Nigeria

Location

Nigeria is located in West Africa and it shares land borders with a few countries. These countries include the Republic of Benin, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger. These countries surround Nigeria on each side; the Republic of Benin is on the west, Chad and Cameroon are on the East, and Niger is on the north. The coast of Nigeria lies on part of the Atlantic Ocean. The capital of Nigeria is Abuja.

Geography

Nigeria happens to be the world’s 32nd largest country. It is located in western Africa and has a total area of 923,768 km². When being compared to California, it is about twice the size. There are various landscapes around Nigeria which include hills, savannahs, Sahara, beaches, and rainforest. The main rivers in this country are the Niger and the Benue Rivers. They both come together and empty into the Niger Delta, which happens to be the world’s largest river delta. This country also is believed to have the world’s largest diversity of butterflies along the Calabar. A few areas are more prone to have certain types of animals or insects. For example, drill monkeys are only found in the southeast.

Climate

Depending on the location in Nigeria, the climate differs. In the west, it is progressively drier that the rest of the country. Rainfall is the key aspect to the climate and there is a variety
of wet and dry seasons. There are two air masses that contribute to rainfall. There is moist air coming from the Atlantic Ocean and dry air coming from the African landmass. In the southeastern part of Nigeria, rainfall is very reliable, but the peak of the rain season occurs in the northern regions. The rainy seasons begin in February and the Southwestern monsoon swarms the country. Air from the Atlantic Ocean is involved in the peak of the rainy season. This is in some ways good because for the dry areas in Nigeria, they need water for their agricultural purposes. In September, the northeast winds contribute to the clear skies, reasonable temperatures, and low humidity throughout the country.

**History**

Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic groups, with varying languages and customs, creating a country of rich ethnic diversity. Nigeria gained its independence from the United Kingdom on October 1, 1960. As a new republic, Nigeria’s government became independent and had 2 parties; one that was dominated by the Islamic faith which is called the NPC and one that is dominated by the Christian faith which were the NCNC. NPC stands for Nigerian People’s Congress and NCNC stands for Nationals Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons. Consequently, with different religious groups controlling the government, it created many problems. The northern part of the country was far bigger than the southern part and in 1963 the country declared itself as a Federal Republic. Mineral resources that are available in Nigeria are coal, tin, iron ore, limestone, niobium, lead, zinc, and arable land. However, the mining industry is almost non-existent. Nigeria, along with many other third world nations, has accumulated a very
significant foreign debt. In October 2005, Nigeria reached an agreement with Paris Club creditors and reduced their debt by 60%.

**Population**

Of all the counties in Africa, Nigeria has the largest population. The population is over 140 million people which makes it the 8th most populated country in the world! Nigeria has 23 major cities. Some of them include Zaria, Maiduguri, Benin City, Kano, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, and Lagos. According to Dr. Samuel N. Maduagwu, population demographics are as follows: Hausas are 29%, Yorubas are 21%, Lgbos are 18%, and others represent 32% of the population.

**Currency**

According to the Animal Science 360 website, the currency for Nigeria is the Naira. The symbol for this currency is NGN. Until 1958, Nigeria used the West African pound which is equal to the UK pound. In 1958, this was replaced by the Nigerian pound.

**Education**

Education is very important in Nigeria. Unlike America, education is taken very seriously. English is used for education and for business transactions, although there are hundreds of other languages spoken in this country. According to OnlineNigeria.com, there were three fundamental education systems in 1990 which include the indigenous system, Quranic schools, and formal European-style education institutions.
Language

Usually in one country there are only a few languages utilized, but not in Nigeria. There are 521 languages; 510 include living languages, two second languages with native speakers, and 9 extinct languages. The official language of Nigeria is English. This was chosen to improve the intellectual and linguistic harmony of the country. Another reason the population chose to speak English was because of the British colonization. The other major languages spoken in Nigeria symbolize three families. The majority are Niger-Congo languages, Afro-Asiatic, and Kanuri. Depending on the Location in Nigeria, a different language is utilized. English is the only language that is widely used for education and business transactions; however in some rural areas, English is not utilized at all. The Muslim population utilizes Hausa where other religious groups make use of other languages such as the Nigerian Pidgin English. Pidgin is known as ‘broken’; and therefore symbolizes broken English and is mostly used in the Niger Delta regions. Another language that is used is called Yoruba. This language has by far the most dialects. The variation is caused by the different parts of towns. These are just a few languages spoken in Nigeria, but there are many others.

Religion

Along with the language in Nigeria, there are various religions practiced. The four main religions are Islam, Christianity, Orisha, and Animism. There are also other religious/spiritual groups that include Hinduism, Judaism, and Chrislam. The different religions cause conflicts among the community. Islam is mainly practiced in the northern part of the country whereas
Christianity is mainly practiced in the southeast part of the country. Across western Nigeria, Orisha is practiced.

Agriculture

As mentioned above, the agriculture is depending on which location of Nigeria you live in. Depending if you’re in the North or the West, the West is very dry which could be bad for agriculture. The North has an abundant amount of rain which is helpful for growing grain.

Food

To find the best food, you’re best chance is on the roadside stalls called the Buka. Here you will find the best cooked cuisine meals. Much of Nigeria food is grained-based because of the climate. A few popular foods are peppery stew, efo, Isi-ewu, seafood, and palm oil. A efo is vegetable soup, Isi-ewu is goat head pepper soup, and palm oil is a reddish colored oil that is made from ground palm kernels. One of the most famous drinks in Nigeria is palm wine which is made from palm trees.

Landmarks

Landmarks may symbolize many things such as structures to be visited, seen, and/or touched or structures that are to memorialize important people/places. Nigeria has certain greetings that are their landmarks and it shows the historic, cultural, and educational aspects of Nigeria that they are very proud of.

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