five years' experience, understands the gamble.

For traders, a "bale" does not describe one standard product. There are UK, China and Canada bale names commonly used in the trade to describe categories of imported second-hand clothing.



Aniekan explained that the labels do not necessarily mean every bale physically originates from the country attached to its name. They have become descriptions used within the trade, alongside categories covering almost anything that can be worn or carried: children's clothing, socks, gym wear, tracksuits, bags, swimwear, gowns, vintage shirts and more.

"The bales are for basically everything that you can think of," Emmanuel said.

Prices vary according to type, size, expected quality, and grade. Some bales cost about N200,000, while high-value ones can reach N1.5 million. Their weight can range from around 55kg to more than 180kg.

For traders, buying a bale is therefore not simply buying clothes. It is buying an expectation. The country labels have acquired particular meanings among traders. Some believe China-associated bales tend to contain smaller sizes, while Canada-associated bales are perceived as having a wider range of larger sizes. Such perceptions are not guarantees, but they influence purchasing decisions.

A seller specialising in plus-size fashion will seek stock believed to contain larger sizes, while a gym-wear seller will look for another category. Beneath the apparently simple business of buying used clothes is therefore a specialised market shaped by experience and risk.

Then comes the grade

Beyond country labels is another language familiar to traders: grading. There are Grade A, AB, B and other classifications, with AA commonly regarded by traders as the highest or among the highest grades. The grade can significantly affect the price of a bale and can also become a source of disappointment.

Aniekan recalled that bales that once sold for about N90,000 have increased substantially, citing exchange rates and clearing costs among the factors. Traders also complain about misrepresentation in the supply chain. A supplier may describe a bale as Grade A, only for an importer to discover after opening it that the contents appear closer to Grade B or C.

Chisom Agbo, a trouser seller with 10 years' experience, knows that risk. She recently bought a first-grade corporate trouser bale for about N700,000 containing roughly 300 pieces. At an estimated cost of N2,333 per piece, she could sell individual trousers for N4,000 to N7,000.

But she also recalled buying a N650,000 bale containing about 60 cut or faded pieces, while many others were very small sizes. Yet the opposite can happen. Chisom recalled an earlier N700,000 bale in which most of the contents were Grade A and sold within weeks, producing what she described as nearly N600,000 in profit. That is the gamble: one bale can disappoint; another can rescue a business.

Why traders 'sign'

The uncertainty explains another practice common in the market: "signing" a bale. There is no fixed industry price for signing. The amount depends on the vendor, category, quality, and agreement between buyer and seller.

Instead of purchasing everything inside a bale, a trader arranges to open it and select pieces relevant to their business. A gym-wear seller does not want a bale dominated by office shirts, while a trouser seller does not want dozens of gowns. Signing allows traders to narrow the risk.

Ibrahim Dada, a Nyanya shirt seller specialising in vintage shirts, described it as part of his normal strategy. His supplier





knows what he wants and contacts him when suitable stock arrives. But even that offers no guarantee.

He recalled opening a N500,000 bale and discovering that many shirts had stains around the collars and armpits. He estimated his loss at almost N200,000.

"Bales can be very tricky," he said.

When unwanted items emerge, traders also exchange stock among themselves.

Sani Abubakar, a gym-wear and shorts seller in Area 1, recalled opening an N1 million gym-wear bale and finding about 30 women's leggings that did not suit his predominantly male clientele. He exchanged them with another sportswear seller for men's shorts.

What is dead stock to one trader can therefore become useful inventory for another.

Consumers are doing the mathematics too.

On the other side are consumers who have learned to calculate the value of thrift against conventional retail. Daniel, 27, a ride-hailing driver in Gwarinpa, specialises in buying trousers. A pair of chinos that might cost N25,000 to N30,000 in a conventional boutique can sometimes be found for N3,000 to N5,000 in the thrift market.

He recalled buying a new H&M pair for N2,000.

"I need durable trousers for work. The money I save goes to my children's school fees," he said.

Joy Akinyemi, 24, an NYSC member and student living in Kubwa, has reached a similar calculation. With an allowance of N77,000, she said paying N20,000 for one shirt from a boutique is difficult.

In thrift markets, she finds shirts for between N1,000 and N2,000 and office gowns for about N3,500. She recently bought six shirts for N9,000.

For her, thrift provides a way to maintain a corporate appearance without exhausting a limited income. From fashion to business

The market has also created a new generation of entrepreneurs.

Favour, 28, an all-round seller at a Sunday market in Katampe, deals in gowns, tops, trousers and skirts. Her last bale cost about N1.4 million and contained approximately 500 pieces, putting the estimated cost at N2,800 per item.

She sells gowns for N6,000 to N15,000 and tops for N3,000 to N5,000. But a N1.4 million investment also means that a bad bale can become a serious financial problem.

She recalled buying a bale containing torn clothes and children's items that did not suit her market. Some had to be sold for as little as N500.

Yet she also remembers an earlier N1.2 million bale containing recognisable brands and some pieces still carrying tags. She said it generated more than N1 million in profit.

Zainab Dawa, 22, a fashion student from Bwari, buys thrift clothing both to wear and to study fashion. She has found a Zara dress with its tag still attached for N6,000 and a Mango blazer for N4,000.

With N20,000, she said, she can assemble several quality thrift pieces.

That calculation is helping to change the stigma historically attached to second-hand clothing. For a growing number of consumers, "used" does not necessarily mean inferior. It can mean affordable, durable or simply better value.

More than a fashion market

Business strategist and Chief Executive Officer Toyin Joseph Larayetan believes the thrift trade should also be viewed through the wider lens of the urban informal economy.

"The street seller thrift vendors are the hope of low-income earners," Larayetan said, arguing that roadside commerce provides an entry point for people who cannot afford conventional shops.

The cost of formal retail space, he noted, can run into millions of naira, pushing some traders towards temporary roadside arrangements. For consumers, there is also convenience.

"You just look at the roadside, you get what you want," he said.

Larayetan pointed to Sunday trading in places such as Kubwa, where traders can take advantage of periods when residents are returning from church. Some also use the frontages of closed shops to create temporary markets without maintaining permanent premises. But he acknowledged the problems that come with street trading, particularly waste disposal and sanitation.

He suggested waste-disposal arrangements and monitoring of temporary trading spaces so that areas can be cleaned before the start of the working week. The larger question is what happens when economic activity is removed without an affordable alternative.





The bales are for basically everything that you can think of.

— Aniekan Ben Emmanuel

10 Nigerian contributions to the world

by Musa Adekunle



Nigerian songs play at parties thousands of miles away, our books reach classrooms abroad, and our food reminds people of home. As we celebrate these connections after Nigeria marked 66 years of independence on Thursday, we look at 10 contributions the country has made to the world.

1 Afrobeat

Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and drummer Tony Allen helped create Afrobeat, mixing jazz, highlife, funk, and Yoruba rhythms with songs that challenged those in power. Decades later, Wizkid, Burna Boy, Davido, and Rema helped take Nigerian pop to more listeners abroad. Today's Afrobeats is different from Fela's Afrobeat and shares roots with Ghana, but Nigerian artistes have played a major role in its success.

2 Nollywood

Nollywood brought Nigerian homes, family troubles, humour, and beliefs to screens across Africa. Filmmakers built an industry through affordable productions and films people watched at home. Later, cinema releases and streaming opened more doors. Its success showed that local stories could attract audiences far beyond the places where they were made.

3 Literature

Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart, published in 1958, helped readers understand Igbo life through the eyes of an African writer. It remains widely studied. Wole Soyinka made history in 1986 as the first African to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. Their books and plays gave the world stories that challenged narrow ideas about Africa.

4 Art

The Benin Bronzes show the skill of Edo artists who recorded royal life and history through metalwork and carving. These works came from the Kingdom of Benin in present-day Nigeria. British forces stole many during their attack on Benin City in 1897. Their return has become part of a global debate about who owns art taken under colonial rule.



5 Fashion

Adire and aso oke carry generations of Nigerian skill. Yoruba dyers create adire patterns by treating parts of the cloth so they resist dye. Weavers make aso oke in narrow strips, then join them together. Nigerian designers have brought these fabrics into modern collections, while museums such as London's Victoria and Albert Museum document the craft behind them.



6 Food

Nigerians have carried suya, egusi, pepper soup and their version of jollof into kitchens and restaurants abroad. Chef Kwame Onwuachi, whose roots include Nigeria, has shared these dishes with international readers and diners. Jollof belongs to several West African countries, but Nigeria's version has helped introduce more people to the region's food. w



7 Medical research

Oncologist and geneticist Dr Olufunmilayo Olopade studied medicine at the University of Ibadan before continuing her career in the United States. Her research helps doctors understand inherited breast cancer risk. University of Chicago Medicine credits her work with improving early detection, treatment, and prevention for women at high risk. This Nigerian contribution reaches people through healthcare.



8 Football

Nigeria gave the world an unforgettable Olympic football tournament in 1996. The men's team beat Brazil 4-3 in the semi-final, then defeated Argentina 3-2 in the final. Nigeria became the first African country to win Olympic men's football gold. Kanu, Okocha, Amuneke and their teammates earned a place in sporting history.



9 Peacekeeping

Nigeria began sending personnel to United Nations peacekeeping missions in 1960. Nigerian soldiers and police have since served in dozens of missions. The UN credits Nigerian troops with helping restore security in Liberia after its civil war. Their service is part of Nigeria's contribution to countries beyond its borders.



10 Yoruba traditions

Yoruba traditions have remained part of community life beyond Nigeria, including in the Americas and the Caribbean. UNESCO recognises Ifa, which draws on a large body of verses and a system of signs interpreted by trained practitioners. These traditions preserve language, stories and knowledge across generations, connecting communities separated by oceans.

Where to go



25 places for a night out in Lagos

Lagos truly owns the night, and the energy of the city completely changes once the sun goes down. From dodging chaotic traffic to spotting your favorite Afrobeats stars popping bottles in Victoria Island, the adrenaline here never stops.

Bogobiri House

Address: Ikoyi, Lagos
Opening Hours: Daily (Open during standard hospitality hours)

Overview: Bogobiri House brings together art, Nigerian food, and live music in an unmistakably Afrocentric setting. Its carved furniture and paintings provide plenty to admire while performances on selected nights keep the evening lively. It is an ideal spot for anyone who wants to enjoy good food and music while still holding a comfortable conversation across the table.

NOK by Alára

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM (Friday & Saturday until 10:30 PM); Closed Mondays

Overview: NOK by Alára offers a relaxed, unhurried dining experience filled with striking African art and a colourful outdoor garden. Featuring a menu that draws from different parts of the continent, it provides a calm and sophisticated environment for friends looking to catch up over great food.

The House Lagos

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily: 10:00 AM – 2:00 AM

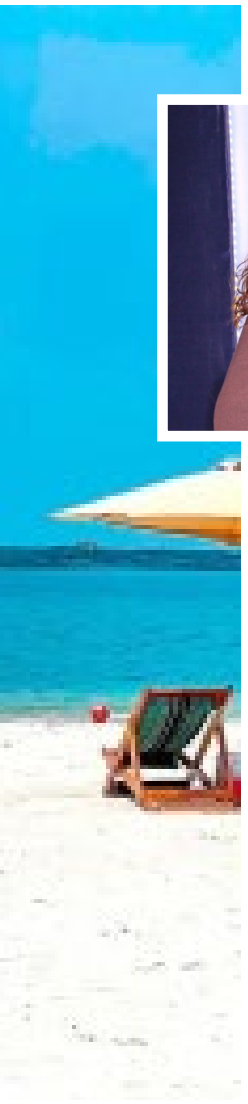
Overview: Designed to feel like visiting a stylish home rather than a traditional restaurant, The House Lagos features distinct indoor rooms and cozy outdoor corners. The comfortable seating, food, and ambient music create an energetic yet intimate atmosphere for an effortless night out.

Cactus Restaurant

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday: 7:30 AM – 10:00 PM; Friday & Saturday: 7:30 AM – 10:30 PM; Sunday: 7:30 AM – 10:00 PM

Overview: Providing a welcome escape from city noise, Cactus Restaurant is best known for its breezy waterfront terrace. Guests can enjoy meals by the water as the weather cools down, complemented by live band performances on selected nights for a familiar and easygoing vibe.







New Afrika Shrine

Address: 1 NERDC Road, Agidingbi, Ikeja

Opening Hours: Open 24 hours daily (Best vibrant energy after 7:00 PM)

Overview: The legendary spiritual home of Afrobeat, run by the iconic Kuti family. Far from a polished VIP lounge, this massive open-air cultural hub offers a raw, completely authentic Lagos experience filled with sweat, palm wine, heavy political consciousness, and hypnotic live music.

Dynasty Lagos

Address: 24 Idejo Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: Dynasty Lagos offers a sleek, high-energy environment designed for guests looking to experience the vibrant nightlife of Victoria Island. With stylish interiors and a lively crowd, it stands out as a prime spot for late-night socializing and upscale partying.

Buzz Barr

Address: 30 Adetokunbo Ademola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: Buzz Barr is a popular staple on a bustling Victoria Island strip, known for its electric atmosphere, vibrant music policy, and social crowd. It is a go-to destination for anyone wanting to kick off an energetic night out with drinks and good company.

Shiro Lagos

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday & Sunday: 12:30 PM – 12:00 AM; Friday & Saturday: 12:30 PM – 1:00 AM

Overview: Shiro Lagos delivers a polished Pan-Asian dining experience defined by high ceilings, dramatic interiors, and curated music. The atmosphere transitions smoothly from a calm dinner setting into a livelier nighttime lounge as the evening progresses.

Terra Kulture

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Overview: A vibrant cultural hub where an evening can seamlessly transition from authentic Nigerian cuisine to a play, concert, or live performance. It is a premier destination for visitors looking to combine dining with rich local arts and entertainment.

Piano Bistro

Address: Delborough Lagos, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily (Operating during hotel dining hours)

Overview: Located within The Delborough Lagos, Piano Bistro maintains a refined, tranquil mood with elegant interiors and gentle live piano music. The soft background sound ensures guests can dine and chat comfortably, making it well-suited for quiet dinners or small celebrations.

RSVP Poolside

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily (Evenings and late night)

Overview: Tucked behind RSVP's main dining room, The Poolside offers open-air seating, music, and an informal vibe. It strikes the right balance for friends looking to unwind, eat, and enjoy the night without diving into a crowded club.

Circa Non Pareil (Penthouse/Lounge)

Address: 12 Mandilas Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: Perched with striking views in Lekki Phase 1, Circa Non Pareil combines sophisticated penthouse lounging with a vibrant nightlife pulse. The space is ideal for guests seeking a mix of fine dining, signature cocktails, and a chic party atmosphere after dark.

W Bar Lounge

Address: LASWA Yard, Under Falomo Bridge, Ikoyi, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: Set against a unique waterfront backdrop under the Falomo Bridge, W Bar Lounge offers an open-air vibe complete with cool breezes, good music, and an energetic crowd looking to unwind by the water.

Escape Nightclub

Address: 234B Adeola Odeku Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Nightly

Overview: Located on one of Victoria Island's most famous avenues, Escape Nightclub delivers a high-octane clubbing experience. Known for its celebrity sightings and vibrant party energy, it is a staple of Lagos nightlife.

355 Restaurant and Lounge

Address: 9A Oko Awo Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: 355 blends a classic Mexican-inspired dining experience with a lively lounge setting. As the evening progresses, the atmosphere shifts smoothly from a relaxed dinner spot into an energetic hub for late-night drinks and socializing.

Nitro Nightclub

Address: 14 Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Nightly

Overview: Nitro Nightclub is built for serious nightlife enthusiasts, featuring heavy basslines, dynamic lighting, and a packed dance floor. It is a premier destination in Victoria Island for dancing late into the morning hours.

Island Breeze

Address: Landmark Beach, Water Corporation Road, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

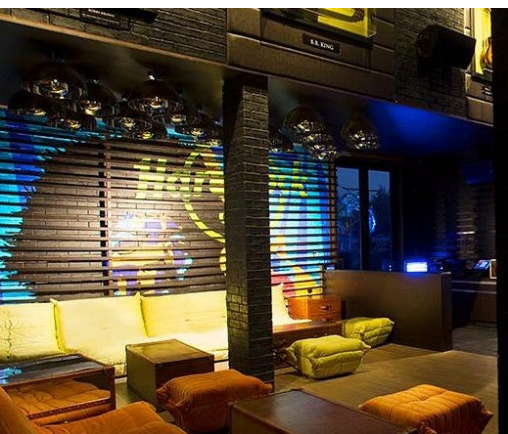
Overview: Island Breeze brings a coastal, festive atmosphere to the shoreline of Landmark Beach. Guests can enjoy music, drinks, and ocean views in an open-air setting that feels like a permanent beach party.

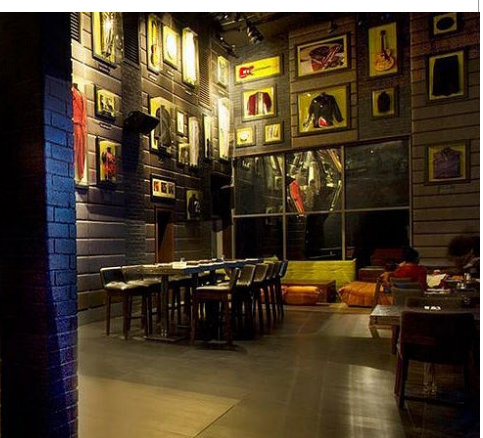
Bay Lounge

Address: Plot 10, Admiralty Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: A long-standing favorite in Lekki, Bay Lounge offers a relaxed waterfront terrace overlooking the water. It seamlessly transitions from a breezy spot for evening drinks and grilled platters into a lively weekend hangout.







The Vibe Lagos

Address: 16b Akin Olugbade Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: True to its name, The Vibe Lagos delivers an energetic blend of great music, social networking, and nightlife culture. It draws a stylish crowd looking for an electric atmosphere right in the middle of Victoria Island.



Cage Lagos

Address: No. 2 Shalom Street, Ago Palace Way, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Daily (with club setups running Friday – Sunday)

Overview: Cage Lagos brings a premium, upscale Island-style nightlife experience to the Mainland. Combining a beach-like poolside aesthetic with a high energy nightclub, it is a highly popular, visually striking spot for groups looking to enjoy Afrobeats, elite DJ sets, an energetic crowd without crossing the bridge.

Club Quilox

Address: 873 Ozumba Mbadiwe Avenue, Victoria Island

Opening Hours: Wednesday to Sunday, 10:00 PM – 8:00 AM (Closed Mondays and Tuesdays)

Overview: This is West Africa's most iconic luxury megaclub. Drenched in rich gold and red lighting, it is a high-octane paradise for big spenders, corporate moguls, and A-list celebrities looking to pop bottles and dance to world-class Afrobeats DJs until the sun comes up.

Sky Bar Rooftop

Address: Lagoon Compound, 1c Ozumba Mbadiwe Avenue, Victoria Island

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 6:00 PM – 2:00 AM

Overview: Perched comfortably above the city's chaos, this high-end rooftop lounge serves up panoramic waterfront views and premium cocktails. It provides a sophisticated, breezy atmosphere that is perfect for a relaxed early-evening social hour or a romantic date night.



Zaza Lagos

Address: 19 Agoro Odiyan Street, Victoria Island

Opening Hours: Wednesday to Sunday, 7:00 PM – 2:00 AM (Closed Mondays and Tuesdays)

Overview: A stylish restaurant and high-energy playground that flawlessly transitions from fine dining to interactive theater shows and late-night dancing. It attracts an exclusive, fashion-forward crowd looking for great food, upscale design, and high-energy music in a more intimate setting.

Kaly Restaurant and Bar

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM

Overview: Kaly combines high-end rooftop dining with sweeping panoramic views of Victoria Island and Eko Atlantic. After sunset, the open-air setting sparkles with city lights, offering selected live entertainment alongside a relaxed space to eat and talk.

Hard Rock Cafe Lagos

Address: Oniru, Lagos

Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday: 12:30 PM – 10:00 PM; Friday to Sunday: 12:30 PM – 12:00 AM

Overview: Set against a stunning beachfront backdrop, Hard Rock Cafe Lagos offers spacious seating and regular live music. Whether catching a high-energy performance or enjoying a relaxed ocean view during a quieter program, it delivers a classic social experience.

Where to catch a show across Nigeria



Craving a glamorous five-star date night, a high-octane blockbuster multiplex, or an intimate private screening lounge, here is our ultimate guide to the finest stages and screens across Nigeria

MUSON Centre

Location: Onikan, Lagos Island, Lagos

What it is: The grand, elegant high-society hub for classical music, opera, and premium stage plays in Nigeria.

Why go: If you want to swap popcorn for a glass of wine and experience some world-class orchestral strings or breathtaking musical theatre, this is your spot. Dress up smart; the crowd here takes arts culture beautifully seriously.

National Theatre

Location: Iganmu, Surulere, Lagos

What it is: Nigeria's ultimate cultural monument. Shaped like a military cap, it is an architectural icon from the 1970s that recently got a massive, modern facelift.

Why go: It is pure history. Going here is a rite of passage for any culture lover. It is the birthplace of Nigeria's performing arts scene, and the massive halls are built for grand, unforgettable spectacles.

Terra Kulture

Location: Victoria Island, Lagos

What it is: A buzzing, lively cultural hub that combines an art gallery, an authentic Nigerian restaurant, and a top-tier theatre hall.

Why go: This is the beating heart of modern Nigerian theatre. If you want to see high-energy, Broadway-style Nigerian musicals with incredible dancing and costumes, Terra Kulture does it better than anyone else. Plus, you can grab amazing pounded yam right after the curtain falls.

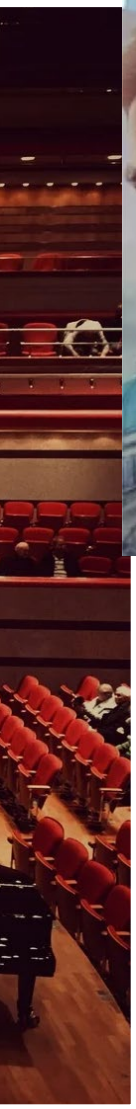
Glover Memorial Hall

Location: Marina, Lagos Island, Lagos

What it is: One of the oldest and most historic performance spaces in Nigeria, beautifully restored to host cutting-edge modern stage plays and cultural festivals.

Why go: It perfectly blends old-school Lagos heritage with fresh, contemporary stage productions. The acoustics are fantastic, and it is a brilliant place to catch rising stars in the local acting scene.





Deja Vu Private Cinema Abuja

Location: Wuse, Abuja

What it is: An ultra-exclusive, private screening lounge where you rent out the entire room for just you and your favourite people.

Why go: Total privacy. You get massive screens, cosy plush couches, and custom food service without having to share the room with strangers. It is absolutely perfect for an intimate birthday bash, a romantic proposal, or a VIP gaming night.

Cinema Club Private Cinema Portharcourt

Location: Elimgbu, Port Harcourt

What it is: A hidden, high-end private cinema lounge designed for exclusive, small-group entertainment.

Why go: It completely redefines "movie night." Instead of standard theatre seats, you get a luxury private space with premium sound and absolute comfort. It is the ultimate way to celebrate a special occasion with a close circle of friends.

Grenhauz Cinema Portharcourt

Location: Port Harcourt

What it is: A beautiful, highly-rated boutique entertainment spot that offers intimate screenings and excellent customer care.

Why go: It feels much more personal and cosy than a giant commercial multiplex. The staff treat you like a VIP, the seating is incredibly comfortable, and it is a fantastic escape if you want to avoid the usual crazy weekend mall crowds.

EbonyLife Cinema

Location: Victoria Island, Lagos

What it is: A super-chic, boutique luxury cinema designed for film lovers who want a five-star, glamorous movie-going experience.

Why go: It is the ultimate date-night spot. Think plush reclining chairs, trendy neon lights, a beautiful rooftop bar, and artisanal snacks. It is where you go to watch the latest Nollywood blockbuster while feeling like royalty.

Filmhouse Cinema

Location: Ado Bayero Mall, Kano

What it is: The go-to modern multiplex in northern Nigeria for catching both massive Hollywood blockbusters and popular Kannywood films.

Why go: It brings high-tech cinema culture right to the heart of Kano. The screens are huge, the sound shakes your seat, and it is the perfect lively weekend escape inside a bustling mall.

Genesis Deluxe Cinemas

Location: Kano

What it is: A sleek, reliable, and comfortable commercial cinema franchise offering a crisp digital viewing experience.

Why go: It delivers a flawlessly smooth movie night. If you want great projection, perfectly salted popcorn, comfy seats, and a completely stress-free environment to watch the latest trending movies, Genesis always hits the mark.

Ozone Cinema Kano

Location: Kano

What it is: A trendy, youthful, and high-energy cinema spot that focuses on bringing the biggest entertainment hits to movie lovers.

Why go: The vibe here is always electric and full of life. It is the best place to watch big action films or hilarious comedies because the crowd is super expressive; expect plenty of laughing, gasping, and shared fun.

Best *Coffee* shops across the city

by Chidinma Enweani

Whether you need a quiet spot to work on your laptop, a sunny place for weekend breakfast, or a really good cup of coffee, Nigeria's coffee space is growing fast.

These great coffee shops double as stylish spaces, creative hubs, and top food spots.





Coffee Bar, Abuja

Sleek, minimalist, and intensely functional, this venue is built for focus and flavor. The atmosphere is sharp and modern, designed with clean lines, comfortable seating arrangements, and a serious dedication to productivity. They serve meticulously roasted coffee beans brewed into potent americanos, smooth flat whites, and refreshing iced beverages.

Why you should visit: You should visit if you are a remote worker, digital nomad, or creative professional looking for high-speed Wi-Fi paired with a serious caffeine kick to power through your deadlines.

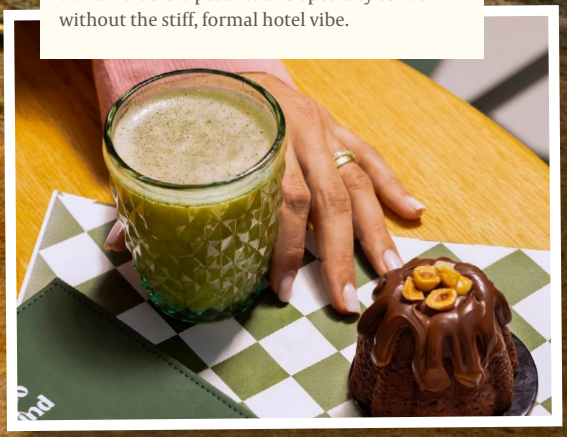




Ziya Federal Palace

The Lobby Café x Ziya brings Ziya Delicacy Boutique's cult-favourite bakes, pastries, and signature drinks straight into the iconic Federal Palace Hotel lobby.

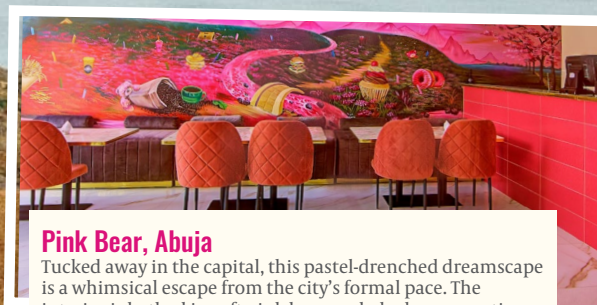
Why you should visit: It is the ultimate spot for a chic, low-key catch-up or a solo treat when you want incredible pastries and specialty coffee without the stiff, formal hotel vibe.



Café Flour

This intimate neighbourhood favorite smells entirely of comfort the second you cross the threshold. The ambiance is warm, unpretentious, and deeply welcoming, featuring rustic wooden accents and gentle lighting that encourages you to linger. They excel in artisanal baking, serving fresh-out-of-the-oven loaves, buttery croissants, and robust, expertly pulled espresso shots.

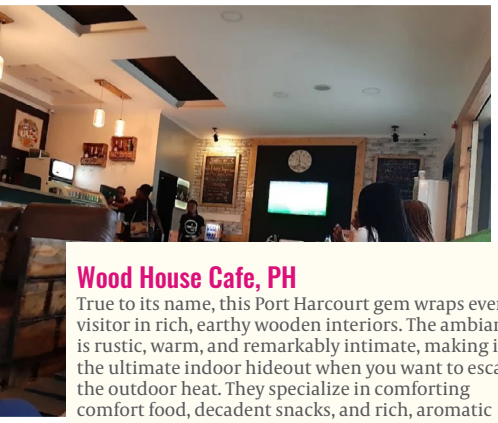
Why you should visit: Good for a quiet breakfast date or when you need a comforting slice of homemade cake paired with a hot cup of coffee to reset your day.



Pink Bear, Abuja

Tucked away in the capital, this pastel-drenched dreamscape is a whimsical escape from the city's formal pace. The interior is bathed in soft pink hues and plush, cozy seating, making it feel less like a traditional eatery and more like a curated film set. They specialize in velvety lattes, Instagram-worthy sweet treats, and delicate pastries that taste just as good as they look.

Why you should visit: Perfect for a relaxed afternoon catch-up with close friends or whenever your social media feed is screaming for a vibrant, cheerful backdrop.



Wood House Cafe, PH

True to its name, this Port Harcourt gem wraps every visitor in rich, earthy wooden interiors. The ambiance is rustic, warm, and remarkably intimate, making it the ultimate indoor hideout when you want to escape the outdoor heat. They specialize in comforting comfort food, decadent snacks, and rich, aromatic coffee brews.

Why you should visit: To enjoy a quiet afternoon with a good novel or when you are craving a grounded, unpretentious space to slow down your pace.

ART CAFE, Lagos

A legendary bohemian sanctuary steeped in the creative history of the city. The atmosphere is eclectic, artistic, and bursting with soul, featuring vintage furniture, walls plastered with local art, and an effortlessly cool crowd. They serve a diverse menu of comforting meals, fresh juices, and dependable coffee classics.

Why you should visit: Visit if you would love to soak up the inspiring creative energy, sketch in your notebook, or lose track of hours conversing with fellow artists, writers, and thinkers.



Dulce Cafe & Bakery, Lagos

As a long-standing fixture on the island's luxury dining scene, this spot delivers refined elegance on every level. The ambiance is upscale, polished, and sophisticated, featuring chic contemporary furnishings and an expansive display of confections. They are masters of luxury baking, offering gourmet desserts, heavy-duty breakfast spreads, and premium coffee pairings.

Why you should visit: Beautiful spot to celebrate a milestone, impress a business date, or treat yourself to high-end pastries in an environment that feels effortlessly exclusive.

Nikkybell cafe, PH

A warm, community-driven neighborhood fixture that prioritizes comfort above all else. The atmosphere is friendly, unpretentious, and instantly puts you at ease the moment you walk through the door. They serve dependable, classic espresso drinks alongside comforting local and continental snacks.

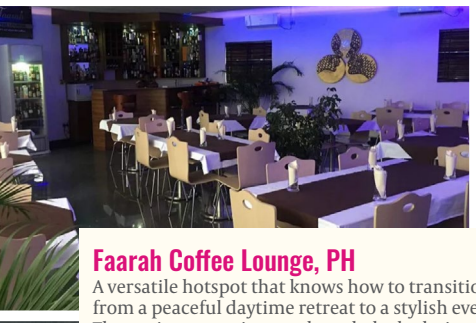
Why you should visit: Pay a visit when you want to bypass the scene-y pretension and simply enjoy a genuinely good cup of coffee served with a smile in a relaxed environment.



TOP BEANS. Coffee, Lagos

This is where casual coffee drinkers transform into purists. The atmosphere is sleek and dedicated, stripped of unnecessary fluff to put the absolute focus on the craft of brewing. They source exceptional beans and employ precise, scientific extraction methods to create everything from delicate pour-overs to rich, concentrated espresso shots.

Why you should visit: Visit if you view coffee as an art form and want to experience what a truly well-roasted, masterfully brewed cup of coffee tastes like.



Faarah Coffee Lounge, PH

A versatile hotspot that knows how to transition smoothly from a peaceful daytime retreat to a stylish evening lounge. The environment is upscale and plush, designed with mood lighting and comfortable lounge seating that invites you to stay a while. They craft exceptional coffees alongside a sophisticated menu of small plates and specialty drinks. Why you should visit: You should visit when your day calls for a seamless shift from catching up on emails over morning espresso to winding down with upscale relaxation in the evening.



Marley and Blue, PH

A design-forward, trendy addition to Port Harcourt's expanding culinary map. The aesthetic is vibrant, youthful, and contemporary, filled with clever design details and a buzzing social atmosphere. They offer inspired brews, creative drink formulations, and delicious pastries that cater to modern palates.

Why you should visit: You should visit if you want to be seen at the newest cool spot in town, catch up with your social circle, or simply enjoy a wonderfully crafted latte in a genuinely inspiring space.

Cafe One Yaba

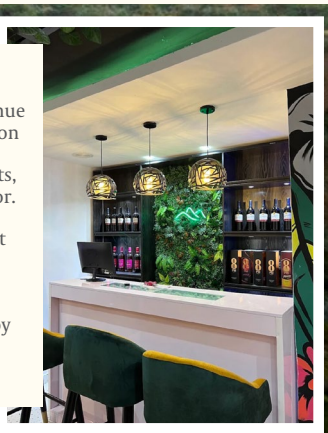
Nestled right in the pulsating heart of the mainland tech district, this space acts as an incubator for ideas and caffeine alike. The vibe is innovative, young, and dynamic, functioning seamlessly as both a collaborative workspace and a relaxed social lounge. They supply high-speed internet, steady workspace power, and reliable, energizing coffee options.

Why you should visit: You should visit if you want to plug into the local tech and startup ecosystem, collaborate with bright minds, or simply need a buzzing, productive atmosphere to get things done.

Tahilla Café, PH

Sleek, modern, and effortlessly chic, this venue brings a touch of metropolitan sophistication to the Garden City. The decor features contemporary lighting, clean seating layouts, and a stylish crowd that matches the interior. They serve a diverse lineup of artisanal coffees, specialty teas, and delightful dessert selections.

Why you should visit: You should visit to kickstart your weekend with style or to enjoy a trendy midday hangout that feels fresh, upbeat, and visually appealing.



Best spots for games and adventure



For your next high-score night out, we chart the absolute best gaming hubs and digital playgrounds across Lagos in no particular order :

1. Crusifix Games and Lounge

Location: Space 103, The Palms Shopping Mall, Oniru, Victoria Island.

Opening Hours: Daily 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM.

Why Go: It is the ultimate spot to blow off steam after a long week.

What to Expect: A beautifully designed modern lounge buzzing with neon accents and cosy seating. Expect top-tier virtual reality simulators, cutting-edge PC and console setups, and an intense multiplayer arena.

2. VR Place Nigeria

Location: 14b Karimu Kotun Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Daily 11:00 AM – 9:00 PM.

Why Go: It is one of the most comprehensive and dedicated virtual reality playgrounds in the city, making it a fantastic destination for tech-forward date nights or friendly group battles.

What to Expect: Complete sensory immersion. Step inside to find massive active VR bays hosting fan favourites like Beat Sabre and heart-pounding horror shooters like The Walking Dead.

3. Rufus & Bee

Location: Twinwaters, Okunde Blue Water Scheme, Off Remi Olowude Street, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Daily 12:00 PM – 10:30 PM.

Why Go: It is a massive, multi-level wonderland that channels classic American boardwalk energy with a vibrant Lagos twist.

What to Expect: An overwhelming, beautiful sensory overload of flashing lights and nostalgic sounds. You will find over 100 arcade games, including classic basketball hoops, racing simulators, dance pads, and coin-pushers.

4. Enzo Reality

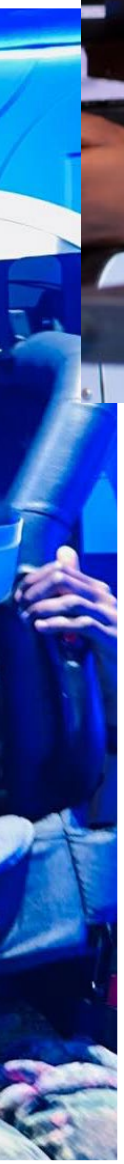
Location: Lekki Town Square Mall, 8 Providence Street, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Mon–Sun 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM.

Why go: This highly-rated tech hub focuses heavily on providing premium, mind-bending VR adventures backed by exceptional, attentive customer service.

What to expect: A stunning, futuristic space packed with the latest augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) tech. Expect to buckle into intense 360-degree rotating simulator chairs that make virtual rollercoasters and flight fights feel shockingly real.





5. Upbeat Centre

Location: 11 Admiralty Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening hours: Tue–Sun 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM.

Why go: If your idea of gaming involves getting airborne and breaking a real sweat, this massive indoor trampoline sports park is the holy grail.

What to expect: High-flying physical action. Expect an enormous grid of interconnected trampolines, foam pits, dodgeball courts, and a challenging ninja warrior obstacle course. It is an electric, high-cardio environment perfect for unleashing your inner child or challenging your mates to a slam-dunk contest.

6. Escape Room 33

Location: 33 Fola Osibo Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening hours: Tue–Sun 12:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Why go: To put your intellect, teamwork, and nerves to the test. It is the perfect destination for live-action puzzle solving in the city.

What to expect: Atmospheric, highly detailed themed rooms where you and your team are locked inside with exactly 60 minutes to escape. Expect to hunt for hidden keys, crack cryptic codes, and unravel mysteries under the ticking clock. It is high-stakes, thrilling, and a brilliant ice-breaker for groups.

7. Illusions Zone

Location: Garnet Plaza, Igbo-Efon, Lekki-Epe Expressway (with a Mainland branch at Ile Oja Mall, Opebi).

Opening hours: Mon–Sat 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Lekki).
Why go: It is a brilliantly quirky, interactive exhibition designed to completely warp your perception of reality and upgrade your social media feed.

What to expect: A maze of mind-bending optical illusions, Ames rooms that distort your height, mirrored infinity chambers, and perspective tricks. Friendly on-site guides are on hand to show you exactly where to stand to capture the perfect, gravity-defying photo.

8. Funzia World

Location: 3B Anthony Etukudo Close, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening hours: Daily 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.

Why Go: A highly interactive entertainment centre engineered perfectly for young families and kids' birthday celebrations.

What to expect: A clean, brightly colored paradise of safe indoor play. Expect multi-level soft play structures, obstacle courses, ball pits, and a gentle selection of beginner-friendly arcade machines designed to keep toddlers and pre-teens thoroughly entertained for hours.

9. Providha Fun City

Location: 79 Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way, Ikeja, Lagos.

Opening hours: Daily 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

Why go: A fantastic indoor entertainment hub that brings premium island-style gaming luxury straight to the Mainland.

What to expect: A sprawling, high-energy layout that has a little bit of everything. Expect sleek, modern bowling lanes, a massive array of prize-winning arcade cabinets, virtual reality simulators, and a swimming pool area. You buy a gaming access card at entry to tap your way through the various activities seamlessly

10. Funsation NG

Location: Penthouse Floor, Centro Lekki Mall, Admiralty Way, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Daily 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

Why go: A versatile indoor amusement park that perfectly balances casual family hangouts with vibrant children's event spaces.

What to expect: A joyful mix of physical play areas and digital entertainment. Expect bumper cars, a small indoor train ride, virtual reality setups, and an array of classic carnival-style arcade games that dole out prize tickets.

Homemade banana bread & Scotch egg

Sweet or savoury? Why choose when you can have both? This week, we are serving up comfort on a plate with an incredibly soft banana bread and perfectly crispy, classic Scotch eggs. Grab your apron; it's time to create some kitchen magic.

Here is a simple recipe for delicious banana bread:

Ingredients

- 3 ripe bananas, well-mashed (the browner, the sweeter!)
- 1/3 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar (reduce to 2/3 cup if your bananas are extremely sweet)
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 1.5 cups all-purpose flour
- Optional add-ins: 1/2 cup chopped walnuts, pecans, or chocolate chips

Instruction

- Preheat your oven to 175^\circ\text{C} (350^\circ\text{F}). Lightly grease a 4\times8-inch loaf pan or line it with parchment paper.
- In a large bowl, mix the melted butter into the mashed bananas until well combined.
- Stir in the sugar, beaten egg, and vanilla extract until smooth.
- Sprinkle the baking soda and salt over the mixture and stir. Gently fold in the flour just until incorporated; be careful not to overmix, or the bread will turn out dense. Fold in any optional nuts or chocolate chips now.



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- Pour the batter evenly into your prepared loaf pan. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean.

- Let the bread cool in the pan for about 10 minutes, then transfer it to a wire rack to cool completely before slicing.

Here is a recipe for delicious Scotch eggs with a savoury sausage coating and a crispy golden crust.

Ingredients

- 5 large eggs (4 for boiling, 1 beaten for coating)
- 450g (approx. 1 lb) good quality breakfast sausage or pork sausage meat (casings removed)
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs (or regular breadcrumbs)
- 1 tablespoon fresh herbs (like parsley or chives), finely chopped (optional)
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- Vegetable oil for frying

Instructions

- Place four eggs in a pot of boiling water and cook for six minutes (this gives you a nice jammy yolk). If you prefer them fully hard-boiled, cook for eight to nine minutes. Transfer them immediately to a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking, then gently peel them and set aside.

- In a bowl, season your sausage meat with a pinch of salt, pepper, and the fresh herbs if using. Divide the meat into four equal portions.

- Dust each peeled egg lightly with flour (this helps the meat stick). Flatten one portion of sausage meat into a thin patty in the palm of your hand. Place the floured egg in the centre and carefully mould the meat around the egg, sealing it completely with no gaps. Repeat for the remaining eggs.

- Set out three shallow bowls: one with the remaining 1/4 cup of flour, one with the one beaten egg, and one with the panko breadcrumbs.

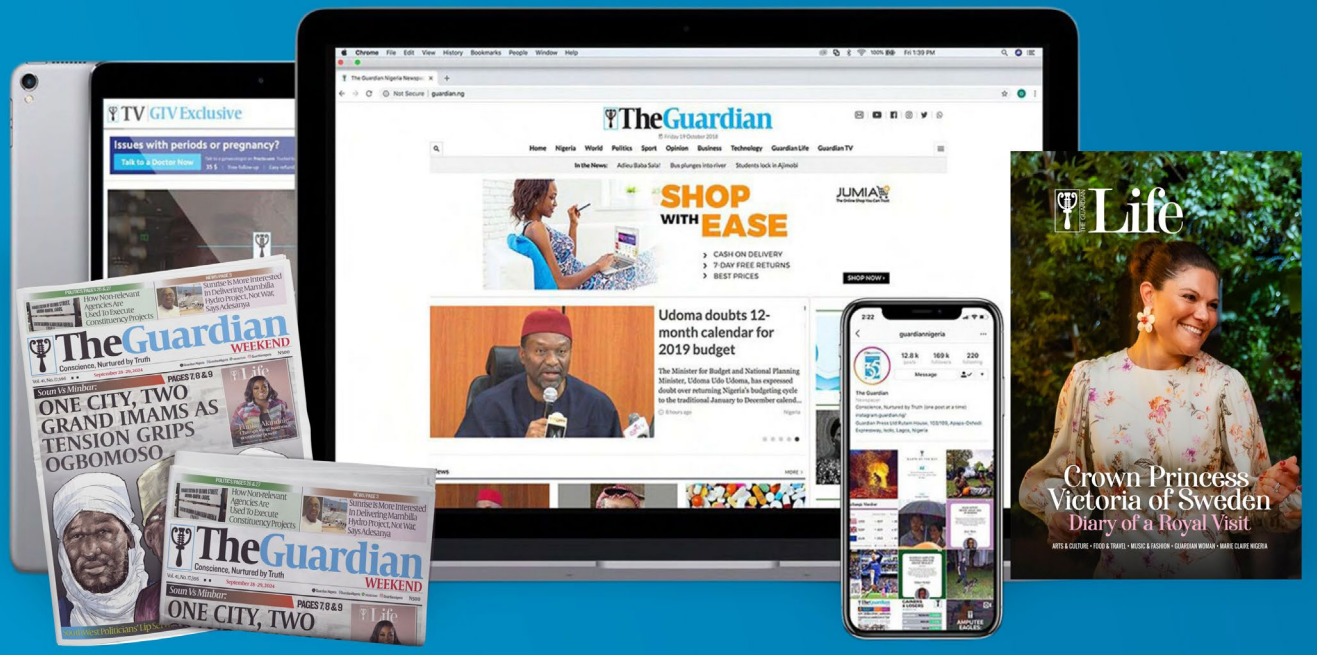
- Roll each sausage-wrapped egg first in the flour, dip it into the beaten egg, and finally roll it thoroughly in the breadcrumbs, pressing gently so they stick.

Cook:

- Heat oil in a deep pan or fryer to 175°C (350°F). Fry the eggs in batches for five to seven minutes, turning occasionally, until the sausage is cooked through and the breadcrumbs are golden brown.

- Let them cool for a few minutes on paper towels, then slice them in half vertically to reveal the yolk.

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