

BattaBox

ORIGINAL NIGERIA

Travel Guide: Visiting Nigeria

A MUST-HAVE TRAVEL GUIDE FOR VISITORS IN NIGERIA

Created by: BattaBox Nigeria Limited

www.battabox.com

info@battabox.com

About BattaBox

BattaBox is Nigeria's most exciting News! Our team of writers brings daily News, entertainment, and information about Nigeria and Africa like never seen before!

When we started in Battabox, our passion for blogging drove us to action: create highly engaging and informative content that is carefully curated and well-researched in a way that provides information and entertainment news to everyday Nigerians. We also wanted to build a strong community and an army of Battabox followers across all our social media platforms.

This cause has led us down a rabbit hole, a never-ending discovery of the Nigerian people's resilience. Despite the nuances of the tribes and peoples of Nigeria, United, we stand! Our daily stories corroborate this fact. Today, our community of like-minded individuals helps improve the quality of the lives of every Nigerian. We are based in the Mega-City of Lagos – the capital of Nollywood, Nigeria.

Please Visit us on all social media platforms, so follow and connect with us.

Contents

About BattaBox	1
About this Travel Guide.....	3
About Nigeria	4
Arriving in Nigeria	4
The weather.....	5
Our Culture and Languages	6
Our Food	6
Dresses and what to wear	7
Security.....	8
Hotel and Lodging	8
Traveling within the States of Nigeria.....	8
Sight Seeing.....	9
Eating out and street food	9
Getting around (inter-state)	10
Public Holidays and National Celebrations.....	10
Religion and Religious days.....	10
Nightlife and strip clubs	11
Mobile networks and internet access.....	11
Conclusion.....	11

About this Travel Guide

This Travel guide's goal is to serve as a compliment to visitors to Nigeria. While it is not all-inclusive, it provides valuable information for everyone visiting Nigeria, especially those visiting for the first time. We hope readers enjoy this short guide, and please send us an email with any questions or suggestions.

We wish you Safe travels.

About Nigeria

Nigeria is popularly referred to as the giant of Africa. It is important to lead with this because of its 225 Million people (2020), making it the most populous country and the largest economy in Africa, and the world's sixth most populous country. There are 36 States or Provinces and the Federal Capital Territory (the Seat of Power and Government) in Nigeria.

Nigeria is a multiethnic State inhabited by more than 250 ethnic groups all identifying with a wide variety of cultures. The three largest ethnic groups are the Hausa in the north, Yoruba in the west, and Igbo in the east, together comprising over 60% of the total population. The official language is English, chosen to facilitate linguistic unity at the national level and modeled after the British, given that Nigeria is a formal British colony that only obtained her independence on October 1, 1960.¹

Nigeria practices democracy, modeled after the United States with elected officials at the executive and legislative branches of government (the House of Representatives and the Senate) at the Federal and State Levels. The Nigerian government has 774 local governments (or counties) that are directly controlled by the Federal government but Nigeria also practices indirect rule through traditional chiefdoms, Obas, and local traditional rulers. Nigeria is located in West Africa, bordering Niger in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east, and Benin in the west.

Arriving in Nigeria

Welcome to Nigeria, the land of milk and honey. Oh, sorry, that is Canaan. Wait, we actually have Canaanland here in Nigeria, too, so the description still stands. You just might find the milk and honey a tad more organic than you're expecting.

Anyways, you've decided to come down to Nigeria. Whether your visit is for business or pleasure, or to trace your roots back to Mother Africa, or for family reasons, or maybe of our several Nigerian Princes sold twelve thousand hectares of premium landed property in Wakanda to you, and he has managed to convince you beyond reasonable doubt that he is the only remaining heir to the Wakanda Kingdom, regardless, for whatever reason, here you are now, thinking about visiting Nigeria.

In either case, we are glad you are visiting Nigeria. But, first, be prepared to have everything you have seen, heard, and read about Nigeria proven wrong because Nigeria is a place like no other. The sun is hot, the mosquitoes are first-class citizens, and no, I do not know any Prince from Wakanda. I am glad you asked, though.

Second advice, please stay smart and sharp, and always be attentive to your surroundings, especially in the larger cities.

If arriving by air, you will most likely arrive through Murtala Muhammadu International Airport in Lagos or Nnamdi Azikwe International Airport in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. When you arrive, there will be a long queue as you go through customs, please be patient, as you will find during your stay here in Nigeria, Patience is a virtue every Nigerian must have, it is a required survival skill in Nigeria. Please do not give your luggage to anyone to carry for you and do not watch over someone's luggage. While these are common sense advice that every traveler must have, as you will observe during your visit, safety is a top priority when visiting Nigeria, so be vigilant while picking up your luggage and going through customs. Expect your luggage tags to be checked at the airport before exiting, some thieves have been known to pretend as travelers and have stolen travelers' luggage. Ensure you have your matching boarding pass tags ready to present upon exiting the airport with your luggage.

There will be people heckling at you asking to exchange your foreign currency for you into the local currency, the Naira, do not talk to anyone of them or do not approach them to exchange your foreign currency.

Plan ahead and have your host pick you up or have your host make arrangements for picking you up at the airport. Do not negotiate with the local taxi drivers and do not get in any stranger's car unless you have confirmed with your host first. Getting in the wrong car or riding with strangers is dangerous and should be avoided at all costs.

The weather

Recently, the country's weather has decided to start behaving like an unruly teenager and acting anyhow, especially in the south.

The normal climate is supposed to have rainy season during the middle of the year, harmattan towards the end around the Yuletide period and the sun doing its thing in-between.

However, rain now falls whenever it likes, and harmattan makes cameo appearances around November and maybe February, Just to see how we're doing.

Usually, Nigeria's climate is hot throughout the year with slight difference between the summer months and winter months. There are two climatic seasons in Nigeria, namely, the wet season and the dry season. The wet season (summer) is between the months of April to October while the dry season (winter) is from the months of November to March. The best time for tourists to visit Nigeria is between November and January with average temperatures of 34°C (94°F) during the day and 27°C (80°F) at night. If at all possible, for your visit to Nigeria, try to avoid the period between June and September when weather is quite hot, humid, and rainy.

By climatic regions, Nigeria can be divided by 3 regions – just like a sandwich, the far south, far north, and the rest of the country in between. The far south features a tropical rainforest climate with a yearly rainfall of 60-80 inches a year. While the far north has desert-like weather and rain is less than 20 inches a year. The rest of the country is defined by savannah, everything in between the far north and far south with rainfall within 20 and 60 inches a year.ⁱⁱ

Our Culture and Languages

Nigeria's culture is shaped by the country's multiple ethnic groups, which have a combined 527 languages, 7 of which are extinct. The three largest ethnic groups are the Yorubas who are predominant in the southwest, the Igbos in the southeast, and the Hausas in the north.

There are many other ethnic groups of sizable populations across different parts of the country, like the Kanuri in the northeast, the Tiv in the northcentral, and the Efik-Ibibio who are in the south-south. Then there are the Bini people who inhabit the spaces between Yorubaland and Igboland.

Nigeria's other ethnic groups, sometimes called 'minorities', are found throughout the country, but especially in the middle belt and the north. The traditionally nomadic Fulani roam all over West and Central Africa; they are mostly Muslims, along with the Hausa and a predominant number of Yorubas. A notable minority of the latter are Christians, along with most of the Igbo, Efik and Bini.

However, indigenous religious practices remain important among all of these various ethnic groups, which are frequently blended with the Christian or Muslim beliefs in a practice known as syncretism. Therefore, when it comes to religion and culture, you must tread carefully with Nigerians.

Our Food

You haven't lived until you've had the Nigerian delicacies I'm about to pour out. Every region has its own peculiar food right? Below is a few peculiar to each tribe/region.

The South West (Yorubas) have **Pounded yam** which goes well with *efo elegusi*. You can have it topped with chicken/beef, and wash it down with chilled Five-Alive. Or fried yam and pepper from the roadside, also known as *dundu alata*. Oh, my Jesus! You've been criticizing Esau for selling his birthright because of porridge all these while? Trust me, you will sell your foreign citizenship on the spot, without regrets.

There is also **rice**, which you will find at any self-respecting Nigerian party in the form of the durable and ever-loving jollof rice, the extra-savoury but proud fried rice, and the local-

but-unfazed-about-it **ofada rice**. Then there is white rice and stew sitting in the corner sullenly and wondering, “Am I a joke to these people?”

Every culture, though, has their own local food menu. The Yorubas, apart from pounded yam, like **amala**, **eba**, and **lafun** (ground dried yam) with a variety of soups like vegetable, melon (egusi), ewedu (Spinach) and okra (ila), among others.

For the East (Igbos), we have Utara na Ofe, which is any swallow ranging from akpu (fufu) to pounded yam, garri (eba) and guinea corn swallow with soups like oha, egusi and others.

The North (Hausas) eat Tuwo shinkafa, masa, dambu and fura de nono (yoghurt with millet), among others.

Oh, yes, there’s suya. How could I forget suya? I can’t even start to describe it. Just take a stroll at night to any nearby junction, then take a deep breath and follow your nostrils to the Hausa man with a platter of roasting meat on a grill. It might seem strange at first and you might be a little reluctant, but all of that goes away the moment you taste it.

Dresses and what to wear

Nigeria is a pretty conservative country that is just slowly emerging into the libertarian space, so what you’re allowed to wear comfortably will depend on which part of the country you are.

For example, if you’re in Lagos or any major city in the southern part of Nigeria, you could go out practically naked, nobody cares.

Apart from a few stares and maybe some catcalls from certain unsavoury elements, no one will disturb your peace of mind.

However, try this in the rural areas, and within two minutes, an elderly woman is already by your side to give you some counseling that she feels you desperately need.

And you rebuff her at your own risk, because you don’t know if she is a member of The Powers That Be.

Dress anyhow in the north, and you might find yourself a victim of capital punishment for the crime of dressing like an infidel. It’s that simple.

‘Nuff said.

Security

Well, why do you think I've got this baseball bat laced with red straps of cloth and cowry beads? Nigeria is not safe. It used to be manageable, but in recent times, security has degraded as the government grew ever lax in its duties.

If it is not policemen who are stopping you illegally with the aim of extorting you just because you look comfortable, then it is the criminal elements roaming around seeking to relieve you of your hard-earned belongings. In fact, most of the time, you can barely tell the two parties apart.

Oh, right, one group wears uniforms, and is backed by the law to carry firearms.

However, you also have to mind the times you go out. Night outings are a NO! NO! Except you go out with friends who know the city well. If that's the case, you'll enjoy the Nigeria nightlife so much you wouldn't want to have a daybreak.

Please have a teaser or pepper sprays since kidnapping is the order of the day. Has always been but it's not more incessant.

Hotel and Lodging

Luckily, if there is one thing Nigeria is not short on, it is hotels for hospitality. We might be unfriendly to each other, but we always have a smile for outsiders. From Sheraton and Eko Hotels in Lagos, all the way to Kajuru Castle in Kaduna state, there is a wide range of options, depending on the size of your budget.

If I start with a list of hotels we might end the guide here. However once you get to a state in Nigeria, all you need to do is Google 'hotels near me' and **Voila!**

Traveling within the States of Nigeria

Well, except you're going by air, you do this at your own risk. Interstate roads in Nigeria are no different now from shopping centers for bandits and kidnappers, and not even the railroads are safe. All they need to do is wait around, and sooner or later, business comes along.

Oh, sorry, let me clarify; you're the business. And your family cannot say they can't afford a ransom of ₦10 million after they found dollars in your wallet. Not with the current exchange rate.

So, if you want to travel within Nigeria, just try to go in broad daylight (even though that's not a guarantee that you're safe). Make your finding on the news and trends online before going anywhere. Better still, go by air.

Sight Seeing

Like the case of hotels that I mentioned earlier, the list of tourism spots in Nigeria may be endless.

However, you may have heard a lot about Nigeria and its cultural heritage, so you're probably looking for some tourist activities to take some memories back with you. So, get more mosquito repellents, sunscreen, and gear up on a healthy dose of Jumanji spirits. We're going across the country.

First, there is Obudu Cattle Ranch in Cross River state, a mountain resort for adventures, and Ikogosi Warm Springs in Ekiti State, where you get to see the unique and legendary presence of warm and cold springs running side by side without ever mixing. Now if that isn't some sorcery, then I don't know what is.

Idanre Hills, Zuma Rock and Oluma Rock are for those of you who like climbing mountains, Tinapa Resort, again in Cross River state, is Nigeria's small London, and the Mambilla Plateau is perhaps the only place in Nigeria without mosquitoes.

This is among so many other tourism spots but hey, you can finish the list next time on Battabox.

Eating out and street food

I'm going to start by mentioning suya again. Really, you should try it out. Then you would know why I have decided to emphasize the delicacy.

Other street foods include doughnuts, puff-puff and buns, akara and egg-rolls. You see that **akara**, please don't buy it at night. Buy it in the morning around 6 am to 7 am. *Thank me later!*

My advice, watch the sausage roll you buy in transit. And if you like call it sausage roll when you see one, except for the hands you wave at the hawkers, the only sausage roll on Nigerian roads is **gala**, as far as the sellers are concerned.

Getting around (inter-state)

All states have public transport systems that allow ease of transport within the states, ranging from buses to cabs, tricycles and bikes (okada), although the latter is steadily in decline as state governments ban them due to safety reasons.

And if you're one who prioritizes comfort over cost, you can easily book private cabs or transport services like Uber, Bolt and Taxify.

Let me tip you on some interesting popular transport vehicles you would really have a travelogue to write on. Basically in the South West though; **Danfo, Mikra, Korope, BRT, Soole (please avoid Soole o. Just notice the system and MOVE!).**

These vehicles are swamped with pickpockets. Therefore, hiding/safeguard your valuables when you board them and try to not discuss with any stranger unless you're asking for directions.

Public Holidays and National Celebrations

Ah! The few periods in the year when office folks finally catch a break from the never-ending day-to-day toil that is their life for 95% of the year.

The first comes on, well, the first day of the year, which is New Year's Day, and I can categorically tell you that while majority of people are happy about seeing the new year, they're happier that they don't have to go to work.

Other public holidays include: Good Friday and Easter Sunday (and Monday), the dates of which vary per year but usually fall in mid-April; Labour Day on May 1; Eid al-Fitr in early May; Democracy Day on June 13; Eid al-Adha in July; Independence Day on October 1; The Prophet's birthday in October; Christmas Day; and finally, Boxing Day.

Religion and Religious days

Religion is pretty straightforward. Christians go to church en masse on Sundays, Muslims go to pray en masse on Friday afternoons, and the traditionalists... well, they don't really have a timetable.

Just don't get caught outside on certain nights, or you might find yourself meeting the gods in undue time. Yeah! I mean the traditional worshippers. They could be scary, but that's considered the religion of *our forefathers*.

Nightlife and strip clubs

Hehehe! Time for enjoyment, right? And when else to enjoy than at night, when darkness has fallen and it is easy to get away with shenanigans, eh?

Well, Nigeria is more than equipped to cater for your nightlife needs. There are almost more bars and lounges than there are people who frequent bars and lounges. Clubs are popping up so fast, they will probably need a League soon.

As for strip clubs, there is a slew of them, from Silverfox and Ocean Blue in Lagos, to Teasers and Godfather Lounge in Abuja. Go and flenjoy! Just be vigilant when you're on the move.

Mobile networks and internet access

The mobile network industry in Nigeria is hotly contested by four kingpins: MTN, Airtel, gmobile and Glo, each with their own perks and suitability, based on your location in the country. These overlords also provide internet access, again with quality based on your location.

However, everyone knows that among all four, one is universally terrible, but as it is, I am unable to mention names, because I don't want a defamation lawsuit on my hands.

Other internet options include providers like Spectranet, Swift, and Smile, among others.

Conclusion

So, I think that about covers it, right? Like I said in the beginning, for whatever reason, you've found yourself with a need to visit Nigeria, now you have everything you need to ease your stay. You know what to wear, how to move around, what to eat... again, you must try suya. It's a must; you haven't visited Nigeria if you haven't tried suya.

Although, I should probably warn you that when you go out to look for suya, ignore any voice that calls you by any royal or top-flight names like "Boss" or "Chief".

Do not, and I repeat, DO NOT answer them in the hope that they've spotted Prince Ajibade's aura on you. And like I said, I still have no idea who that is.

ⁱ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/attachments/summaries/NI-summary.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.studycountry.com/guide/NG-climate.htm>