

# Jamaica Age 16-18

**Official Name:** Jamaica

**Capital City:** Kingston

**Ethnic Groups:** Black (90.9%), mixed (7.3%), East Indian (1.3%), white (0.2%), Chinese (0.2%)

**Natural Resources:** Bauxite, gypsum and limestone.

**Principal Exports:** Bauxite and aluminum, apparel, sugar, bananas, coffee, citrus and citrus products, rum, cocoa.

**Major Imports:** Consumer Goods, construction materials, electrical equipment, food, fuel, machinery and transportation equipment.

**GDP per capita:** \$US3,350 (purchasing power parity)

**Head of State:** The head of state is the governor-general, who is appointed by the British monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister of Jamaica.

**Head of Government:** The head of government in Jamaica is the Prime Minister who is elected by the Jamaican people. The prime minister is the leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives.

**Language:** The official language is English but Patois, a dialect, is widely spoken across the island



**Flag:** The Jamaican flag has 3 colors, green, black and gold. *Black* stands for hardships overcome and to be faced; *Gold*, for natural wealth and beauty of sunlight; and *Green* stands for hope and agricultural resources.

**Some things Jamaica is well known for:**

- Blue Mountain Coffee
- The Jamaican Bobsled team
- Reggae Music and Bob Marley
- Jerk Sauce

- The Beautiful beaches and coral reefs

<http://www.jamaicans.com/childsguide/facts.shtml>

Jamaica gradually obtained increasing independence from Britain. In 1958 it joined other British Caribbean colonies in forming the Federation of the West Indies. Jamaica gained full independence when it withdrew from the Federation in 1962.

CIA Factbook: Jamaica Introduction.

Alexander Bustamante became Jamaica's first elected prime minister.

## **People and Their Achievements**

### **Colin Powell**

Born to Jamaican parents on April 5, 1937, Powell led a long and distinguished career as an American statesman. He was the first African American to be appointed as the U.S. Secretary of State and retired as a four-star general from the U.S. Army. Highly decorated during his prestigious military career, he served as the National Security Advisor, Commander of the U.S. Army Forces Command, and was the only African American to serve as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Following his retirement, he became a partner in the Silicon Valley firm of Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers, a motivational speaker, joined the board of directors of Revolution Health and became a spokesman for National Mentoring Month.

### **Usain Bolt**

Jamaican sprinter, Usain St. Leo Bolt, was born in Trelawny, Jamaica on Aug. 21, 1986. He holds the world record and Olympic record in the 100-meter and 200-meter sprint, the first to hold both titles at the same time. He won the gold in both competitions three times, was the youngest gold medalist in the World Junior Championships and became the first to complete the 200-meter sprint in under 20 seconds. He has performed worldwide and has earned the nickname "Lightning Bolt." Puma sponsors him and his autobiography will be released in 2012.

### **Asafa Powell**

Specializing in the 100-meter sprint, Powell has held the world record for the 100-meter sprint in World and Olympic competitions. He translated his successes into lucrative deals with Nike, GlaxoSmithKline and Nutrilite. Born Nov. 23, 1982 in Spanish Town, Jamaica, he's broken the 10-second barrier 63 times in events worldwide. He has collected gold, silver and bronze

medals at the Olympics, World Championships, Commonwealth Games and IAAF World Athletics Final.

### *Bob Marley*

World famous reggae singer, songwriter and musician, Nesta Robert “Bob” Marley, was born in Nine Mile, Jamaica on Feb. 6, 1945. He’s credited with bringing the music of his homeland to the forefront of the industry and introducing many to the Rastafarian religious movement. A global favourite, he was considered the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy by the Native American Havasupai and Hopi tribes, and some in Nepal saw him as the incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu. His band, Bob Marley & the Wailers, were hired numerous times in the early years to open for well-known bands, and were fired when they proved more popular than the established groups for which they opened. Diagnosed with cancer in 1977, he chose to continue entertaining for as long as possible and died May 11, 1981. He received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001.

### *BanjoBanton*

The literal translation of Banton’s name is chubby storyteller. Born July 15, 1973 in Kingston, Jamaica, he’s a direct descendant of the Maroon freedom fighters and spoke out often on political issues. He was a signer of the Reggae Compassionate Act and the creator of the Stop Murder Music movement. Banton began performing at the age of 12, becoming a popular dancehall, ragga and reggae performer, musician and DJ. He broke the record of number one singles in one year that was previously held by reggae artist Bob Marley.

### *Jody-Anne Maxwell*

Jody-Anne Maxwell has the distinction of being the first black student and the first outside the U.S. to win the Scripps National Spelling Bee in the competition’s history. She won the event in 1998 at the age of 12. She later hosted the Jamaican program, “The KFC Quiz Show,” with a range of co-hosts until 2004. Maxwell is currently a law student attending the Norman Manley Law School.

### *Carla Campbell*

Carla Campbell was born Nov. 22, 1980. She is an internationally known model who appeared in the 2006 *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit* issue. She was the first Caribbean model to appear in *Sports Illustrated* and the second to work for Victoria’s Secret. She promotes well-known companies such as Avon, L’Oreal, Nike, Target, Footlocker and Seventeen magazine.

### *Chris Blackwell*

Hailed as one of the most influential people in the music industry worldwide, he's the founder of Island Records. He counted Bob Marley, Cat Stevens, Grace Jones, Steve Winwood, Melissa Etheridge and U2 among his high profile clients. He was born Christopher Percy Gordon "Chris" Blackwell to a mother of Jamaican ancestry on June 22, 1937. Blackwell worked as a production assistant for the James Bond film Dr. No., in his early years and served as aide-de-camp to the governor of Jamaica. He guided Island Records into the film industry, founding the media entertainment firm of Palm Pictures. He supports a variety of philanthropic interests and is the founder of the Goldeneye Film Festival. Blackwell received the Jamaican Musgrave Medal for excelling in the arts, music and public service, along with the Order of Jamaica for his philanthropic work and contributions to the entertainment industry.

### Donovan Bailey

Born in Jamaica in 1967, Donald Bailey immigrated to Canada as a child. He won the 100-meter sprint and the 4x100 meter relay titles at the 1995 Track & Field Championships in Gothenburg, Sweden. Prior to the centennial Olympics in 1996, he broke the 50-meter world record and set the world record at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996. His third world title came in 1997 as part of the Canadian relay team. He was named the world's fastest man in 1997. His career ended when he ruptured his Achilles tendon in 1998. He officially retired in 2001 as a three-time World and two-time Olympic champion. He founded DBX Sport Management, a firm that aids amateur athletes in self-promotion. Bailey worked as a sports commentator during the 2008 Olympics, was inducted into the Canada Sports Hall of Fame as an individual in 2004, and as part of the Canadian relay team in 2008.

Profiles of famous Jamaicans and descendants of Jamaicans - Part 1& 2

<http://www.jamaicans.com/culture/hallfame/famousjamaican1.shtml>Published Aug 8, 2011

## **Jamaican Culture - An Overview**

*By Marcia Davidson*

*Published May 8, 2003*

Culture is the way of life of a people and includes, customs, practices, beliefs, superstitions and food. These customs lead people to act, think and behave differently and make them distinctive.

The Jamaican culture is expressed through local stories, songs, dances, the use of herbs and bush medicine, local beliefs, the preparation of indigenous foods and through religious practices.

Jamaicans perform folk songs and dances mainly during festivals and Independence celebrations. During celebrations, it is customary for women to wear their bandana skirt with the traditional peasant blouse. Men often wear a bandana shirt or colours of the flag.

Jamaica's folk culture began mainly in the rural and mountainous villages. The main contributors to Jamaican culture are the groups of people who made Jamaica their home. These are the Africans, the English, The Spaniards, and the Indians.

## The Jamaican National Symbols

*Published Dec 1, 1995*

### **The Jamaican National Bird**

The "Doctor Bird" (*Trochilus polytmus*), found only in Jamaica, is one of the most outstanding species of Humming Birds. The feathers of the Doctor Bird are beautifully iridescent, a characteristic peculiar to this family.



### **National Flower - Lignum Vitae**

Lignum Vitae (*Guaiacum officinale*) is indigenous to Jamaica and was found in the island by Christopher Columbus. The name "Wood of Life" was given to the Lignum Vitae because of its medicinal qualities.

The tree grows best in the dry woodlands along both the North and South coasts of [the island](#). In addition to shedding an attractive blue flower, the plant itself is extremely ornamental. The wood is widely used in the manufacture of propeller shaft bearings for ships, as well as in the creation of curios, sought after by visitors and nationals alike.

### **National Tree - Blue Mahoe**

Mahoe (*Hibiscus elatus*). This is one of the primary economic forms of lumber. It is currently much used for re-forestation and is a valuable source for making furniture. Of an attractive

blue-green colour with variegated yellowish intrusions, it is capable of showing to advantage the variety of grain and colour tones. Each year local and foreign tradeuse many thousandfeet of this beautiful lumber.



### **The Jamaican Coat of Arms**

William Sanderoft, Archbishop of Canterbury designed the original Coat of Arms, granted to Jamaica in 1661. Apart from a partial revision in 1957, it remains virtually the same as it was originally designed. The Arms shows a male and female Arawak, standing on either side of the shield which bears a red cross with five golden pineapples superimposed on it. The Crest is a Jamaican crocodile surmounting the Royal Helmet and Mantlings. The original Latin motto, "Indus Uterque Serviet Uni", has been translated to: "Out of many, one people"



### **The Jamaica National Flag**

The Jamaica National Flag was first hoisted on Jamaica's Independence Day August 6, 1962. A bipartisan committee of the Jamaica House of Representatives designed the flag.

The Flag has a diagonal cross or saltire with four triangles in juxtaposition. The diagonal cross is in gold and one-sixth of the length of the fly of the flag; the top and bottom triangles are in green; and the hoist and fly triangles are in black. The exact shade of green used in the flag is Emerald T8 17, British Admiralty Bunting Pattern. The Flag follows the "Admiralty Pattern" and the proportion is 2 x 1.

Original Symbolism of the Flag- "Hardships there are but the land is green and the sun shineth" is the symbolism of the Flag. Black stands for hardships overcome and to be faced; Gold, for natural wealth and beauty of sunlight; and Green stands for hope and agricultural resources." In 1996 the symbolism was updated so that Black now symbolizes "the strength and creativity of the Jamaican people."



### **Ackee the Jamaican National Fruit**

Ackee is the Jamaican National Fruit. The ackee is not indigenous to Jamaica, but was originally imported from West Africa, probably brought to Jamaica in a slave ship. Ackee trees grow in abundance on the island producing large quantities of edible fruit. The tree was unknown to science until plants were taken from Jamaica to England in 1793 by none other than Captain William Bligh of "Mutiny on the Bounty" fame, hence the botanical name "Blighiaspasia" in honour of the notorious sea captain. One of the earliest local propagators of the tree was Dr. Thomas Clarke who introduced it to the eastern parishes in 1778.

Jamaica is the only place where the fruit is generally recognized as an edible crop, although the plant has been introduced into most of the other Caribbean islands.



Miss Lou in the National Costume

[Click for Larger image](#)

### **The Jamaican National Costume**

A full-flaired [skirt](#) made of Madras bandana (predominantly red plaid cotton) material worn usually with a white blouse edged with matching bandana. Headwear varies from bandana wrapped in a special design to straw hat decorated with flowers. Above is Jamaica's folk ambassador, Louise Bennett-Coverly ("Miss Lou") displaying the national costume on the cover of her book *Jamaica Labrish*.



## National anthem:



**name:** "Jamaica, Land We Love"

**lyrics/music:** Hugh Braham SHERLOCK/Robert Charles LIGHTBOURNE

**note:** adopted 1962

Information Source includes: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

<http://www.jamaicans.com/info/national/symbols-2.shtml>

## **JAMAICA–Interesting Facts**

- **1962** **Jamaican Independence: Jamaica becomes independent within the British Commonwealth Alexander Bustamante elected Prime Minister Jamaica Labour Party (JLP).**
- **1972** **Michael Manley becomes Prime Minister for the People’s National People (PNP)**
- **1980** **Edward Seaga becomes Prime Minister (JLP) and the US grants the government substantial aid as the country distances itself from Cuba**
- **1988** **Hurricane Gilbert**
- **1989** **Michael Manley returns as Prime Minister.**
- **1992** **Manley retires and is succeeded by Prime Minister Percival J. Patterson.**
- **1999** **July: The army patrols Kingston following a massive increase in crime.**
- **2004** **September: Hurricane Ivan**
- **2006** **February: Portia Simpson Miller is elected head of People’s National Party  
March: Portia Simpson Miller becomes Jamaica’s first female Prime Minister in March.**

### August 6, 1962

The British Flag was lowered at midnight August 5, 1962 and the Jamaican Flag was hoisted for the first time. [Click here to learn more about the Jamaica flag.](#)

Jamaica was granted its independence from England.

Got its own constitution which sets out the laws by which the citizens are governed.

The constitution provides for the freedom, equality and justice for all who dwell in the country.

Sir Kenneth Blackburne was the last Colonial Governor and the first Governor General.

Afterwards, Sir Clifford Campbell became the first Jamaican Governor General. He was the former President of the Senate.

After Independence, the first two governments were formed by the JLP, which had opposed membership in the West Indies Federation.

Coventry, England twinned with Kingston, Jamaica.

[September 18, 1962](#)

Admitted membership to the United Nations.

[May 1, 1966](#)

Inauguration ceremony of Air Jamaica held at the Palisadoes Airport (now Norman Manley International Airport).

[Also, departure of the first Air Jamaica flight to Miami.](#)

[February 29, 1972](#)

The PNP came into power when Manley's son Michael Manley became Prime Minister of Jamaica. Held power until 1980.

[January 3, 1975](#)

Miss Carmen Paris was appointed Ambassador to France – first woman to be appointed Ambassador by Jamaica.

[October 1980](#)

The JLP won General Elections and held political office until 1989. Edward Seaga was the Prime Minister.

The eighties also saw large volumes of emigrants, primarily to the USA (New York, Miami, Chicago, and Hartford are cities which have a significant Jamaican population).

## 1985

Canasol introduced by the Hon. Professor Manley West and the Hon. Dr. Albert Lockhart.

It was a new drug developed from cannabis (or ganja) for the treatment of glaucoma, an eye disease.

In 1987, both were awarded the Order of Merit.

## February 1989 – September 2007

The PNP has held political office. Manley was forced to resign in 1992 because of failing health and his successor was Percival J. Patterson who won the election in 1993.

From 1993 –2006 Percival J. Patterson was in power. He was succeeded by Portia Simpson Miller – Jamaica's first female Prime Minister.

## September 2007 – present

General Election 2007 produced a change of government. After 18 years, the JLP defeated the ruling PNP on September 3, 2007. Bruce Golding who was sworn in on September 11, 2007 and was Prime Minister until 2011. In 2011 Andrew Holness took over from Bruce Golding and in the December 2011 elections Portia Simpson led the People's National Party to power.

<http://www.jamaica-dream-vacation.com/history-of-jamaica-timeline.html>

# Government

## Executive branch:

**chief of state:** Queen ELIZABETH II (since 6 February 1952); represented by Governor General Dr. Patrick L. ALLEN (since 26 February 2009)

**head of government:** Prime Minister Portia Simpson (since January 2012)

**cabinet:** Cabinet is appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister

(For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#))

**elections:** the monarchy is hereditary; governor general appointed by the monarch on the recommendation of the prime minister; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or the leader of the majority coalition in the House of Representatives is appointed prime minister by the governor general

## Legislative branch:

bicameral Parliament consists of the Senate (a 21-member body appointed by the governor

general on the recommendations of the prime minister and the leader of the opposition; ruling party is allocated 13 seats, and the opposition is allocated 8 seats) and the House of Representatives (60 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms)

**Judicial branch:**



Supreme Court (judges appointed by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister); Court of Appeal; Privy Council in UK; member of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ)

**Political parties and leaders:**



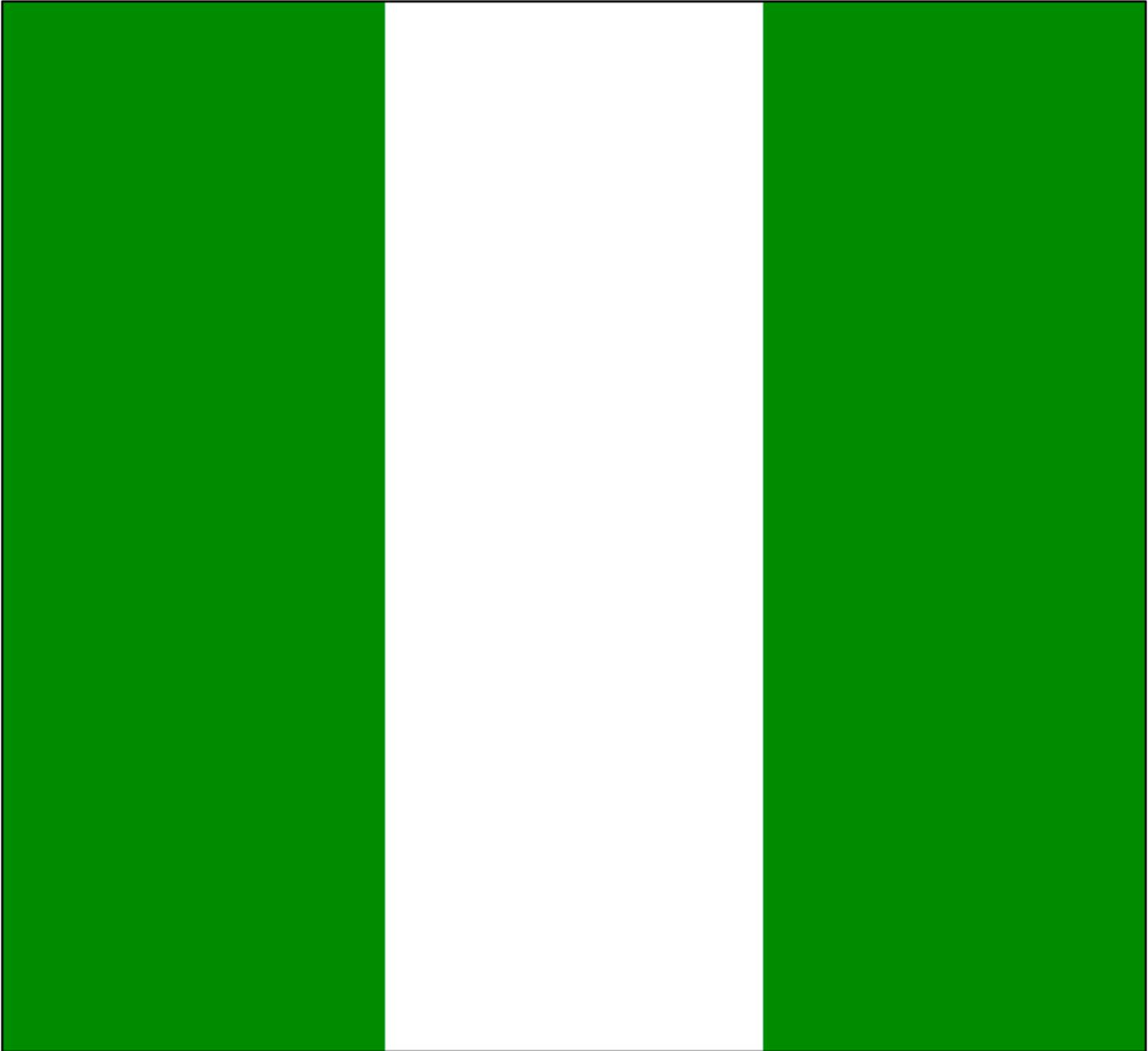
People's National Party or PNP [Portia SIMPSON-MILLER]; Jamaica Labour Party or JLP [Andrew HOLNESS]; National Democratic Movement or NDM [Michael WILLIAMS]

**Political pressure groups and leaders:**



New Beginnings Movement or NBM; Rastafarians (black religious/racial cultists, pan-Africanists)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/jm.html>



# **NIGERIA**

## **50 YEARS YOUNG**

A review of Post-colonial Nigeria.

**Afro Quiz 2012**

# NIGERIA

## 50 YEARS YOUNG

### Black-Africa Redux

In Africa in the 1960s, a number of events happened that forged the Africa we know today. The growing of consciousness and nationalism that defined the era globally, created a powerful uproar that colonialists could no longer ignore. An international shift away from colonialism and African-Nationalistic ideologies buoyed public sentiment that decolonization would deliver freedom and prosperity, especially in Nigeria, potentially Africa's most promising nation.

### Liberty now!

To be free of British domination and become self-deterministic was the heart of the nationalist movement in Nigeria. Herbert Macaulay, founder of the Nigerian Nationalism Movement and other radicalist groups like The Zikists, the Action group and the Freedom Movement attempted to provoke the British colonialists in hopes of inciting revolution. Mass strikes like the Abeokuta's Women Union and Laborer's strike were successful in winning concessions from the colonial government. Beginning with the Aba Riot of 1929, women have been a part of the organized liberation struggle.

In 1954, the Lyttleton Constitution was formed allowing self-governance for any region in Nigeria. By 1957, the Eastern and Western regions declared self-rule and election riots had erupted in Northern region of Nigeria. 1959 saw the Northern Region also declare self-rule and the creation of the Central Bank of Nigeria. Nigeria holds elections and becomes independent on **October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960**. Nigeria also entered British Commonwealth in the same year.

*"The Zikist Movement was founded by a group of young Nigerian patriots in 1946...My name was used without my knowledge and consent... So far as the ideals of the Zikist Movement are concerned, I am in complete sympathy with the Movement and I am proud that my name was considered fit and proper for such veneration." ~ Nnamdi "Zik" Azikwe*

## THE PEOPLE

### Language:

Although there are an estimated 500 indigenous languages spoken within Nigeria, English is the official language. Pidgin English is highly popular mixing indigenous language, Portuguese and traditional English.

### Population:

Nigeria is often referred to as the "giant of Africa" due to her large population of over 160 million. It is estimated that 25% of Africans are in Nigeria. All this on a land mass less than the size of Alberta.

### "HEAD OF STATE"

Refers to either the Queen, governor-generals, military leaders or democratically elected presidents who have risen lead the country.

General Olusegun Obasanjo has been Head of State twice.

# THE DEVIL YOU KNOW...

## THE FIRST REPUBLIC

The bright spark of Independence faded quickly, after becoming a republic on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1963. Power struggles between the three regions quickly led to election boycotts and revolt. General Aguiyi-Ironsi declared the first coup d'etat on Nigerian soil. The first president was deposed and the Prime minister, Tafawa Balewa, assassinated. The new Head of State retracted the independence of the regions and sought to centralize all government. Months later Aguiyi-Ironsi himself was deposed and murdered with Yakubu Gowon ascending to the position of Head of State. President Azikwe took asylum in the United Kingdom.

The events of 1966 marked the end of an era called "the First Republic" (1960-1966). It also marked the introduction of military government rule, thereby denying democratic process promised to the people a few short years before.

## CIVIL WAR: PATRIOTS VS. SEPERATISTS

Once in power, Gowon overhauls the regions into 12 states among other nationalistic policies that paved the way for a bloody civil war. This era marked by many petty regionalist disputes.

On May 30<sup>th</sup> in 1966, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu-**Ojukwu**, former governor of the Eastern region rejects Gowon's authority over the Eastern region and handling of riots where Igbo people of the East were targeted. The Aburi conference is held and fails to bring unity. Ojukwu responds by declaring secession of the former Eastern Region and renames it the "**Republic of Biafra**".

Gowon's strategy included isolation of the Biafra. He implemented policies to cut off supplies like food. Despite foreign support for supplies and aide, the region declined rapidly. Over a million people slowly starved, bolstering claims of attempted genocide. Sympathy quickly shifted to Biafra. Federal forces seize control of a key part of the Eastern region on January 7<sup>th</sup>. Days later, Ojukwu fled to **Ivory Coast** and the Civil war ends suddenly on January 12, 1970. With the oil-rich region back in its control, the Nigerian government creates the Nigerian National Oil Corporation and joins OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries)

Ojukwu was pardoned and returned to Nigeria in 1982. Upon his return he was titled **Dikedioramma** ("beloved hero of the masses") by the Igbo people. He died on November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

	Patriots	Separatists
Leaders	<b>Gowon</b> (President)	<b>Ojukwu</b> (Governor of the Eastern Region)
Motivation	Maintain Unity, ensure future stability of the nation and maintaining control of oil-rich eastern region	Sovereignty of the Igbo people
Military support	<b>USSR</b> This lead to a break away from the West and more Africa-centered foreign policy.	<b>Portuguese and the French</b> Believed secession would stop Nigerian support of liberation struggles in colonized Liberia
International Solidarity	Organization of African Unity (OAU)	Tanzania, Gabon, <b>Ivory Coast</b> , Zambia, Israel and China



## NIGERIAN HEADS OF STATES

Term	Name	Notes	Transition
Nov 1960 – Oct 1963	<b>Nnamdi Azikiwe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1<sup>st</sup> indigenous Head of State</li> </ul>	Transitioned to “President” of Federal Republic of Nigeria
Oct 1963 - Jan 1966			Deposed in <b>Coup</b>
Jan 1966 - Jul 1966	<b>Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1<sup>st</sup> military Head of State</li> </ul>	Deposed in <b>Coup</b> and murdered
Aug 1966 - July 1975	<b>Yakubu Gowon</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sitting Head of State during Civil War</li> <li>Unites the regions into 12 states</li> </ul>	Deposed in <b>Coup</b>
Jul 1975 – Feb 1976	<b>Murtala Mohammed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State count rises to 19</li> </ul>	Assassinated
Feb 1976 – Oct 1979	<b>Olusegun Obasanjo</b>		Transitioned to Civil Rule
Oct 1979 - Dec 1983	<b>Shehu Shagari</b>		Democratically elected, Deposed in <b>Coup</b>
Dec 1983 – Aug 1985	<b>Muhammadu Buhari</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declined IMF demands for SAP</li> </ul>	Deposed in <b>Coup</b>
Aug 1985 – Aug 1993	<b>Ibrahim Babangida</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented IMF SAP</li> <li>State count rises to 30</li> </ul>	Resigned
Aug 1993 - Nov 1993	<b>Ernest Shonekan</b>		Deposed in <b>Coup</b>
Nov 1993 - Jun 1998	<b>Sani Abacha</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sitting Head of State during Ken Saro-Wiwa trials</li> <li>State count rises to 36</li> </ul>	Died in office
Jun 1998 - May 1999	<b>Abdulsalami Abubakar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 political parties are recognized</li> </ul>	Transitioned to Civil Rule
May 1999 - May 2007	<b>Olusegun Obasanjo</b>		Democratically elected
May 2007 - May 2010	<b>Umaru Musa Yar'Adu</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created an amnesty program for militants in the Niger Delta</li> </ul>	Democratically elected, Died in office
Feb 2010 - May 2010	<b>Goodluck Jonathan</b>		Acting for Yar'Adua
May 2010 - Present			Democratically elected

## **DEMOCRACY: WHILE DELAYED, IS INEVITABLE**

Once the Military was re-introduced, public animosity grew accordingly. Tactics first used by the foreign occupiers to install colonialism, creating the dominion of Nigeria under their rule, were now being perpetuated by the military to secure power and thwart the free will of the people. Democracy seemed indefinitely delayed (by design). Each coup leader starting with Buhari and culminating with Abacha claimed the previous regime proved ineffective and professed himself the only way to deliver democracy and economic reform to Nigerians. The hypocrisy of these statements was not lost on the public.

Babangida, the longest running authoritarian, detained activist and accused colleagues of coup attempts. One situation led to his boyhood friend and aide, Vatsa, being accused and hung for treason. Then, despite assessing 13 political associations, a strict two-party system was implemented in 1991. After years of “structuring” a handover plan, presidential elections were cancelled in 1993. The only opponent in the race (and likely winner), M.K.O. Abiola was jailed for treason soon after.

To tackle dissent, Abacha bans any participation in political campaigns, a ploy to imprison several politicians and military officials, including former head of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo. As a result of one too many assassinations, Nigeria’s membership in the Common wealth is suspended. Charges of human rights abuses brought International sanctions and disapproval. When public outcry increased pressure to move to a civilian democratic process, Abacha installed himself as the official presidential candidate of both parties making himself (allegedly through bribes or threats) the only presidential candidate for the elections of 1995. Elections were therefore canceled.

Just when all seemed lost, Abacha dies mysteriously and public elections are held within months, reinstating democratic rule that perseveres to today.

## **GOD & GUNS**

Faced with economic hardship and fear campaigns Nigerians either turned to God or guns for salvation and solace. Churches and Mosques opened en-masse, and militant groups took root in poorer communities. Many of the violent uprisings in Nigeria today are a result of religious militants.

## **MORE MONEY, MORE PROBLEMS**

### **THE NAIRA: WELCOME TO THE THIRD WORLD**

In 1973, the national currency was switched from the British Pound to the Nigerian “Naira”, named for the Yoruba verb for “buy”. Economic disintegration followed swiftly and the Naira, once valued higher than the British Pound Sterling, slowly lost value.

In 1993, Babangida instituted a Structural Adjustment Plan in response to international pressure, economic recession and IMF loan defaults. Under the program, the Naira was devalued, national programs were slashed, national assets auctioned off (including military weapons), civil servant salaries were cut, and crown corporations were sold and deregulated. Adoption of the Paris Club Agreement saw \$7 Billion of loans rescheduled. Crumbling infrastructure and an aggressive “free market” based economic reform program left people destitute. The economic benefits promised never materialized.

### **UNMITIGATED CORRUPTION AND THE BIRTH OF “419”**

The road to becoming synonymous with corruption started before independence and was elevated to art by Nigeria’s military leaders. Weary of the swift changes and deterioration of the office of the Head of State, the public grew despondent. Growing apathy and economic frustration led to a country-wide culture of quid-pro-quo style business and proliferation of outright 419 fraud. Perfected in Nigeria first by the political leaders then business people, the practice of corruption soon spread across Nigeria as the people sought wealth and stability.

Bureaucratic corruption while high during Babangida’s lengthy term was nothing compared to the estimated \$5 Billion alleged to have been stolen by Abacha in 5 short years in office.

Today, old systems still persist despite anti-corruption campaigns, promises and criminal proceedings

**“419”**

***Gets its name from the Nigerian Criminal Code for Fraud. It saw a sharp rise during the economic decline of Nigeria in the early 1990s***

### **ENTROPY**

After Babangida’s implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program and Abacha’s drain on Nigeria wealth, Nigeria was essentially a failed state. Public protests grew to a fervor notably: letter bombs, student protests, riots, strikes, pro-democracy campaigns, aircraft hijackings and assassinations. Many politicals sought asylum from the ruthless military regimes.

Nigeria is still suffering from high rates of infant mortality, lack of health programs, deteriorating education systems, energy shortages and many other indicators of development.

### **TIGER ECONOMY & FUTURE ECONOMIC SELF-DETERMINATION**

Burgeoning sectors (like telecommunications) have contributed to a growing economy in Nigeria. With government revenues benefitting the 1%, entrepreneurship has emerged as an avenue for wealth building. Where international aid programs have often been hindered by corruption and mismanagement and have failed to deliver poverty reduction goals, foreign direct investment seems to offer a viable alternative.

Like in many parts of Africa, monopolistic foreign/national corporations are causing controversy in Nigeria today. Many also sight foreign investment as a form of neo-colonialism. Nigeria was named as part of the “Next Eleven” emergent economies.



## **OIL & DEATH**

### **THE GIFT & THE CURSE**

Oil was struck in the Delta Region of Nigeria in 1956 by Shell. Over a trillion dollars has been made since discovery. Aspiring to typify the model for post-colonial success, oil exploration was expanded to other foreign oil companies and Nigeria quickly became the largest oil producing country in Africa. Starting with a rise in oil prices in 1970 and continuing today with deep-water drilling, the sector shows no sign of slowing down.

Nigeria joined OPEC in 1971 when petroleum exports skyrocketed and other products such as cocoa, rubber, machinery, and processed foods have slowly declined to less than 5% of total exports. Imports of basic goods including food and live animals have increased.

### **OIL SPILLS, MONEY FLOWS**

In oil-rich Niger-Delta (located in the south of Nigeria), environmental abuse range from hydrocarbons, daily oil spills, air pollution from flare burning and leakage of crude oil. The residents have hotly protested the oil industry, claiming the destruction of their way of life, health and local economy. In 1995, environmental-activist Ken Saro Wiwa was executed by the military government under Sani Abacha (allegedly in collusion and with knowledge of Royal Dutch Shell). 14 years later, Shell, admitting no fault, settled the case out of court for \$15.5 million.

The lawsuit is one of many brought against shell for human right abuses, violations of local law and public endangerment bordering on genocide. Recently in November 2011, another billion dollar lawsuit was again being heard overseas by the US Supreme Court and was brought forth by four Kings in Ogoniland.

The Delta Region prior to 1960 was a tranquil and pristine environment. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest wetlands in the world. Exploration was expedited towards the end of colonial rule. While National coffers grow and foreign companies benefit, the locals remain some of the poorest in the country. The Nigerian government itself has been ineffective or uninterested in pursuing lawsuits or enforcing local laws to protect the people most affected by local oil and gas industry. It is worth noting the lawsuits brought forward were successful in a foreign court and under foreign law.

Political parties that began initiatives to deliver results often end up as “avenues for corruption and patronage building through which the regime could buy support”. Support was bought by guns (to militants) and money paid to the local people and non-militant leaders without any accountability. This attempt to appease causes fractured and highly volatile agreements among the Delta people. The counter-intuitive approach by government has resulted in vigilantism, theft of oil barrels, rampant kidnapping, extortion and worse.

Tensions remain high as the region receives little in spite of consistent demands for aide and cleanup.

*Oil spill in the Niger Delta*



## THE SPECTACLE OF CULTURE



*Mask of Queen Idia*

World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC), was launched and hosted twice in Lagos. The second and larger festival was hosting in 1977, lasting 29 days and drawing blacks from across Africa and the diaspora. Ebony magazine called “Festac ‘77” “the biggest and most significant gathering of black people in the history of the world”. With aims of reviving and promoting African arts and culture on a global stage, the Festival was funded by the Nigerian government under Olusegun Obasanjo. A replica of the Ivory mask of Edo queen Idia was designed by Nigerian artist Erhabor Emokpae and launched as the emblem of the festival. Embodying the spirit of renascence, Emokpae chose the image to protest British continued exile of African art. The original ivory mask was commandeered during a bloody massacre led by the British in the capital of the Kingdom of Benin in 1897, 100 years prior to the Festac celebrations.

Despite the unlawful possession of the original Queen Idia Mask and many other historically significant Nigerian artifacts, the British have yet to surrender looted items. Recently, Sotheby's had plans to SELL the mask at public auction in February 2011. Possession and especially sale of the artifact is in direct contradiction to the 1970 UNESCO Convention. Public outcry on social media brought attention to the issue and the sale of this priceless piece of Nigerian history was canceled. Ironically, the bronze replica of the statue was gifted to UNESCO by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2005 to celebrate Africa Day.

Through this piece of art, many parallels can be drawn to Nigerian history, the refusal of Europeans to acknowledge past wrongs and also recognizance on the part of Nigerians to the value of culture. Queen Idia herself a great warrior queen, continues to symbolize the fight in the Nigerian people.

With globalization comes the threat to Nigerian culture and traditions. This could mean Nigerian culture is fated to be re-written by foreigners, as much of our history has been.

### MAJOR CULTURAL FESTIVALS

**Eyo Festival** – Held in honour of the Yoruba Oba of Lagos, the festival is a favourite for its masquerades and dances

**Osun Grove Festival** – Held yearly in the sacred grove on the banks of the Osun river. The grove is noted as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Pilgrimage is made to seek blessings from the river.

Repatriation



*Eyo Masquerade dancer*

### NATIONAL SYMBOLS

**Flag** – Three equally sized vertical stripes of green, white and green symbolize the Niger River cutting through lush green land. The white stripe also denotes peace.

**The National Motto-** *“Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress“.*

## GOLDEN JUBILEE

The “Golden Jubilee” was celebrated in various ways over the course of one year ending on the actual anniversary date October 1, 2010. New government programs were unveiled, sports tournaments, pageants, competitions, parades and awards and recognition were given. Though many criticize the pageantry and cost to a still recovering nation, many chose to be optimistic about the future and the current improvements in the past two decades. Either way, it is a major new chapter in the history of one of Africa's greatest countries.

50 people were awarded as “Distinguished Nigerians”. Many of the first heads of states were included as well as writers and other activists:

## **WOLE SOYINKA**

Nationalist Activist and writer Wole Soyinka wins the Nobel Prize for Literature, the first Nigerian and African honoree. Soyinka was jailed during the civil war (which he supported). Soyinka had been a part of the Action Group and participated in armed resistance to military government.

## **CHINUA ACHEBE**

Writer, activist who is well known for criticizing Nigerian leadership. Achebe supported Biafra and he has written about his experience during the civil war in several books.

## **ALIKO DANGOTE**

Recently named the richest man in Africa. He is part of the super-rich entrepreneurs, who took advantage of economic booms, changing government policy during the military era.

## **MRS FUNMILAYO RANSOME KUTI**

An Educator and early activist for independence and women's suffrage, she led successful strikes and boycotts against the colonial regime. She is also the mother of famed activist and musician Fela Kuti.

The anniversary was also commemorated across the diaspora for lovers of Nigeria, Nigerians and Nigerian descendants.

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