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on Mara Music, street
sound, and a movement
in the making

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Your guide to beauty
habits that work

HOW TO STYLE
DENIM WITHOUT
LOOKING BASIC



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Where Fashion Meets Devotion: Don Julio at the Heart of the 12th AMVCA



The Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards has always been more than an award show. It is one of the few nights where African film, fashion, culture and identity meet in one room with the red carpet becoming its own form of storytelling. This year, however, something felt different. The 12th edition of the AMVCA was not simply about who wore the biggest silhouette or who delivered the most dramatic entrance. The conversations online reflected something deeper. People showed up with intention. Fashion felt more considered, more personal and more connected to identity and craftsmanship

than spectacle alone. Sitting comfortably at the centre of that cultural moment was Don Julio. Since its launch in Nigeria in 2025, Don Julio has consistently positioned itself at the centre of meaningful cultural moments by moving beyond traditional visibility and leaning into experiences that feel intentional, immersive, and culturally connected. The brand has focused on creating spaces that celebrate creativity, craftsmanship, ambition and authentic human connection. That philosophy has become increasingly visible through its growing presence across

entertainment, nightlife, fashion and experiential culture in Nigeria. Whether through curated social experiences, cultural collaborations, or premium event platforms, Don Julio continues to align itself with audiences who value substance. Its presence at the 12th AMVCA therefore felt less like sponsorship and more like a natural continuation of the brand's evolving relationship with culture. As headline sponsor of the AMVCA, Don Julio did not just align itself with entertainment. The brand aligned itself with devotion, creativity, and the idea of earned excellence, values that were visible not only during the awards ceremony itself, but across the entire fashion landscape of the evening. From the red carpet to the after conversations, the night became a celebration of people who understand that true style, much like true craftsmanship, is never accidental. One of the clearest examples of this was Don Julio's Fashion Icon of the Night, Uche Montana. Making a striking appearance in a custom design by Tubo Bereni, Uche Montana embodied the spirit of reinvention and transformation that defined the evening. Inspired by the rise of a phoenix, the look represented strength, evolution, and confidence, themes that naturally aligned with Don Julio's philosophy around ambition, craftsmanship, and devotion to one's journey.

The brand's philosophy has always centred around craftsmanship and dedication, values that mirror the discipline required to create memorable fashion moments. Behind every standout look at the AMVCA was a designer sketching concepts, stylists refining details, glam teams perfecting execution, and talents trusting the creative process. In many ways, the red carpet itself became a visual representation of what Don Julio stands for: devotion to craft. The AMVCA has long evolved beyond film alone. It now exists as one of Africa's most important cultural stages, where fashion, entertainment, and storytelling influence each other in real time. This year, Don Julio understood that perfectly. Rather than simply sponsoring an event, the brand became part of the cultural language of the night. From The Don's Table conversations celebrating storytelling and excellence to the unforgettable Don Julio 1942 toast moment, the brand consistently reinforced one message: greatness is earned through passion, patience and consistency. Perhaps, that is why Don Julio felt perfectly at home at the AMVCA because both worlds understand the beauty of craftsmanship. Whether it is a perfectly aged tequila, a carefully constructed gown, a powerful film performance, or a stylist creating an unforgettable image, excellence always leaves a lasting impression.

AMVCA Best Dressed

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

Osas Igodaro Mike Edwards Beauty Denola Grey
Toni Tones Mercy Eke Timini Enioluwa



Qudus Ibrahim of QIB Productions

The Face Behind Interactive Theatre in Nigeria

by Maria Diamond



Photographs by Andre Oyakhtilome @andreoyakhtilome

QUDUS IBRAHIM is a creative entrepreneur, cultural innovator and the Founder and CEO of QIB Productions, a leading pioneer of interactive theatre in Nigeria, shaping modern entertainment in the country. From public productions to exclusive private performances, QIB Productions is building a movement, one unforgettable experience at a time.



As a Nigerian storyteller, Director, and Creative Entrepreneur, Qudus Ibrahim is redefining the boundaries of live theatre through immersive and interactive experiences.

Widely recognised as the pioneer of interactive theatre in Nigeria, his work has played

a key role in shaping a new wave of audience-centered storytelling across the country.

In October 2021, Qudus founded QIB Productions, a forward-thinking entertainment company focused on creating bold, audience-driven theatrical experiences. QIB Productions continues to expand its creative footprint, with a growing slate that includes stage productions,

and upcoming ventures in film and television. Through his work, Qudus is committed to telling compelling Nigerian stories that resonate locally and globally while pushing the evolution of modern theatre.

As pioneers of interactive theatre, QIB have created a fresh and exciting form of entertainment that continues to captivate audiences, sell out shows, and set new standards across the country. Through QIB Productions, Ibrahim is redefining live entertainment in Nigeria through immersive, interactive theatre experiences that place audiences at the heart of every story.

This innovative approach has contributed to a growing shift in contemporary theatre culture. The productions have been attended by CEOs, high-profile executives, and influential figures across the country, further solidifying their status as a leading force in modern theatrical experiences.

Ibrahim has carved out a distinct lane in Nigeria's entertainment landscape through QIB Productions, introducing a fresh, highly immersive approach to theatre that breaks away from traditional, passive viewing. What began as an unconventional idea has quickly evolved into a sought-after format, with QIB Productions' style gaining traction across the country.

“There is a unique beauty in experiencing a performance live, in real time, and being present in that moment.”

— Qudus Ibrahim

The demand for these interactive experiences continues to grow, influencing a new wave of creators and producers who are now adopting and adapting the model. Through this, Ibrahim has built a successful brand and also played a key role in reshaping contemporary theatre in Nigeria.

In an interview with Guardian Life, Qudus Ibrahim speaks about QIB Productions as an emerging force in the creative and entertainment industry with plans to create more immersive, interactive theatre shows across and outside Nigeria.

When did you get into the creative industry and why? Prior to this what were you doing?

My interest in the creative industry goes all the way back to my days at St. Saviour's Primary School, where my love for storytelling first began. I discovered an early talent for writing when I visited the library, picked up a book, and rewrote the entire story in my own words, creating a version that felt uniquely mine. That experience created a passion that continued to grow throughout my education.

By the time I got to secondary school, writing came naturally to me. I did not only write, I directed school plays, which further developed my appreciation for storytelling and performance. My friends would often queue up to read my work which I found really exciting and motivating. It boosted my confidence in my abilities as a writer.

Despite recognising writing as a talent, I never considered it as a career path. I envisioned a future in the corporate

“You can’t truly tell stories without grounding them in your culture and traditions.”

— Qudus Ibrahim

world, as a banker or finance professional. This led me to study Banking and Finance at university. After graduation, I secured a role in a financial institution, but it did not take long for me to realise that the traditional 9 to 5 lifestyle was not aligned with my aspirations.

My turning point came when I stumbled upon the Beeta Universal writing competition. I entered, won, and that awakened my desire to pursue a career in the creative industry. Inspired by that success, I founded QIB Productions in December 2021. Since then, we have consistently produced at least three interactive theatre productions every year.

As a creative entrepreneur and cultural innovator shaping modern entertainment in Nigeria, tell us what all that entails?

As a creative entrepreneur and cultural innovator, I create unique entertainment experiences while building a sustainable business around creativity. Through QIB Productions, I have helped pioneer immersive and interactive theatre in Nigeria, transforming audiences from passive spectators into active participants.

What does the acronym QIB mean and what does QIB Productions represent? What are the specifics that aren’t anywhere else?

The acronym QIB is from my name Qudus Ibrahim. QIB Productions represents innovation, immersion, and community. We are dedicated to creating quality entertainment experiences.

Instead of simply watching a story unfold, our audiences become part of the experience, making each production feel personal, engaging, and memorable.

We are very particular about ensuring that our audience gets real value from the entertainment we offer. It’s one thing to put on a show, produce a play, make a film, or create a television series, but for me, the most important thing is that people genuinely enjoy the experience and leave feeling that it was worth their time and investment.

Most times, it’s the little details that make all the difference. At QIB Productions, we pay close attention to every element of the audience journey, making sure every detail is thoughtfully executed. That commitment to excellence, dotting every ‘i’ and crossing every ‘t’ is what makes us unique. We combine quality storytelling with relatable themes and interactive experiences that truly connect with people.

Tell us about Interactive theatre? How does that play out?

Interactive theatre is theatre that actively involves the audience in the storytelling process. Rather than being passive spectators, audience members become

part of the experience. The performance happens within their space, and they are encouraged to engage with the characters and make key decisions that affect the direction of the story.

What makes it exciting is that no two performances are exactly the same because the audience’s choices shape the experience. Ultimately, the audience becomes an integral part of the storytelling, making each show unique.

Is the concept of interactive theatre solely your idea?

Interestingly, I wasn’t aware that interactive theatre already existed when I started exploring the concept. The idea came to me organically as I had always wanted to engage audiences and make them a part of the storytelling process. It was after I had begun developing and producing these experiences that I discovered similar concepts had been practiced in other parts of the world.

I had always known that I wanted to create a more interactive form of theatre, but what I struggled with initially was finding the perfect setting to bring that vision to life. The breakthrough came when I attended a play that was staged on a lawn rather than in a conventional theatre space. That experience inspired me and showed me the possibilities of using unconventional venues to create a more immersive connection between the audience and the story.

So while I can’t claim to have invented interactive theatre globally, I can say that the idea was independently conceived by me, and I’ve been instrumental in introducing, developing, and popularising this style of theatre within Nigeria through QIB Productions.

Tell us about QIB Productions thematic preoccupations?

At QIB Productions, our thematic focus is drawn from everyday life and the experiences people encounter daily. We tell stories about relationships, family, love, politics, friendship, ambition, conflict, and the various challenges that shape our lives. We believe audiences connect most deeply with stories that reflect their own realities.

We create relatable, timely, and entertaining stories that not only captivate audiences but also leave them with something to think about long after the performance has ended.

Let’s dive into the business angle of what you do as a creative entrepreneur? How does it amount into figures for your brand?

As a creative entrepreneur, I see every production not just as a creative project but also as a business venture. Revenue comes primarily from ticket sales, but we also explore sponsorships and partnerships. We carefully budget every production to ensure that we can deliver a high quality experience while maintaining profitability and sustainability.

One of the major indicators of growth for us has been audience demand. We have gone from planning a handful of shows to selling out extended runs because of demand.

What makes QIB a leading pioneer of interactive theatre in Nigeria?

Originality and authenticity. One thing I always enjoy is seeing the audience reaction. Some people arrive not knowing what to expect and may even be indifferent at first, but once they experience the play, they leave excited and genuinely amazed by how good it is.

Tell us about your management team, and crew members and also how do you source your cast?

QIB Productions wouldn’t be where it is today without my two sisters who run the company with me. My elder sister Ayesha Ibrahim is our Brand and Communications Director. My younger sister Maryam Ibrahim is our Operations & Strategy consultant. They bring so much passion to QIB Productions and have contributed greatly to its success.

Keeping it in the family is a deliberate choice that allows intentional commitment, shared values and passion for the brand’s

“More people really need to experience theatre. I don’t want it to become a dying art form.”

— Qudus Ibrahim

growth and development. It has been really rewarding and enjoyable running the company with them.

I have also been fortunate to have a dedicated team that has remained with me from the very beginning. Ebenezer Shobowale my Assistant Director, Maurice Edem, my stage manager and Omasan Nelson my assistant. They play key roles in the success of every production.

When it comes to casting, it always depends on the story and the specific character I’m trying to bring to life. I spend a lot of time researching and discovering talent, often going on deep dives through social media when I’m looking for a particular type of actor. Sometimes it’s someone whose work I’ve followed for a while, and other times it’s someone I know has the right skill set and presence for the role. This has helped me build a family-like pool of talented actors that I can call on from time to time.

When we first started, I felt that having popular faces attached to our productions was important because it could help attract audiences and build credibility. However, as QIB Productions has grown, we’ve reached a point where the brand itself has become a draw. We’ve built a loyal audience that trusts the quality of our productions, regardless of who’s on the poster.

That said, I’m a huge fan of Nollywood and I would absolutely love to work with established actors from time to time. I think they can bring something unique to a production.

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





Rise of Mara Music

by Chinonso Ihekire

Within Nigeria’s party circuits, street dance music has always had its own seat in the spotlight for decades.

In the last few years, new street dance tunes which combine Western EDM elements with indigenous rhythms have emerged as the Nigerian response to a global EDM takeover in party culture. Shortly after the successes of DJ YK Mule’s “Cruise Beats”, with its comic audios and raspy, uptempo percussion, another electronic street dance tune dubbed “Mara” rose to the limelight. The charismatic dance tune invented by Nigerian producer-DJ, DJ Khalipha, has since become a staple soundtrack to youth parties across the country since it took off circa 2023. Last year, *Mara music* experienced its most pivotal growth moments. From Insert Nights to Mainland Block Party, Planet Utopia, Monochroma, Detty Rave and other youth-facing parties across Lagos, *Mara* began to move from street corners and TikTok dance clips into the main body of Nigeria’s urban nightlife. At these events, the sound has grown from just social media viral tunes to one of nightlife’s high points, arriving with its own dance language, its own energy, and its own claim to Nigerian electronic music.

The institutional recognition came with *Mara Mania*, an exhibition and live showcase supported by the

Embassy of France in Nigeria, Alliance Française Lagos, Creation Africa Nigeria, WeTalkSound, Kadima and Improv. The exhibition documented the rise of *Mara* through archival material, interactive installations, visual art, documentary screening and live performance. It was a rare moment where this fast-moving street movement was being archived in real time.

For DJ Khalipha, born Habeeb Lawal Kola, the attention has only made the vision clearer. “I feel very happy and more motivated to do more and invest more into elevating the sound,” he tells *Guardian Music*. “I am focused on making sure that the sound can compete internationally. Most importantly, I want people to officially recognize *Mara* as a style of music in Africa.”

Interestingly, *Mara* itself was birthed out of sheer curiosity and experiment. Khalipha tells *Guardian Music* that he first made the beat with his DJ software without treating it as anything serious. “I love to create something out of nothing, and I like listening to a lot of emotional songs,” he said. “I made the first *Mara beat* with my DJ software; it was nothing serious. I was just playing around initially, but when I saw that it sounded great, I mashed it up into

a full song.”

That instinct became the foundation for a sound that blends Nigerian street pop, electronic house, moody lo-fi piano chords and sometimes samples from other cultures. On his breakout track, “*Mara Pass Mara Beat*”, he leaned into melancholic Chinese Guoyue textures, while records such as “*Mara Drill*”, “*Violin Mara Dance Beat*”, “*Mara Lati India*”, “*Marapiano Street Beat*” borrowed from other climes.

“I was trying to merge the streets and the elites — one sound, regardless of status.”

— DJ Khalipha

Still, Khalipha insists that the dream was never to make a sound only for the streets. “The Nigerian audience has been the one reacting positively to the sound and they have been the ones making its momentum meaningful,” he says. “I started this as an experiment, but they took it. I was happy that it happened, because, at first, everyone thought it was just another sound for the streets. However, I was trying to merge the streets and the elites; whereby everyone can dance to one single sound, regardless of their status.”

This is where *Mara*’s journey becomes more interesting. Its first life was as instrumental dance music, spread largely through TikTok, legwork videos, street DJs and party sets. Its new life is beginning to stretch into recorded songs, syncing opportunities, international DJ sets and cross-border collaborations.

Just last week, CKay released *Mara*’s latest stamp of legitimacy. It’s a bubbly tune titled “*African Girls*” featuring Kidd Carder, with production credits including Bola BMH, DJ Khalipha and Cixxx. It is evidence that *Mara* is ascending beyond instrumental music and mash-ups into full recorded vocal tracks, a feat which would only help it resonate better with music audiences. For a genre that has often been consumed in quick bursts on dance floors and TikTok feeds, this shift means more replay value and a better chance of travelling beyond borders.

Khalipha reveals this as also part of the bigger plan. “I want to make the sound a general sound, something unique that everyone across the world can listen to,” he says. “I want it to be our own Made-in-Nigeria electronic music. I want the style of music to go beyond just beats; it should be used by artistes in songs, in TV shows, games, among others. The vision is beyond just attracting listenership. I want it to grow to the point where you consume *Mara* in different circuits. It should serve different purposes beyond dancing and listening.”

The streaming numbers already show that the audience is not passive. On Spotify, “*Mara Pass Mara Beat*” has crossed 3.5 million streams, while “*Obirin*”, his collaboration-linked breakout moment with Poco Lee, has crossed 1.3 million.

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

PLAYLIST OF THE WEEK

by Collins Etunim

Here's another weekend to raise the volume and let every beat take control. This week's playlist focuses on shaping the atmosphere and lifting your spirit. These carefully selected new releases deliver passion, feeling and just the right amount of musical enchantment.



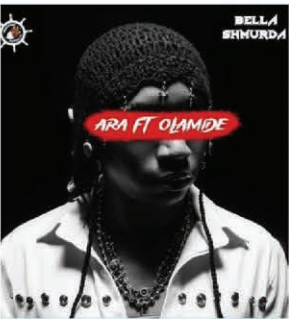
Nostalgia – Zinoleesky



Fine Ting (Fine \$hit) – Fola



Attack – Ayo Maff



Ara (600M) – Bella Shmurda ft. Olamide



Fire In Your Eyes – Didi B & Mavo



Press Button – Tekno



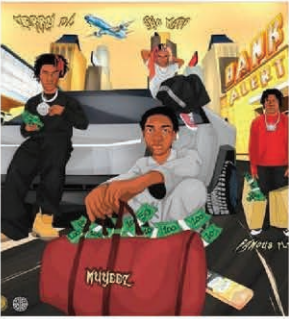
Back Outside – BNXX & Sarz



Jam – Fally Ipupa ft. Wizkid



420 – Plutomania ft. Shallipopi



Bank Alert – Muyeze, Zerrydl, Ayo Maff, Famous Pluto

9 natural beauty habits that help women look younger

by Ese Oghenetega

Maintaining a youthful look is the desire of many ladies, but it requires you to put in the work. It doesn't necessarily mean you have to go through cosmetic surgery or rock heavy makeup. By simply sticking to healthy habits and watching what you eat, you can attain a younger look. Here are 10 beauty habits that help women look younger naturally.



1

Eat healthy foods

Stay focused on eating healthy foods and include fruits in your menu. Ensure that that your meal consists of the right amount of carbohydrates, protein, and vegetables.



4

Avoid excessive stress

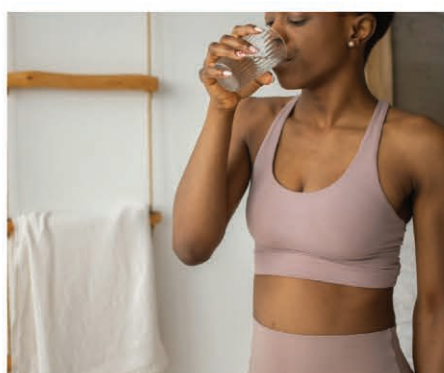
Stress has a way of keeping your mind and body low. Avoid situations that will take a toll on your body and give you a grumpy look. Adopt ways to handle issues without being weighed down.



7

Get enough rest and sleep daily

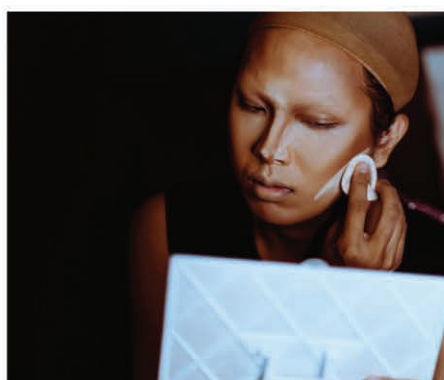
The hustle of earning money can affect our sleep. However, it is important that we create adequate time to rest and sleep in order to be refreshed daily.



2

Drink enough water daily

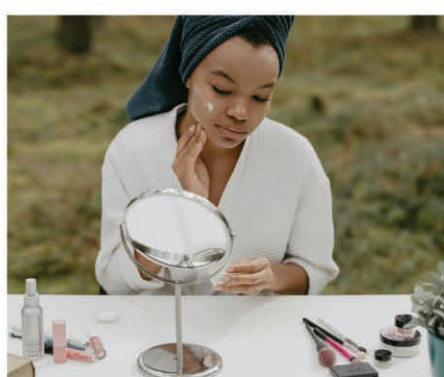
Water doesn't just aid digestion, it helps to cleanse your system and keeps you healthy. Drink enough water daily to stay hydrated for the day's activities.



5

Reduce heavy make-up

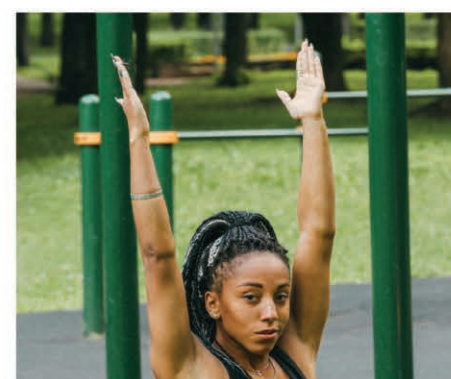
Do not choke the pores on your face with heavy make-up. Make-up enhances our beauty but giving your face some moments to breathe is very good for your skin.



8

Use sunscreen

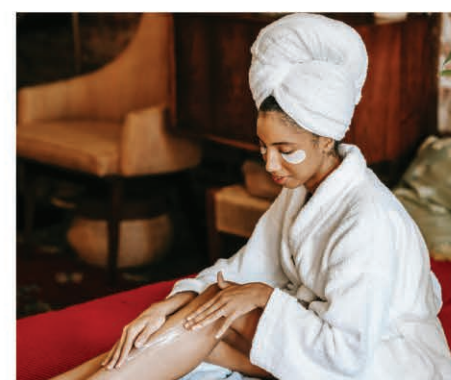
Apply sunscreen daily to avoid the harsh effect of the sun on your skin. It helps to keep the skin healthy and avoid wrinkles. Our skin is very delicate and taking proper care of it can make us look younger.



3

Exercise regularly

Keeping fit will not only improve your health, it is a key way to look younger. You don't have to be a registered member of a gym to exercise. Taking long walks and jogging in your street regularly will help you to be fit.



6

Avoid harsh body lotion

Some body lotions contain toxic chemicals that can damage your skin and make you look older. Do away with them and embrace natural products.



9

Socialise with positive people

Aside from work, create time to hangout with positive people. Having people of like-minds around you will brighten your spirit and influence your look.

MUST-HAVE DENIM PIECES AND HOW TO STYLE THEM

by Chidinma Enweani

Denim is one of the few fabrics that never goes out of style because it is both durable and fashionable. From the 90's Mummy Jeans 'trousers ripped shorts and even hats. It has become a statement for those who love to look cool, with a blend of elegance and bougie. Because of this, creating your wardrobe, a small collection of essential clothes has become a necessity rather than just a passing trend. Fashion experts say that building your wardrobe around a few high-quality denim pieces makes it much easier to choose an outfit every morning while giving you plenty of different looks. Here are four ways you can style your Denim wear to leave necks turning when you pass.

Straight-Leg Jeans

This classic style is neither too tight nor too baggy. A mid-wash blue color is the most versatile choice. For daytime looks, wear them with a plain white t-shirt, flat leather shoes, and a smart blazer for a clean office look, while for the night time look swap the t-shirt for a silky top, add high heels, and put on gold jewelry.



Oversized Denim Jacket

A loose-fitting jacket that adds an easy, cool layer to any outfit. For day time look, throw it over a casual knit dress and wear it with clean white sneakers for running errands. Button the jacket up completely, put a nice belt around your waist, and wear it with high heels for a girls night out.

Midi Denim Skirt

A long, structured denim skirt that is comfortable to walk in but looks sharper than regular trousers. Tuck in a simple cotton bodysuit and wear it with flat sandals for a relaxed lunch date. For a night out match it with a stylish long-sleeve top, a thick leather belt, and high boots.

Chambray Shirt

Get a soft, lightweight shirt that looks like denim but feels as breathable as plain cotton. Button it up and tuck it into lightweight linen trousers with slides for a hot sunny afternoon. For the night leave it open over a satin slip dress, tie it neatly at your waist, and wear it with mules.



Photos by Magnific

TRAVEL

Travel Diaries: Kigali, Rwanda — Day 3: Into the wild & the beautiful game

by Denise Eseimokumoh



At 3:40 a.m., I was already mostly awake, lying in a Kigali hotel room with five alarms set in five-minute intervals because missing what I was about to do was simply not an option. Outside, the city was still dark and quiet, but I was already somewhere between sleep and anticipation, mentally halfway up a volcano in the pitch black, trying to convince my body that this was, in fact, a good idea.

By sunrise, we were on the road to Kinigi, leaving Kigali behind as Rwanda's countryside unfolded into rolling green hills wrapped in mist. Farmers moved along steep slopes on bicycles and on foot, already deep into their day, and I

remember watching it all in near silence — like the world was waking up just for us to pass through it.

At Volcanoes National Park, the mood shifted completely. Trekkers from all over the world gathered in the cold morning air as we were briefed on what lay ahead. This was where I first really understood the fragility of mountain gorillas — how their population once dropped to just a few hundred due to snares, habitat loss, and instability, and how they are now one of the only great apes whose numbers are increasing. It made everything ahead feel heavier, more real, in a way I didn't fully know how to hold yet.

The trek began gently — potato farms, eucalyptus trees, soft paths — and then very quickly stopped being gentle at all. The rain from the day before had turned the mountain into thick, slippery mud. I fell more times than I can reasonably count. At some point, it stopped being hiking and became a negotiation with gravity. I repeated "one foot in front of the other" like a private chant while my porter, Gentile, stayed with me every step of the way. I was deeply grateful for her. At one point, I even had to pause to use my inhaler just to keep going — the mountain was not particularly interested in my fitness level.

Eventually, we crossed a stone boundary wall, and everything changed. Beyond it was no longer a trail but dense rainforest — bamboo, vines, nettles, and thick undergrowth that resisted us at every turn. Rangers moved ahead with machetes, carving a temporary path through a world that very clearly did not want visitors.

And then we found them. There is no real preparation for the moment gorillas look back at you. A young male wrestled with his sibling. A mother endured the chaos of children climbing over her. And the silverback sat in complete calm, pulling leaves from the vines, occasionally glancing at us

without urgency or fear. It wasn't just observation — it felt like recognition. Something aware. Something unmistakably present. I stood in the mud completely still, overwhelmed by how close and familiar it all felt, and slightly unprepared for how much it would move me.

We had one hour with them. One hour that stayed with me long after we left the mountain.

By the time we reached Bisate Lodge, I was exhausted and completely in awe. Set inside a volcanic bowl surrounded by ancient rainforest, it felt like another world — mist moving through trees, forest villas blending into green, and a kind of luxury that doesn't separate you from nature but sits inside it.

And then, still somehow on the same day, I ended up at Amahoro Stadium in Kigali, waving a Rwandan flag as Rwanda beat Grenada 3-0. The stadium was loud, electric, and joyful, and I remember laughing at the absurdity of moving from mud-soaked mountain to stadium lights in a matter of hours.

From early morning runs to gorillas in the mist to football chants under Kigali lights, it felt like several lives lived in one day — exhausting, surreal, and completely unforgettable.

FASHION

What your personal style says about you and why it matters more than you think

by Ashim Ojeh

What you wear often creates a first impression, whether we like it or not. While the idea of "dressing to impress" may sound cliché, personal style does shape how others read us at a glance, even if only superficially.

As we grow, our style evolves with our experiences and self-understanding, becoming less about validation and more about confidence and self-expression. For many women, especially, dressing is about feeling comfortable and true to themselves. Ultimately, the styles we gravitate toward can reveal something about who we are — and what our choices might be communicating about us.

The minimalist

Minimalists are drawn to neutrals, clean cuts, and unembellished pieces, embracing the "less is more" philosophy. Their style prioritises simplicity, functionality, timeless design, and value, with every item serving a clear purpose.

What this fashion choice communicates Minimalists are often seen as cool, calm,

and collected. Everything feels like it fits perfectly into place without looking forced or overly complicated.

The maximalist

If minimalism is all about "less is more," then maximalism is the bold answer of "more is more." It features vibrant colours, mixed patterns, layered textures, accessories, and statement pieces all at once. Maximalists don't hold back, yet still manage to make everything feel cohesive rather than overwhelming.

What this fashion choice communicates Maximalist fashion is naturally rebellious and personal. It reflects a refusal to conform to quiet standards and rigid cycles, choosing instead to stand out boldly and unapologetically.

The Alté

We can't talk about fashion styles without mentioning Alté fashion, the style pioneered here in Nigeria. Visually, Alté draws from a wide range of influences — Y2K aesthetics, retro 90s nostalgia, skater subculture, indie,



and traditional African elements. Blending them into something unconventional.

What this fashion choice communicates Alté individuals often value standing out over fitting in. They are typically expressive, using fashion as a way to explore and communicate identity.

The traditional

Traditional dressing is more than a fashion style — it is deeply rooted in Nigerian heritage and identity across groups like

Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and others. Despite modern fabrics and silhouettes dominating everyday wear, many people still intentionally incorporate traditional pieces like aso-oke, kente, and akwete into their style. This ongoing presence reflects a deep respect for cultural heritage.

What this fashion choice communicates Traditional dressing reflects someone who is proud of their roots and understands the importance of keeping culture alive through clothing and fashion.

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more



Amaka Ehighibe: As a woman in surgery, I embrace competence, precision

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

Dr. Amaka Patricia Ehighibe is a Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon and Head of the Plastic Surgery Unit at Federal Medical Centre, Jabi, Abuja. A Fellow of the West African College of Surgeons, certified cleft surgeon, Global Surgery Fellow of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and currently a hand fellow at the Kleinert Institute in Louisville Kentucky, her clinical practice spans the entire spectrum of reconstructive plastic surgery ranging from cleft lip and palate, congenital hand deformities and hand injuries, burn care, breast reconstruction amongst others, to aesthetic body procedures. In this interview, she speaks on her drive, passion and interests especially working in a male dominated space.

As a Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon and Head of Unit at the Federal Medical Centre, Jabi, how would you describe your journey into a field where women are still significantly underrepresented? I would describe my journey as interesting. During my training it was not so easy combining having kids with the rigorous schedule of a surgery resident. I was always very ill while pregnant, I remember clearly my second pregnancy was during my paediatric surgery rotation as a junior resident, it was so hectic I just could not cope so I had to take time off work and this meant I had less time off after the baby. I went back to work when she was barely two months old. Even though I stored as much breast milk as I could before going back, it ran out and somehow my milk production just declined once I was back on the grind. I felt a lot of mum guilt but after a while, I came to terms with the reality that exclusive breastfeeding was not for us at that time. She's 10 now and she's fine so yay! Lol.

I was lucky to have great colleagues who saw me as a surgeon and no less and so thankfully I didn't have to fight the battle of mean superiors or condescending colleagues which some of my female surgeon friends

have had to deal with. It was the patients who could never conceive a female surgeon. So, I was either referred to as the nurse, or the student doctor or the health assistant depending on the height of my heels. Lol. Even now as a consultant, I have patients come into my consulting room and they ask when they will see 'my boss'. But I have learnt not to try to be a man.

You can't be better at being a man than the men. So, I embraced being a woman in surgery by being competent and precise. Firm but compassionate. By finding other women who hold the same space and laughing together at those moments when you had to drop off your kid you were out with, with the nurse because you had to go in for an emergency. I must add, my journey has been made so much easier by a very supportive family and mentors. Every female surgeon needs a mentor that sees her. I have been blessed by some of the best and I have promised myself I will pay this forward. I literally am standing on the shoulders of giants.

What were some of the unspoken pressures or expectations that came with being the only woman in those spaces?

Oh, there was a constant expectation for you to prove yourself. The men could get

upset but if you did, it was your hormones. So, I learnt to always think things through such that when I spoke, I was likely putting forward a superior argument that could not be linked to the state of my ovaries at that time.

Plastic and reconstructive surgery is often misunderstood as being purely cosmetic. Can you shed more light on the life-changing reconstructive work you do, especially around cleft surgery, burns, breast reconstruction and hand deformities?

Yes indeed, when people hear 'plastic surgery' their minds immediately go to cosmetic surgery but it's a whole lot more than that. More than 90 percent of my practice I would say is reconstructive surgery which is what the average Nigerian will need access to a plastic surgeon for. I am quite passionate about burns especially its prevention because as I always say, I do not wish a burn on my worst enemy. At the Federal Medical Centre Abuja, I treat burns, lots of patients also come to me with chronic wounds. I treat a significant number of hand injuries too. I do not see so many clefts these days but cleft lip is one of the things that drew me to Plastic surgery. It was always rewarding and humbling to see

the transformation a cleft repair had on a child and their entire family.

As a certified cleft surgeon and Global Surgery Fellow of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, how important is access to reconstructive surgery in improving quality of life for underserved patients in Nigeria?

Access to reconstructive surgery is extremely important in improving Quality of life (QOL) of the Nigerian people. For patients with cleft lip and palate, burns, trauma, congenital anomalies, and cancer-related defects, reconstructive surgery is not cosmetic or optional; it is essential healthcare.

For cleft patients specifically, timely surgery improves feeding, speech, hearing, dentition, facial growth, psychosocial wellbeing, and social acceptance. In underserved communities, lack of access often means prolonged stigma, school exclusion, malnutrition, communication difficulties, and reduced economic opportunity. Providing reconstructive surgery restores function, dignity, and participation in society. The principle of health equity is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where geography, poverty, workforce shortages, and limited specialist services create barriers to care.

Female academics decry exclusion, inequality in African universities

by Abigail Ikhaghu

Female academics and gender advocates across Africa have raised concerns over systemic exclusion, unequal opportunities and structural barriers facing women within universities, warning that higher institutions meant to promote fairness and intellectual growth are still failing to provide equal access to leadership, career advancement and justice for women.

The concerns were raised at a post-International Women's Day reflection workshop organised by the Africa Leadership Foundation (ALF) in partnership with Oxfam in Africa.

The event was held at the ALF Africa Hall in Ota, Ogun state, with the theme, 'The Role of Female Academics in Promoting

Inclusive Access to Justice within the University system.'

Speakers at the event said many women in academia continue to face discrimination in promotion, leadership appointments, research opportunities and decision-making despite increasing female enrolment and academic performance across universities.

Executive Director, ALF, Dr. Olumide Ajayi, said gender equality conversations across Africa often overlook women within the university system because institutions are wrongly perceived as spaces where fairness and justice already exist.

"We believe the university system should naturally be fair and should not discriminate,

but what we later discovered is that this is not so," he said.

Dr. Ajayi said the workshop was convened to hear directly from female academics and develop practical frameworks that would improve access to justice for women within universities.

According to him, universities play critical roles in determining who gains access to opportunities, leadership and influence in society, making it necessary to address inequalities within the institutions themselves. He noted that the outcome of the workshop would be shared with universities, the African Union and regional institutions across the continent as part of broader efforts to push

reforms and strengthen gender-responsive policies within higher education.

Interim Gender Justice Lead at Oxfam in Africa, Paul Vingi, said universities remain reflections of wider societal inequalities despite their roles in shaping future leaders and public policy.

According to him, many highly qualified women still struggle to access leadership opportunities and recognition within academic spaces.

"If women cannot experience fairness, protection and equal opportunity within universities, then we are reproducing inequality at the highest level of intellectual formation," he said.

GERE global empowers 100 schoolgirls on climate, environmental leadership

by Silver Nwokoro

As part of efforts to promote girls' participation in environmental sustainability and leadership, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), Girls for Environmental Resilience and Empowerment (GERE) Global has empowered 100 female students of Avital College, Surulere and LivingPasture College, Ikorodu, Lagos, on climate awareness and environmental responsibility.

Speaking during the awareness programme, the founder, GERE Global, Dr. Blessing Palmberg said the initiative was designed to ensure that girls are not left behind in conversations and actions surrounding climate change and community development.

She noted that empowering girls with environmental knowledge would have a multiplier effect on families and society at large.

According to her, projects like this are significant for the country because it has always been about the boys, while forgetting that girls are also part of the change. "When we educate a girl child, we educate the whole community."

"The woman, the mother, takes care of the family, and the girls are the leaders of tomorrow. Climate change affects everybody, so it is important to educate them about their living environment and how they can contribute positively," she stated.

Palmberg stressed that many girls in society still struggle with marginalisation

and lack of opportunities. "A lot of girls have gone through difficult experiences in society because people believe they do not belong or they should remain in the shadows. This time, we are saying no to that. We must educate our girls for them to rise and take leadership positions," she said.

During the awareness programme at Avital College, two selected students were inaugurated as environmental ambassadors to champion tree planting and environmental care within the school. They are Udeme Udofia from the senior class (SS2) as the president and Alisa Chuckuwuka from the Junior class (JSS2).

Palmberg described the ambassadors as whistleblowers who would take the lead in nurturing trees planted in the school environment and encourage other students to embrace environmental responsibility.

She likened the care of the trees to raising children, noting that the students would learn leadership, responsibility and community service through the exercise.

"We have told the teachers to support the girls while the girls take care of the trees. It is like nurturing babies, giving them attention, care and resources to grow. Through this, the girls will learn how to lead and care for the community from an early stage," she added.

The Communication Lead, GERE Global, Ogechukwu Ugwu stated that the organisation believes women naturally possess the capacity to nurture, manage and sustain



both families and the environment, making the girl child a critical stakeholder in climate advocacy.

Ugwu noted that women play significant roles in preserving balance within society and should therefore be equipped early with environmental responsibilities.

According to her, the awareness is designed to instill environmental consciousness in girls while encouraging them to become active participants in waste management and climate protection.

She explained that the organisation is establishing GERE Clubs in schools visited during its outreach programmes as part of efforts to sustain the initiative and ensure long-term impact among students.

Ugwu disclosed that members of the clubs would be trained on environmental sustainability practices, including recycling of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottles and other waste management activities

aimed at keeping communities clean.

The Communication Lead further noted that although the programme has global relevance, Lagos was chosen as the flagship location for the programme before its expansion to other parts of the country.

According to her, the organisation plans to extend the initiative to states in the South-East to deepen climate awareness among young girls nationwide. "It is a project that will affect the entire world, but we are starting with Lagos. From here, we are moving to the eastern part of the country," she added.

The students inaugurated as environmental ambassadors to champion tree planting and environmental care pledged to ensure that the planted trees are properly maintained and to educate younger ones on the importance of environmental sustainability and tree planting.

In 'Big Brother Conversations', foundation creates safe space for boys

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia



In a society where conversations around boys are often pushed to the sidelines, Beyond the Classroom Foundation has launched "Big Brother Conversations," a quarterly mentorship and safe conversation platform designed to engage boys on identity, discipline, masculinity, emotional wellbeing, leadership, and responsibility.

The initiative was officially piloted at Destiny Child Scientific Academy, Abuja, in commemoration of the International Day of the Boy Child 2026, where almost 30

boys participated in honest and interactive conversations around growing up as boys in today's society.

For years, many conversations and interventions around safety and empowerment have focused on girls, which remains important. However, Beyond the Classroom Foundation says it began to notice a growing gap while working with adolescent girls across schools and communities.

Speaking during the event, Project Manager of Beyond the Classroom Foundation, Adah

Emmanuel Ugba, who also served as a "Big Brother" during the session, explained that the initiative was born from a question the organisation kept hearing from boys during girls' empowerment sessions.

"For many of our girls' sessions, boys would always ask us, 'What about us?' And honestly, that question stayed with us," he said.

"We went back thinking about it and realised that if we truly want to build safer environments for girls, healthier relationships, and stronger communities, we cannot leave boys out of the conversation. Safe conversations around respect, responsibility, emotional wellbeing, and leadership should also include boys."

He added that Big Brother Conversations was created to give boys a safe space to ask questions, learn, reflect, and engage in honest conversations around masculinity, discipline, self-awareness, and positive values.

The Foundation noted that while there has been increasing investment in girls' empowerment and safeguarding, structured conversations and funding focused on

boys remain limited, despite the growing pressures boys face around masculinity, peer pressure, violence, identity, and societal expectations.

The initiative also builds on the Foundation's ongoing HeForHer Campaign, which over the last two years has focused on raising boys as allies to girls through school engagements and conversations around respect, equality, and safety. As part of the campaign, the organisation distributed its HeForHer Handbook and Booklet to over 5,000 boys across about 10 schools in 2025. Through Big Brother Conversations, Beyond the Classroom Foundation hopes to raise boys who understand the value of discipline, hard work, accountability, empathy, respect for girls, and positive masculinity.

The organisation stated that safer communities are built not only by empowering girls, but also by intentionally guiding boys and creating spaces where they can learn, ask questions, and be mentored positively. Beyond the Classroom Foundation plans to continue the conversations quarterly across schools and communities in Abuja and beyond.



Photos by Magnific

Navigating talking stage- do's and dont's

by Chidinma Enweani

The journey toward a romantic relationship has changed completely in recent years. In the past, dating followed a clear path from introduction to formal courtship. Today, couples usually begin in a gray area known as the "talking stage." This period is no longer just a brief introduction; it has become a distinct, often confusing phase of modern romance.

The talking stage can be defined as the period when two people are communicating regularly, expressing romantic interest, and getting to know each other before deciding to date exclusively. While it offers a low-pressure environment to test compatibility, it can also cause anxiety and mixed signals if not handled correctly. To help navigate this modern romantic phase successfully, here is a guide to the essential do's and don'ts of the talking stage.

Be Clear About What You Want

One of the biggest mistakes people make in the talking stage is hiding their true intentions to avoid appearing desperate or too forward. If you are looking for a committed relationship, it is best to be honest from the start. Similarly, if you

are only looking for something casual, let the other person know. Clear communication ensures that nobody wastes their time or energy on a connection that has no future.

Do Judge Their Actions, Not Just Their Words

It is incredibly easy for someone to text you every morning or say all the right things on the phone. However, the talking stage

"You may fall in love with a digital version of a person."

requires you to look closely at their actual behavior. Do they make real plans to see you? Do they respect your time? Consistency in actions is the only true way to measure someone's interest and character.

Do Keep Living Your Own Life

The talking stage is a trial period, not a commitment. It is important to maintain your daily routines, hobbies, career goals, and friendships. Pouring all your energy into someone you barely know creates an unhealthy dependency. By keeping your own schedule busy, you protect your peace of mind and avoid putting too much pressure on your talking stage.

Move from Screen to Reality

Texting back and forth for months creates a false sense of intimacy. You may fall in love with a digital version of a person, only to find you have no chemistry in real life. Meet up for a simple coffee date or a casual lunch within the first two to three weeks of consistent talking. Real-world interaction is the only way to truly test compatibility.

Mistakes to avoid.

Don't Act Like You Are in a Relationship

Until you both have a formal conversation about being exclusive, you are single. It is a mistake to demand constant updates on their whereabouts, express jealousy, or expect them to prioritize you over their long-term friends. Behaving like a partner when you are still just an acquaintance often pushes the other person away.

Don't Ignore Early Warning Signs

The talking stage is exactly when people are usually on their best behavior. If they are already showing red flags such as disappearing for days without an explanation, speaking rudely to service staff, or constantly talking about their ex-partners pay attention. Do not fall into the trap of believing you can change them later.

Don't Over-share Too Quickly

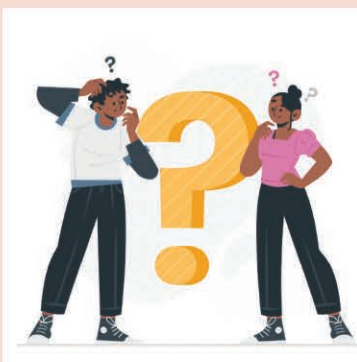
While honesty is important, sharing your deepest emotional traumas, family dramas, or financial struggles in the first few weeks can be overwhelming. Emotional intimacy should be earned over time. Let the conversation flow naturally and share deeper parts of your life as trust is built.

Don't Let the Stage Drag On Indefinitely

A talking stage should have an expiration date. If you have been talking for four to six months without any progress toward an actual relationship, you are likely stuck in a placeholder position. When this stage lasts too long, it usually means one person enjoys the attention but has no intention of committing.

Ultimately, the talking stage should serve as a bridge, not a permanent home. It is a safe space to gather information about a potential partner before investing your emotions heavily.

When both individuals follow these basic boundaries, the transition from talking to dating becomes a natural and stress-free progression. By keeping your expectations realistic and your boundaries firm, you can enjoy the excitement of this new connection without sacrificing your emotional well-being.



Ask Life's Big Sister

by Amaka Eche



I've started seeing red flags in my long-term partner. How do I handle this?

I didn't see them early on. Pause before panicking. Seeing red flags doesn't automatically mean you must leave, but it does mean you're receiving important information. Be specific about what you're noticing. Look for patterns, not isolated moments. Pay attention to how your body feels; constant anxiety, silence, or unease is data.

Have an honest conversation, not an accusation. Then observe the response. Real growth shows up as changed behaviour, not promises. Relationships don't collapse because red flags are noticed; they collapse when they're ignored.



What are examples of red flags, and how do I tell the difference between a red flag and something else?

A red flag is not a mistake that's acknowledged and corrected, or a flaw someone is actively working on. A red flag is behaviour that repeats after it has been addressed, requires you to shrink to keep peace, or leaves you doing all the emotional work.

Common red flags include repeated emotional dismissal, lack of accountability, boundary violations, hot-and-cold behaviour, control masked as care, secrecy, isolation from family, friends and support systems, or feeling consistently smaller, less confident, or "too much."

Do you have a relationship dilemma or burning question? Send it to lifemag@guardian.ng to ask Life's Big Sister for guidance. Selected answers will be published in the magazine and on [@guardianlifeng](https://twitter.com/guardianlifeng).

Finding Peace:

How meditation helps calm the chaos

by Geraldine Akutu

Life in Lagos can feel like a nonstop battle against stress. From struggling to board overcrowded BRT buses to worrying about rising fuel prices and endless family responsibilities, the pressure of daily survival often leaves little room for peace of mind.

Even those fortunate enough to drive their own cars are not spared from the tension that comes with traffic congestion, financial uncertainty, and the fast pace of city life. In the middle of this relentless hustle, many people forget the importance of simply pausing to breathe.

Meditation offers a simple but powerful solution to this everyday chaos. Contrary to popular belief, meditation does not require abandoning one's responsibilities or escaping to a quiet village far from civilisation.

Instead, it is the deliberate act of slowing down, even for a few minutes, to reconnect with oneself. It is a form of mental rest that helps the mind recover from the constant pressure of modern living.

In today's hyper-connected world, distractions are everywhere. Notifications constantly ring, deadlines pile up, and anxious thoughts compete for attention. Silence itself now feels like a luxury many people cannot afford. Yet meditation provides an opportunity to step away from the noise and focus on the present moment.

For many beginners, meditation can initially feel frustrating. Sitting quietly

with closed eyes often causes the mind to wander toward unfinished tasks, worries, and responsibilities.

However, meditation is not about forcing the brain to become completely blank. Rather, it is about learning to observe thoughts without becoming overwhelmed by them. The practice teaches individuals to acknowledge distractions, let them pass, and gently return attention to the breath.

Starting meditation requires very little. A quiet corner, a comfortable seat, and five minutes of uninterrupted time are enough. By focusing on the sensation of breathing—the cool air entering the nostrils and the warm air leaving the body—people gradually train their minds to remain calm and present. Over time, this simple exercise strengthens emotional balance and improves the ability to handle stress.

The true power of meditation lies in the awareness it builds daily. With consistent practice, people begin to respond to life's challenges with patience and clarity instead of panic. In a city as demanding as Lagos, meditation may not remove the chaos, but it can help individuals find calm within it.



Photos by Magnific

My Father's Shadow: Making memory from fatherhood

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

Akinola Davies Jr. was twenty months old when his father died. His brother Wale, who wrote the script, was four. Between them, they have made a film about a man neither of them can remember. Rather than hide that memory gap, they have built the film around it.

What you are watching, for much of *My Father's Shadow*, is not a childhood being remembered but a father being invented: assembled from family stories and from later visits to Lagos by the brothers. Davies has no interest in recovering the past neatly. The film moves between what the boys see and what they seem to remember seeing, without signalling which is which. Sudden bursts of images punctuate the narrative at intervals, merging earlier and later moments into each other the way actual memory does. You are not watching the past. You are watching two brothers try to find it, which is a different thing entirely, and more interesting. As the film begins, we are shown older versions of the brothers alone at home, then we see their father, Folarin, played by opé Dirisù, arrive home. He is preparing to leave again for Lagos, where he works, when the boys start grumbling, and Folarin decides to take them along. The story takes place across a single day in Lagos, June 1993. The boys, eleven and eight, have never seen Lagos before. Folarin grew up there, and as he takes them around on okadas, through bars, past a shuttered

amusement park, down to the sea, we see he is also moving through his own past, showing them who he was before he was their father. He tells them how he met their mother. A friend remembers the couple as the neighbourhood's great romance. Each story adds to a picture of a man they are only beginning to know. Outside, the country is coming apart. The June 12 election is unravelling in real time. The boys catch it in pieces: headlines glimpsed on the bus, their father's argument with a pro-regime passenger, the word "massacre" on a front page no one explains to them. When the annulment is announced on a bar television, gunshots follow almost immediately. Folarin moves his sons out of the city. The film simply shows you what the boys see and lets the fear do its work. Davies holds the whole film together through the eyes of children who absorb everything and understand only some of it. Davies trusts the image. He does not reach for the explanation. Dirisù's performance works in the same way. In one of the film's most exact scenes, a recently widowed friend of Folarin's reproaches himself at length for how he treated his wife. The camera holds on Folarin's face for the entire monologue.



He says nothing. What the scene is doing is hinting at troubles in his own marriage that the film will never name directly. By the time the boys board a bus back home, the city behind them, they know more about their father than they did that morning. Not everything. Not the parts he could not say. But enough to have started building something: a person made of stories, of the streets where he came from, of the way he said "stupid people" under his breath when a military truck rolled past. This is what the Davies brothers have been doing, too, for their whole lives, and what the film is about. What they construct belongs to all three of them: the brothers, the father, the country. All three lost something in 1993. They lost something nearly held, then taken before it could be kept. Davies does not force that connection. He places all three losses in the same frame and steps back. For a Nigerian audience, it will feel less like cinema and more like recognition of the weight carried by a generation raised in the shadow of June 12, by parents who never quite said what it cost them. Folarin is one of those parents. The film is his son's final understanding of why, who, and what.

WHAT TO WATCH THIS WEEKEND



1. Call of My Life (In cinemas)
A call centre agent gets her heart broken, then falls for a stranger over the phone. Warm, funny, very Nigerian. One of the strongest Nollywood romance debuts of 2026, it made N78M in its first weekend.

2. Ajosepo 2: The Gathering (In cinemas)
For the one who watched the first one and needs to know what happens next. You already know you're going.



3. Monica 2 (YouTube)
Still on the trending table. The story revolves around the firstborn daughter who sacrificed everything: her education, her youth, her dreams, so her family could survive.

4. Gingerrrr
Four women pull a heist. It goes sideways. Bisola, Bukunmi, Wumi Toriola all in one film, enough said.



RECIPE

Chef Mohammad Baydoun's Plantain Cake with spicy prawns

by Chidinma Enwean



Photos by Magnific

If there is one thing we love at the Food Page, it is a dish that takes the familiar flavors of our childhood and turns them into a amazing culinary experience. This week, we are stepping back into the kitchen with the brilliant Chef Mohammad Baydoun. Known for his incredible ability to refine Nigerian ingredients for a global audience, Chef Mohammad has done it again.

This time, he would be sharing a sweet ripe plantain recipe. Forget your regular dodo; we are talking about a crispy, savory, and absolutely addictive Plantain Cake stuffed with Spicy Prawns, served alongside a fiery Chilli Pepper Sauce. It's sweet, it's spicy, and it's the ultimate weekend treat.

According to Chef Mohammad, the magic of this dish lies entirely in the texture. The outside is fried to a deep, golden crunch, while the inside remains soft,

sweet, and bursting with juicy prawns. But there is a catch. "The biggest mistake people make is letting too much water into the mix," Chef Mohammad warns. If you want that perfect texture, you have to control the moisture. Here is how to recreate your own Plantain cake with Spicy prawns.

Plantain Cake with Spicy Prawns recipe

The Ingredients

Ripe plantains – 2 pcs
Corn flour – 40 g

Salt – 3 g
Prawns (cleaned) – 300 g
Crayfish (blended) – 30 g
Onion (finely diced) – 80 g
Rodo pepper (scotch bonnet) – 10–15 g (adjust heat)
Red bell pepper – 60 g
Green bell pepper – 60 g
Crayfish Maggi – 1 cube
Vegetable oil – 40 ml
For the Chilli Pepper Sauce (Side):
Rodo pepper – 20 g
Onion – 40 g
Oil – 30 ml
Salt – to taste

Instruction

Step 1

Control the moisture

After chopping your cleaned prawns, pat them completely dry with a paper towel. Lightly squeeze out any excess water from your diced onions and peppers.

Tip: If you skip this step, your mixture will become watery and break apart the moment it hits the hot oil!

Step 2

In a large bowl, mash your ripe plantains thoroughly.

Toss in the chopped prawns, blended crayfish, diced onions, and colorful bell peppers.

Crumble in your Crayfish Maggi and add salt to taste.

Gradually fold in the corn flour until the mixture binds together into a thick, scoopable paste.

Note: The texture should look like a thick dough, not a runny pancake batter.

Step 3

Heat your vegetable oil to 170–180°C.

Using a spoon, scoop the mixture (or shape it into small balls with your hands) and gently drop them into the oil.

Fry in small batches so you don't overcrowd the pan.

Cook for 3–4 minutes until they turn a beautiful, deep golden brown. Remove and drain on paper towels.

Step 4

Roughly blend the rodo pepper and onion together.

Heat up your 30 ml of oil in a small pan and fry the blended mix.

Season with salt and let it simmer until it thickens into a rich, glossy dipping sauce.

How to serve.

Serve these cakes screaming hot with the chilli sauce on the side. Pair it with a drink to cool down the rodo heat, and you have yourself a five-star hotel experience right in the comfort of your living room.

TIPS



Prep Smart, Stay Safe

Working with raw prawns and rodo peppers can get messy fast. Always wash your hands, knife, and cutting board with warm, soapy water immediately after prepping the prawns to prevent cross-contamination. To get that stubborn pepper heat off your fingers, rub them with a bit of vegetable oil before washing with soap.



Choosing the right prawn

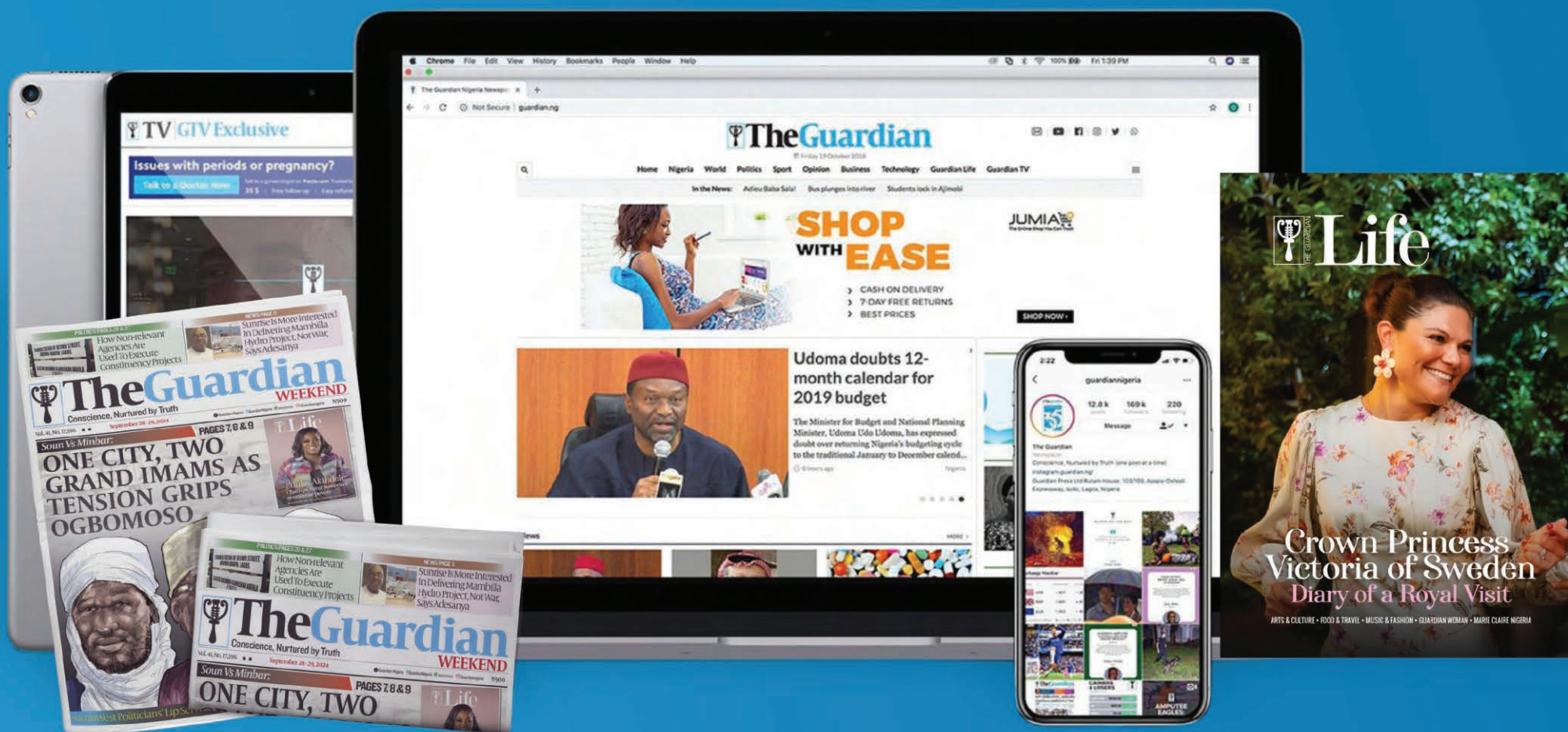
If you are using frozen prawns, make sure they are completely thawed before you pat them dry. For the absolute best flavor and texture, use fresh, medium-sized white prawns. Cutting them into small, bite-sized pieces ensures you get a juicy piece of seafood in every single bite of your plantain cake.



Control the Temperature

If your oil is too hot, the outside of the cake will burn before the prawns cook through on the inside. If it's too cool, the dough will soak up the oil and become soggy. Test the oil by dropping a tiny piece of the mixture in; if it sizzles and rises immediately to the top, you are good to go.

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