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SHOULD KNOW

+ OJ Posharella
on Afro Fusion, culture
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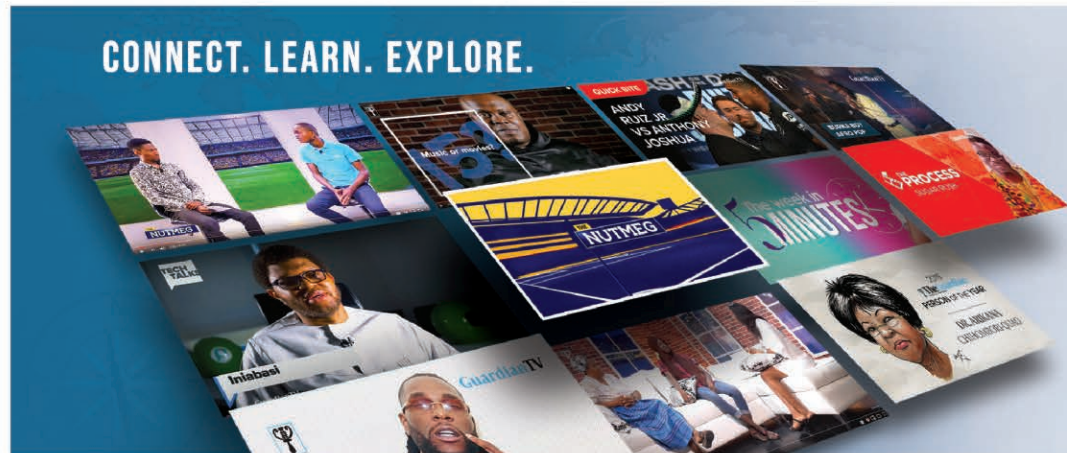
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1 VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball has a way of turning strangers into teammates within minutes. Lekki Volleyball Club brings professional and recreational players together for regular sessions on the Island, making it suitable for beginners and experienced players. Festac Volleyball Club offers a similar community on the Mainland, with its court around 24 Road, FHA Field, Festac Town. The University of Lagos also has volleyball facilities used for games and training. Since university access and club schedules sometimes change, confirm the playing time before leaving home.

5 PADEL

Padel has quickly become one of Lagos' favourite social sports. It combines parts of tennis and squash, but beginners usually find it easier to pick up. Padel X on Cooper Road, Ikoyi, offers court bookings, coaching and organised matches, while The Padel House on Ribadu Road provides courts, equipment and training. Other options include Magic Padel at the Federal Palace Hotel in Victoria Island, Play Padel in Ikoyi and Landmark, and The Padel Court on Kusenla Road, Lekki. Most centres rent rackets and offer beginner sessions, so not owning equipment is no excuse.



4 TENNIS

Tennis gives you a full workout without making exercise feel like punishment. The Lagos Lawn Tennis Club, founded in 1895, remains one of the city's most recognisable tennis institutions. It is located at Tafawa Balewa Square on Lagos Island. Players can also explore the tennis facilities at Teslim Balogun Stadium, Ikoyi Club 1938 and the University of Lagos Sports Centre. Hitway Tennis Academy offers personalised coaching for beginners, intermediate players and advanced players across selected Lagos locations. Access rules differ, so contact the club or coach before visiting.



2 GOLF

If golf has always looked intimidating from a distance, Lakowe Lakes Golf and Country Estate offers a calm place to start. The estate, located along the Lekki Epe Expressway, has an 18-hole championship course, a smaller course and a driving range for practice. Beginners can book lessons, while experienced golfers can test their skills on the main course. Ikoyi Club 1938 also has an established golf section, but it is a private members' club. Non-members should confirm guest access before arriving with their clubs.



WHERE LAGOS GOES TO PLAY

by Musa Adekunle

Your next Lagos hangout does not have to revolve around food and drinks. Pick up a racket, grab a ball or challenge your friends to a game. These Lagos spots offer plenty of ways to play.



3 BASKETBALL

You do not need to shoot like a professional before stepping onto a basketball court. Gripps Breed Basketball, MPAC Sports Nigeria and Lagos Tigers Basketball Academy offer structured coaching for young players and adults who want to improve their skills. Those who prefer a casual game can explore the basketball court at the University of Lagos. The American Cola Creative Court in Ilupeju also gives residents a public space to train, compete and connect. The recently renovated court now serves as a multipurpose space for basketball, youth culture and creative activities.

Aisle of millions

...Cost of saying 'I do'

by Musa Adekunle



Food, clothes, decoration, photography and family expectations are pushing Nigerian wedding bills into millions. For many couples, the celebration now demands serious financial choices long before they reach the altar.



here is a moment in almost every wedding plan when the numbers stop behaving. The first budget looks reasonable. Then the guest list grows. A relative introduces another ceremony. The dream decoration

appears on Instagram. Food prices change. A vendor sends a fresh quotation. Suddenly, what began as a celebration of two people has become a large financial operation.

Oluwadamilola Oloyede is living through that moment. As a husband-to-be planning his wedding, he has watched estimates expand as quickly as the plans around them.

"As someone currently planning a wedding, I have realised that there is no fixed budget. You may set a figure at the beginning, but the expenses keep increasing as the planning progresses," he said.

He has heard couples discuss budgets between N15 million and N20 million. At first, those figures can sound excessive. Break the wedding into food, drinks, venue, clothes, decoration, photography, music, makeup, cultural obligations and transport, however, and the total begins to look less like luxury

and more like arithmetic.

INFLATION WALKS DOWN THE AISLE

Nigeria's rising cost of living does not pause because two people are getting married. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) put headline inflation at 15.43 per cent in July 2026, down from 15.91 per cent in June. Food inflation, however, rose from 17.52 per cent to 20.31 per cent.

Monthly food inflation also climbed from 3.75 per cent in June to 5.56 per cent in July, showing that food prices increased faster during the month.

Couples see that pressure in the caterer's market list, the decorator's transport bill, the tailor's fabric costs and the money required to move workers and equipment.

Oloyede has also noticed what he describes as the "wedding price". Some services appear to cost more once the vendor learns that the booking is for a wedding.

"Wedding vendors have built a major industry around ceremonies. Once some vendors hear the word 'wedding', their prices increase. The same thing happens with hairstylists and makeup artists," he explained.

"For an average 200-guest wedding in Lagos today, the budget is approximately 20 to 23 million naira"

— Funmi Adisa, Founder and Creative Director, Lavish by Endowed Events



MODEST LAGOS WEDDING STARTS AT ₦20 MILLION

Founder and creative director of Lavish by Endowed Events, Funmi Adisa places the cost of a modest 200-guest Lagos wedding between ₦20 million and ₦23 million.

Her estimate rises with the level of service. She places affordable luxury between ₦27 million and ₦30 million, premium luxury between ₦38 million and ₦40 million, and first-class premium luxury between ₦75 million and ₦85 million.

The venue, decoration, food, entertainment, and experience the couple wants determine where the final figure lands. Adisa also identifies logistics, power, transport, technical production, service charges,

overtime, security, accommodation and last-minute additions as costs couples often overlook.

She advises couples to reserve another 10 to 15 per cent for unexpected expenses and to work with current quotations rather than old estimates.

“The biggest advice I have for couples basically is don't plan with yesterday's prices.”

For Adisa, a high budget alone does not make a wedding luxurious.

“Luxury basically isn't about spending the most. It's about intentionality, exceptional execution and experience that feels truly yours.”

FEEDING 200 GUESTS NOW COSTS MILLIONS

Food is one of the largest expenses in a wedding budget. Chief Executive Officer of Bowlands Foods, Adebunola Ogunbiyi, estimates that feeding one guest now costs about ₦35,000 for a modest but properly catered celebration.

“Makeup for traditional and white wedding ceremonies costs between ₦600,000 and ₦1 million. Touch-ups and travel attract additional charges”

— Matilda Olagunju, a make-up artist and CEO of Facesbymo.



“Before, ₦15,000 would give you food, small chops and even drinks. Now, if you want to keep things minimal, feeding each guest is about ₦35,000.”

At that rate, food for 200 guests comes to ₦7 million. That equals 100 months of Nigeria's ₦70,000 national minimum wage. Decoration, venue, clothes, photography, music, makeup and drinks have not entered the calculation.

The guest list has therefore become one of the first places couples cut costs. Ogunbiyi now sees more invitation-only weddings, while some couples settle for 200 guests or fewer.

One of her clients reduced a planned celebration from 150 people to 50 after reviewing the cost.

“As a caterer, it was saddening, but I understood why. Before, we could go shopping with ₦300,000, but now it has tripled.”

Her experience reflects the pressure in Nigerian markets. The SBM Intelligence Jollof Index found that the average cost of cooking a pot of jollof rice for a family of five reached ₦29,578 in June 2026, an increase of 14.6 per cent within one year.

At Trade Fair Market in Lagos, the cost rose by 49.6 per cent over the same period.

LOOKING GOOD COMES AT A PRICE

Nigerian wedding fashion often includes traditional attire, a wedding gown, the groom's outfit and a reception change. Shoes, jewellery and clothes for the bridal party add their own costs.

Fashion designer and creative director of Olola Stitches, Ololade Oni explained that fabric, finishing and the amount of handwork determine the final price.

“The fabric, quality of finishing, level of embellishment,

beadwork, hand embroidery, customisation and the reputation of the fashion brand can significantly influence the final cost.”

At the luxury end, one customised outfit for either the bride or groom starts from about ₦1.5 million. Dressing both partners for traditional and white ceremonies could run into several millions.

Imported embellishments, labour, fittings and delivery also affect the final cost. Oni, however, believes couples do not need the most expensive designs to look good.

“You do not have to wear the most expensive outfit to look luxurious. A well-thought-out design, quality fabric, excellent tailoring and a perfect fit can make even a relatively simple outfit look exceptionally elegant.”

Bridal makeup adds another six-figure expense.

Makeup artist and founder of Facesbymo, Matilda Olagunju, places the cost of makeup for traditional and white wedding ceremonies between ₦600,000 and 1 million. Touch-ups and travel attract additional charges.

A basic package usually covers one look for one ceremony, with the artist leaving after the makeup is completed. Premium packages may include a consultation, trial, high-end products, makeup changes, touch-ups and several hours of support.

“Bridal makeup must survive hours of heat, photography and video coverage. The cost may also cover assistants, transport, backup products and support for the bridal party.”

PAYING TO PRESERVE THE MEMORY

Photography, video and music also take a share of the budget. Photographer and videographer Demola Aderinde charges about ₦700,000 for a standard package. It includes a two-outfit indoor pre-wedding shoot, coverage of the white or nikah ceremony, traditional wedding and reception.

The couple also receives a 50-page photobook, a framed photograph, a highlights video, the full video and soft copies of the pictures.

His basic package starts at about ₦550,000. A premium package with a bridal shower, drone coverage and a 360-degree video booth costs about 1.4 million. Pre-wedding shoots, drone coverage and social media videos increase the final bill.

SMALLER WEDDINGS, FIRMER CHOICES

Rising wedding costs have not weakened Nigeria's love for celebration, but they are changing how

“The wedding is one day, but marriage is for a lifetime. It is not wise to spend the first years of marriage paying for one days”

— Dolly Ohanyere, Lawyer, Relationship and Marriage Counsellor



“One customised outfit for either the bride or groom starts from about ₦1.5 million”

— Ololade Oni, fashion designer and creative director of Olola Stitches



couples plan. Invitation-only weddings are becoming more common, along with combined ceremonies, fewer outfit changes, weekday events and smaller vendor packages.

For some couples, inviting 50 guests is not a sign that they cannot afford more. It is a deliberate decision to control spending.

A lawyer, relationship and marriage counsellor, Dolly Ohanyere, believes couples should agree on their priorities and financial limits before family expectations take over.

“Couples must first agree on what they want, what they can afford and what they are willing to reject. They should set a budget that works for both of them and does not require debt. If relatives want something outside that budget, they should pay for it themselves, or the couple should politely decline.”

For Ohanyere, the financial choices made before the wedding can shape the early years of the marriage.

“The wedding is one day, but marriage is for a lifetime. It is not wise to spend the first years of marriage paying for one day. When the hall is empty, the music stops, and the guests are gone, the couple will be left with the financial decisions they made. A wedding should celebrate the beginning of a marriage, not compromise it.”





OJ Posharella...

On Afro Fusion, Culture, Purpose

by Eniola Daniel

Presently, women are at the forefront of Nigerian music's global explosion, with streaming success, notable awards, charting feats and international collaborations.

While trailblazers such as Tiwa Savage, Omawunmi, Yemi Alade built the modern Afrobeats foundation, younger stars like Tems and Ayra Starr are now carrying the torch of this significant shift.

Now, other emerging songbirds are now joining this vanguard of female singers racing for the spotlight. Singers like Ojoma Sule, professionally known as OJ Posharella, are showing strength in this new wave as they continue to redefine the status-quo with their grit, voice and artistry.

OJ Posharella is also the founder of the Power Woman Initiative International, a women empowerment platform. She also heads Posharella Group of Companies, among other enterprises spanning investments, design, beauty, and philanthropy. She is also renowned for her appearance on The Real Housewives of Abuja, her film credits include Farm Boy and The Lot.

Her African Pop fusions have always endeared listeners, with fan-favourites like Soyaya and her just-released 'Eko' achieving streaming success. With her debut EP on the horizon, she catches

up with Guardian Music, giving us a front-seat into her career journey; from her come-up, creative process, business enterprise and her mission to rewrite the rules for women heading for success in the industry.

You have quite an interesting personality. Tell us about yourself. I was born to parents from Kogi and Benue States, raised between Kaduna and various international destinations, and that cosmopolitan upbringing deeply shaped who I am today. It gave me a love for culture, for people, for storytelling, and for the beautiful complexity of the African woman's experience. Everything I do, whether it is music, business, advocacy, or simply showing up in a room, is rooted in one purpose: to inspire people, celebrate African culture, and create positive impact. I do not separate my platforms because they are all expressions of the same mission. I am a woman who was built to serve through entertainment, through enterprise, and through love.

Just walk us through your beginning

with music. When did this journey start for you?

I came into the entertainment space as a musician, then an actress, a spoken-word artist, and a woman with opinions and ambitions that extended well beyond what anyone had scripted for me. And I quickly learned something that every woman in this industry learns at some point, usually the hard way.

The entertainment industry loves a woman's talent but is considerably less comfortable with her authority.

My music has always been the purest expression of that truth. Songs like Soyayya and The Mother did not come from a desire to be commercial, though I am not ashamed of commercial success, and I think any artist who pretends not to want it is not being honest with you. They came from a need to say something real about love, about strength, and about what it means to be a Nigerian woman navigating a world that has very strong ideas about who you should be.

Music, business, acting, advocacy. You do it all. What does music give you that none of your other platforms can?

Music gives me direct access to the human soul in a way that nothing else does. When I am in a boardroom, I am strategic. When I am on a film set, I am disciplined. When I am speaking at an event, I am deliberate. But when I am in music, I am free. Completely and unapologetically free.

Music allows me to communicate feelings, stories, culture, and messages in a way that is timeless and borderless. My catalogue includes songs like Soyayya, which is a deeply cultural and romantic piece that celebrates love through the lens of Northern Nigerian identity, and The Mother, which is one of the most personal things I have ever created. The Mother came from a place of profound reflection on strength, sacrifice, nurturing, and what it means to hold everything together while still becoming yourself. Not every woman can articulate that feeling in words, but when they hear that song, they feel it. And that is the miracle of music. It says what language cannot. Unlike other platforms, music transcends language, background, and circumstance and reaches the soul instantly. That is why I keep returning to it. It is my most honest voice.

Eko is one of the most iconic cities in the world. What is it about Lagos that you felt demanded a song?

Eko represents ambition, hustle, creativity, diversity, and survival. It is the mother of all Nigerian cities, the place where dreams come to be tested and where only the truly resilient survive and thrive. I created this song to celebrate the beauty, the chaos, the strength, and the global influence of Lagos and its people. When I say Lagos, I mean the woman selling on the bridge at 6 a.m. who is also somebody's mother and somebody's prayer warrior. I mean the creative director working at midnight on a global campaign from a studio in Lekki. I mean every person who arrived in this city with nothing but a vision and refused to leave without making something of themselves. Eko is for them. It is a love letter, a celebration, and a testimony all in one song.

Read the full story on www.guardian.ng/life

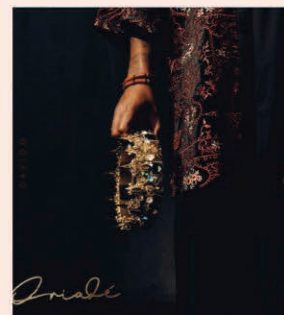
PLAYLIST OF THE WEEK

by Mayowa Iyiola

Kick off your weekend with some great music! Here are well-curated recent releases to fit whatever you are doing – whether you want to dance or just chill out. Press play and let these tracks make your weekend one to remember.



Dangerous – Ayra Starr



Gimme Dat Ting – Davido ft NO11



Gut Genug – Kitschrieg ft Omah lay



Attention! – Fola



I AM – Omah lay



Come On – Larry Gaga ft Olamide, Mavo, Kidd Carder



Happy Song – Bella Shmurda



5AM – Kunmie ft Phyno



40 Days – T-Classic



Hello – Tml Vibe ft Victory

Do you know Ejigbo?

The Nigerian town where French became part of everyday life

By Oluwagbemisola Sadare

In Ejigbo, Yoruba and French can exist side by side, a reflection of the town's long history of migration, especially its ties to Côte d'Ivoire.

It may sound unusual in Nigeria, where English is the official language and Yoruba is widely spoken across Osun State. But in this town, French has found a place in everyday life, thanks largely to generations of migration across West Africa.

Ejigbo, about 40 kilometres from Osogbo, is predominantly Yoruba. Its connection to French did not come from colonial rule or a change in Nigeria's official language. It came through the people who left home, lived elsewhere and eventually returned.

From the early 20th century, people from Ejigbo began travelling to other parts of West Africa in search of work and business opportunities. Some settled in Benin, Togo and Ghana, while Côte d'Ivoire became one of the main destinations.

Many spent years in Ivorian cities, working, trading and raising families. Some eventually returned to Nigeria, bringing back money and, with it, a new language, food, and way of life.

French is spoken in some homes and communities, particularly among families with close ties to Côte d'Ivoire. Some residents also speak other West African languages they picked up while living abroad. Yoruba remains at the heart of everyday life, while English serves its usual role as Nigeria's official language.

The connection with Côte d'Ivoire has also continued across generations.

Ejigbo people have established communities in places including Abidjan, Bouaké, Treichville and Grand-Bassam. Families travel between Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire for business, weddings, funerals and other important occasions. Some have returned to Ejigbo permanently, while others continue to live between the two countries.

Walk through parts of the town and the connection can be seen in small ways. Ivorian food is available, and some businesses have been known to accept CFA francs alongside the naira. But Ejigbo's history goes back much further than its relationship with Côte d'Ivoire. The town's traditional history is linked to

Akinjole Ogiyan, regarded as its founder. The Ogiyan remains the traditional ruler of Ejigbo, and the palace continues to be an important part of the town's cultural life.

To get a feel for everyday Ejigbo, start at Oja Ejigbo, the traditional market in front of the palace.

Saturday is the main market day, when traders, farmers and shoppers from nearby communities gather to buy and sell.

There is little need for an itinerary here. Walk around, listen to the conversations and watch the market come alive. Farm produce changes hands, food is prepared and sold, and traders call out to customers.

Food is another way to see the town's connection with Côte d'Ivoire. Attiéké, the fermented cassava dish closely associated with Côte d'Ivoire, is available in Ejigbo. For people who have lived in the country, it can bring back memories of their time there. For visitors, it is a chance to taste a little of that connection without crossing the border.

At the same time, Ejigbo's food culture remains strongly Yoruba.

Agriculture is still important to the local economy. Farmers grow yam, cassava, cocoyam, sweet potato, maize, guinea corn and cowpea. Palm oil, kola nuts, coconuts and different fruits are also produced, while poultry, fishing and livestock farming provide other sources of income.

Then there is the **Ogiyan Palace**. The palace is closely tied to the traditional institution of the Ogiyan and to the annual Orisa Ogiyan Festival, one of the town's major cultural events. The festival is held around the beginning of the new yam harvest during the rainy season.

It is dedicated to Orisa Ogiyan and includes traditional rites, performances and celebrations. One of the better-known traditions is Ewo. Traditionally, Ejigbo is divided into two groups, Isale Osolo and Oke Mapo, whose members take part in symbolic whipping contests. The practice is linked to the story of Sawoleje, an Ifa priest who, according to local tradition, was punished after having an affair with the wife of an Ogiyan.

The story says he later placed a curse on the town, and the whipping ritual became associated with protecting Ejigbo from further trouble.

Like many traditional festivals, Orisa Ogiyan has changed over the years. What was once mainly a religious and ritual observance has grown into a wider cultural celebration that attracts residents and visitors.

For visitors interested in more than Ejigbo's French connection, the festival offers a chance to see some of the town's older traditions.



Getting there

Getting to Ejigbo by road is fairly easy. The town is about 40 kilometres from Osogbo, 35 kilometres from Iwo, 30 kilometres from Ogbomoso and roughly 95 kilometres from Ibadan.

Visitors travelling from Lagos can make the journey by road through the southwest. From Osogbo, Ejigbo can also be visited as a day trip.

Spend some time at Oja Ejigbo. Walk around the palace area. Try the food. Speak to residents about their experiences in Côte d'Ivoire.

And if you speak French, don't be surprised if someone answers you in French.

That is part of what makes Ejigbo interesting.

Ejigbo is not a French town.

It is a Yoruba town with a long history of movement across West Africa. French is simply one of the clearest signs of that history.



Crochet dresses...

Style this

crafty trend

By Ese Oghenetega

Recently, fashionistas have been exploring crochet dresses and flaunting some crafty designs made with wool and a blend of creativity. To jump on this rave and look gorgeous in it, check out some of the ways to style this crafty trend.

Play with colours

A crochet dress gives you an opportunity to blend various colours to make your outfit stand out. You can stretch your options from neutral colours to bold colours like pink, orange, blue, or green.

Embrace a casual look

One feature of crochet dresses that makes it acceptable by many is its casual look. You can rock it with slippers or sneakers and it will not lose its aesthetic appeal. A simple bag and minimal jewellery are enough to give you a beautiful appearance.

Perfect for beach wear

Are you looking for what to wear to the beach? A crochet dress is perfect for the environment. Simply rock it over your swimwear and complete your look with bold sunglasses and a big hat.

Style with a denim

You can turn up with a street-style look by blending your crochet dress with a denim trouser or jacket. It's a simple, yet cool combination that is perfect for a weekend or casual outing.

Style with a belt

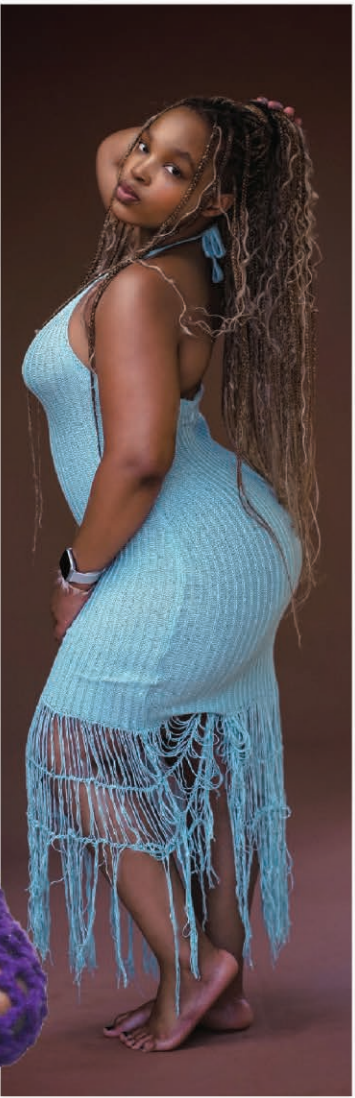
To add a stylish look to your crochet dress, you can snatch your waist with a belt. It gives you a fitted look and you can go further by rocking some glamorous accessories with it.

Rock your crochet dresses with heels

Although crochet dresses look casual, you can still elevate your look by rocking it with heels. You can add a fancy bag that will give you a classy vibe.

Make your accessories stand out

Crochet dresses are evidence that handmade designs are not crafty but they are timeless fashion. To stand out in this creative piece, make your accessories count. However, ensure that whatever statement earrings, necklaces, wrist-watches, or other fashion items you would combine your outfit with matches it.



Photos by Pexels

CULTURE

The biggest tests of adult friendships don't involve betrayal anymore; they involve money

by Oyindamola Adebisi



I came across a podcast where a woman argued that friends should be able to afford the same lifestyle, suggesting that if someone cannot afford the group's choices — from ordering a bottle of wine to spontaneously booking a yacht — they perhaps should not have come out. She ultimately said, “drop a friend who's on a budget.” The comments were divided between those who believed friends should “match the vibe” and those who felt no one should have to spend beyond their means to belong. The conversation stayed with me because, beneath the debate about wine and yachts, it seemed to reveal something deeper about what money has come to

mean in adult friendships.

When different budgets become different levels of friendship

As we get older, we have to accept that our friends will have different incomes, financial responsibilities and spending priorities. One may be saving for rent, another paying off a loan, supporting family, or simply deciding that certain expenses aren't worth it. These differences do not make anyone a better or worse friend, yet “I can't afford it” is increasingly interpreted as “I don't value you.” Money shapes expectations in all relationships, including friendships, influencing how we spend, what we consider worthwhile and

what we expect from the people we love.

Conversations about money in friendships can become emotionally charged because they are often interpreted as measures of effort, loyalty and commitment rather than simply financial choices. But setting financial boundaries does not mean someone cares less. Choosing a glass of wine over a bottle or declining an expensive spontaneous plan can simply be a responsible decision, not stinginess or a lack of fun.

The pressure to spend is showing up everywhere

This isn't just about girls' nights out. We're seeing it in destination birthdays that require flights and luxury accommodation. Group trips where everyone is expected to upgrade to the same experience. Concerts, brunches and restaurants chosen with little room for different budgets.

Perhaps nowhere is that pressure more obvious than weddings. Being asked to be a bridesmaid has increasingly become a financial commitment as much as an emotional one. By the time you've paid for aso ebi, outfits, bridal showers, accommodation, makeup, gifts and transportation, you're sometimes looking at

hundreds of thousands, even millions, of naira.

There is often an unspoken belief that if you love your friends enough, you'll find a way to spend on important moments. But while celebrating loved ones naturally comes with costs, the problem is when saying “that's outside my budget” is seen as a lack of love rather than an honest reflection of someone's financial reality.

Good friendships should make room for different realities

Friendships should not depend on everyone having the same lifestyle or spending power. People move through different financial seasons and may have different priorities, so choosing not to spend on certain experiences does not mean they value their friendships any less. While there is nothing wrong with enjoying expensive or spontaneous experiences with friends who genuinely want and can afford them, no one should be made to feel lesser for opting out. The healthiest friendships are those where people can honestly say, “That's outside my budget,” without shame or pressure to prove their friendship through spending.

FASHION

If you don't have these fashion pieces, you might be missing out on serious style

by Ashim Ojeh

Nigerian designers have continued to make their mark on the global fashion scene, with labels like Torlowei, Tia Adeola, Hertunba and House of Marvee appearing on international stages and dressing global stars. This growing recognition speaks to the strength of Nigeria's fashion industry, where both established and emerging designers are creating timeless pieces that consistently capture attention. Among these collections, however, certain dresses, tops, jewellery and bags stand out, fuelled by celebrity and influencer love and amplified by social media — the kind of pieces that instantly make you think, I really wish I had that in my closet.

Hertunba – Ure woven skirt

The Ure Woven Skirt from Hertunba's Aka rù Handwork Collection has become one of the collection's standout pieces, with celebrities, influencers and fashion pages all giving it attention. Its handkerchief-style asymmetrical cut, dramatic length and volume make it

instantly eye-catching, while its versatility means it can be paired with everything from simple tanks to corset tops. Available in shades including blue, cobalt, green, gold, silver, cotton and black, there's plenty of room to make it your own.

Kai Collective — Nao Cotton Logo Embroidered Racer Back Vest Top

Fisayo Longe's Nao Tank Top is another piece that has firmly earned its viral status, reportedly grossing over \$1 million and becoming one of Kai Collective's most recognisable designs. The unmistakable Kai logo is now a familiar sight on Instagram, Pinterest and beyond, while the body-hugging silhouette makes it an easy wardrobe staple. Available in several colours and made from 95% cotton, it is the kind of versatile tank top worth investing in.

Hertunba – Dona Top

The Dona Top is exactly the kind of quirky, art-meets-fashion piece that feels



destined to go viral. Designed around an exaggerated eye, nose and lips and extending into a dramatic hip, it turns an artistic image into something genuinely wearable. Its unusual silhouette has made it one of Hertunba's most sought-after pieces, while its 100% organic cotton construction keeps sustainability firmly in the conversation.

Rèfaini – Kofo Set

If dainty jewellery is starting to feel a little too safe, the Rèfaini Kofo Set is the statement-making alternative. Loved by Denise Esemokumoh and Temi Ajibade, the set includes a chunky long necklace, cuffs, earrings and rings, all featuring 18-carat gold-plated detailing on brass with tourmaline stones. With locally sourced gemstones from Jos, the set is bold, distinctive and guaranteed to become the focal point of an outfit.

Kilèntà – Ano Set

For anyone with a soft spot for fringes, the Kilentar Ano Set is basically fringe heaven. From the Surulere collection, the brown two-piece features a cropped top and a tiered skirt that gives the whole look an effortlessly breezy feel. The skirt combines woven cotton, semi-sheer mesh and raffia trim, with an asymmetric hemline that adds movement and keeps the look playful.

Moelle Zavian – The Hope Beaded Dress

The Moelle Zavian Hope Dress has been making its way across the writer's feed, with the green-and-blue version standing out in particular. Made from Aso Oke and detailed with contrasting cut-outs, the dress plays beautifully with colour and texture, while its halter neckline and straight-fit silhouette make it ideal for brunches, dinners and occasions where making a statement is the goal.

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more

Glory Uzoigwe:

Consistency matters more than perfection

by Geraldine Akutu

Glory Uzoigwe is a maternal and paediatric nutrition and health coach. With a Masters Degree from United States in Nutrition Sciences, and a bachelors degree in Microbiology, the Certified Autism Specialist, champions nutrition-led interventions for children with diet-induced allergies, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, and Autism Spectrum conditions. Uzoigwe is the founder of Wholesome Maternal Nutrition and Managing Director of Cheersandsunshine Nigeria Limited. In this interview, she speaks on her passion for motherhood and food safety education.

Take us back to the beginning. What first drew you to maternal and paediatric nutrition, and when did you realise this was the work you wanted to build your career around? My path here wasn't a straight line, and I think that's exactly why it feels so personal. I studied Microbiology for my first degree, I was very interested in food microbiology. I was very fascinated with the invisible world, the organisms that break down these foods that we consume and systems that quietly decide whether a body thrives or struggles. When I became a mother, that fascination turned into something urgent. I was raising boys and watching, up close, how directly what goes into a child's body shapes their mood, their focus, their growth and even how they sleep at night. That personal experience pushed me to go back to school for a Master's in Nutrition Sciences and a Master's Certificate in Infant and Young Child Feeding in the United States, and later a

Diploma in Nutrition and Health Coaching. Around the same period, I also stepped into the role of Managing Director at Cheers and Sunshine, a company that imports and distributes baby and maternal products across Nigeria, and that role put me in daily conversation with mothers making real purchasing decisions for their children. Listening to their worries, their confusion over labels and their questions about what was actually worth their money added another layer to everything I was learning academically. Somewhere in that season, mixing motherhood, formal study and those conversations with mothers, I stopped seeing nutrition as a subject I was learning and started seeing it as the work I was meant to do. It became less about a career decision and more about a calling I couldn't ignore.

What gaps did you observe in the way Nigerian families access and understand nutrition that inspired you to establish Wholesome Maternal Nutrition?

I kept noticing the same pattern with mothers around me and with clients in the early days of my practice. There was either too little information, or there was an overwhelming flood of it, most of it copied from foreign sources with no thought for what a Nigerian household actually looks like or can afford. Mothers were being told to source ingredients that don't exist in our markets, or to follow feeding advice that ignored our climate, our food culture and our budgets. My work as Managing Director at Cheers and Sunshine made this gap even more visible to me, because I would watch mothers stand in front of shelves of imported baby food and formula, genuinely unsure which product their child actually needed versus which one simply had the loudest packaging. On top of all this, there was very little support for families whose children had allergies, ADHD or were on the autism spectrum. Those parents were often left to figure things out alone, sometimes chasing claims online that promised cures nutrition simply cannot deliver.

Our company, Wholesome Maternal Nutrition grew out of wanting to close that gap, to give Nigerian mothers guidance that is evidence based but also lived in, something that respects our food, our budgets and our realities.

You work with children dealing with diet-induced allergies, ADHD and autism spectrum conditions. What role can nutrition realistically play in supporting these children, and where should parents be cautious about claims that food can 'cure' these conditions?

Nutrition can be genuinely powerful here, but it plays a supporting role, not a curing one, and I say that clearly to every family I work with. For children with diet induced allergies, identifying and removing the actual trigger foods can bring real relief to their skin, their gut and their comfort. For children with ADHD or autism, thoughtful nutrition can help manage inflammation, support gut health, steady blood sugar and, in some children, ease sensory or behavioural friction. What it cannot do is reverse autism or erase ADHD, and any practitioner who tells a parent otherwise is selling false hope. I always encourage parents to be cautious of anyone promising a food or supplement that will cure their child. The honest, responsible approach is to use nutrition alongside therapy, medical care and the child's full support team, not as a replacement for any of it.

“For children with diet induced allergies, identifying and removing the actual trigger foods can bring real relief to their skin, their gut and their comfort.”

— Glory Uzoigwe

How can Nigerian mothers provide nutritious meals for their children without feeling pressured to adopt expensive or entirely foreign diets?

I always begin by reminding mothers that nutrient density is not determined by geography. Some of the most valuable sources of iron, protein, folate and healthy fats a growing child needs are already staples in a typical Nigerian kitchen, ugu

and ewedu for their micronutrient content, beans and groundnuts as accessible plant proteins, fish and eggs for high quality protein and essential fatty acids, and tubers like yam and plantain as reliable energy sources. My guidance to families is rarely to replace what they already cook, it is to refine it. That might mean adjusting oil quantities, increasing the proportion of vegetables in a soup, or introducing greater variety across the week so a child's nutrient intake is broader rather than repetitive.

In a country where food prices continue to put pressure on household budgets, how can families provide balanced nutrition without breaking the bank?

I tell families that balance is more about planning than spending. Buying seasonal produce, shopping at local markets rather than relying only on supermarkets, and cooking in batches all stretch a food budget further than people expect. Protein doesn't have to mean expensive cuts of meat, eggs, beans, groundnuts and locally sourced fish are affordable and nutrient rich. I also encourage mothers to reduce waste by planning meals around what's already in the kitchen instead of buying impulsively. And honestly, a lot of nutrition value gets lost through overcooking or excess frying, so simply adjusting how a meal is prepared, more steaming, less deep frying, shorter cooking times for vegetables, can improve what a family gets nutritionally from the same money they're already spending.

From pregnancy to postpartum, what nutritional mistakes do you see women making most frequently, and what would you advise them to do differently?

The most common mistake is treating pregnancy nutrition as something that ends the moment the baby arrives. Women pour so much attention into what they eat while carrying the pregnancy, then almost abandon that care once postpartum begins, at exactly the moment their body needs support to heal, produce milk and recover its strength. I also see women under eating out of fear of retaining weight, or skipping meals because they're overwhelmed with a newborn, when what their body actually needs is consistent, nutrient dense meals. Another frequent gap is iron and protein intake dropping off after delivery, even though blood loss during birth makes those two things more important than ever. My advice is always the same, postpartum is not the time to shrink your plate, it's the time to nourish deliberately, with food that supports healing, hormone balance and breastfeeding if that's the mother's choice.

How Alpha City, Talent for the Master's Use are shaping young lives

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

For 18 consecutive years, Talent for the Master's Use has provided children with a platform to discover, develop and showcase their abilities, reinforcing the idea that talent development must begin early if young people are to realise their potential and contribute meaningfully to society.



The annual programme, which combines music, dance, Bible quiz, Bible memory recitation and other creative activities, was preceded by Alpha City, a three-day Vacation Bible School designed to engage children through learning, practical skills and creative expression.

This year's programme, themed "Light of the World," brought together children from different churches and backgrounds at TREM Wealthy Place, Iyana Ipaja, targeting about 2,000 participants. While Talent for the Master's Use is in its 18th edition, Alpha City is marking its 13th edition.

For the convener, Alpha City and Joint convener, Talent for the Master's Use, Ayodeji Ebinoluwa Olukorede, the initiative is much more than competition. It is deliberately structured as a talent discovery and exhibition platform where children can identify their abilities, develop them and begin to understand how those abilities can contribute to their future.

The programme is open to children from birth to 16 years and deliberately welcomes participants across denominations, sectors and religious backgrounds. According to Mrs. Olukorede, the decision to create an inclusive environment through Alpha City

is rooted in the need to reach children who might otherwise not have access to such opportunities.

"Sometimes, if you simply tell children to come to church, they may not come. But there is so much they need to learn and so many ways we can reach them," she explained.

The three-day Alpha City programme provides a range of activities, training and learning sessions before the children converge for the main talent showcase. Organisers say the objective is to create a safe and engaging environment where children can learn, experiment and discover what they can do.

The initiative's vision extends beyond the immediate programme. Mrs. Olukorede said they are conscious that today's children will eventually occupy the positions currently held by adults and therefore need to be equipped with the values, knowledge and skills required to shape society responsibly. "Our vision is about every child impacting the nation, every child impacting the world and every child harnessing his or her potential," she said.

She added that investing in a child's potential could have a multiplier effect,

with one child's development eventually influencing a family, community and even the nation.

"We will not always occupy the positions we occupy today. These children will eventually take our places. They will be the ones serving and leading in the future," she said.

That philosophy is reflected in the structure of Talent for the Master's Use. Rather than focusing exclusively on winning, the programme provides children with opportunities to practise, perform and receive encouragement to pursue their interests.

Mrs. Olukorede who is also an educator noted that many talents remain undiscovered because children are often expected to wait until they reach a particular age before expressing or pursuing their interests. By then, however, some may have lost interest or moved in a different direction.

"When you identify and nurture a child's talent early, that child begins to build on it," she said.

She gave the example of a child who identifies as a drummer and repeatedly returns to the programme with a desire to improve. Such consistency, she explained, creates an opportunity for adults to provide direction, introduce the child to music education and expose them to other instruments.

"That is how you produce great instrumentalists and other professionals who can contribute to national development," she said.

The programme also goes beyond music and the arts to introduce children to practical and entrepreneurial skills. During this year's Alpha City, participants were taught how to make souvenirs and decorate them

with labels, create photo frames using flex banners and make bags, including cloth bags.

Instructors are drawn from within the programme as well as externally, while some teachers receive training before transferring the knowledge to the children. The 18th edition of Talent for the Master's Use, hosted by TREM Wealthy Place, Iyana Ipaja, featured participation from churches including TREM Ishuti, TREM Oko Oba, TREM Ejigbo, RCCG Great Expectation, TREM Iju, RCCG Ambassador Mega Zone, TREM Igando, RCCG Ark of God, TREM Ikotun, Christ Gospel Church of Praise, Go Ye Pentecostal Mission International and Hour of Touch Bible Ministry.

The competition featured Bible recitation in junior and senior categories, dance, Bible quiz, music and Bible Sword. TREM Wealthy Place emerged strongly across several categories, winning the junior and senior Bible recitation competitions, dance, Bible quiz and music, while RCCG Ambassador Mega Zone won the Bible Sword category.

Beyond the winners and the applause, the organisers see the programme as part of a longer-term investment in children. As Mrs. Olukorede puts it, "Every child has potential."

For Alpha City and Talent for the Master's Use, catching children young is therefore not merely about discovering who can sing, dance, recite or perform. It is about identifying possibility early, providing the right environment to develop it and preparing a generation that can eventually take responsibility for the future.

"If we invest in our children today, we are investing in the future of our communities, our nation and the world," she said.

Ominya Initiative graduates first cohort of peacebuilders

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

The Ominya Initiative for Peace and Community Development (OIPCD) has graduated the inaugural cohort of its Peacebuilders Leadership Internship (PLI 1.0), equipping a new generation of young people with practical skills to promote peace, resolve conflicts and drive positive change in their communities.

The 12-week leadership and peacebuilding programme, which concluded with a graduation ceremony in Abuja on July 31, 2026, brought together young people who underwent intensive training in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, leadership, civic engagement and community development.

The graduates have now joined OIPCD's growing network of Peace Champions,

positioning them to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the programme to peacebuilding and social-impact initiatives within their communities.

Designed as a practical leadership development programme, PLI 1.0 combined weekly hybrid learning sessions with hands-on community engagement. Participants were trained by experienced peacebuilding practitioners and experts across areas including conflict analysis and resolution, Youth, Peace and Security (YPS), gender and inclusive peacebuilding, youth leadership, advocacy and project management.

The programme also introduced participants to the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for peacebuilding and social impact,

reflecting the growing need for young leaders to understand how emerging technologies can support community development and civic action.

A key component of the internship was the implementation of the Pass It On (PIO) Project at the Karamajiji IDP Camp, where the interns took their learning beyond the classroom and engaged young people in conversations around peace, dialogue, empathy and non-violent conflict resolution. The community project demonstrated the programme's emphasis on translating leadership and peacebuilding knowledge into practical action, while giving participants direct experience engaging communities affected by displacement and other vulnerabilities.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, the Executive Director of OIPCD, Amb. Honest Salihu Gode, reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to investing in young people as catalysts for peace and sustainable development. The successful completion of the first cohort, she noted, underscores the potential of youth-led initiatives to contribute to peaceful communities while strengthening the capacity of emerging leaders to drive social change. The graduation ceremony featured a keynote address by Hon. Tpl Abubakar Ahmed Sadiq, presentation of certificates, recognition of outstanding interns and reflections from participants on their experiences throughout the 12-week programme.

The other side of *JAPA*

when migration dreams meet deception

by Stella Okemuo

From fake visas and phantom jobs to deadly desert routes, Nigerians are losing their savings, safety and freedom while chasing better lives abroad.

Thirty-two-year-old Adaobi knows what it feels like to watch a dream collapse in silence.

She sold her late father's only remaining plot of land, added her jewellery, and borrowed from friends and relatives to raise N8.5 million.

The money was for what a Lagos-based "travel consultant" described as a guaranteed Canadian work visa. He produced convincing employment letters, immigration documents and photographs of supposed clients already settled abroad. Confident her future had finally arrived, Adaobi resigned from her teaching job. Fourteen months later, she has neither a visa nor her money.

The office where she made the payments has been abandoned. The telephone numbers no longer work. The company's website has disappeared.

"I thought I was investing in my future," she says quietly. "Instead, I financed my own ruin."

Adaobi's experience is no longer unusual. Across Nigeria, thousands of people are losing life savings to fraudulent visa consultants, fake recruitment agencies and increasingly sophisticated migration scams. As inflation erodes incomes and unemployment remains stubbornly high, migration has shifted from personal ambition to economic survival.

According to the International Monetary Fund's 2026 Article IV Consultation on Nigeria, approximately 63 percent of Nigerians now live below the national poverty line, while about 27 million people experienced food insecurity in late 2025. These conditions have intensified pressure on families to seek opportunities abroad.

Recognising the growing crisis, the Nigeria Immigration Service recently warned Nigerians against irregular migration, while the National Association of Nigerian Travel Agencies cautioned the public against agents promising guaranteed visas, overseas jobs or priority processing for unofficial payments.

For many, however, desperation outweighs caution. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and SOM Observatory research 2022 reported that organised migrant smuggling has become an increasingly sophisticated business across West and North Africa. More than half of Nigerian migrants surveyed relied on a single smuggler throughout their journey, paying an average of US\$892 after transport, accommodation, unofficial payments and other expenses, often representing years of family savings.

Not every victim reaches the desert. Some

never make it beyond the visa application stage. Nkechi, a university graduate, lost 4.7 million after paying what she believed was the cost of obtaining a Canadian visitor visa. As our conversation continued, she admitted something many prospective migrants rarely say aloud. She never intended to visit Canada temporarily. Her plan was to remain permanently and find work after arrival.

"Everybody online seemed to be succeeding," she says. "I thought once I entered Canada, everything would work itself out."

Like many young Nigerians, Nkechi had built her expectations from carefully curated social media posts portraying migration as a guaranteed pathway to financial success. What those videos rarely show are visa refusals, unemployment, homelessness, deportation, or the legal consequences of overstaying immigration status.

Migration experts argue that misinformation has become one of the most powerful drivers of irregular migration.

UNODC and SOM Observatory research 2022 shows that 49 percent of Nigerian migrants finance migration through personal savings, 27 percent receive financial support from relatives, 23 percent sell personal assets, and 13 percent borrow money. Nearly one-third eventually exhaust their funds during the journey, leaving many vulnerable to exploitation.

The problem has attracted international attention. In 2025, immigration authorities in Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia jointly launched the #FightingVisaFraud campaign to combat visa scams targeting Nigerians. The campaign warned prospective migrants against agents promising guaranteed approvals, accelerated processing or overseas employment in exchange for unofficial payments.

For those unable to secure legal migration pathways, the risks become far greater. Many turn to smugglers who promise safe passage through Niger, across the Sahara Desert into Libya and ultimately to Europe. For many, Libya becomes the end of the journey. In June 2026, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) assisted 182 Nigerian migrants to voluntarily return home from Libya after failed migration attempts.

Pita's story reflects the experiences many returnees have described. After losing money to a fraudulent agent who promised her domestic work in the United Arab Emirates, she borrowed even more to finance an irregular journey through Niger, believing Libya would be her gateway to Europe.

From Agadez, she joined more than twenty

migrants crammed into the back of a pickup truck bound for the Sahara Desert. With little food, almost no water and temperatures soaring above 40 degrees Celsius, the journey lasted several days. When the vehicle broke down, the passengers were left stranded under the relentless sun, uncertain whether help would ever come.

Eventually they reached southern Libya, but the promised opportunity never materialised. Instead, migrants found themselves confined in overcrowded compounds controlled by armed groups. Food was scarce. Violence was common. Fear became routine.

Like many others, Pita never reached Europe. Her savings were exhausted before she could attempt the Mediterranean crossing. Burdened by debt and traumatised by the ordeal, she eventually returned to Nigeria with assistance from the IOM.

Her experience reflects a pattern documented by the UNODC. Smugglers frequently confiscate migrants' mobile phones, isolate them from their families and demand ransom payments before allowing them to continue their journey. Others remain detained until relatives raise additional money.

The violence is equally disturbing. Women face particularly severe risks. UNODC found that 27 percent of Nigerian women paid smugglers through labour, compared with only 6 percent of men, while many who exhausted their money reported sexual exploitation as a means of payment.

For criminals, migration has become a profitable business. Fraudulent recruitment agencies sell fake employment offers. Traffickers lure women with promises of domestic work or hospitality jobs before exploiting them abroad. Unscrupulous recruiters market counterfeit Certificates of Sponsorship for United Kingdom care worker visas, leaving victims burdened with

enormous debts for jobs that never existed.

These schemes thrive because they exploit the same combination of hope, financial pressure and limited understanding of complex immigration systems.

Yet experts argue that enforcement alone will not solve the problem.

Human rights advocates are calling for stronger regulation of travel consultants, tighter oversight of overseas recruitment agencies, improved cross-border law enforcement cooperation and sustained public education on legitimate migration pathways.

International organisations have also urged governments to expand safe, regular migration opportunities. In 2025, the International Labour Organisation partnered with Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment to strengthen labour migration governance and improve support services for prospective migrants.



Celebrate *World Photography Day* with fun games

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but these games will put your photography knowledge, creativity and observation skills to the test. From word scrambles to bingo challenges, here are fun ways to celebrate World Photography Day with fellow photography lovers.

SNAP ? QUIZ

1. Who is credited with taking the first permanent photograph, in 1826 or 1827?
a) Louis Daguerre
b) Joseph Nicéphore Niépce
c) George Eastman
d) Henri Cartier-Bresson
2. What does “ISO” measure in photography?
a) Shutter speed
b) Lens width
c) A camera's sensitivity to light
d) Focal length
3. Which Nigerian-born photographer is celebrated for his striking black-and-white portraits of West African fashion and culture in the 1950s and 60s?
a) Malick Sidibé
b) J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere
c) Seydou Keita
d) Samuel Fosso
4. What was the first the brand launched by George Eastman in 1888
a) Nikon
b) Leica
c) Kodak
d) Polaroid
5. In photography, what does “aperture” control?
a) The amount of light entering the lens
b) The camera's storage capacity
c) Image resolution
d) The flash duration
6. What year was the first Instagram photo posted?
a) 2008
b) 2010
c) 2012
d) 2014
7. Which camera setting determines how long the camera's sensor is exposed to light?
a) ISO
b) Aperture
c) Shutter speed
d) White balance
8. What is the term for a photograph taken at very close range to capture small details?
a) Panorama
b) Macro photography
c) Landscape photography
d) Street photography

THROUGH THE LENS

WORD SEARCH

Find words associated with photography in the puzzle below.

A	B	C	A	M	E	R	A	T	Z	Q	N	E	J	C
V	B	I	Q	W	N	K	T	R	I	P	O	D	S	C
O	S	A	V	F	X	F	M	L	J	A	O	H	F	P
O	Z	S	V	L	S	H	E	G	P	C	U	R	O	K
Q	E	O	N	R	U	X	S	E	M	T	T	R	C	T
C	Z	R	Z	E	I	D	E	A	T	B	T	X	U	V
K	T	V	U	P	V	X	A	E	L	R	J	S	S	ß
N	L	P	V	T	P	I	R	R	A	F	U	E	J	K
Q	U	A	G	O	R	H	T	I	K	V	X	O	W	C
E	V	S	S	L	R	E	T	A	S	R	N	L	Q	H
S	O	U	M	I	D	H	P	F	G	G	O	R	X	D
H	R	I	U	D	G	Q	V	A	I	E	W	O	P	H
E	R	O	H	R	S	W	D	X	Q	S	N	S	M	C
N	V	C	Z	O	E	Q	R	Q	W	Y	D	U	X	Q
M	O	O	Z	D	F	I	L	M	O	S	N	E	L	V

APERTURE
CAMERA
DARKROOM
EXPOSURE
FILM

FLASH
FOCUS
ISO
LENS
NEGATIVE

PIXELS
PROTRAIT
SHUTTER
TRIPOD
ZOOM

Unshoot the Word

Unscramble each set of letters to reveal a photography term.

1. RUTASEPER →
2. SLEN →
3. TROPRAIT →
4. HLASF →
5. GTIVANEE →
6. DOPTIR →
7. EMRAF →
8. HSUTRET →
9. OSIFCU →
10. XUEPOSER →

Answers:

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Aperture | 5. Negative | 9. Focus |
| 2. Lens | 6. Tripod | 10. Exposure |
| 3. Portrait | 7. Frame | |
| 4. Flash | 8. Shutter | |

SPOT

REVIEW



Bonny Island... Beyond the oil wells

by Chidinma Enweani

Yet, past the corporate gates and bustling industrial layouts lies a completely different world, one defined by roaring Atlantic waves, quiet green reserves, and a slow-paced island charm that offers a sharp escape from the chaos of city life.

If you are looking for a unique spot to unplug, breathe, and explore a side of the Niger Delta that rarely makes the front page, Bonny Island is worth the trip.

A Journey Across the Water

Getting to the island is part of the adventure. Most travelers catch a boat or ferry from the Bille or Nembe watersides in Port Harcourt. The 45-to-60-minute water ride cuts through winding rivers before opening up to the fresh, salty breeze of the Atlantic. Once you dock, you are greeted by an environment that feels surprisingly structured, clean, and secure, thanks to the unique blend of local community life and corporate infrastructure.

Where Nature Takes Center Stage

The true magic of Bonny Island isn't found in concrete or boardrooms; it lives outdoors.

Finima Nature Park

For nature lovers, the Finima Nature Park is an absolute must-visit. Spanning roughly 1,000 hectares of protected land, this lush reserve is a stunning mix of tropical rainforest, mangrove swamps, and fresh water ponds. Walking through its quiet trails feels worlds away from Nigeria's noisy urban centers. It serves as a safe haven for diverse wildlife, including monkeys, reptiles, and various bird species, making it a dream spot for quiet walks, eco-tours, and

birdwatching.

Just a short distance away is Finima Beach, famed for its long, wide stretches of clean white sand meeting the blue Atlantic. Unlike many crowded urban beaches, Finima offers an expansive, serene coastline where you can genuinely hear your own thoughts. Whether you want to take a barefoot evening walk as the sun sets or set up a quiet seaside picnic, the beach provides a peaceful, calming atmosphere.

History, Culture, and Local Flavors

For history lovers, the island holds deep roots. A quick tour can take you past old colonial landmarks, including the historic Bonny Lighthouse, or into the historic corridors of the Bonny Kingdom Royal Palace, where you can catch a glimpse of the rich traditions of the Ibani people.

No trip here is complete without diving into the local cuisine. Because it is an island completely surrounded by water, the seafood is as fresh as it gets. Local joints and small-scale restaurants dish out steaming pots of fresh fish pepper soup and native soups that capture the authentic taste of the coast.

Why You Should Visit

Bonny Island forces you to slow down. It is not a loud, frantic party destination packed with neon clubs; it is a quiet refuge for travellers who appreciate nature, clean air, and coastal stillness. It reminds us that beneath Nigeria's heavy industrial exterior lies raw, untouched beauty waiting to be explored. Pack light, leave your rush behind, and discover the quieter side of the delta.

When people talk about Bonny Island in Rivers State, the conversation almost always points straight to industry, corporate headquarters, and its heavy reputation as an economic powerhouse.

Known widely as one of the wealthiest zones in the country due to its massive oil and gas footprint, this coastal enclave is rarely painted as a leisure destination.



Dr Isioma Okolo is a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, Harvard-trained global public health researcher and women's health writer. She writes about medicine, women's lives and the social systems shaping health across Africa and the diaspora.

Inside your womb nobody talks about

by Isioma Okolo

Your aunty has one. Your sister may have one. Your mother may have lived with one for years without telling you.

Somewhere in many Nigerian families, there is wahala growing quietly inside a womb, yet nobody wants to mention it.

Walk into an owambe, church programme or market and look at the women around you. Research suggests that seven to eight out of every 10 Black women may develop fibroids during their lifetime.

Fibroids are common, but the silence surrounding them remains dangerous.

When NEPA takes light, everyone complains. But when a woman's womb develops a fibroid, nobody may notice. Sometimes, even she does not know.

What a fibroid actually is

A fibroid is a non-cancerous growth made of muscle and fibrous tissue that develops in or around the womb.

It is not cancer. It is not what your village people sent after you. It is not the work of a spiritual husband.

Many fibroids cause no symptoms and are only discovered during a scan for another condition.

Others can cause heavy or painful periods, frequent urination, constipation, pelvic pressure or a swollen stomach.

For some women, the bleeding becomes so heavy that they plan their lives around toilets and sanitary products. They sit through church services wondering whether they can make it to the end without staining their clothes.

Others develop a swollen stomach and must endure questions about pregnancy from people who should know better. The myths

Fibroids do not affect only older women. They can develop in women in their twenties and, in some cases, teenagers.

Age may increase the risk, but fibroids do not wait for marriage or motherhood. A fibroid diagnosis is also not an infertility diagnosis.

Many women with fibroids conceive and carry pregnancies without complications. However, some fibroids can affect fertility or pregnancy, depending on their size, number and location.

That conversation should happen between a woman and her doctor. It should not become a sentence whispered by relatives

at a family meeting.

Fibroids are not a death sentence or a spiritual attack.

In most cases, they are not life-threatening. However, untreated heavy bleeding can cause severe anaemia. A woman may become weak, dizzy, constantly tired or short of breath because she has lost too much blood over time.

That is the real danger. It is a reason to seek medical care early, not to hide the condition or pray it away.

Agbo and massage will not cure fibroids. There is no reliable medical evidence that herbal mixtures or massage can remove them. These methods may delay proper treatment while the fibroids continue to grow or the bleeding becomes worse. Treatment options you should know. Many women believe they have only two choices: endure the symptoms or remove the womb. That is not true.

Treatment depends on the woman's symptoms, age, plans for pregnancy and the size, number and location of the fibroids.

Some medicines can control heavy bleeding or temporarily shrink fibroids. Myomectomy removes the fibroids while preserving the womb and may suit women who want to retain their fertility.

Less invasive procedures are also available. Uterine fibroid embolisation blocks the blood vessels supplying the fibroids, causing them to shrink over time. Radiofrequency ablation uses heat to destroy fibroid tissue without a large surgical cut.

These procedures are not available in every Nigerian hospital, and they may not suit every woman. However, women deserve to know about them before assuming open surgery is their only option.

A hysterectomy, which removes the womb, may be appropriate when symptoms are severe and future pregnancy is not a priority. But it is one option among several, not the automatic answer to every diagnosis.

Why silence remains dangerous

We do not talk openly enough about periods. Women may bleed through



Photo by Magnific

a sanitary pad within an hour and still believe they should endure it quietly. Some carry spare wrappers to work, church or social events because they fear staining their clothes.

Others try herbal mixtures, visit spiritual homes or ignore their symptoms until the pain becomes unbearable.

Shame does not shrink a fibroid. Silence does not stop the bleeding. Delaying care can make a manageable condition more difficult to treat.

Pay attention when your periods become heavier, longer or more painful. Do not ignore persistent pelvic pressure, frequent urination or unexplained swelling around

your stomach.

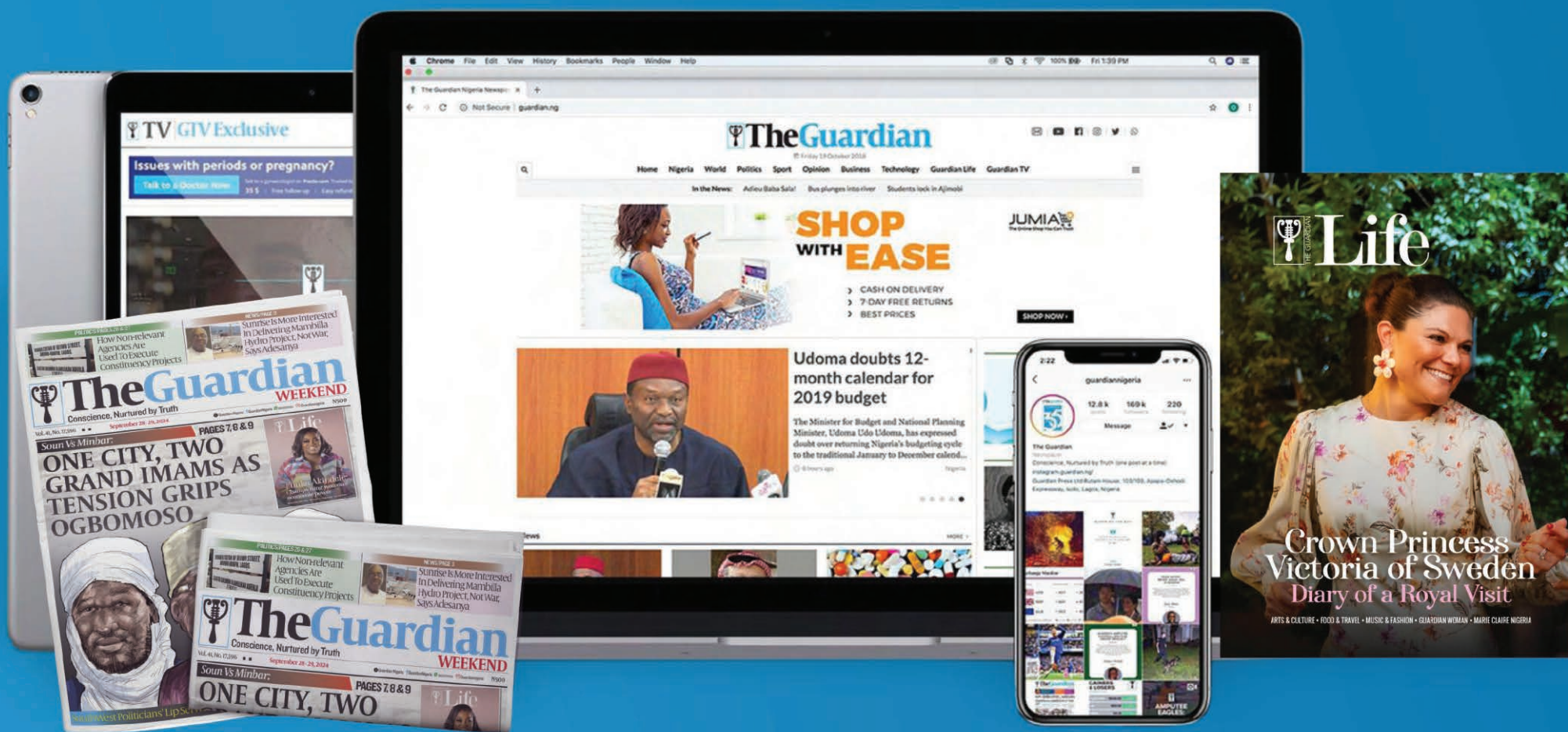
Speak with a qualified health professional and get examined. Your doctor may recommend a pelvic ultrasound or another appropriate test based on your symptoms.

A fibroid should never become a secret you carry because you fear judgment.

So, sis, let me ask you plainly: have your periods changed? Have you experienced unusual bleeding, pain or swelling? When last did you speak with a doctor about your reproductive health?

Do not laugh it off in the family WhatsApp group. Do not allow shame, fear or misinformation to decide for you. Get tested today!

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