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THE GUARDIAN Life



Detty December?

Your guide to the best of Nigeria

DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT
AFRICANS SHAPING GLOBAL FASHION TRENDS

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T.I Blaze on The Blueprint and the business of singing

OF ADABOY:

Taking African cuisine globally

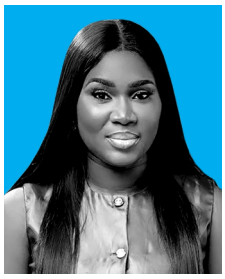
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Everything you need to live well



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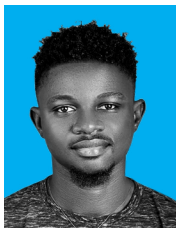












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5 best spots for breakfast in Lagos

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare



Whether you prefer a traditional Nigerian breakfast, a plate of pancakes or a full English breakfast, Lagos has several restaurants and cafés where you can enjoy a good breakfast to start the day.

1

La Chaumiere

La Chaumiere offers several breakfast options with French and international influences. Its menu includes an English breakfast, an American breakfast and a Nigerian breakfast featuring yam, plantain, akara and egg sauce.

There are also lighter options for visitors who prefer pastries and coffee in the morning. The restaurant's broad menu makes it suitable for groups with different food preferences.

Location: 1384 Tiamiyu Savage Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Opening hours: Confirm directly with the restaurant before visiting, particularly for breakfast service.





2

Cafeteria Nigeria

Cafeteria Nigeria is a brunch destination for people who enjoy a combination of breakfast classics and café-style meals. Its menu includes English breakfast, pancakes, French toast, sandwiches and burgers, alongside drinks such as bubble tea.

The restaurant caters to different breakfast preferences, whether visitors want a filling meal or something lighter to accompany their coffee. Its central location also makes it a convenient stop for people exploring Victoria Island.

Location: 16B Akin Adesola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Opening hours: Monday to Thursday, 8am–10pm; Friday and Saturday, listed as open 24 hours; Sunday, 8am–10pm. Confirm weekend hours before visiting.

3. The Orchid Bistro

With locations in Ikoyi and Ikeja GRA, The Orchid Bistro is another option for breakfast and brunch in Lagos. The restaurant combines a relaxed dining environment with a menu that includes breakfast favourites, pastries, sandwiches and other meals.

Its Ikeja GRA location, on Isaac John Street, has a garden-inspired setting with indoor and outdoor seating. Visitors can enjoy a leisurely breakfast, catch up with friends or spend some time over coffee.

Location: 58A Isaac John Street, Ikeja GRA, Lagos.

Opening hours: Monday to Thursday, 7am–9pm; Friday, 7am–11pm; Saturday, 7am–10pm; Sunday, 7am–9pm.

4. Nest Lagos

Nest Lagos serves a breakfast menu that combines Nigerian and international favourites. Its Nigerian breakfast plate features fried yam, plantain, egg sauce and moi-moi, while guests looking for something more familiar can opt for the English or American breakfast.

The restaurant also has a sharing platter designed for two or three people, with eggs, pancakes or waffles, sausages, grilled chicken, plantain and fresh fruit. Breakfast is served daily from 8am, while weekend brunch runs until 3pm.

Location: 12 Samuel Manuwa Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Opening hours: Daily, from 8am. Breakfast is served until 11.30am. Weekend brunch runs until 3 pm.

5

Dulce Café

Dulce Café is a bakery and café that combines pastries with a breakfast and brunch menu. Its offerings include croissants, cinnamon rolls, French toast and other baked treats.

The café is an option for people who prefer a lighter breakfast or enjoy pairing pastries with coffee. Those looking for something more substantial can explore its broader brunch selection.

Location: 15 Glover Road, behind Slashpoint Supermarket, Ikoyi, Lagos.

Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday, 8am–8pm; Saturday and Sunday, 9am–9pm. Closed on Mondays.



RESTORATION

FEDERAL
PALACE
RESORT ★★★★★



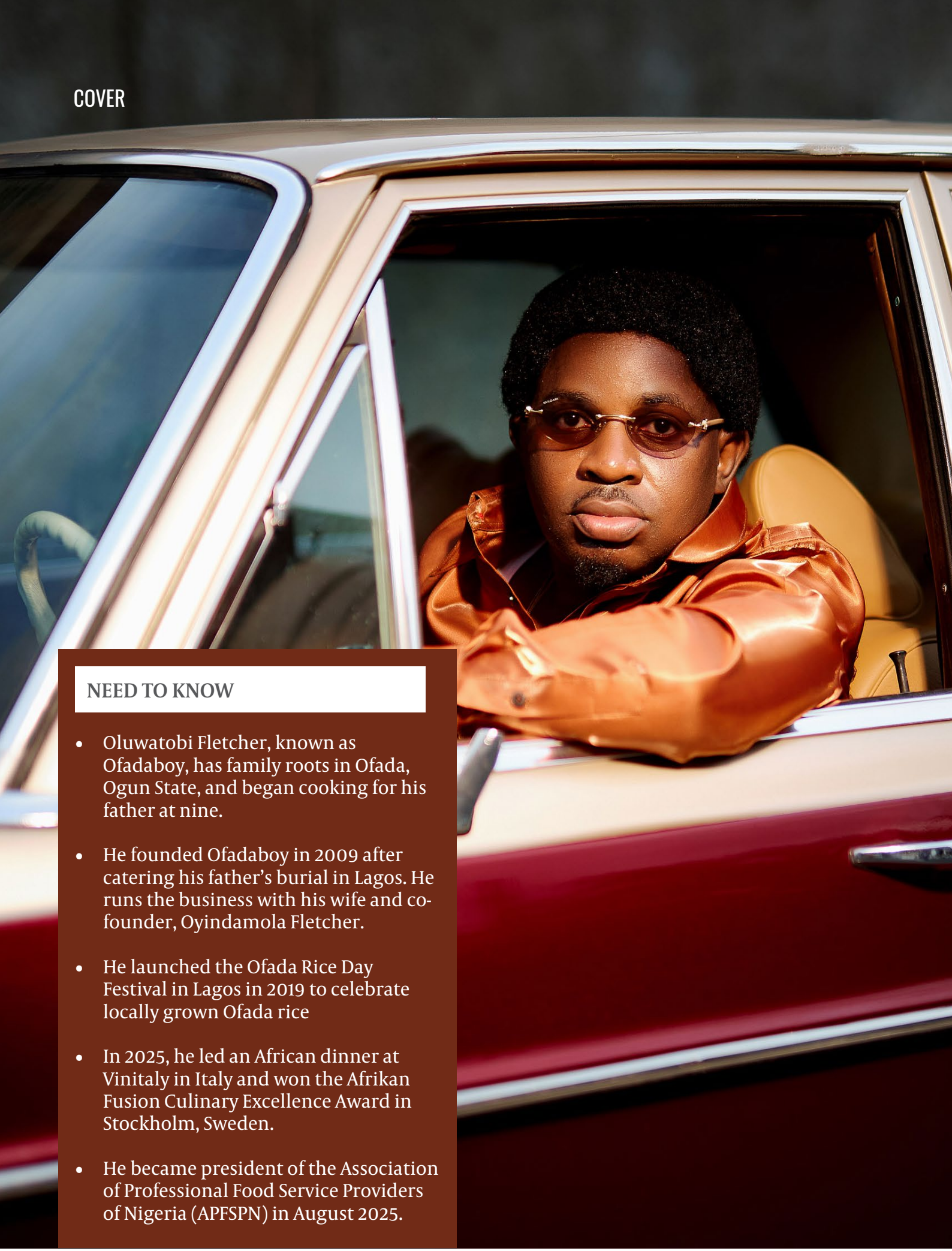
COMING SOON...



Ofadaboy:

Taking African cuisine globally

by Musa Adekunle



NEED TO KNOW

- Oluwatobi Fletcher, known as Ofadaboy, has family roots in Ofada, Ogun State, and began cooking for his father at nine.
- He founded Ofadaboy in 2009 after catering his father's burial in Lagos. He runs the business with his wife and co-founder, Oyindamola Fletcher.
- He launched the Ofada Rice Day Festival in Lagos in 2019 to celebrate locally grown Ofada rice
- In 2025, he led an African dinner at Vinitaly in Italy and won the Afrikan Fusion Culinary Excellence Award in Stockholm, Sweden.
- He became president of the Association of Professional Food Service Providers of Nigeria (APFSPN) in August 2025.



In 2009, Tobi Fletcher's family paid a caterer's deposit for his father's burial in Lagos but could not afford the balance. Fletcher took over. His aunt helped buy the ingredients, he hired cooks, and his friends served the guests.

He chose Ofada rice to honour his father and their family's roots in Ofada, Ogun State. Fletcher had been cooking for his father since he was nine. He started Ofadaboy that year and now runs it with his wife and co-founder, Oyindamola Fletcher.

In April 2025, Fletcher led an African wine dinner at Vinitaly in Italy. The menu paired moi moi and akara with Prosecco and served ossobuco with ewedu, gbegiri and pepper sauce.

Ahead of the eighth Ofada Rice Day Festival on 6 December at Muri Okunola Park, Victoria Island, Fletcher tells *Guardian Life* how he built his catering business and what he wants the festival to do for farmers and food vendors, among others.

Where did your interest in cooking begin, and how did preserving food culture become part of your work?
I am a food entrepreneur, a hospitality practitioner and a proud custodian of our culture.
My father was a major influence on me. I started cooking for him when I was nine, so my relationship with food began long before I considered making a business out of it. Connection to family still shapes what I do today.
I run Ofadaboy with my wife and business partner, Oyindamola. I am also the Founder and Convener of the Ofada Rice Day Festival and President of the Association of Professional Food Service Providers of Nigeria, APFSPN.

How did you get into the Ofada rice business?
It started with my father's burial in 2009. I was involved in the arrangements, including the catering. We had planned to use a caterer, but after making a deposit, we could not afford the full bill. I decided to organise the food ourselves.

An aunt helped with purchasing the ingredients; I brought cooks together and arranged the equipment, and my friends helped serve the guests. What began as a family responsibility showed me that my love for cooking could become something more.

Choosing Ofada rice was also personal. It was a way of honouring my father and our family's connection to Ofada. Seventeen years later, that meaning has not changed. The business has grown, but I still remember why it started.

What did Ofada rice mean to you growing up?
My connection to food goes back to childhood. I was cooking for my father from the age of nine, and he remains central to the story of why I eventually built a business around Ofada rice. For me, the dish is connected to family and where we come from, not simply to a restaurant menu.

What was the difference between catering the burial and taking on your first paid job?
The starting point was the catering I organised for my father's burial. That was a family occasion, and I would separate it from my first commercial order. One gave me the confidence to begin; the other marked the moment someone trusted me enough to pay for the service.

What did you get wrong when you started running a food business?
One lesson I have had to learn is that creativity and cooking ability are not enough on their own. A business also needs structure.
I have spoken before about wanting to control too many aspects of an event. When everything depends on your personal attention, you put yourself under unnecessary pressure and leave too little room for other



"Choosing Ofada rice was personal. It was a way of honouring my father and our family's connection to Ofada."

— OFADABOY

people to take responsibility. The risk is burnout. Building a team and taking administration seriously are essential. The business must deliver consistently, not only when the founder is personally watching every detail.

What role has Oyindamola played in building Ofadaboy?

A great deal. Oyinda is not simply my wife supporting a business from the sidelines. She is our co-founder and Chief Operating Officer, and her contribution to the administration of the business has been essential to our growth.

She brought professional experience into Ofadaboy and left a multinational career to build the business with me. That was a serious commitment.

People often associate the brand with my face, the food and the public appearances, but there is a business that must function behind all of that. Her contribution deserves to be recognised.

We have different strengths, and that has helped us. I would not tell the Ofadaboy story properly if I left her out of it.

How has the way you present Ofada rice changed over the years?

I do not believe that making our food more polished should mean taking away its identity. That has been an important part of the Ofadaboy approach: giving indigenous food the presentation and hospitality it deserves without treating its roots as something to hide.

Presentation has become a bigger part of the experience over the years. You can plate a local meal thoughtfully and serve it in a contemporary setting while still allowing people to recognise and connect with the food.

For me, improvement should help people appreciate the dish, not turn it into something completely different.

What did you serve at Vinitaly in April 2025, and how did you choose the wines?

From the menu Fletcher supplied: The African Wine Dinner on 7 April opened with moi moi and akara alongside Villa Sandi Prosecco. Duck suya followed. The main courses included cod with okra and spring onions, paired with Gavi di Gavi, and ossobuco with ewedu, gbegiri and pepper sauce. The dessert course listed palm wine and coconut panna cotta alongside Moscato d'Asti and Lambrusco Amabile. The menu credited Fletcher alongside chefs Miyonse Amosu and Immaculate Ruému.



> *"I started cooking for my father when I was nine, so my relationship with food began long before I considered making a business out of it."*
>
> — OFADABOY

When you led the African dinner at Vinitaly, what assumption about Nigerian food did you want to challenge?

I wanted to challenge the assumption that Nigerian food is just local, traditional or limited to what people already know. Nigerian cuisine is rich, diverse, sophisticated and deserving of a place on the global culinary stage. More importantly, our stories are not being told enough. We have incredible ingredients, culinary techniques, food heritage and cultural depth, but we haven't done enough to document, package and tell these stories to the world. I wanted people to see that Nigerian food is not just something to taste; it is a culture, an identity and an experience worth celebrating globally.

How do you respond when a customer is unhappy?

I try not to describe someone as a difficult customer. If a customer is unhappy, I first want to understand what went wrong from their point of view. They paid for an experience, and it is important to hear them properly before defending yourself.

My approach is to listen, remain calm and work out how to resolve the issue. The follow-up matters too. You cannot assume that everything is fine simply because the conversation has ended.

Some customer relationships have become stronger because of how we handled a problem. Hospitality is not only about getting everything right; it is also about taking responsibility when something goes wrong.

What goes into the price of a plate of Ofada rice?

A plate costs more to produce than the rice and sauce alone. You have to consider the protein, cooking ingredients, labour, energy, packaging or service, and the running costs that keep the

business sustainable.
The portion and service format also matter. A restaurant plate and an outdoor catering order are not necessarily the same calculation.
I want our food to remain accessible, but indigenous food should not be underpriced simply because it is local. The aim is a price that respects the customer and allows the business to maintain its standards.

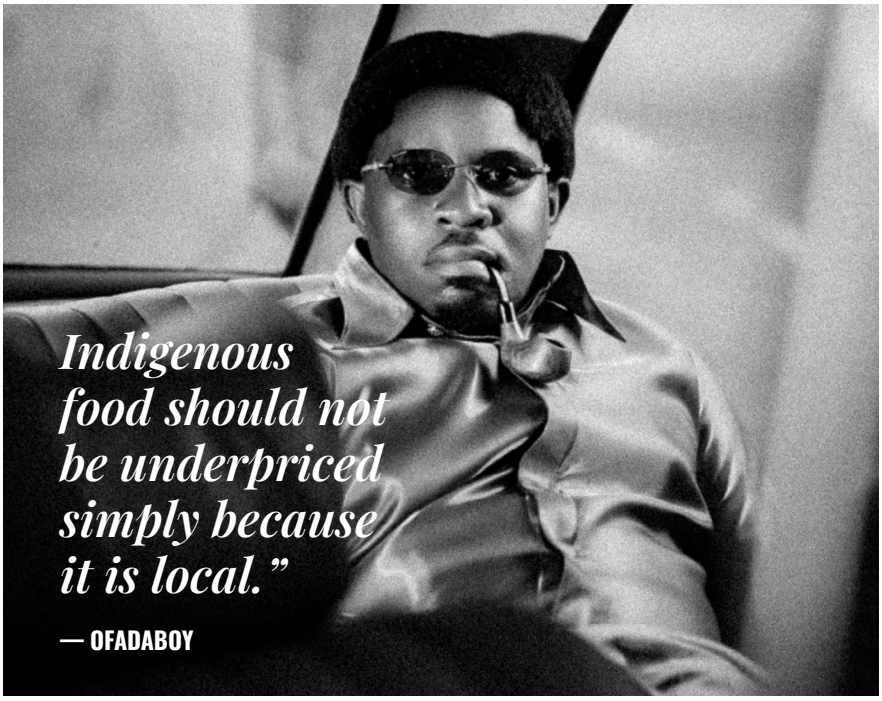
What do you want diners to know about the people who grow and supply Ofada rice?
For me, sourcing is part of the wider Ofada story. The restaurant is where many customers encounter the product, but there are growers, processors and traders behind that plate.
If we want people to value home-grown rice, we must also pay attention to the people producing it and the quality that reaches the customer. I do not want the conversation about Ofada rice to end at taste and presentation. Farmers should have a voice in it too.

What did you and Oyinda want the Ofada Rice Day Festival to do for farmers and food vendors, and what has it achieved so far?
We wanted people to see more than a plate of rice. We wanted them to appreciate the people and knowledge behind our indigenous meals.

For food vendors, the festival creates an opportunity to showcase their work to a wider audience. For farmers, our aim is to generate more interest in the product they grow and the story behind it.

One achievement we can point to is the space we have created for veteran food vendors from different parts of the southwest. Their food and experience become part of the same conversation as contemporary hospitality, music and culture. That recognition matters, particularly when younger people are discovering these dishes and traditions.

We have also supported scholarship and hospitality-learning opportunities through collaborations. The Ofadaboy Charity Foundation gives us a platform to develop the giving-back side of the work beyond the festival.
As we prepare for the eighth edition, I want that practical support to keep growing. Success should not be measured only by how many people attend, but also by what remains useful to people after the event.



If you stepped away from the kitchen tomorrow, what would be hardest to hand over?
The part I would be most concerned about is the creative judgement: how we develop the food, present it and make sure the experience still feels like Ofadaboy. There is a difference between following instructions and understanding the intention behind a dish or a service style.

But I do not want the business to depend permanently on me being in the kitchen. After 17 years, the goal should be to pass that knowledge on and develop people who can uphold the standard.
My presence should add value, not become the only reason the business works.

What is your long-term vision for Ofadaboy and the Ofada Rice Day Festival?
I want Ofadaboy to help people see Nigerian food differently. Our food should be something we present confidently, not something that must lose its identity before it can be taken seriously internationally.

For the business, that means improving the hospitality experience and building people and systems that can carry the work beyond me.

For the festival, it means becoming a stronger platform for indigenous-food knowledge, professional learning and cultural exchange. As we move towards the tenth edition, I want more young people to learn from veteran cooks and more useful connections between food businesses and the people who grow and supply our ingredients.

My role as APFSPN President also gives me an opportunity to encourage those professional conversations.

Taking our food and culture to international audiences is part of the ambition, but I want that growth to remain rooted here. If people leave the festival with more respect for our food and the people behind it, and we can turn that interest into lasting opportunities, that is the legacy I want to build.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

Wisdom from our archive of cover stars



"Don't be afraid to start small. Every big thing starts somewhere tiny."
Tems, 2025



"Everything starts from the mind. If you're able to quiet the mind, you're able to heal yourself as much as possible."
Nancy Isime, 2025









"You have to keep growing and evolving; you can't remain in the same place."
Qudus Ibrahim, 2026

"It is not everything that is good that is good for you to do. There are some things you shouldn't do, not because they are bad, but because God just doesn't want you to do them, and you can't question Him."
Frank Edwards, 2026





"You don't spend all you earn; invest and prepare for the calm seasons. Reinvention, expansion or breaking new ground will require investment that majorly has to come from you."
Tobi Bakre, 2026





Gbagada, Lagos

Where DJ SKB's DJ journey took shape.

DJ SKB on finding his feet in Lagos and Abuja, navigating the demands of the entertainment industry and building a brand with global ambitions.

GBAGADA has been central to my journey, marking the beginning of a path that would take me through Lagos and Abuja. I studied Accounting at Covenant University and began DJing professionally after my NYSC, gradually finding my feet in the entertainment industry.

For me, building a career as a DJ requires understanding people and knowing how to respond to different environments. Lagos taught me to stay alert, read different audiences and adapt to the demands of each event, while Abuja gave me a professional head start.

One experience that particularly shaped my outlook happened during a brand activation. I received a call at 11 p.m. to replace a headline DJ, and by midnight, I was performing before an audience of almost 3,000 people. It reinforced the importance of preparation, adaptability and the ability to deliver under pressure.

Today, I am focused on building DJ SKB into a global entertainment brand. My journey across Lagos and Abuja has taught me that every opportunity requires readiness, and that growth comes from being able to adapt while remaining committed to the bigger vision.

Interviewed by **Ajuluchukwu Brown.**

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T.I Blaze's *The Blueprint* in seven moves

by Chinonso Ihekire

T.I Blaze goes solo on The Blueprint and talks about Olamide's business advice and the songs he hopes will outlive him.

Most people would remember how, circa 2021, T.I Blaze, born Akintunde Abiodun Timileyin, broke into the mainstream of Nigeria's music scene with his soul-stirring hit single *Sometimes*. The song ushered him into the spotlight, even earning him a remix with Olamide, a move that cemented his breakout moment.

Before then, T.I Blaze had been a young lad hustling through the rustic corridors of Ikorodu, in Lagos, where he spent much of his years honing his craft as a Yoruba-leaning pop fusionist. From his secondary school days, the singer gradually found his footing in music, drawing heavily from his personal experiences and the realities of everyday life. Ever since then, he's become one of the recognisable voices of Nigeria's modern street-pop scene.

For T.I Blaze, the release of his latest EP, *The Blueprint*, signals a new chapter in his career. The seven-track project arrives after a prolonged hiatus occasioned by industry disputes with his former label, and it finds the singer returning with a renewed sense of purpose, both creatively and commercially.

In this chat with *Guardian Music*, T.I Blaze reflects on the making of The Blueprint, his early influences from Kizz Daniel and Burna Boy, his relationship with Olamide, the lessons from his industry struggles and his ambition to create music that will remain relevant for generations.

How does it feel to finally have The Blueprint out?
I feel so good. This is my first solo project where every song, from track one to track seven, is just me. The way my fans have received the EP has been so surprising. They love it, and I don't even know how to contain the excitement. It's been good so far.

TikTok and everywhere else have been going crazy with *Living Thing* and *Lucid*. Trust me, in a short while, the numbers these songs will be doing will be very different from where they are right now. I can already see it.

You've released other projects before. What makes this one particularly significant?
This is the first project I've done entirely by myself without featuring anybody. And with the way the music industry has been recently, it's hard for an artiste like myself to have a dispute with labels and then come out again to have people applauding a new body of work.

A lot of people have gone through this kind of experience and haven't survived it. I'm so glad. I've even recorded one of my biggest streaming numbers after dropping this project.

I didn't release any music for a very long time because of these disputes. And in Nigeria, if you don't have a strong fan base, you're gone. Just two or four months without people hearing new music from you can affect your career. So I'm grateful for the reception.

Is that why you named the project *The Blueprint*?
Yes. The Blueprint is not just a title. It's a statement. Not everybody can pull off this kind of thing.

Take us through the making of the project. When did you start recording the songs?
I'm not a music producer, but I usually sketch things by myself on my laptop. That's how most of the songs started. I would be in my bedroom, pick up my laptop, sketch out something, compose on it and send it to my producers.

The first song I recorded for the project was *Lucid*. I recorded it about three years ago, before my Shako era. It was supposed to be on the Shako project, but I already had enough tracks, so I moved it.

After listening to the song for a long time, I felt it could have been better. I had to change the beat and work on it again. I turned it from a two-minute track into a four-minute track and added another verse. That's how it came together.

Were you ever tempted to feature another artiste on the project?
Yes, I wanted to have some features. But the artistes I wanted to work with were trying to push things to next year, and I didn't want that. I needed to release the project this year. So the features I was supposed to have on this project will be on my next project.

You've become known for making different kinds of music, from inspirational records to more experimental sounds. Where do you draw most of your musical influences from?
I draw most of my inspiration from my experiences and my past. I have so many things to talk about and so many things to sing about. It's like a loop. Every time, something new happens, and there's something else to talk about.

I'm not really the type of person who talks to people about things like that, so I express myself through my music.

Growing up and developing your sound, who were some of the artistes you listened to?
I love Kizz Daniel. He actually pushed me into this space. When I started listening to Kizz Daniel, I was in secondary school. The kind of songs he was making then could make anybody who was talented want to venture into music.

Around 2016, 2017 and 2018, I was listening to Kizz Daniel a lot. I learnt so many things from his music.
Also, Burna Boy. I feel like people can actually sense Burna Boy's influence in my music without me having to tell them.
About 80 per cent of my catalogue is about real life, real-life experiences and tough love. A lot of people can relate to that.

There's also a traditional Yoruba influence in your music. Is that something you consciously try to preserve?
Yes, and I have a reason for doing that. In the next 40 or 50 years, I want to be an artiste who will still be part of music conversations. I feel like when people of my generation get to that age, the kind of songs they'll want to listen to are the type of songs I'm making right now. So I feel like I'm making timeless music.



> *"The Blueprint is not just a title. It's a statement."*
>
> — T.I BLAZE



Comparing when you started your career to where you are now, how has success changed your mindset about music and the industry?
I started this thing as a boy. Now I'm a man. When I started, I was just a boy who wanted to make music. I didn't put my mind to the business side of things. That's one mistake I feel no artist should ever make.

Always make sure you have one eye on the singing part and another eye on the business side. At the end of the day, you can keep singing and singing while another person is pocketing all your profits.

The business part is very important. I learnt this late, and I always tell every artiste I meet that once you decide you want to do music full-time and for a very long time, you need to understand the business. Get the business into your head.

What was the most memorable song or recording session for you while making *The Blueprint*?
Track one, *Living Thing*. You can hear it from the title. I'm basically giving thanks to God for being back in the game. It's me expressing myself, spitting and thanking God. It was very emotional for me, and that's why I made it the introduction to the project.

You started your musical journey as a rapper. If you weren't singing today, do you think you would still be rapping?

> *"I draw most of my inspiration from my experiences."*
> — T.I BLAZE

Yes, I would still be rapping. I think I would have become really good at it. I always say that the reason my lyrics are this good is that I started as a rapper. I won't ever settle for mediocre punchlines.

You've mentioned Olamide as someone who has played an important role in your career. What's your relationship with him like, and what are some of the biggest lessons you've learnt from him?
I've learnt so much from him. He's one of the people who made me understand that knowing how to sing is not enough in this industry.

There are so many people who know how to sing but aren't making anything from it because they think their talent alone will bring them money. That's not how it works. You have to understand the business.
That's where I first heard that lesson. I heard it from him.

Continue reading on guardian.ng/category/life/

PLAYLIST OF THE WEEK

by Mayowa Iyiola



FEEL ALRIGHT
Rema, Wizkid



KOWOPE
Wande Coal



SIMPLE THINGS
DJ Tunez, Tay Iwar, Mannywellz, Kemuel



WELCOME TO LAGOS
Patoranking, Olamide



MONEY IN A WHEELBARROW
Adekunle Gold, Blaqbonez

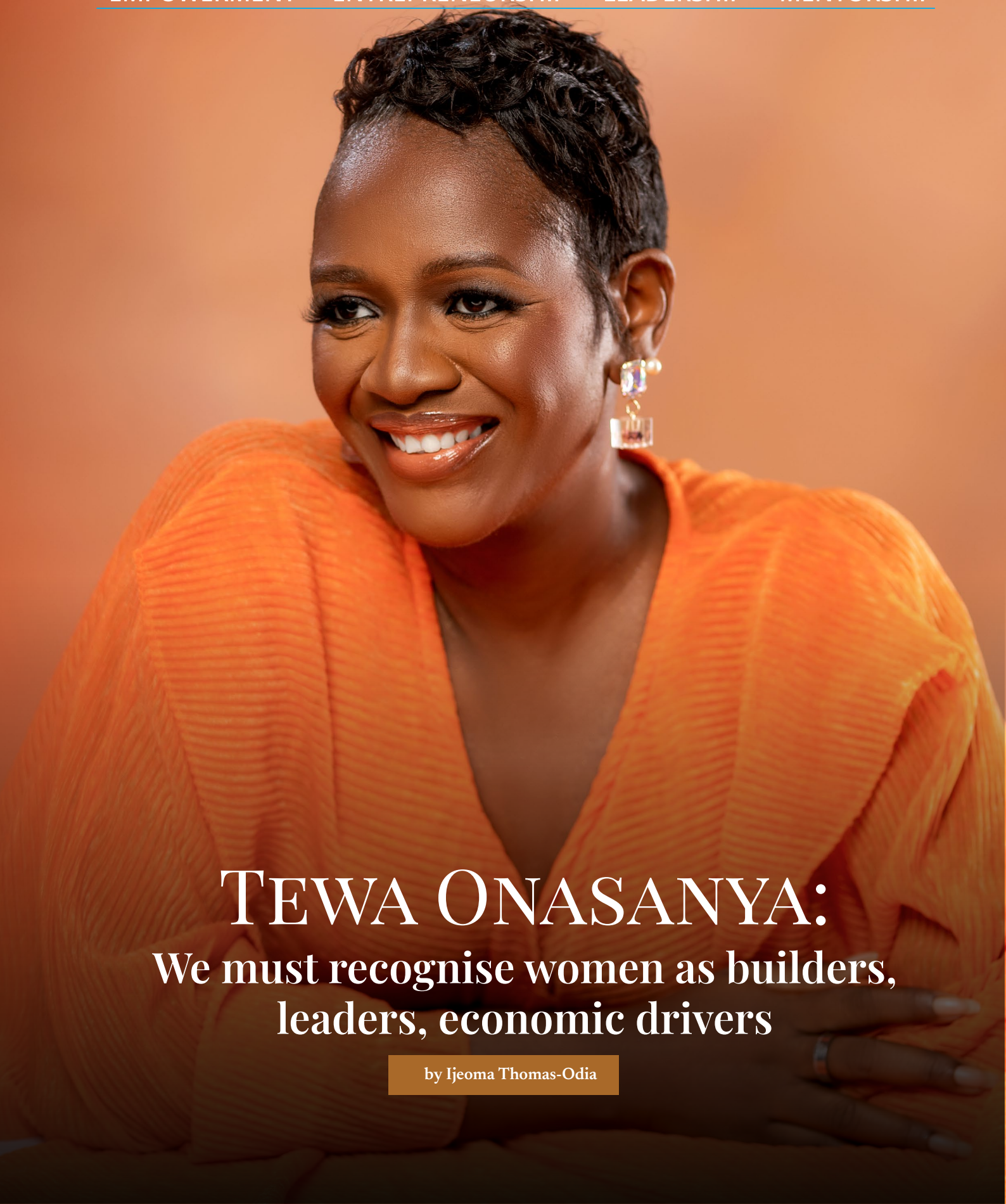


SANTORINI
Joeboy, Ruger



JAIYE
Falz, Simi

Guardian Woman
EMPOWERMENT • ENTREPRENEURSHIP • LEADERSHIP • MENTORSHIP



Tewa Onasanya:

We must recognise women as builders, leaders, economic drivers

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

Dr. Tewa Onasanya is a serial entrepreneur, publisher, author, mindset stylist and philanthropist with over 23 years of experience championing women's empowerment, wellness and entrepreneurship. She is the founder of Exquisite Magazine, a platform dedicated to women's visibility, and the visionary behind the Exquisite Lady of the Year (ELOY) Awards and Conference, established in 2009 to celebrate female excellence and advance women's economic empowerment. Through the ELOY Foundation, she supports women entrepreneurs with mentorship, business training, access to finance and growth opportunities. She also champions cervical cancer prevention through the Exquisite Magazine Awareness for Cancer (EMAC) initiative, promoting awareness and screening. A graduate of Pharmacology from the University of Portsmouth, UK, she is also the author of Rule Your Mind and Convince Yourself First. Passionate about personal transformation, she continues to inspire women to embrace purposeful living, build sustainable businesses and achieve their full potential. In this interview she speaks on the forthcoming 18th ELOY Conference and awards.

You have spent over two decades empowering women through Exquisite Magazine and the ELOY Awards. What inspired this journey, and how has your vision evolved?

My journey has been anything but linear. I studied Pharmacology, worked in the Pharma industry, and eventually followed my passion for writing and women's empowerment. I founded Exquisite Magazine in 2003 because I had a deep desire to create a platform for Black women, (I started in England) a platform that would tell their stories, give them the visibility they deserved, and show that we are not limited to one identity or one path. We have the capacity to evolve, reinvent ourselves, and create something meaningful. Over the years, I realised that celebrating women was not enough. We needed to create platforms that could actively contribute to their growth, empowerment, and economic advancement. That led to the ELOY Awards Foundation in 2009.

ELOY (Exquisite Lady of the Year) began as a platform to recognise outstanding women. It has evolved into a much broader empowerment initiative: mentorship, entrepreneurship support, training, networking, and access to opportunities, especially affordable finance. My vision has also evolved personally. I have come to understand that empowerment is not just about what happens externally. It is also about what happens within a woman, her mindset, confidence, self-belief, and ability to see herself as worthy of the opportunities she desires. This is why I have embraced my work as a Mindset Stylist. We must stylise our minds just as intentionally as we style our appearance. Today, my work through Exquisite Magazine, ELOY, EMAC Foundation, and my mindset initiatives is connected by one purpose: to help women become visible, empowered, healthy, confident, and positioned to live lives that feel as good as they look.

> *"Women who have access must be intentional about opening doors for others."*
>
> — TEWA ONASANYA

The 18th ELOY Conference and Awards focuses on women's visibility. What informed this year's theme, and what should participants expect?

The theme is "The Power of Being Seen - Visibility as a Global Tool for Women's Empowerment." Women are doing extraordinary things across industries, yet many are still not being seen, recognised, or positioned for the opportunities their achievements deserve.

Visibility is not vanity. It is not simply about being popular or having a large social media following. Visibility is about being known for your value, your expertise, your contribution, and your impact. You cannot be considered for an opportunity if the people making decisions do not know what you bring to the table. You cannot influence conversations you are not invited into. I know



this from experience. For so many years, I was running Exquisite Magazine and the ELOYs but I was hidden behind them. I eventually realised I had to be more visible, because people do business with who they know.

Participants should expect meaningful conversations, practical insights, networking, and an environment that inspires women to take ownership of their narratives. We want women to leave not just inspired, but equipped to position themselves, their businesses, and their expertise for greater opportunities. The campaign is simple: Nominate Her. Vote for Her. Make Her Visible.

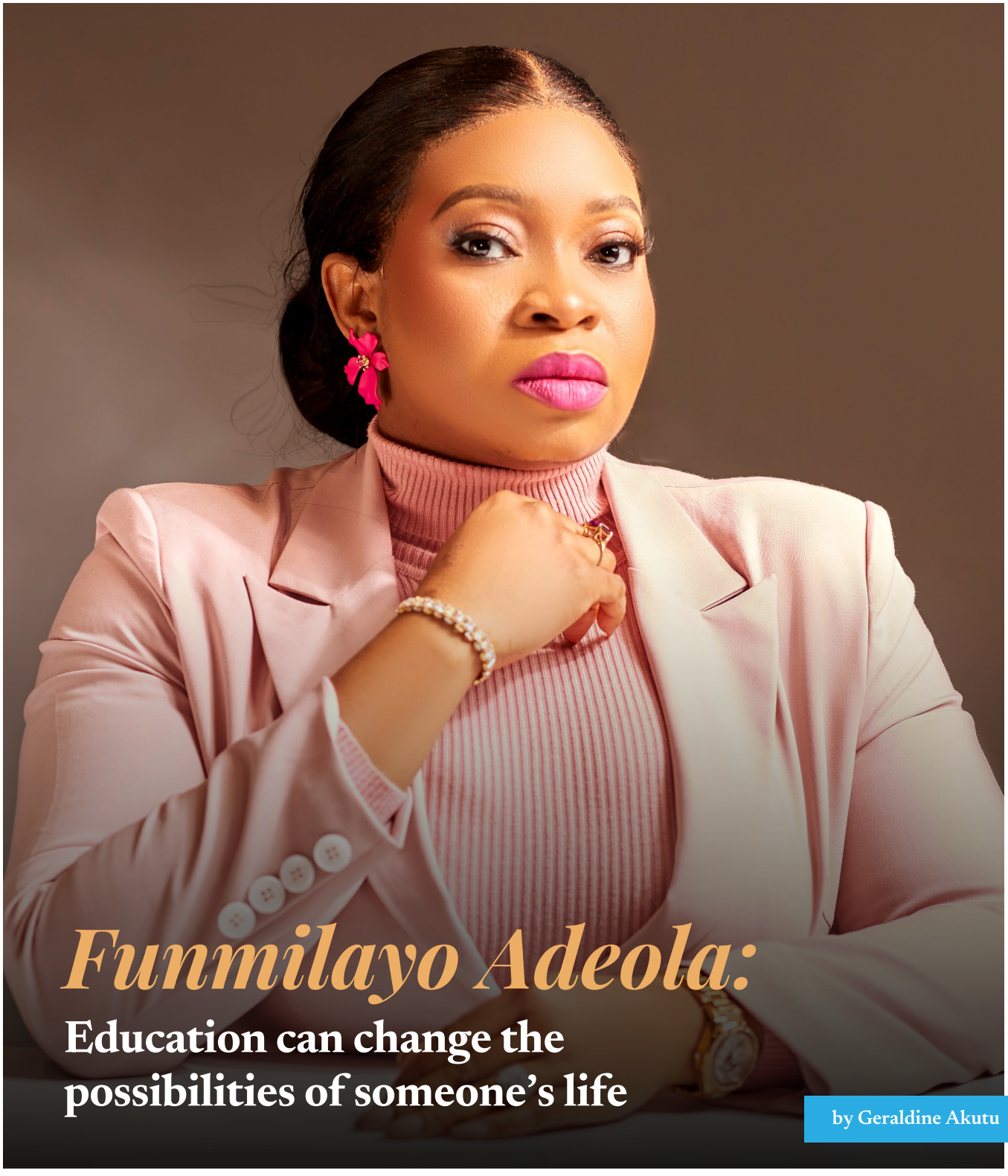
After 18 years of ELOY, what impact have the awards made?

One of the greatest impacts has been creating a platform where women are recognised, celebrated, and encouraged to pursue their ambitions. For many women, being recognised by ELOY is more than receiving an award. It is validation of their work and their journey. It can also create new opportunities for visibility, networking, partnerships, and business growth. We have celebrated over 300 women across entrepreneurship, business, healthcare, media, technology, education, and public service. We also have the ELOY HE4SHE award for men who advocate for gender inclusion — seven men so far. We have evolved beyond recognition into practical empowerment. Through the ELOY Foundation Sustainable Empowerment Program, we have awarded grants to over 20 women since 2021, empowered over 5,000 people through the ELOY Business Showers, and built a network of over 700 women and counting.

I am particularly proud that ELOY has created a community where women can see what is possible through the achievements of other women. When a woman sees another woman succeeding in a field she once believed was inaccessible, it expands her own sense of possibility. For me, the real success of ELOY is not the number of awards presented. It is the number of women whose lives, businesses, and opportunities have been positively influenced by the platform.

Guardian Angels

▪ ADVOCACY ▪ PHILANTROPHY ▪ SOCIAL IMPACT ▪ CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ▪ SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Funmilayo Adeola:

Education can change the possibilities of someone's life

by Geraldine Akutu

Guardian Angels

Funmilayo Adeola is a Nigerian-born, US-based beauty entrepreneur and founder of SwanPro Cosmetics and SwanPro Studios. With over 16 years of experience in the beauty industry and a Diploma in Cosmetic Chemistry, she combines artistry and science to develop skincare and beauty products that promote healthy skin and confident aging. Passionate about education and women's empowerment, she also champions social impact through SwanPro's Beauty in Education initiative. In this interview, she speaks on supporting educational opportunities for underserved women and children in rural Africa.

How did you get to where you are today?

My journey has been shaped by curiosity, preparation, challenges and a willingness to evolve. Growing up in Nigeria, I was fascinated by beauty magazines, makeup techniques and cosmetic brands. I never imagined I would eventually establish my own beauty brand. My interest in makeup artistry began at university after an uncle gifted me a makeup kit. Soon, friends and classmates started requesting my services. What began as a creative interest became a source of income. I later obtained professional certification in makeup artistry in 2007. After university, I worked briefly in the magazine industry and later at House of Tara, where I gained valuable exposure to the business structure behind a successful beauty company. I continued working in corporate roles while providing makeup services on weekends. Following two job losses, I decided to build on my skills and clientele by opening a makeup studio in Nigeria. After relocating to the United States, I established SwanPro Cosmetics in 2017, starting with a lipstick line. My interest in skincare developed through concerns women shared during makeup sessions and changes I experienced in my own skin. I wanted women to feel confident even without makeup. This inspired me to explore skincare formulation and eventually pursue a Diploma in Cosmetic Chemistry in 2020.

What were the initial challenges you had to overcome?

One of my biggest challenges was rebuilding after relocating to the United States. In Nigeria, I had an established studio, clients and professional networks. Moving meant adjusting to a different environment and learning how to operate in a new market. I was also a stay-at-home mother raising a young family and initially worked from home. Finding customers wasn't necessarily the biggest challenge, but maintaining consistency and scaling required a different approach. When you're building a business while raising a family, you cannot always devote every hour to entrepreneurship. You must make calculated decisions and work with available resources. Some challenges remain, but they have taught me patience, adaptability and the importance of creating systems that support sustainable growth.

How did your upbringing influence your career?

I come from a humble background, and I believe our beginnings do not determine how far we can go. My father was an accountant, while my mother explored different professional paths, including hairstyling and beauty services, before working in government administration. My mother was fashionable, disciplined, organised and resilient. I remember her signature red lipstick, dark lip pencil and beauty spot. Watching her dress for work and family occasions was my earliest introduction to beauty. More importantly, she was committed to my education despite limited resources. I lost her when I was eighteen, and part of my motivation has always been to honour her dreams for me. Her ability to reinvent herself influenced my approach to entrepreneurship. I want my story to encourage others to understand that their circumstances may shape their starting point but need not define their destination.

How is life as an entrepreneur?

Entrepreneurship comes with highs, lows and constant learning. Sometimes, you invest considerable effort and resources without seeing immediate results. It requires faith, resilience, focus and resourcefulness. One important lesson has been managing my time, money and energy, particularly while balancing business and family responsibilities. I have also learnt the value of diversification. Makeup artistry was my foundation, but I gradually expanded into skincare, cosmetics and complementary services. These provide different income opportunities while I build SwanPro Cosmetics. However, diversification brings challenges. Serving clients sometimes takes time away from product development, marketing and business growth. I am learning to prioritise and build stronger systems. Entrepreneurship isn't always glamorous, but it can be incredibly fulfilling. Beyond profitability, I want my work to make a difference. Through SwanPro's Beauty in Education initiative, we commit part of our monthly proceeds to supporting educational opportunities for underserved women and children in rural Africa, in partnership with Deploying Skills for Living. Education changed my possibilities, and I want to extend that opportunity to others. My faith in God remains my greatest strength, and I am grateful for my husband's encouragement and support.

What role does mentorship play in the beauty industry?

Mentorship helps people recognise opportunities, avoid unnecessary mistakes and build sustainable businesses. My mentorship experience has been largely informal, through observing professionals, taking courses and learning from practical experiences. Working at House of Tara was particularly influential. Although I already had makeup skills, my involvement in digital and administrative operations exposed me to accounting, human resources, marketing, quality control and business management. I realised that makeup artistry could become much more than a service; it could grow into a structured enterprise. This is why mentorship should extend beyond technical skills. Beauty professionals need guidance on pricing, customer experience, financial management and sustainable growth. I hope to contribute to creating more practical mentorship opportunities for emerging beauty entrepreneurs.

The beauty industry keeps evolving. How do you stay current?

Continuous learning is essential. I read cosmetics industry publications, follow cosmetic scientists and formulators, study market developments and observe emerging innovations. Trends extend beyond ingredients to packaging, technology, marketing and changing customer expectations. However, I don't believe every trend should become a product.

Women creating wealth ...with Tomiisin Balogun



"I believe wealth is both financial and holistic."

— TOMIISIN BALOGUN

The Guardian Woman Festival in partnership with Federal Palace Resort is gearing up for its month-long celebration of International Women's Month 2027 under the theme "Women as Wealth Creators."

After three successful editions, the Guardian Woman Festival is bringing together women leaders, policymakers, business executives, entrepreneurs, creatives, development practitioners, media professionals and other stakeholders committed to advancing opportunities for women and girls.

The 2027 edition will spotlight women's economic power, financial independence, entrepreneurship and their role in driving sustainable growth. Tomiisin Balogun, widely known as The JOY Merchant, is an emotional wellness strategist, counsellor, author, speaker and founder of JOY HQ, a global emotional wellness platform dedicated to helping women leaders unburden, heal and reclaim their JOY, she bares her thoughts on creating wealth.

Take us through your career path.

My career has been anything but linear, but looking back, I can see how every season was preparing me for the work I do today. I started with a degree in Agricultural Economics and Extension, then built my professional experience across research, business development, project management, monitoring and evaluation, and education. Along the way, life introduced me to another kind of education, one that no university could have prepared me for.

My personal experiences with grief, motherhood, identity and healing awakened a deep passion for women's emotional wellbeing. I began to recognise how many women were achieving remarkable things publicly while silently struggling privately.

That conviction gave birth to JOY HQ, a global emotional wellness platform helping women leaders unburden, heal and reclaim their JOY. Today, I am an emotional wellness counsellor, author of three books, speaker, and public health researcher. My journey has taught me that sometimes, purpose is discovered at the intersection of our professional preparation, personal pain and the problems we feel called to solve.

What does women creating wealth mean to you?

For me, women creating wealth goes beyond earning money. It is about building the capacity to generate, manage, multiply and preserve value across generations. I believe wealth is both financial and holistic. What is the value of building a successful empire if the woman behind it is emotionally depleted, physically unwell or disconnected from herself?

Financial independence gives women choices, dignity and the ability to influence decisions that affect their lives. But emotional wellbeing gives them the inner capacity to steward those opportunities sustainably. I want to see more women who are not only financially empowered but emotionally whole, intellectually equipped and spiritually grounded. Because a truly wealthy woman should not have to lose herself while building everything else.

How are you creating sustainable wealth as a woman?

I am learning to build wealth by creating value that can outlive my immediate involvement. Through JOY HQ, I am developing an ecosystem of emotional wellness resources, books, transformational programmes, counselling services and communities that address a real and often overlooked need among women leaders. Our Emotional Healing Immersion has reached women across several countries, demonstrating that healing is a universal need and that purpose-driven solutions can transcend geographical boundaries. I am also investing in education, professional development, strategic relationships and systems that can strengthen the sustainability of what I am building.

For me, sustainable wealth means creating intellectual property, building an institution rather than merely a personal brand, and developing solutions that continue to serve people and generate economic value over time. I am still building, still learning and still evolving.

Interested organisations can explore sponsorship, partnership and programme-hosting opportunities by contacting Guardianwomanfestival@guardian.ng, Ricketts: +234 802 301 5115 or Olayinka: +234 808 695 1129.

Storytelling can challenge harmful gender Norms, stakeholders say

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia



Stakeholders across the creative, corporate and development sectors have called for stronger partnerships to address harmful social norms, improve young people's well-being and expand economic opportunities for women and girls across Africa.

The call was made at Unlikely Allies: Stories That Shift Norms, a private roundtable held recently at the Federal Palace Resort, Lagos, during CANEX WKND.

Convened by Shuga Global, Shujaaz Inc and Brands on a Mission, the gathering brought together representatives of global brands, foundations, investors, the creative industries, media organisations and youth groups to explore how storytelling can influence attitudes and inspire behavioural change.

Discussions drew on the experience of Surround Sound Kenya (SSK), a youth-focused initiative that uses storytelling across television, comics, radio, social media and community engagement to address issues affecting young people.

Established in 2023, the programme reportedly reaches 4.2 million young people in Kenya, addressing subjects including gender-based violence, reproductive health, education, livelihoods and women's economic empowerment.

Speaking at the gathering, Chief Mission Officer of Brands on a Mission, Professor Myriam Sidibe, stressed the importance of collaboration between organisations with complementary strengths.

"Storytellers know how to reach young people's hearts. Brands know how to reach them at scale. Funders can take a risk on something new. On our own, none of us can shift a norm," she said.

"Together, as unlikely allies, we can. Kenya has shown it works." The initiative seeks to engage young people through relatable stories that encourage conversations about issues often considered difficult to discuss within families and communities, including menstruation, body image, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition and financial independence.

Executive Director of Shuga Global, Wame Jallow, explained that storytelling provides opportunities for young people to recognise their experiences and question established beliefs.

ISWIS Live amplifies women's voices, conversations on relationships, careers

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

In a bid to promote breast health awareness and encourage early detection of breast cancer among women, The Active Circle, in partnership with Nigerian fashion brand Zephans & Co., recently hosted The Girls' Club, a wellness and educational gathering in Lagos.

Held at West Foster Harbour, Ikoyi, in commemoration of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the event brought together women for conversations on breast health, preventive healthcare, physical wellbeing and the importance of community support.

The invitation-only gathering, themed Pretty in Pink, combined wellness activities with health education, creating a relaxed environment for women to learn about breast cancer, share experiences and prioritise their wellbeing.

Activities commenced with a beginner-friendly Pilates session led by fitness instructor Dammy Olufowobi, who encouraged participants to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

A major highlight was the Breast Talk session facilitated by Dr. Omolola Salako of Pearl Oncology, popularly known as The People's Oncologist.

The interactive discussion focused on understanding breast health, recognising possible warning signs of breast cancer, available screening options, and the importance of seeking timely medical attention when unusual changes are noticed.

Speaking on the initiative, Convener of The Active Circle, Chisom Okuguni, said the gathering was designed to make breast



health conversations more accessible while encouraging women to take responsibility for their physical, mental and social wellbeing.

"At The Active Circle, our mission is to create spaces where women feel inspired to prioritise their physical, mental and social wellbeing. The Girls' Club was born from a desire to make conversations about breast health feel less intimidating and more personal, empowering and actionable.

"We wanted women to leave not only having enjoyed a beautiful experience, but also feeling better informed, more confident and supported in taking charge of their health," she said.

Guardian Guides



Nigeria | December 2026

Your guide to Detty December

Detty December fills the calendar with concerts, but there's also lunch with friends, a drink after work and a free afternoon to spend somewhere new. This edition of Guardian Guides picks out concerts to catch, places to eat and drink, stays to book and sights to see across Nigeria.



CONCERTS AND EVENTS TO ATTEND

6 December | Shoday Experience
Shoday performs at Balmoral Convention Centre, Lagos.

11 to 20 December | Future Fest
The festival spans music, fashion, film, art, food and technology at venues across Lagos. Two concerts take place at Oasis Ground, Victoria Island:

- **18 December:** Olamide's YBNL: The Reunion brings together Adekunle Gold, Fireboy DML, Lil Kesh, Young Jonn, Pheelz and DJ Enimoney.
- **20 December:** Asake closes the festival with M$NEY in Lagos.

13 December | ÀLÓ: Once Upon a Song
African folk music and live storytelling share the bill at Shell Hall, MUSON Centre, Onikan.

17 to 19 December | Davido's ORIADÉ: The Residency
Davido plays three nights at the Wole Soyinka Centre for Culture and the Creative Arts, formerly the National Theatre.



WHERE TO RELAX AND RESET

Federal Palace Resort
Spend the afternoon with friends over drinks at Federal Palace Resort, stay for dinner or head to the casino. If you're in Lagos for Detty December, a room overlooking the water gives you somewhere to slow down between concerts and nights out. You'll find the resort at 6–8 Ahmadu Bello Way, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Lakowe Lakes Golf & Country Estate
In Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos, book a lakeside cottage for a quiet weekend. Spend the afternoon by the water or play a round of golf.

Sheraton Lagos Hotel
At 30 Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way, Ikeja, Lagos, Sheraton offers a mainland option for a weekend break. Spend the afternoon by the outdoor pool or book a table at La Giara for Italian food. Pumpkin Leaf also serves breakfast.



WHERE TO EAT, DRINK AND DANCE

Zaza
Book dinner and a live show at Zaza, 19 Agoro Odiyan Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, then stay for the DJ set. Reservations are required, and guests must be 25 or older.

BoHo
Meet friends for cocktails at BoHo on 14B Akin Adesola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Quilox
For late-night dancing in Lagos, head to Quilox at 873 Ozumba Mbadiwe Avenue, Victoria Island.

The Burgundy
Go for pan-African dishes and live jazz at The Burgundy on 990 NAL Boulevard, behind Fraser Suites in Central Area, Abuja

The Skope
Start with cocktails in the lounge at The Skope, 9 Lingu Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja, then head to the nightclub.



MORE ON CONCERTS AND EVENTS

18 to 30 December | Detty December Fest
The festival takes place at Detty December Village, Ilubirin. The announced shows include:

- 18 December: Wizkid opens the festival.
- 21 December: Lauryn Hill, YG Marley, Zion Marley and Wyclef Jean.
- 27 December: Summer Walker and Fridayy.
- 28 December: Young Thug.

19 to 23 December | ICONIQ FEST
Five shows take place at the Lekki Coliseum. BNXN opens on 19 December, followed by FOLA on 20 December, Oxlade's Plug The Ox on 21 December, Ruger's BlownBoy show on 22 December and Mr P's OG Thank You Concert on 23 December.

20 December | Flytime's House of R&B
Brandy headlines at Eko Convention Centre, Victoria Island.

22 to 24 December | Flytime Fest
Latto, Sexyy Red and A Boogie wit da Hoodie are on the bill at Eko Convention Centre, Victoria Island. Individual performance dates are subject to confirmation.



WHERE TO SHOP

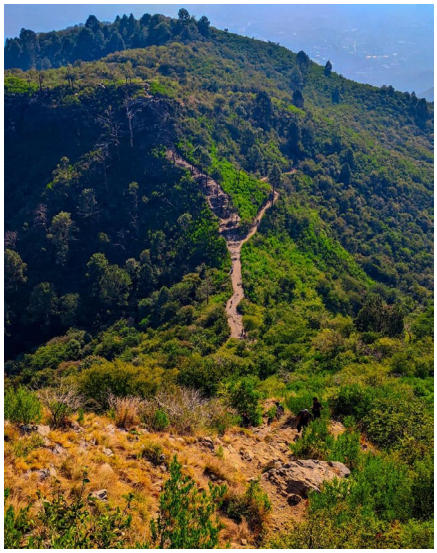
ALÁRA
Shop African and international designer fashion, jewellery and accessories at 12A Akin Olugbade Street, Victoria Island. Look out for Banke Kuku's printed kaftans.

Temple Muse
Browse dresses and kaftans by African designers, or pick up a fragrance or a gift hamper at 2 Musa Yar'Adua Street, Victoria Island.

Polo Avenue
Head to 166 Ozumba Mbadiwe Avenue, Victoria Island, for designer shoes, handbags and fragrances. The boutique carries labels including Bottega Veneta and Jimmy Choo.

In Vogue Casa
Find ready-to-wear pieces, handbags and sunglasses at 10 Agoro Odiyan Street, Victoria Island. The boutique stocks labels including Loewe, Celine and The Row.

ASHLUXURY
Try 21B Admiralty Way, Lekki Phase 1, for designer streetwear and accessories for a concert or a night out. The retailer lists Casablanca, Ambush and Kenzo among its brand partners.



HILLS AND NATURE TRAILS TO EXPLORE

Lekki Conservation Centre
In Lekki, wooden boardwalks take you through the forest, where you may spot monkeys along the way. Take the canopy walk for a view of the reserve from above the trees.

LUFASI Nature Park
At kilometre 41 on the Lekki–Epe Expressway, LUFASI is a good place for a slow walk. Follow the shaded forest paths and take a break by one of the lakes.

Greenfingers Wildlife Conservation
This wildlife sanctuary in Lekki offers guided walks. Go with a guide to see native wildlife and hear about the animals in the sanctuary's care.

Idanre Hills
In Idanre town, Ondo State, the climb takes you to the old hilltop settlement. Look for the Owa's Palace and the old courthouse, then pause for a view of the valleys below.

Ogbunike Caves
In Ogbunike, Anambra State, a staircase leads down through a forested valley to the cave entrance. Inside, passages branch off from the main chamber, and streams run through parts of the cave system.

marie claire NIGERIA

DATING & RELATIONSHIPS



Does who you date shape the life you live? The class calculations behind romantic choices

by Patricia Ellah

Most women calculate everything, especially when dating. Not always consciously or from a place of cynicism, but choosing who to be affectionate with, attracted to and committed to often involves assessing a potential future. Is this man's status above mine or below mine? Will he elevate my life or complicate it? Society teaches women from childhood that choosing a partner is not merely an emotional decision but one that must also consider self-preservation.

The question is never simply, Do I want him? It is also, What does life with him look like? The modern romantic fantasy insists that love transcends class, yet every relationship exists within material structures. Income, education, family background, cultural capital and social prestige all influence intimacy. Love is often presented as separate from the economics of partnership, but it rarely is.

"Dating up" and aligning yourself with a wealthy partner's lifestyle

The wealthy man occupies a peculiar place in the female imagination. He is rarely desired simply as an individual but also represents security, access, ease and protection. To dismiss these attractions as materialism is to misunderstand women's experiences of economic vulnerability, which have historically been more pronounced than men's. What appears to be calculation may, in fact, be a form of self-preservation inherited across generations.

Wealth also creates an aesthetic of certainty. The wealthy man appears to move through the world with fewer obstacles, with money providing options and solutions. Women are not necessarily attracted to resources alone but to what they represent: possibility, stability and freedom.

Dating someone wealthy can also mean enjoying a lifestyle that reflects a particular social standing. Even financially independent women may find that their partner's resources influence the comforts and experiences available to them. Sharing a similar financial position can make maintaining an established standard of living easier.

"Dating down" and aligning yourself with a low-income partner

The less wealthy man is often romanticised as authentic, uncorrupted by ambition and closer to life's essential meaning. Popular culture frequently presents him as morally superior to his wealthy counterpart. This narrative can be harmful to women, particularly when those who date men with fewer resources are praised for prioritising love over status. It raises a question about why sacrifice remains such a central expectation of femininity.

Some women experience a different kind of power when they become the more financially secure partner. They become providers and architects of possibility. However, admiration for a man's potential can eventually become exhaustion from carrying the relationship. Resentment may emerge when women have to compromise their choices, spending habits and lifestyle expectations to accommodate their partners.

Does the class status of your partner matter?

Ultimately, class status matters in dating, though not because wealth determines a person's worth. Love can flourish across economic differences, but relationships do not exist outside everyday realities.

A partner's financial position, ambitions and relationship with money inevitably shape the opportunities, comforts and constraints a couple experiences. The question is whether two people can build a life that aligns with their expectations, lifestyles and long-term goals. Romance may begin with attraction, but sustaining a partnership requires compatibility in how both people envision their future.

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more

marie claire NIGERIA

ASTROLOGY

This November, let your zodiac sign guide you towards the art of being a more authentic version of yourself

by Djenabe Edouard



Fresh off Lagos Art Week, we're reminded that self-expression extends beyond gallery walls. It lives in the company we keep, the risks we take and the little details that make life our own. With Mercury and Venus ending their retrogrades in November, followed by Saturn and Neptune in December, the cosmos is making a few curatorial decisions of its own.

As the year approaches its final frame, we're finding new ways to express who we've become, with all our colours, contradictions and unfinished ideas. After all, life is an ongoing work of art. Here's what the stars have in store for each sign.

Experimentation is in your future, Aries
What's a masterpiece without the mess? This season invites you to experiment and express yourself through movement. With Saturn and Neptune moving forward in your sign in December, your sense of identity is becoming more deliberate. Follow your curiosity and let it lead somewhere unexpected.

Indulgence is in your future, Taurus
Who says you can't redecorate your life while living in it? Give yourself permission to indulge, adorn yourself and make room for whimsy. Unexpected connections and conversations that challenge your perspective could offer fresh inspiration.

Strategic planning is in your future, Gemini
You have plenty of ideas, darling. Now give them somewhere to grow. Rather than rushing into action, focus on building strategies. The Full Moon in your sign could reveal just how much your priorities and ambitions have evolved.

Pleasure is in your future, Cancer
Your private world is becoming more colourful. Embrace playful intimacy, familiar pleasures and little rituals that make ordinary days special. The Full Moon in your sign just before Christmas could bring revealing emotions to the surface.
Bold decisions are in your future, Leo
Your world is expanding through exciting connections and a renewed appetite for change. As Jupiter prepares to turn retrograde in your sign, you may need to step away from the spotlight temporarily. Remember, every grand reveal begins behind the curtains.

Spontaneity is in your future, Virgo
Your words carry more texture this season. Conversations may reveal truths you haven't fully examined, while Mars entering your sign encourages movement and change. Allow spontaneity to disrupt your familiar routines.

Beautiful things are in your future, Libra
Enjoy your little renaissance! Rediscover the pleasure of collecting, curating and surrounding yourself with beautiful things. As Venus moves through your sign, invest in experiences that nourish your senses and celebrate your distinctive taste.

Minimalism is in your future, Scorpio
Consider this your self-portrait era. With Venus re-entering your sign in December, embrace a more intentional approach to beauty and self-expression. Experiment quietly, gather inspiration and release the weight of old worries.

New projects are in your future, Sagittarius
Revisit abandoned sketches, notes and ambitions that once seemed too ambitious. As your season arrives, a renewed sense of self begins to take shape. Dream boldly, play with scale and stop explaining every decision.

Memorable moments are in your future, Capricorn
Small, intimate gestures could bring greater meaning to your relationships. As Mercury picks up speed next month, communicating your values may attract new friendships. Perhaps it's time for that link-up to finally leave the group chat!

The spotlight is in your future, Aquarius
Your career could bring unexpected opportunities. As your work life becomes livelier, make room for rest and pleasure, too. Changing dynamics in your relationships may also reveal new ways to exchange affection and support.

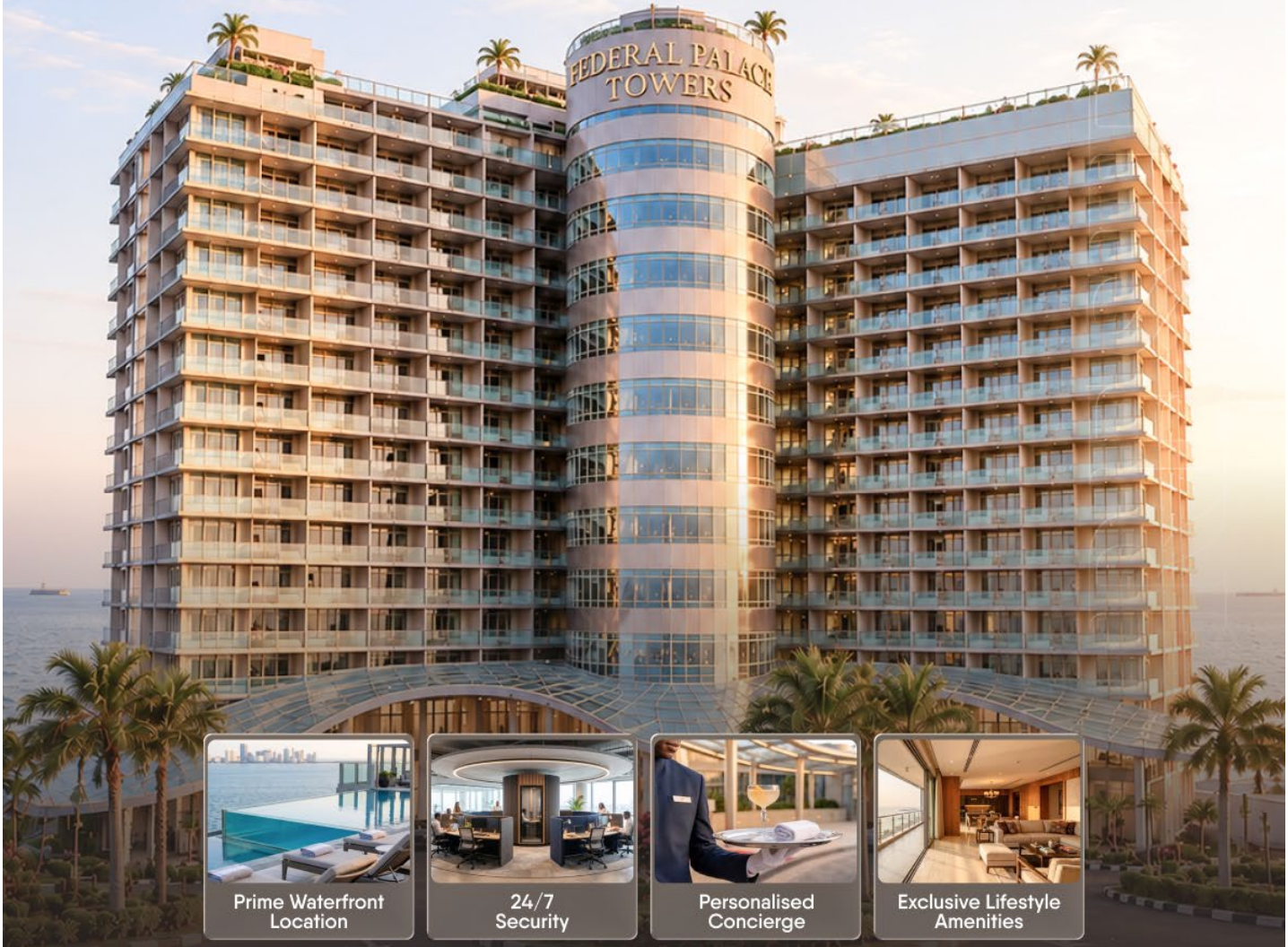
Imagination is in your future, Pisces
Rediscover the pleasure of devoting yourself to what makes life meaningful. Your professional life may also benefit from a more imaginative approach. Give your biggest visions some structure and see what comes to life.

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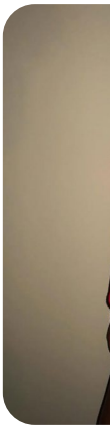
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TikTok looks in 2026

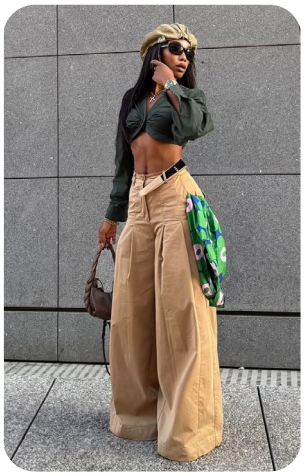
by Dorcas Ayoola

Corsets with baggy jeans, football jerseys, and shirts worn as skirts. TikTok's 2026 outfit ideas give you fresh ways to style pieces you may already own.

Pair a fitted corset with loose denim for a mix of shapes.

Give an oversized shirt a second life as a skirt, or pull out a football jersey and build an outfit around its colours.

Here are the TikTok looks you can make yourself.

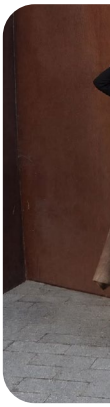




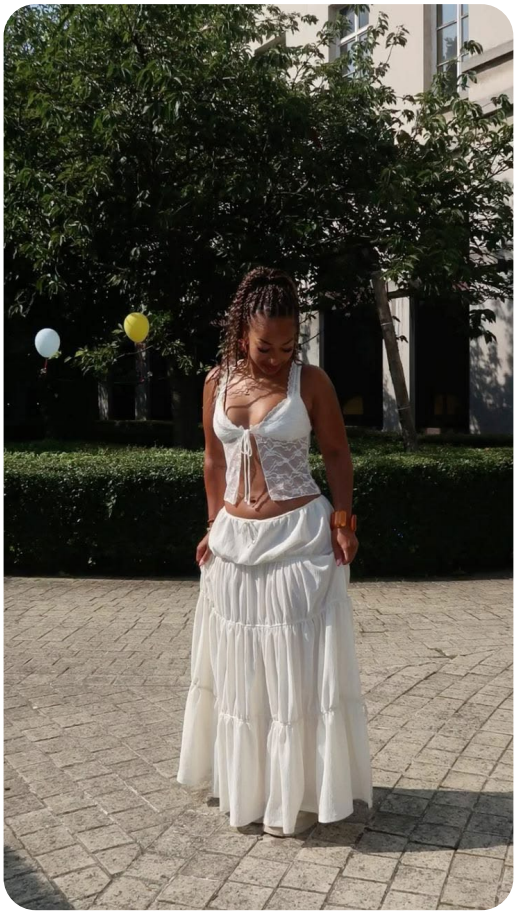
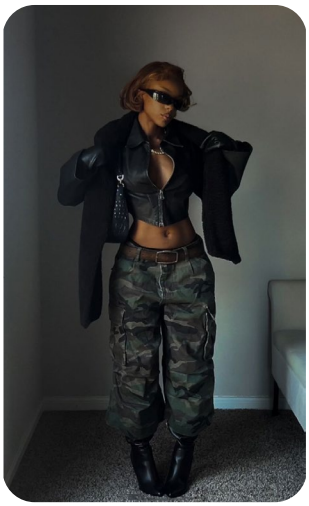










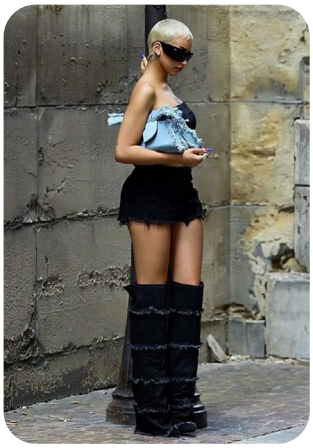






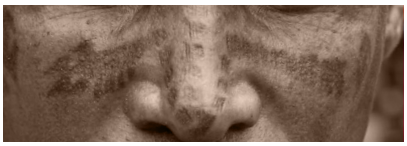








Hausa facial marks: Ancient lines of identity, heritage







by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

From ancestral kingdoms and family lineages to cultural identity and social distinction, Hausa facial marks carry stories of heritage, migration and belonging.

Facial markings have long been part of the cultural heritage of several communities across Hausaland, the historical region encompassing northern Nigeria and parts of the Republic of Niger.

For generations, distinctive lines and patterns cut into the faces of men and women have served as more than physical decoration. Known in Hausa as tsagar gado, these inherited marks have helped identify a person's family, ancestral community, kingdom and, in some instances, social position.

Unlike a uniform system of facial scarification, Hausa markings differ considerably from one community to another. Some consist of short vertical lines on the cheeks, while others feature elaborate arrangements extending from the temples towards the mouth.

Research by Bashir Aliyu Sallau, Sanusi Dauda and Sumayya Yakubu, published in 2024, documents several of these patterns and their connections to different communities across northern Nigeria and Niger.
Although the practice has declined in many places, Hausa facial marks remain an important part of the region's cultural and historical identity.

What are Hausa tribal marks?

Hausa tribal marks are permanent facial scars traditionally created through deliberate incisions on the skin.

They are commonly referred to as tsagar gado, meaning inherited or ancestral marks.

The markings were traditionally used to distinguish families, communities and kingdoms. Their patterns were passed down through generations, allowing people to identify one another's origins through distinctive facial features.

Some markings were given to both male and female children, while others were associated with particular family groups or social classes.

The patterns were not uniform across Hausaland. Communities in Katsina, Daura, Kano, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi and Jigawa developed different arrangements, each carrying its own historical associations.

Why did Hausa people wear tribal marks?

The reasons for facial scarification varied across communities, but identity and ancestry were among its most important purposes.

Family lineage and ancestry

Facial marks helped people recognise members of particular families and ancestral groups.
In communities where several families lived together, distinctive markings provided a visible means of identifying a person's background.

According to the 2024 study by Sallau, Dauda and Yakubu, some communities maintained facial marks even after migrating from their original settlements and adopting aspects of Hausa language and culture.

For these groups, the markings remained a connection to their ancestral origins.

Community and kingdom identity

One of the major functions of Hausa facial marks was to distinguish people from different kingdoms and



settlements.

Patterns associated with Katsina, Daura, Gobir, Zamfara, Kabi and other traditional territories could help establish where a person came from.
The marks were particularly significant in earlier societies, where migration, trade, warfare and changing political relationships brought different communities into contact.

Social status and royal distinction

Some facial markings also communicated social position.

Among the Katsinawa, for example, historical scarification patterns distinguished members of the aristocracy from commoners.

The study by Sallau and his colleagues documents differences in the arrangement of marks on the right and left sides of the face.

Among the Kabi people, a particular pattern was reserved for the royal family descended from Kotal Kanta, the founder of the Kabi kingdom.

Such distinctions demonstrate that facial scarification could communicate more than ethnic or community identity.

Beauty and cultural expression

Facial markings also had an aesthetic purpose.

Certain patterns were created to enhance physical appearance, particularly among women and younger members of some communities.

Traditional practitioners produced decorative designs on the face and other parts of the body.

The practice of jarfa, associated with decorative body marking, formed part of the wider tradition of Hausa body art.

The different types of Hausa tribal marks

Hausa facial marks vary in number, arrangement, length and position.

The 2024 study identifies several patterns associated with different communities and kingdoms across Hausaland.

Here are some documented examples.

Katsinanci

Katsinanci is associated with the Katsinawa, people whose ancestral identity is connected to the Katsina Kingdom.

The traditional pattern consists of several marks arranged on both sides of the face, including short diagonal or vertical lines around the temples and cheeks.

According to Sallau and his colleagues, the standard pattern contains seven marks on one side and six on the other.

Among the aristocracy, seven marks appear on the right side and six on the left, while the arrangement is reversed among commoners.
The pattern is also associated with a variation known as zube, which involves markings around the temple.
Although Katsinanci was historically found across several parts of Katsina, it is now more commonly encountered among older generations and in rural communities.

Dauranci

Dauranci is associated with the people of Daura in present-day Katsina State.

The pattern is characterised by two prominent descending lines extending from the temples towards the mouth.

Additional short markings appear around the upper temple area, usually numbering between six and seven on each side.

Daura occupies an important place in Hausa history and is associated with the Bayajidda legend, one of the traditional accounts explaining the origins of the Hausa states.

The facial marks therefore serve as an important expression of ancestral identity.

Today, only a small number of Daurawa are reported to retain the traditional markings.

Gobirci

Gobirci is associated with the Gobirawa, whose historical settlements include parts of present-day Sokoto State and the Republic of Niger.



The traditional arrangement consists of several facial incisions, with variations depending on the community and social background of the bearer.

The 2024 study records a pattern of six marks on the right side and seven on the left among certain Gobirawa communities.

It also documents a simplified contemporary variation in which a single vertical incision appears on each cheek.

This change illustrates how inherited cultural practices have been modified over time.

Zamfaranci

Zamfaranci is associated with the Zamfarawa, whose ancestral communities are connected to Zamfara Kingdom.

The traditional pattern consists of multiple vertical facial markings arranged on both cheeks.

Historical arrangements could include ten marks on the left and nine on the right.

However, modern variations are considerably simpler, with some bearers having only two vertical cuts on each cheek.

The markings demonstrate how a recognisable pattern can evolve while retaining its association with a particular community.

Lezumanci

Lezumanci is associated with the Lezumawa, a community whose oral history connects its ancestry to the Zamfarawa.



Their facial markings combine vertical and diagonal lines, with additional marks around the temples.

Although the pattern resembles Katsinanci, one of its distinguishing features is the greater number of incisions around the temple.

The community is primarily found in Katsina and Zamfara States.

Kabanci

Kabanci is associated with the Kabawa of the Kabi Kingdom in present-day Kebbi State.

The markings traditionally consist of ten incisions on the right side of the face and eleven on the left.

The pattern is associated with the commoners of the Kabi Kingdom, distinguishing them from the royal family, whose members are known as Lekayawa.

Lekayawa

Lekayawa is associated with the aristocratic family of the Kabi Kingdom.

According to oral accounts documented through an interview at Kanta Museum in Argungu, the markings were reserved for descendants of Kotal Kanta, the founder of the kingdom.

The pattern consists of vertical lines extending from the mouth towards the temples, with additional markings across the forehead.

The documented arrangement includes ten marks on the right side, nine on the left and nine short marks on the forehead.

The markings were therefore an important distinction between the royal family and other members of the kingdom.

Ƙwannanci

Ƙwannanci is associated with the Ƙwannawa of Ƙwanni.

The traditional pattern consists of approximately 12 horizontal markings on the right side of the face and 11 on the left.

Additional vertical lines appear around the temples.
Unlike some other Hausa communities, the markings were not used to distinguish aristocrats from commoners. According to the study, members of different social backgrounds within the community shared the same pattern.

Yargwaram

Yargwaram is associated with the people of Gwaram in present-day Jigawa State.

The pattern is relatively simple, consisting of three incisions beneath each eye.

It serves as a distinctive marker of people from the Gwaram Emirate, distinguishing them from neighbouring communities.

Wangarawa

The Wangarawa are associated with communities around Rano and Gaya in Kano State, as well as Dutse in Jigawa State.

Their traditional facial markings consist of five long vertical lines on each cheek, extending towards the mouth.

The pattern is among the distinctive examples of Hausa scarification documented in the 2024 study.

Warjanci

Warjanci is associated with the Warjawa of Masanya in Birnin Kudu Local Government Area of Jigawa State.

The pattern consists of two groups of short incisions on each side of the face.
Each group contains five lines, with one arrangement positioned above the other.

Tribal marks and the different communities of Hausaland

Although several Hausa communities share similar cultural practices, their facial markings reflect distinct histories.

The Katsinawa, Daurawa, Gobirawa and Zamfarawa, for instance, have patterns associated with their respective ancestral kingdoms.

The Kabawa and Ƙwannawa also maintain distinctive arrangements connected to their traditional communities.

However, Hausaland is not culturally homogeneous.
Several non-Hausa communities migrated into the region over centuries through trade, political relationships, warfare and settlement.

Some adopted Hausa language and cultural practices while retaining facial markings associated with their original ancestry.

This is particularly evident among certain Kanuri, Tuareg and Fulani communities.

Facial marks among the Kanuri and Barebari

The Kanuri, also known in some historical Hausa accounts as Barebari, have a long history of interaction with Hausa communities.

Migration from the Borno Empire brought several Kanuri families into different parts of Hausaland, including Katsina.

Despite becoming integrated into Hausa society, some families maintained distinctive facial markings that reflected their ancestral origins.

Among the Barebari of Katsina, the traditional pattern consisted of three layers of incisions on both sides of the face.

Each layer could contain approximately 10 to 15 lines.
However, the practice has changed considerably, with some families replacing the elaborate arrangement with a single long incision on the forehead.

Facial marks among the Fulani

The Fulani have also maintained distinct facial-marking traditions in communities that became integrated into Hausa society.

One documented example is the Dallazawa, a Fulani lineage associated with Katsina.
Their facial marks are known as Kalangu.

The pattern consists of two or three straight incisions on each cheek, with additional smaller lines attached to the main markings, creating an appearance resembling a tree.

Both male and female members of the Dallazawa aristocracy traditionally received the markings.
Other documented communities



include the Rumawa, Yandakawa, Shemawa, Mallawa and Kyarawa.

Although some of their patterns resemble one another, differences in the number and arrangement of lines help distinguish their ancestral identities.

For example, the Rumanci pattern associated with the Rumawa consists of two vertical lines on each side of the face. Female members traditionally received three additional vertical lines on the cheeks.

How were Hausa tribal marks made?

Traditional Hausa facial marks were administered by practitioners known as wanzamai, the plural of wanzami.
These were traditional barbers whose responsibilities extended beyond shaving hair.

According to Sallau and his colleagues, the practice of wanzanci included creating facial and body markings, traditional medical procedures and other forms of personal care.

The study identifies different categories of practitioners, including Wanzaman Gado, who performed several traditional procedures, and Wanzaman Jarfa, who specialised in decorative markings.

The instruments used for scarification included a small double-edged knife known as askar tsaga and razor blades.

The procedure involved making deliberate incisions on the skin, followed by the application of traditional substances.

The practitioners acquired their skills through apprenticeship, often learning under experienced barbers for one to two years.

These descriptions document historical practices and should not be treated as instructions for carrying out scarification today.

At what age were children given Hausa tribal marks?

The age at which children received facial markings varied across communities.

According to the 2024 study, Hausa facial marks were commonly administered during infancy, sometimes within the first week after birth.

In other cases, the procedure was performed before the child reached two years of age.

The timing depended on the customs of the family and community.

While some markings were inherited by children of both sexes, others were associated with particular family traditions or decorative purposes.

The role of migration in Hausa facial markings

Migration played an important role in the development of facial scarification traditions across Hausaland.

Over centuries, trade, political alliances, religious movements and warfare brought different communities into contact.

Some groups settled in Hausa kingdoms and gradually adopted the language and social customs of their new environment.

However, they retained certain physical markers of their ancestral identity.

The Kanuri, Tuareg and Fulani communities provide examples of this cultural interaction.

Their markings demonstrate how facial scarification could preserve a connection to an earlier homeland even after generations of settlement elsewhere.

Why are Hausa tribal marks disappearing?

Traditional facial scarification has declined considerably across many Hausa communities.

Several factors have contributed to the change.

Modernisation and changing cultural practices

Urbanisation, education and changing social attitudes have influenced how younger generations view facial markings.
As people increasingly identify through family names, community histories and other forms of cultural expression, the need for permanent facial identification has reduced.

Changing ideas about beauty

Traditional facial markings were once accepted as part of the appearance of members of particular communities.

However, contemporary beauty standards have changed, and some families no longer consider permanent facial scars desirable.

Religious and social influences

Religious beliefs and changing social values have also influenced attitudes towards traditional body modification.

As communities have changed, some families have become less willing to continue inherited scarification practices.

Health concerns

Facial scarification involves cutting the skin and carries risks, including infection, excessive scarring and keloid formation.
Concerns about these complications have contributed to the decline of the practice.

Loss of traditional knowledge

The decline of scarification has also affected the transmission of traditional knowledge.

As fewer families request the markings, the number of practitioners with experience in particular patterns has reduced.

This creates a risk that some of the historical details surrounding specific community markings may disappear with older generations.

Preserving the history of Hausa tribal marks

Hausa facial markings provide an important record of the region's cultural and social history.

Beyond their physical appearance, the patterns tell stories of ancestral kingdoms, migration, family relationships and traditional institutions.

Research by Sallau, Dauda and Yakubu provides valuable documentation of these traditions, including patterns that are no longer commonly seen.
Museums, cultural institutions and historical archives can help preserve photographs, oral accounts and representations of the markings.

The challenge is to document their meanings and histories without assuming that every Hausa person shares the same scarification tradition.
Although the practice is gradually disappearing, its cultural significance remains.

For communities across Hausaland, the lines once carried on the face were more than marks of identification. They were visible reminders of where people came from, the families they belonged to and the histories passed down through generations.





Dressed to the fingertips

by Saodat Esin

Burgundy cat-eye, champagne chrome or a French tip in sheer pink? Six manicure ideas for your next salon visit.

A silver manicure can do as much for a black dress as a pair of earrings. With a cream suit and gold jewellery, tortoiseshell might be the better choice. Think about what you'll wear, then decide how much you want your nails to stand out.

Cat-eye nails

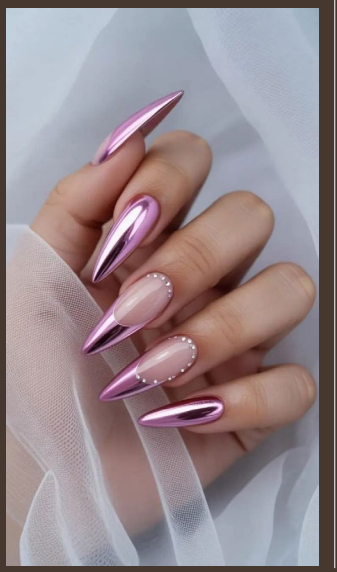
Magnetic polish creates a band of shimmer that catches the light as you move your hands.



In burgundy or plum, the finish can look almost like velvet. Try emerald for an evening out, or chocolate if you want a shade you can wear all week.

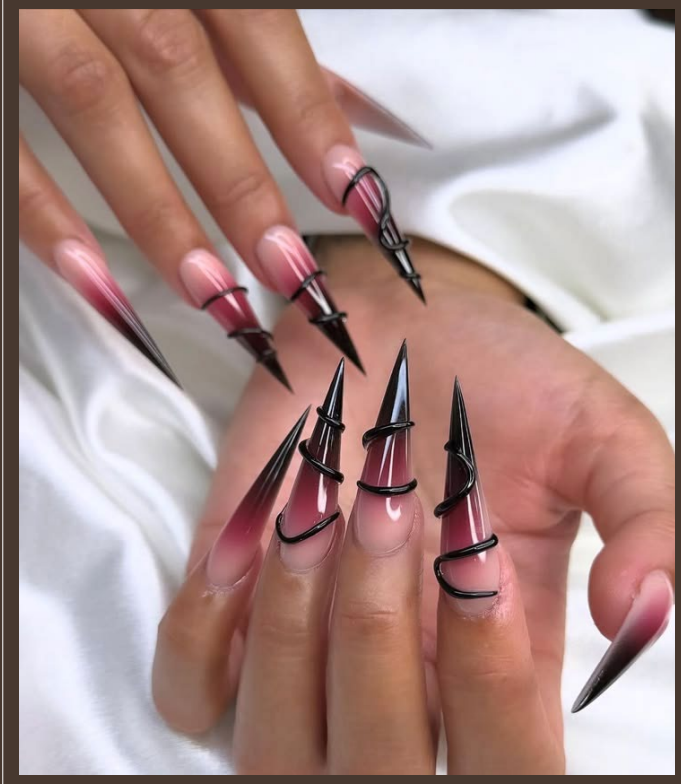
Chrome nails

Silver chrome has a mirror finish that looks sharp against a plain black outfit. Champagne or rose gold gives a softer shine, especially if you already wear gold jewellery. If a full set feels too bright, ask for chrome tips over a sheer base.



3D nail art

A small pearl or a raised flower on the ring finger can be enough.

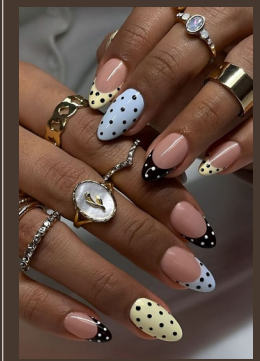


For a wedding, try either detail over a milky base and leave the other nails plain. If the manicure is part of the party look, carry the embellishment across a few more nails.

Jelly French nails

This version of the French manicure uses a translucent base and coloured tips. Sheer pink keeps the finish close to a classic French, while cherry gives the tips more definition. Ask for a thin line of colour if you want the finish to stay subtle.



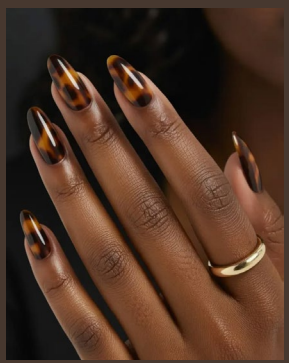


Polka-dot nails

The size of the dots changes the look. Tiny black dots over a nude base give you a pattern you can wear to work. For the weekend, try larger cream dots over burgundy, or keep them to two nails and paint the rest a solid colour.

Tortoiseshell nails

Layers of amber and dark brown give tortoiseshell the mottled finish you see on a pair of sunglasses. It works well with cream tailoring and gold jewellery. If you want less pattern, ask for tortoiseshell tips and keep the rest of the nail sheer.



Photos by Pinterest



Feeding a growing brain

by Glory Uzoigwe

In this edition of Growing Minds, maternal nutrition consultant Glory Uzoigwe explains how food supports a baby's brain development before birth and shares five practical habits for eating well during pregnancy.

Glory Uzoigwe is a globally certified maternal and paediatric nutrition consultant and Autism Specialist. She holds a Master's in Nutrition Sciences and leads Wholesome Maternal Nutrition, helping families navigate feeding, allergies, autism and ADHD support.

A few months ago, a client sat across from me, hand resting on her belly, and asked the question I hear more than any other. "Glory, is it too late? I'm already five months in, and I feel like I haven't done enough." I remember smiling at her, because I have learned that worry is just love that has nowhere to go yet. So we talked, slowly, the way I want to talk to you now.

Here is the truth I told her. Long before anyone picks a nursery colour or debates names at the family table, the real building work has already begun, quietly, inside every pregnant mother . And the materials for that build are not paint or fabric. They are nutrients such as folate, rest, calm, and yes, love, all arriving through something as ordinary as a plate of food.

This is where a beautiful bit of science called epigenetics comes in, and I promise it is gentler than it sounds. It does not mean



changing a baby's DNA. Think of it more like a set of light switches sitting on top of the genes a baby already has. What a mother eats, how well she sleeps, how safe and calm she feels, all of this quietly reaches in and decides which switches get flipped on, and which stay off. Some of those switches shape metabolism. Some shape immunity. And a good number of them shape the brain itself, laying down the early wiring for attention, mood and focus that a child will carry for life.

> ***Every meal during pregnancy is a message sent straight to your baby's brain."***

I watched something soften in my client's shoulders when I told her this next part, and I want it to soften in yours too. One skipped meal will not undo your baby's future. Please put that fear down gently and let it go. What matters is the quiet, steady rhythm of small choices, repeated with love over these nine months. So here is where we begin, together.

Practical steps to support your baby's brain during pregnancy

1. Prioritise folate and choline from real food

These two nutrients are directly involved in building the neural tube and wiring early brain cells. Eggs, leafy greens, beans and a little liver go a long way.

2. Bring omega-3 into your weekly meals

DHA (Docosahexaenoic Acid) found in fatty fish like salmon and mackerel, along with walnuts and flaxseed, supports the physical structure of the baby's developing brain.

3. Get your iron and vitamin D levels checked, not guessed

Both nutrients influence how oxygen and signals move through the developing brain. A simple blood test shows what your body needs, rather than leaving it to chance.

4. Protect your peace as seriously as your plate

Chronic stress raises cortisol, which crosses the placenta and can influence the very gene switches we are talking about. A short walk, quiet prayer time, or simply saying no to what drains you all count as nutrition for your baby too.

5. Cut back on ultra-processed food and hidden sugar

Diets heavy in refined sugar during pregnancy have been linked to gene expression changes tied to mood and attention later in childhood. You don't need to eliminate every treat; just notice when processed snacks become the default and avoid them.



If you are planning a pregnancy, start these habits three months before conception if you can. Epigenetic programming begins earlier than most people realise, sometimes before the pregnancy test even turns positive.

Before my client left that day, she asked one more question. "So it's not about being perfect?" No, I told her, and that's one mistake most mothers make too. Maternal Nutrition is never about being perfect. It is about showing up, one plate at a time, with whatever you have. Some weeks that will look like soups, mackerel and Ugu. Other weeks it will look like eggs on toast eaten standing at the counter, and that is still enough.

> ***One skipped meal will not undo your baby's***

Every meal you eat while carrying your child is a small, quiet letter to their brain. You will never see it being written, and your baby will never remember receiving it. But somewhere in the years ahead, in the way they focus on a story, or calm themselves after a hard day, that letter will still be there, folded into who they are.

Next time in Growing Minds, we are going to sit with another quiet question many mothers carry: why one child reacts to certain foods while a sibling never does, and what that tells us about catching allergies early.



10 African fashion brands making global waves

by Dorcas Ayoola



African fashion is no longer waiting for a seat at the table. For decades, the narrative surrounding African fashion was often confined to a handful of familiar references. Today, designers across the continent are dismantling those limitations through bold experimentation, contemporary craftsmanship and deeply personal storytelling. They are turning traditional textiles into modern statements, transforming discarded materials into luxury, and creating streetwear cultures that rival some of the world's most influential fashion capitals.

Here are 10 African fashion brands making waves across the global fashion industry, challenging conventions, celebrating heritage and proving that some of fashion's most exciting ideas are coming from the continent.

1. Feben: where fashion becomes art

Some designers create collections while Feben creates experiences.
Founded by Ethiopian-born designer Feben, who was raised in Sweden and is now based in London, the label has become synonymous with bold colour, unconventional silhouettes and fearless creativity. Her work blurs the boundaries between art and fashion, producing garments that challenge traditional ideas of structure, beauty and femininity.

A graduate of Central Saint Martins, where she studied under an Isabella Blow Foundation scholarship, Feben has showcased her collections at both London and Milan Fashion Weeks. Her designs feel expressive, emotional and refreshingly unpredictable, earning her recognition as one of the most exciting voices in contemporary fashion.



In a landscape increasingly driven by repetition, FEBEN stands apart by constantly pushing the conversation forward.

2. Buzigahill: turning fashion's waste into fashion's future

Few brands interrogate the fashion industry as boldly as Buzigahill. Founded in Kampala by designer Bobby Kolade, the label combines fashion, sustainability and social commentary in ways that are impossible to ignore. Its acclaimed Return to Sender project reworks second-hand garments sourced from Uganda's mitumba markets and sends them back to the Global North, where many of the clothes originally came from.



The concept is both smart and provocative. By transforming discarded garments into highly desirable fashion pieces, Kolade exposes the contradictions of a system built on overconsumption while highlighting the environmental consequences of global textile waste.
Buzigahill proves that fashion can be visually compelling while also asking difficult questions about how the industry operates.



fashion's most compelling visions are born from resilience, ingenuity and self-belief.

4. Hawii: bridging heritage and modernity

For Ethiopian designer Hawi, fashion is more than clothing. It is a way of preserving culture while creating something entirely new.

Through Hawii, she fuses Ethiopian craftsmanship with a contemporary aesthetic that resonates globally. Based in Paris but rooted in Ethiopian heritage, the label explores themes of identity, freedom and self-expression through thoughtfully crafted collections.

International recognition has followed. Dr. Martens selected Hawii as one of only three designers featured in its Paris Fashion Week showroom, while African Fashion Up honoured Hawi with both Best Designer and Best Female Entrepreneur awards in 2025.

Yet her ambitions stretch beyond personal success. Through plans to establish a fashion school in Ethiopia, Hawi hopes to help cultivate the next generation of

3. Bone Koboyi: creativity without limits

Before there was a brand, there were scraps of fabric, old family clothes and a determination to create something extraordinary. Founded in Kigali in 2020 by Ras Maurice, Bone Koboyi emerged from a belief that creativity is not dependent on resources but on imagination. Maurice learned tailoring skills from a local craftsman before experimenting with his father's shirts, his mother's dresses and whatever fabrics he could find.



Those humble beginnings have grown into a label that sits between fashion, art and storytelling. Through reconstructed garments and inventive designs, Bone Koboyi transforms discarded materials into pieces that feel expressive, personal and deeply connected to Rwanda's creative landscape.

Its story is a powerful reminder that some of



Photos by Ro'tography image, Umberto Santoro, Cormac, Uncle Dyce, Tiana

African creative talent.

5. Mafi mafi: giving tradition a modern life



In an industry obsessed with the next new thing, Mahlet Afework, popularly known as Mafi, has found inspiration in something timeless.

Founded in Addis Ababa in 2011, Mafi mafi celebrates Ethiopia's rich textile traditions through contemporary ready-to-wear fashion. Drawing on handwoven fabrics and artisanal techniques, the brand reinterprets heritage for modern audiences without losing its cultural essence.

Afework's appreciation for craftsmanship began during childhood while watching her mother create embroidered garments for clients. Today, that same respect for artistry continues to shape the brand's identity.

Beyond its collections, Mafi mafi functions as a social enterprise that supports local weavers, designers, pattern makers and garment workers. In doing so, it demonstrates that preserving cultural heritage and building sustainable fashion ecosystems can go hand in hand.

6. Nairobi apparel district: streetwear with a Kenyan identity



Streetwear's influence is global, but Nairobi apparel district proves that local culture remains its greatest source of originality. Founded in 2017 by creative director Junior Orina, the brand merges fashion, art and urban culture through collections inspired by the creative energy of Nairobi. Rather than replicating trends from international streetwear capitals, it creates clothing that speaks directly to its environment and community.

Sustainability is also central to the brand's philosophy. Through the use of recycled textiles, upcycled fabrics and repurposed denim, Nairobi apparel district continually reimagines how streetwear can be produced responsibly.

Its success reflects the growing influence of African streetwear, a movement that is increasingly shaping global style rather than simply responding to it.

7. Away from home: the power of understated design

Away from home has built its identity around the art of subtlety, drawing inspiration from sportswear and translating it into elevated everyday essentials. Relaxed tailoring, thoughtful construction and versatile silhouettes define collections designed to remain relevant long after seasonal trends fade away.

The brand's strength lies in its ability to make simplicity feel intentional and refined. At a time when consumers are increasingly seeking longevity over novelty, its approach feels particularly relevant.



Sometimes the quietest pieces leave the strongest impression.

8. Dann: fashion for the Next Generation

Fashion has always been a tool for self-expression, and Danawit Alema is using it to explore what that means for a new generation. Through Dann, the Ethiopian designer creates contemporary pieces rooted in individuality, youth culture and social awareness. Her work reflects a desire to challenge expectations while encouraging young people to embrace their identities with confidence.

Alema's journey into fashion was shaped by a determination to succeed in

an industry where women have often faced barriers to entry. Since participating in the African Mosaique Fashion Incubation Programme in 2019, she has steadily built a creative platform that continues to resonate with emerging audiences. Dann represents the growing number of African women using fashion not only as a creative outlet but also as a vehicle for change.



9. Kargo: an emerging name worth watching

Fashion's future often belongs to the brands that are still flying under the radar.

Kargo is among a growing group of independent African labels attracting attention through originality, creative experimentation and a fresh approach to contemporary style. As consumers increasingly seek authenticity and individuality, emerging brands like Kargo are finding space to establish their own identities within an increasingly crowded marketplace.



Its rise reflects a broader shift within African fashion, where young designers are confidently building businesses and creative communities on their own terms.

10. Alter - native: challenging Fashion Conventions

Fashion thrives on reinvention, and Alter - native embodies that spirit.

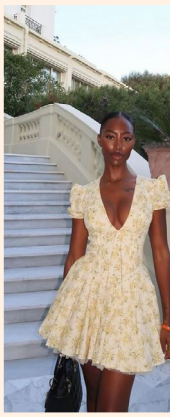


As an independent label exploring identity, creativity and self-expression, the brand represents the freedom that increasingly defines contemporary African fashion. Its work highlights the value of questioning convention and embracing new ideas, even when they sit outside mainstream expectations.

Like many of the continent's most exciting emerging brands, Alter - native reminds us that innovation often begins on the margins before influencing the centre.







Style guide this Detty December

by Dorcas Ayoola

Trying to decide what to wear to a Detty December concert? We've rounded up 10 looks for everything on your calendar, including brunch with friends and New Year's Eve dinner.

1. Alté baddie

Start with a vintage graphic tee and pair it with distressed jeans or loose cargo trousers. Tinted sunglasses and layered jewellery give the outfit an alté edge, while chunky trainers will serve you well if you're spending the evening on your feet at a concert.

2. Soft girl

For brunch, pair a floral midi skirt with a pastel top and ballet flats. A satin dress with kitten heels works for a daytime party. Keep the accessories small, such as a pair of delicate earrings or a vintage handbag.



3. Clean girl
A crisp white shirt tucked into tailored trousers works for lunch and can take you straight to dinner. Add simple gold hoops, flat sandals and a structured bag. If you'd rather skip the separates, try a matching set in one colour.



5. Afro-chic
Pair an Ankara skirt with a plain fitted top for a family gathering, or wear an adire dress with beaded earrings for dinner. If the print is bold, give it room by keeping your shoes and bag simple.



7. Old money
For a lunch reservation, try a cream linen set with brown loafers. For dinner, pair a navy midi dress with a structured bag. Fit does most of the work here, so pay attention to where your trousers break and how a blazer sits at the shoulders.



9. Maximalist
If you want to mix prints for a party, choose two that share a colour. A striped top and a floral skirt can work together when both pick up the same shade of red. You can also start with one bold print and repeat a colour from it in your earrings or shoes.



4. Baddie
A fitted dress and bold heels work for a birthday dinner. For a night of dancing, try a corset top with wide-leg trousers and shoes you can stay in for hours. A small shoulder bag keeps your hands free.



6. Streetwear
An oversized jersey, baggy jeans, and trainers make an easy outfit for a day with several stops. Swap the jeans for lightweight cargo trousers if you'll be outdoors in the heat. A crossbody bag keeps your phone and keys within reach.

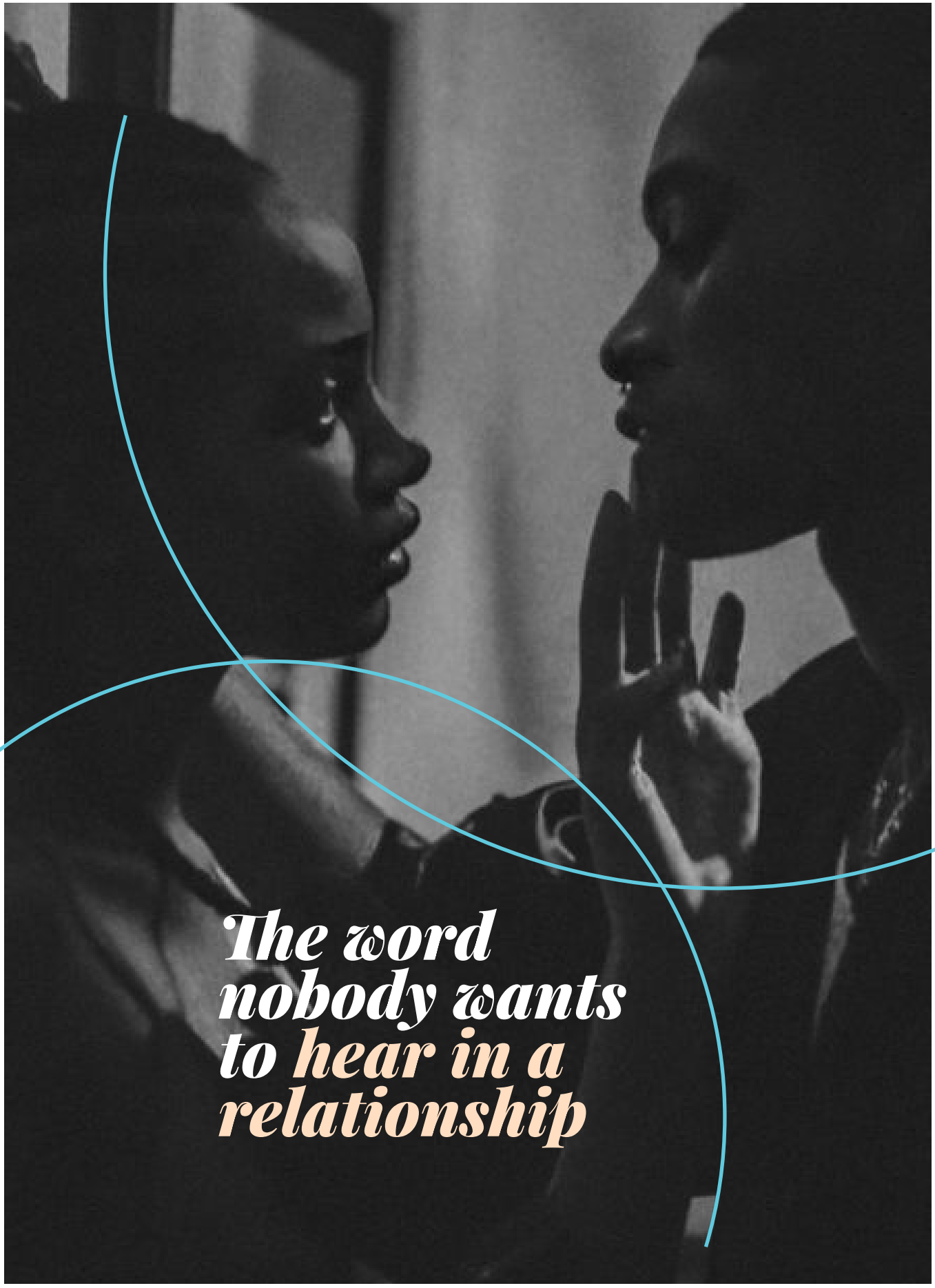


8. Coquette
A lace-trimmed top with a satin skirt works for an afternoon date. For a festive dinner, wear a satin dress with pearl earrings or tie a ribbon in your hair. One detail is enough to give the outfit the coquette look.



10. Glam
Save the sequinned dress for New Year's Eve or wear a satin gown with metallic sandals to a formal dinner. If your dress is already embellished, finish the look with small earrings and a plain clutch.

Photos via Pinterest



The word nobody wants to hear in a relationship

COLUMN



Dolly Ohanyere is a Lawyer, Relationship and Marriage Counsellor, NLP Practitioner, and Founder of The Healthy Marriage Hub and Thrive360 Limited. She coaches individuals and couples toward identity, purpose, and thriving relationships.



There is a word that makes people uncomfortable when it comes to relationships. A word that sounds cold, clinical, even unloving. A word that many people associate with distance rather than closeness.

The word is boundaries — and the discomfort most people feel about it is costing their relationships more than they realise

Here is what a boundary is not. It is not a wall. It is not a threat. It is not evidence that you do not trust your partner or that you are holding yourself back from the relationship. A boundary is simply a clear statement of what you are and are not available for.

It is the honest communication of where you end and another person begins and, in a relationship, that communication is not a sign of distance; it is a sign of respect — for yourself and for your partner.

The absence of healthy boundaries in a relationship does not produce closeness; it produces resentment. When you consistently say yes to things you mean no to, when you consistently absorb behaviour that diminishes you, when you consistently give more than you receive without naming it, the result is not love without limits; it is a slow accumulation of pain that eventually becomes impossible to contain.

The people who struggle most with boundaries are often the ones who were taught that love means giving everything and asking for nothing. That self-sacrifice is the highest form of love. That wanting something for yourself in a relationship is selfish. These are not truths; they are beliefs that produce exhausted, resentful people who do not understand why they feel empty in relationships where they have given so much.

A boundary is an act of love. It tells your partner honestly who you are, what you need, and what you will not accept. It gives them the information they need to love you well. And it protects the relationship from the slow damage of unspoken resentment.

"The absence of healthy boundaries in a relationship does not produce closeness; it produces resentment".

Boundaries every healthy relationship must have:

01 The respect boundary

Every relationship must have a clear and shared understanding that contempt, name-calling, public humiliation, and deliberate degradation are not acceptable — not in conflict and not in jest. This boundary does not need to be negotiated; it needs to be stated and held.

02 The privacy boundary

What is shared between the two of you stays between the two of you. The details of your arguments, your partner's vulnerabilities, your financial situation, your intimate life — these are not topics for friends, family, or social media. Privacy protects the safety of the relationship.

03 The time boundary

Both people in a relationship need time that belongs to them — time for rest, for friendships, for personal growth, for the things that make them who they are outside the relationship. A relationship that consumes every hour of both people's lives produces two people who have nothing new to bring to each other.

04 The family and friends boundary

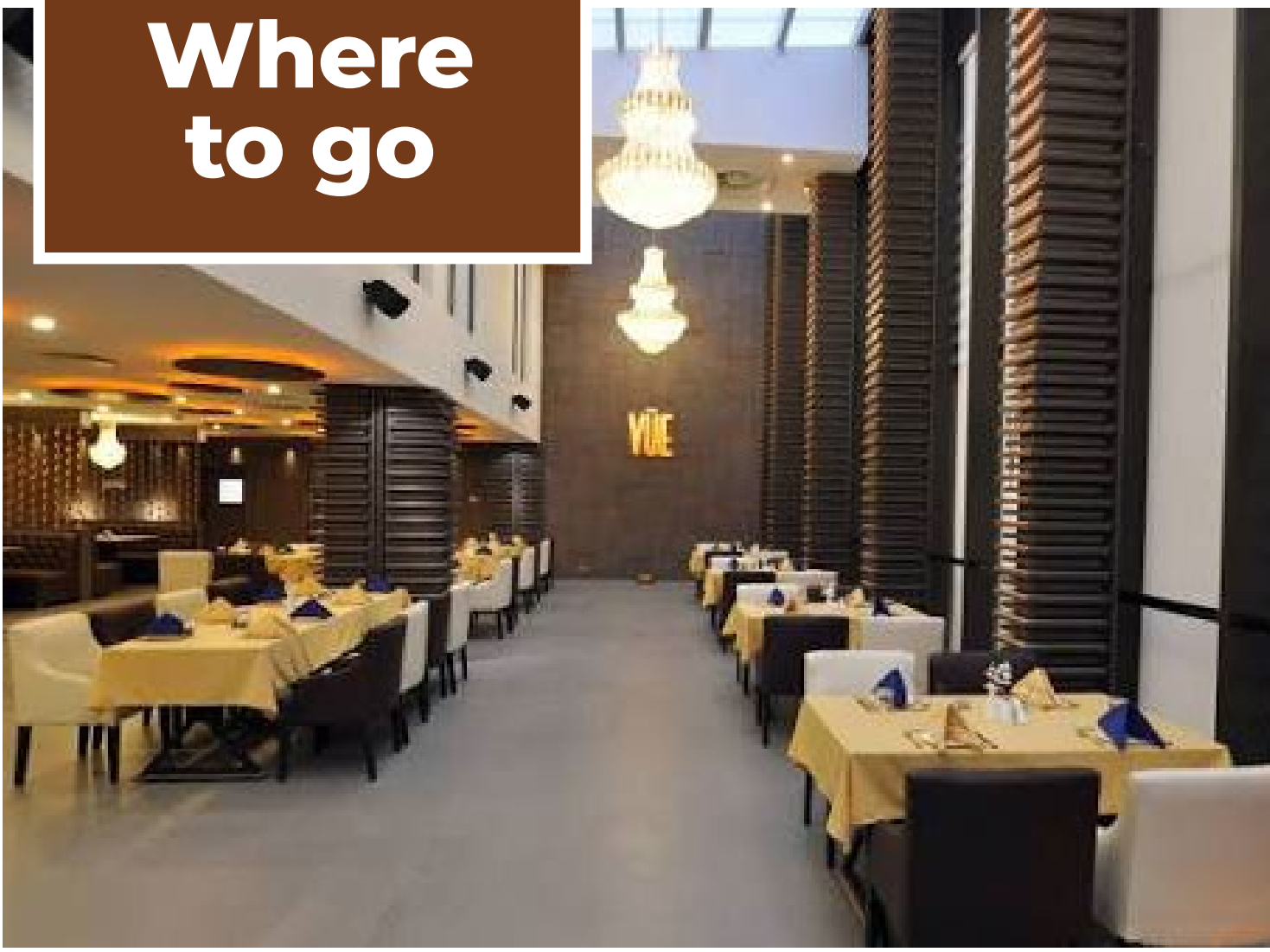
Both partners must agree on the role that extended family and friends play in their relationship. Who has access? Whose opinion carries weight? What conversations are had with outside parties about the relationship? Unspoken disagreements here are a consistent source of conflict in Nigerian relationships.

05 The financial boundary

Money is one of the most common sources of relationship conflict. Both partners need clarity on how decisions about money are made, who has access to what, and what constitutes a joint decision versus an individual one. Financial transparency is not a lack of trust; it is a condition for it.

A boundary is not a wall; it is an act of love. It tells your partner honestly who you are, what you need, and what you will not accept. That honesty is the foundation of genuine intimacy.

Where to go



Places for a night out in Lagos

Lagos truly owns the night, and the energy of the city completely changes once the sun goes down. From dodging chaotic traffic to spotting your favorite Afrobeats stars popping bottles in Victoria Island, the adrenaline here never stops.

NOK by Alára

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Sunday: 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM, 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM (Friday & Saturday until 10:30 PM); Closed Mondays

Overview: NOK by Alára offers a relaxed, unhurried dining experience filled with striking African art and a colourful outdoor garden. Featuring a menu that draws from different parts of the continent, it provides a calm and sophisticated environment for friends looking to catch up over great food.

The House Lagos

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily: 10:00 AM – 2:00 AM

Overview: Designed to feel like visiting a stylish home rather than a traditional restaurant, The House Lagos features distinct indoor rooms and cozy outdoor corners. The comfortable seating, food, and ambient music create an energetic yet intimate atmosphere for an effortless night out.

Cactus Restaurant

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday: 7:30 AM – 10:00 PM; Friday & Saturday: 7:30 AM – 10:30 PM; Sunday: 7:30 AM – 10:00 PM

Overview: Providing a welcome escape from city noise, Cactus Restaurant is best known for its breezy waterfront terrace. Guests can enjoy meals by the water as the weather cools down, complemented by live band performances on selected nights for a familiar and easygoing vibe.







New Afrika Shrine

Address: 1 NERDC Road, Agidingbi, Ikeja

Opening Hours: Open 24 hours daily (Best vibrant energy after 7:00 PM)

Overview: The legendary spiritual home of Afrobeat, run by the iconic Kuti family. Far from a polished VIP lounge, this massive open-air cultural hub offers a raw, completely authentic Lagos experience filled with sweat, palm wine, heavy political consciousness, and hypnotic live music.

Dynasty Lagos

Address: 24 Idejo Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: Dynasty Lagos offers a sleek, high-energy environment designed for guests looking to experience the vibrant nightlife of Victoria Island. With stylish interiors and a lively crowd, it stands out as a prime spot for late-night socializing and upscale partying.

Buzz Barr

Address: 30 Adetokunbo Ademola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: Buzz Barr is a popular staple on a bustling Victoria Island strip, known for its electric atmosphere, vibrant music policy, and social crowd. It is a go-to destination for anyone wanting to kick off an energetic night out with

Shiro Lagos

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday & Sunday: 12:30 PM – 12:00 AM; Friday & Saturday: 12:30 PM – 1:00 AM

Overview: Shiro Lagos delivers a polished Pan-Asian dining experience defined by high ceilings, dramatic interiors, and curated music. The atmosphere transitions smoothly from a calm dinner setting into a livelier nighttime lounge as the evening progresses.

Terra Kulture

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Overview: A vibrant cultural hub where an evening can seamlessly transition from authentic Nigerian cuisine to a play, concert, or live performance. It is a premier destination for visitors looking to combine dining with rich local arts and entertainment.

Piano Bistro

Address: Delborough Lagos, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily (Operating during hotel dining hours)

Overview: Located within The Delborough Lagos, Piano Bistro maintains a refined, tranquil mood with elegant interiors and gentle live piano music. The soft background sound ensures guests can dine and chat comfortably, making it well-suited for quiet dinners or small celebrations.

RSVP Poolside

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily (Evenings and late night)

Overview: Tucked behind RSVP's main dining room, The Poolside offers open-air seating, music, and an informal vibe. It strikes the right balance for friends looking to unwind, eat, and enjoy the night without diving into a crowded club.

Circa Non Pareil (Penthouse/Lounge)

Address: 12 Mandilas Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: Perched with striking views in Lekki Phase 1, Circa Non Pareil combines sophisticated penthouse lounging with a vibrant nightlife pulse. The space is ideal for guests seeking a mix of fine dining, signature cocktails, and a chic party atmosphere after dark.

W Bar Lounge

Address: LASWA Yard, Under Falomo Bridge, Ikoyi, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: Set against a unique waterfront backdrop under the Falomo Bridge, W Bar Lounge offers an open-air vibe complete with cool breezes, good music, and an energetic crowd looking to unwind by the water.

Escape Nightclub

Address: 234B Adeola Odeku Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Nightly

Overview: Located on one of Victoria Island's most famous avenues, Escape Nightclub delivers a high-octane clubbing experience. Known for its celebrity sightings and vibrant party energy, it is a staple of Lagos nightlife.

355 Restaurant and Lounge

Address: 9A Oko Awo Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: 355 blends a classic Mexican-inspired dining experience with a lively lounge setting. As the evening progresses, the atmosphere shifts smoothly from a relaxed dinner spot into an energetic hub for late-night drinks and socializing.

Nitro Nightclub

Address: 14 Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Nightly

Overview: Nitro Nightclub is built for serious nightlife enthusiasts, featuring heavy basslines, dynamic lighting, and a packed dance floor. It is a premier destination in Victoria Island for dancing late into the morning hours.

Island Breeze

Address: Landmark Beach, Water Corporation Road, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: Island Breeze brings a coastal, festive atmosphere to the shoreline of Landmark Beach. Guests can enjoy music, drinks, and ocean views in an open-air setting that feels like a permanent beach party.

Bay Lounge

Address: Plot 10, Admiralty Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: A long-standing favorite in Lekki, Bay Lounge offers a relaxed waterfront terrace overlooking the water. It seamlessly transitions from a breezy spot for evening drinks and grilled platters into a lively weekend hangout.





The Vibe Lagos

Address: 16b Akin Olugbade Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

Overview: True to its name, The Vibe Lagos delivers an energetic blend of great music, social networking, and nightlife culture. It draws a stylish crowd looking for an electric atmosphere right in the middle of Victoria Island.



Cage Lagos

Address: No. 2 Shalom Street, Ago Palace Way, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Daily (with club setups running Friday – Sunday)

Overview: Cage Lagos brings a premium, upscale Island-style nightlife experience to the Mainland. Combining a beach-like poolside aesthetic with a high energy nightclub, it is a highly popular, visually striking spot for groups looking to enjoy Afrobeats, elite DJ sets, an energetic crowd without crossing the bridge.

Club Quilox

Address: 873 Ozumba Mbadiwe Avenue, Victoria Island

Opening Hours: Wednesday to Sunday, 10:00 PM – 8:00 AM (Closed Mondays and Tuesdays)

Overview: This is West Africa's most iconic luxury megaclub. Drenched in rich gold and red lighting, it is a high-octane paradise for big spenders, corporate moguls, and A-list celebrities looking to pop bottles and dance to world-class Afrobeats DJs until the sun comes up.

Sky Bar Rooftop

Address: Lagoon Compound, 1c Ozumba Mbadiwe Avenue, Victoria Island

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 6:00 PM – 2:00 AM

Overview: Perched comfortably above the city's chaos, this high-end rooftop lounge serves up panoramic waterfront views and premium cocktails. It provides a sophisticated, breezy atmosphere that is perfect for a relaxed early-evening social hour or a romantic date night.



Zaza Lagos

Address: 19 Agoro Odiyan Street, Victoria Island

Opening Hours: Wednesday to Sunday, 7:00 PM – 2:00 AM (Closed Mondays and Tuesdays)

Overview: A stylish restaurant and high-energy playground that flawlessly transitions from fine dining to interactive theater shows and late-night dancing. It attracts an exclusive, fashion-forward crowd looking for great food, upscale design, and high-energy music in a more intimate setting.

Kaly Restaurant and Bar

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM

Overview: Kaly combines high-end rooftop dining with sweeping panoramic views of Victoria Island and Eko Atlantic. After sunset, the open-air setting sparkles with city lights, offering selected live entertainment alongside a relaxed space to eat and talk.

Hard Rock Cafe Lagos

Address: Oniru, Lagos

Opening Hours: Monday to Thursday: 12:30 PM – 10:00 PM; Friday to Sunday: 12:30 PM – 12:00 AM

Overview: Set against a stunning beachfront backdrop, Hard Rock Cafe Lagos offers spacious seating and regular live music. Whether catching a high-energy performance or enjoying a relaxed ocean view during a quieter program, it delivers a classic social experience.



Cinemas and theatres across Nigeria

Find cinemas, private screening rooms and theatre venues across Nigeria.

MUSON Centre

Location: Onikan, Lagos Island, Lagos

What it is: The grand, elegant high-society hub for classical music, opera, and premium stage plays in Nigeria.

Why go: If you want to swap popcorn for a glass of wine and experience some world-class orchestral strings or breathtaking musical theatre, this is your spot. Dress up smart; the crowd here takes arts culture beautifully seriously.

National Theatre

Location: Iganmu, Surulere, Lagos

What it is: Nigeria's ultimate cultural monument. Shaped like a military cap, it is an architectural icon from the 1970s that recently got a massive, modern facelift.

Why go: It is pure history. Going here is a rite of passage for any culture lover. It is the birthplace of Nigeria's performing arts scene, and the massive halls are built for grand, unforgettable spectacles.

Terra Kulture

Location: Victoria Island, Lagos

What it is: A buzzing, lively cultural hub that combines an art gallery, an authentic Nigerian restaurant, and a top-tier theatre hall.

Why go: This is the beating heart of modern Nigerian theatre. If you want to see high-energy, Broadway-style Nigerian musicals with incredible dancing and costumes, Terra Kulture does it better than anyone else. Plus, you can grab amazing pounded yam right after the curtain falls.

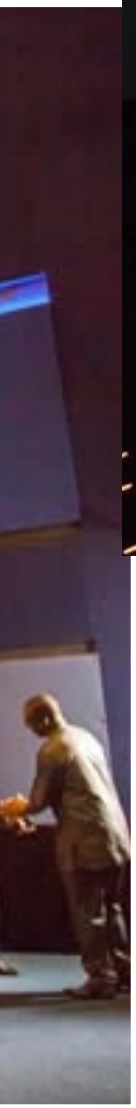
Glover Memorial Hall

Location: Marina, Lagos Island, Lagos

What it is: One of the oldest and most historic performance spaces in Nigeria, beautifully restored to host cutting-edge modern stage plays and cultural festivals.

Why go: It perfectly blends old-school Lagos heritage with fresh, contemporary stage productions. The acoustics are fantastic, and it is a brilliant place to catch rising stars in the local acting scene.





Deja Vu Private Cinema Abuja

Location: Wuse, Abuja

What it is: An ultra-exclusive, private screening lounge where you rent out the entire room for just you and your favourite people.

Why go: Total privacy. You get massive screens, cosy plush couches, and custom food service without having to share the room with strangers. It is absolutely perfect for an intimate birthday bash, a romantic proposal, or a VIP gaming night.

Cinema Club Private Cinema Port Harcourt

Location: Elimgbu, Port Harcourt

What it is: A hidden, high-end private cinema lounge designed for exclusive, small-group entertainment.

Why go: It completely redefines "movie night." Instead of standard theatre seats, you get a luxury private space with premium sound and absolute comfort. It is the ultimate way to celebrate a special occasion with a close circle of friends.

Grenhauz Cinema Port Harcourt

Location: Port Harcourt

What it is: A beautiful, highly-rated boutique entertainment spot that offers intimate screenings and excellent customer care.

Why go: It feels much more personal and cosy than a giant commercial multiplex. The staff treat you like a VIP, the seating is incredibly comfortable, and it is a fantastic escape if you want to avoid the usual crazy weekend mall crowds.

EbonyLife Cinema

Location: Victoria Island, Lagos

What it is: A super-chic, boutique luxury cinema designed for film lovers who want a five-star, glamorous movie-going experience.

Why go: It is the ultimate date-night spot. Think plush reclining chairs, trendy neon lights, a beautiful rooftop bar, and artisanal snacks. It is where you go to watch the latest Nollywood blockbuster while feeling like royalty.

Filmhouse Cinema

Location: Ado Bayero Mall, Kano

What it is: The go-to modern multiplex in northern Nigeria for catching both massive Hollywood blockbusters and popular Kannywood films.

Why go: It brings high-tech cinema culture right to the heart of Kano. The screens are huge, the sound shakes your seat, and it is the perfect lively weekend escape inside a bustling mall.

Genesis Deluxe Cinemas

Location: Kano

What it is: A sleek, reliable, and comfortable commercial cinema franchise offering a crisp digital viewing experience.

Why go: It delivers a flawlessly smooth movie night. If you want great projection, perfectly salted popcorn, comfy seats, and a completely stress-free environment to watch the latest trending movies, Genesis always hits the mark.

Ozone Cinema Kano

Location: Kano

What it is: A trendy, youthful, and high-energy cinema spot that focuses on bringing the biggest entertainment hits to movie lovers.

Why go: The vibe here is always electric and full of life. It is the best place to watch big action films or hilarious comedies because the crowd is super expressive; expect plenty of laughing, gasping, and shared fun.

Your next **adventure spot**

A canopy walk, a museum visit, or an afternoon at a park offers a different way to spend your day. These six Lagos destinations cater to visitors interested in nature, history, culture, and outdoor recreation.



Badagry Heritage Museum

Location: Lander Road, Marina, Badagry, Lagos.

Opening hours: Confirm with the museum before visiting.

Housed in a former colonial district officer's office, Badagry Heritage Museum documents the history of the transatlantic slave trade. Its collections provide context for understanding Badagry's place in that history. Allow time to read the displays rather than rush through the building.

Omu Resort

Location: Bogije town, off the Lekki-Epe Expressway, Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos.

Opening hours: Monday to Saturday, 9am to 6pm; Sunday, noon to 6pm.

Omu Resort brings several attractions together, making it an option for families and groups planning a full day out. Check the available ticket packages before booking, as access to individual attractions depends on the package selected.

Lekki Conservation Centre

Location: Km 19, Lekki-Epe Expressway, Lekki, Lagos.

Opening hours: Confirm current visiting and canopy walk hours with the Nigerian Conservation Foundation.

The 78-hectare reserve offers a chance to spend time among trees and wetland habitats within Lagos. Its canopy walkway is a draw for visitors seeking a view above the trees, while the reserve's paths offer another way to explore the grounds. Check access arrangements before setting out.







Freedom Park

Location: 1 Hospital Road, Lagos Island, Lagos.

Opening hours: Daily, 9am to 9pm. Food court and bar hours extend on event nights.

Built on the site of the former Broad Street Prison, Freedom Park combines colonial history with an active arts programme. Visit to see the grounds and memorial features, or plan your outing around a concert, exhibition or festival. Check the programme before visiting, as some events require separate tickets.

Ndubuisi Kanu Park

Location: Mobolaji Johnson Avenue, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos.

Opening hours: Confirm current park hours before visiting.

Ndubuisi Kanu Park offers space for outdoor recreation on the mainland. Following renovation work, the Lagos State Parks and Gardens Agency announced preparations for its reopening in October 2025. Check which facilities are currently available before planning your outing. The Rec Room, a children's play venue within the park, operates its own visiting schedule.

John Randle Centre for Yoruba Culture and History

Location: Onikan Roundabout, Lagos Island, Lagos.

Opening hours: Wednesday to Monday, 10am to 6pm. Closed on Tuesdays.

The John Randle Centre focuses on Yoruba culture and history through its museum displays and public programmes. It suits visitors interested in cultural exhibitions, with workshops and family activities also forming part of its programme. Check the centre's calendar for activities scheduled on your chosen date.

Coffee shops across Nigeria

by Chidinma Enweani

Whether you need a quiet spot to work on your laptop, a sunny place for weekend breakfast, or a really good cup of coffee, Nigeria's coffee space is growing fast.

These great coffee shops double as stylish spaces, creative hubs, and top food spots.



Coffee Bar, Abuja

Sleek, minimalist, and intensely functional, this venue is built for focus and flavour. The atmosphere is sharp and modern, designed with clean lines, comfortable seating arrangements, and a serious dedication to productivity. They serve meticulously roasted coffee beans brewed into potent americanos, smooth flat whites, and refreshing iced beverages.

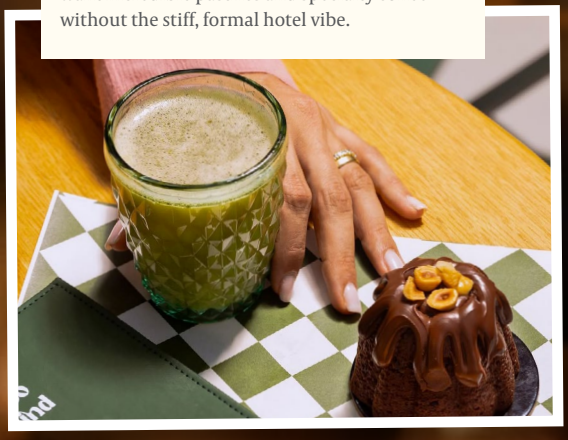
Why you should visit: You should visit if you are a remote worker, digital nomad, or creative professional looking for high-speed Wi-Fi paired with a serious caffeine kick to power through your deadlines.



Ziya Federal Palace

The Lobby Café x Ziya brings Ziya Delicacy Boutique's cult-favourite bakes, pastries, and signature drinks straight into the iconic Federal Palace Hotel lobby.

Why you should visit: It is the ultimate spot for a chic, low-key catch-up or a solo treat when you want incredible pastries and specialty coffee without the stiff, formal hotel vibe.



Café Flour

This intimate neighbourhood favorite smells entirely of comfort the second you cross the threshold. The ambiance is warm, unpretentious, and deeply welcoming, featuring rustic wooden accents and gentle lighting that encourages you to linger. They excel in artisanal baking, serving fresh-out-of-the-oven loaves, buttery croissants, and robust, expertly pulled espresso shots.

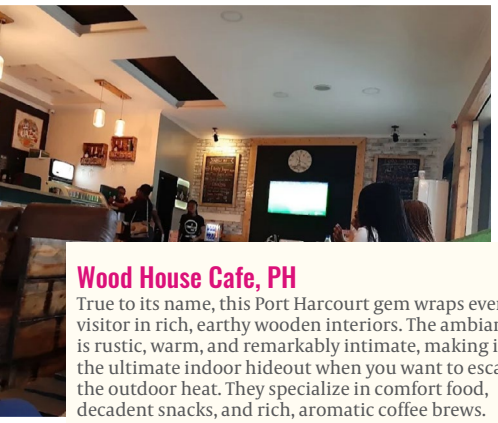
Why you should visit: Good for a quiet breakfast date or when you need a comforting slice of homemade cake paired with a hot cup of coffee to reset your day.



Pink Bear, Abuja

Tucked away in the capital, this pastel-drenched dreamscape is a whimsical escape from the city's formal pace. The interior is bathed in soft pink hues and plush, cozy seating, making it feel less like a traditional eatery and more like a curated film set. They specialize in velvety lattes, Instagram-worthy sweet treats, and delicate pastries that taste just as good as they look.

Why you should visit: Perfect for a relaxed afternoon catch-up with close friends or whenever your social media feed is screaming for a vibrant, cheerful backdrop.



Wood House Cafe, PH

True to its name, this Port Harcourt gem wraps every visitor in rich, earthy wooden interiors. The ambiance is rustic, warm, and remarkably intimate, making it the ultimate indoor hideout when you want to escape the outdoor heat. They specialize in comfort food, decadent snacks, and rich, aromatic coffee brews.

Why you should visit: To enjoy a quiet afternoon with a good novel or when you are craving a grounded, unpretentious space to slow down your pace.

ART CAFE, Lagos

A legendary bohemian sanctuary steeped in the creative history of the city. The atmosphere is eclectic, artistic, and bursting with soul, featuring vintage furniture, walls plastered with local art, and an effortlessly cool crowd. They serve a diverse menu of comforting meals, fresh juices, and dependable coffee classics.

Why you should visit: Visit if you would love to soak up the inspiring creative energy, sketch in your notebook, or lose track of hours conversing with fellow artists, writers, and thinkers.



Dulce Cafe & Bakery, Lagos

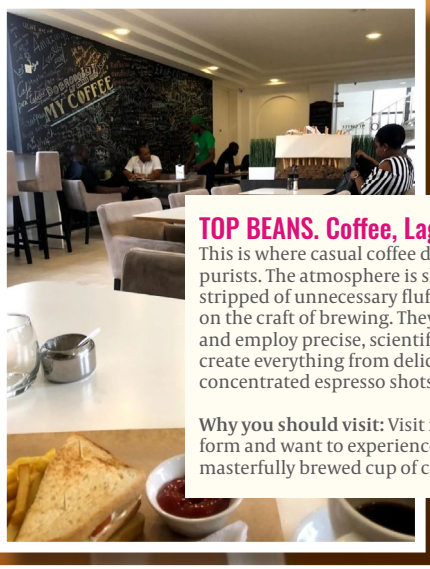
As a long-standing fixture on the island's luxury dining scene, this spot delivers refined elegance on every level. The ambiance is upscale, polished, and sophisticated, featuring chic contemporary furnishings and an expansive display of confections. They are masters of luxury baking, offering gourmet desserts, heavy-duty breakfast spreads, and premium coffee pairings.

Why you should visit: Beautiful spot to celebrate a milestone, impress a business date, or treat yourself to high-end pastries in an environment that feels effortlessly exclusive.

Nikkybell cafe, PH

A warm, community-driven neighborhood fixture that prioritizes comfort above all else. The atmosphere is friendly, unpretentious, and instantly puts you at ease the moment you walk through the door. They serve dependable, classic espresso drinks alongside comforting local and continental snacks.

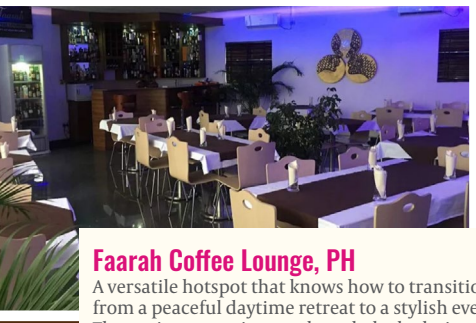
Why you should visit: Pay a visit when you want to bypass the scene-y pretension and simply enjoy a genuinely good cup of coffee served with a smile in a relaxed environment.



TOP BEANS. Coffee, Lagos

This is where casual coffee drinkers transform into purists. The atmosphere is sleek and dedicated, stripped of unnecessary fluff to put the absolute focus on the craft of brewing. They source exceptional beans and employ precise, scientific extraction methods to create everything from delicate pour-overs to rich, concentrated espresso shots.

Why you should visit: Visit if you view coffee as an art form and want to experience what a truly well-roasted, masterfully brewed cup of coffee tastes like.



Faarah Coffee Lounge, PH

A versatile hotspot that knows how to transition smoothly from a peaceful daytime retreat to a stylish evening lounge. The environment is upscale and plush, designed with mood lighting and comfortable lounge seating that invites you to stay a while. They craft exceptional coffees alongside a sophisticated menu of small plates and specialty drinks. Why you should visit: You should visit when your day calls for a seamless shift from catching up on emails over morning espresso to winding down with upscale relaxation in the evening.



Marley and Blue, PH

A design-forward, trendy addition to Port Harcourt's expanding culinary map. The aesthetic is vibrant, youthful, and contemporary, filled with clever design details and a buzzing social atmosphere. They offer inspired brews, creative drink formulations, and delicious pastries that cater to modern palates.

Why you should visit: You should visit if you want to be seen at the newest cool spot in town, catch up with your social circle, or simply enjoy a wonderfully crafted latte in a genuinely inspiring space.

Cafe One Yaba

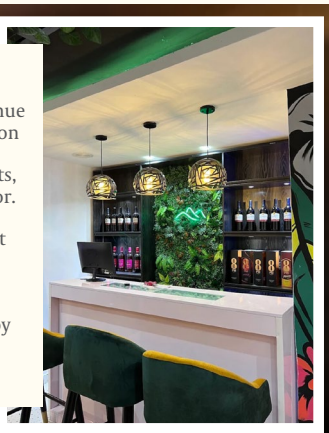
Nestled right in the pulsating heart of the mainland tech district, this space acts as an incubator for ideas and caffeine alike. The vibe is innovative, young, and dynamic, functioning seamlessly as both a collaborative workspace and a relaxed social lounge. They supply high-speed internet, steady workspace power, and reliable, energizing coffee options.

Why you should visit: You should visit if you want to plug into the local tech and startup ecosystem, collaborate with bright minds, or simply need a buzzing, productive atmosphere to get things done.

Tahilla Café, PH

Sleek, modern, and effortlessly chic, this venue brings a touch of metropolitan sophistication to the Garden City. The decor features contemporary lighting, clean seating layouts, and a stylish crowd that matches the interior. They serve a diverse lineup of artisanal coffees, specialty teas, and delightful dessert selections.

Why you should visit: You should visit to kickstart your weekend with style or to enjoy a trendy midday hangout that feels fresh, upbeat, and visually appealing.



Best spots for games and adventure



Looking for somewhere to play games or try something new? Here are gaming and adventure spots in Lagos.

1. Crusifix Games and Lounge

Location: Space 103, The Palms Shopping Mall, Oniru, Victoria Island.

Opening Hours: Daily 9:00 AM – 11:00 PM.

Why Go: It is the ultimate spot to blow off steam after a long week.

What to Expect: A beautifully designed modern lounge buzzing with neon accents and cosy seating. Expect top-tier virtual reality simulators, cutting-edge PC and console setups, and an intense multiplayer arena.

2. VR Place Nigeria

Location: 14b Karimu Kotun Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Daily 11:00 AM – 9:00 PM.

Why Go: It is one of the most comprehensive and dedicated virtual reality playgrounds in the city, making it a fantastic destination for tech-forward date nights or friendly group battles.

What to Expect: Complete sensory immersion. Step inside to find massive active VR bays hosting fan favourites like Beat Sabre and heart-pounding horror shooters like The Walking Dead.

3. Rufus & Bee

Location: Twinwaters, Okunde Blue Water Scheme, Off Remi Olowude Street, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Daily 12:00 PM – 10:30 PM.

Why Go: It is a massive, multi-level wonderland that channels classic American boardwalk energy with a vibrant Lagos twist.

What to Expect: An overwhelming, beautiful sensory overload of flashing lights and nostalgic sounds. You will find over 100 arcade games, including classic basketball hoops, racing simulators, dance pads, and coin-pushers.

4. Enzo Reality

Location: Lekki Town Square Mall, 8 Providence Street, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Mon–Sun 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM.

Why go: This highly-rated tech hub focuses heavily on providing premium, mind-bending VR adventures backed by exceptional, attentive customer service.

What to expect: A stunning, futuristic space packed with the latest augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) tech. Expect to buckle into intense 360-degree rotating simulator chairs that make virtual rollercoasters and flight fights feel shockingly real.





5. Upbeat Centre

Location: 11 Admiralty Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening hours: Tue–Sun 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM.

Why go: If your idea of gaming involves getting airborne and breaking a real sweat, this massive indoor trampoline sports park is the holy grail.

What to expect: High-flying physical action. Expect an enormous grid of interconnected trampolines, foam pits, dodgeball courts, and a challenging ninja warrior obstacle course. It is an electric, high-cardio environment perfect for unleashing your inner child or challenging your mates to a slam-dunk contest.

6. Escape Room 33

Location: 33 Fola Osibo Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening hours: Tue–Sun 12:00 PM – 9:00 PM.

Why go: To put your intellect, teamwork, and nerves to the test. It is the perfect destination for live-action puzzle solving in the city.

What to expect: Atmospheric, highly detailed themed rooms where you and your team are locked inside with exactly 60 minutes to escape. Expect to hunt for hidden keys, crack cryptic codes, and unravel mysteries under the ticking clock. It is high-stakes, thrilling, and a brilliant ice-breaker for groups.

7. Illusions Zone

Location: Garnet Plaza, Igbo-Efon, Lekki-Epe Expressway (with a Mainland branch at Ile Oja Mall, Opebi).

Opening hours: Mon–Sat 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Lekki).
Why go: It is a brilliantly quirky, interactive exhibition designed to completely warp your perception of reality and upgrade your social media feed.

What to expect: A maze of mind-bending optical illusions, Ames rooms that distort your height, mirrored infinity chambers, and perspective tricks. Friendly on-site guides are on hand to show you exactly where to stand to capture the perfect, gravity-defying photo.

8. Funzia World

Location: 3B Anthony Etukudo Close, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening hours: Daily 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM.

Why Go: A highly interactive entertainment centre engineered perfectly for young families and kids' birthday celebrations.

What to expect: A clean, brightly coloured paradise of safe indoor play. Expect multi-level soft play structures, obstacle courses, ball pits, and a gentle selection of beginner-friendly arcade machines designed to keep toddlers and pre-teens thoroughly entertained for hours.

9. Providha Fun City

Location: 79 Mobolaji Bank Anthony Way, Ikeja, Lagos.

Opening hours: Daily 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

Why go: A fantastic indoor entertainment hub that brings premium island-style gaming luxury straight to the Mainland.

What to expect: A sprawling, high-energy layout that has a little bit of everything. Expect sleek, modern bowling lanes, a massive array of prize-winning arcade cabinets, virtual reality simulators, and a swimming pool area. You buy a gaming access card at entry to tap your way through the various activities seamlessly

10. Funsation NG

Location: Penthouse Floor, Centro Lekki Mall, Admiralty Way, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos.

Opening Hours: Daily 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM.

Why go: A versatile indoor amusement park that perfectly balances casual family hangouts with vibrant children's event spaces.

What to expect: A joyful mix of physical play areas and digital entertainment. Expect bumper cars, a small indoor train ride, virtual reality setups, and an array of classic carnival-style arcade games that dole out prize tickets.

Where to eat Thai in Nigeria



Here is our guide to Thai and Asian-fusion restaurants in Nigeria.

TT Lagos

Location: 5 Olosa Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday, noon to 10.30pm. Closed on Mondays.

The vibe: A hidden retreat away from the bustle of Victoria Island. Formerly known as Thai Thai, this intimate, family-run boutique restaurant limits its seating capacity to keep the dining experience personal. Its decor features minimalist furnishings and green accents.

Why visit: The menu includes chor muang, flower-shaped purple dumplings, and classic pad Thai, which combines sweet tamarind with smoky wok flavours. The restaurant offers an intimate setting for diners who value privacy and careful presentation.

Kunakorn Thai Restaurant

Location: Ahmadu Bello Way, Wuse, Abuja

Opening hours: Daily, 11am to 10pm.

The vibe: Understated and traditional, with a focus on food. Located in Wuse, Kunakorn has a warm, welcoming interior reminiscent of a Bangkok eatery.

Why visit: Its dishes include green papaya salad, known as som tum, and coconut curries. Consider it for a relaxed lunch or a midweek dinner.

Siam City Thai Restaurant

Location: Plot 2044, 54 Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja

Opening hours: Daily, noon to 11 pm.

The vibe: An upscale setting in Maitama, with woodwork and modern fittings.

Why visit: The menu includes massaman curry with tender meat and layered spices, alongside crisp, seasoned fish dishes. The setting suits celebratory dinners and business meals.

Orchid House Thai Restaurant

Location: 14 Konoko Crescent, Wuse, Abuja
Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 10pm. Closed on Mondays.

The vibe: Bright and airy, with a garden-like setting suitable for families and groups.

Why visit: Its tom yum soup combines lemongrass, galangal and lime leaves. The menu also includes vegetarian and vegan options.



Asia Town Restaurant

Location: 38 Forces Avenue, Old GRA, Port Harcourt

Opening hours: Daily, 11am to 11pm.
The vibe: A spacious setting with high ceilings, dramatic lighting, and an open-plan layout.

Why visit: The menu offers Asian-fusion dishes, including Thai-inspired seafood. Options include pineapple fried rice served in a carved-out pineapple shell, spring rolls, and sweet-and-sour stir-fries. The venue accommodates birthday dinners, anniversaries, and group outings.

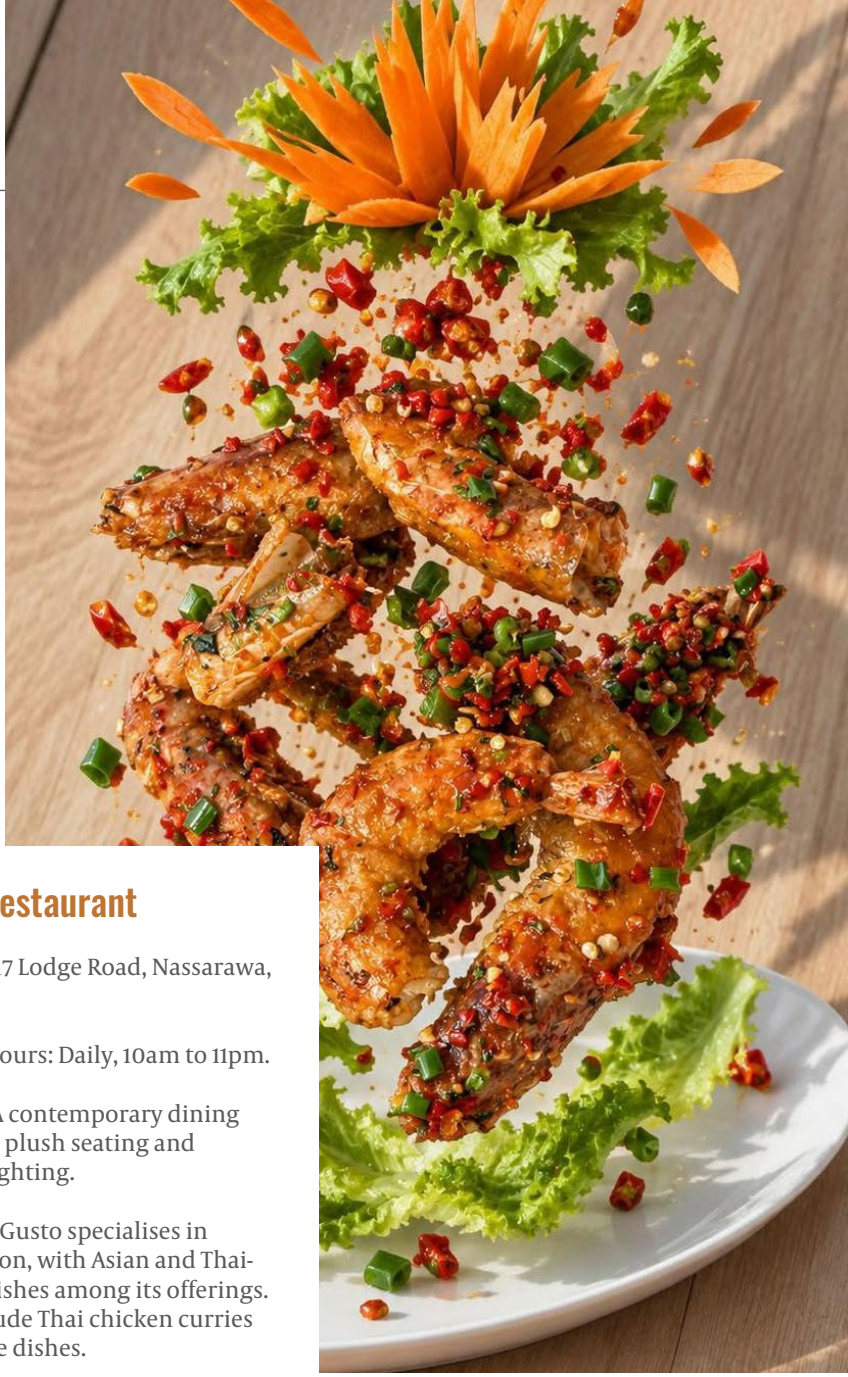
Miso Japanese and Thai Restaurant

Location: Summerset Continental Hotel rooftop, 34 Usuma Street, Maitama, Abuja

Opening hours: Daily, noon to 11 pm.

The vibe: Rooftop dining with views of the city's skyline and a pan-Asian menu.

Why visit: The menu combines Japanese and Thai dishes, making it an option for groups with different preferences. Choices include sashimi and Thai basil stir-fry, known as pad kra prow. Drinks and weekend music also form part of the offering.



Gusto Restaurant

Location: 17 Lodge Road, Nassarawa, Kano

Opening hours: Daily, 10am to 11pm.

The vibe: A contemporary dining space with plush seating and ambient lighting.

Why visit: Gusto specialises in global fusion, with Asian and Thai-inspired dishes among its offerings. These include Thai chicken curries and noodle dishes.

Asia Town Restaurant: Alternative entry

Location: 38 Forces Avenue, Old GRA, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Opening hours: Daily, noon to 10.30pm.

The vibe: An upscale restaurant with Mediterranean-influenced decor and a lounge area, suitable for birthdays, dates and group dining.

Why visit: Its Asian menu includes spicy Thai prawns and chicken in massaman curry sauce, alongside spring rolls and cocktails.

Siam City Thai Restaurant: Alternative entry

Location: Plot 2044, 54 Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja

Opening hours: Monday to Thursday, 11am to 11pm; Friday, 11am to 12.15am; weekends, 2pm to 11pm.

The vibe: An outdoor garden lounge with bamboo huts, open lawns and warm lighting.

Why visit: The menu combines Thai dishes, such as pad Thai, with Nigerian options, including spicy grilled catfish. The supplied information also lists a Friday salsa dance party.

Chi Thai Revolution Restaurant

Location: 15 Rhine Street, Maitama, Abuja

Opening hours: Daily, noon to 10 pm.

The vibe: A relaxed space with an indoor dining room, an outdoor garden with gazebos, a koi pond, and a rooftop area.

Why visit: The pan-Asian menu includes pad Thai, sushi, spicy Korean chicken wings, and dumplings. The supplied information lists karaoke nights on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 6 pm.

FILMS
to watch in cinemas this November

★★★★★

by Musa Adekunle

A campus romance, a cybercrime drama, and a ghost scam gone wrong feature on November's watchlist. Here are eight films to watch this month. Check our cinema listings for showtimes near you.

01 Street Fighter



Ryu and Ken reunite when Chun-Li recruits them for the World Warrior Tournament. A hidden conspiracy raises the stakes, forcing the fighters to confront their past and face each other. Kitao Sakurai directs the action film, with a cast that includes Andrew Koji, Noah Centineo, Jason Momoa, Callina Liang, and Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson.

02 Wire Transfer



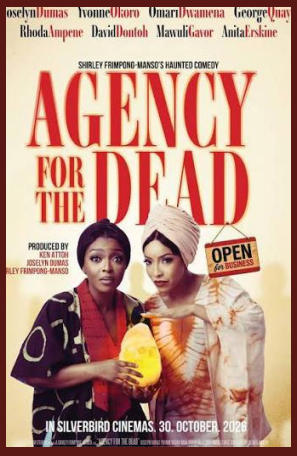
Tega enters a world of cybercrime and fast money, where betrayal makes every decision dangerous. As the authorities close in, he must navigate divided loyalties and decide how far he will go to protect himself and those around him. Directed by Lawrence Uchechukwu, the action drama stars Charles Okocha, Deyemi Okanlawon, Gideon Okeke, Hanks Anuku, Nkechi Blessing, and Segun Arinze.

03 Tele x Zikora



Zikora leaves her comfortable but lonely life in Houston for a semester at Lagos Metropolitan University. A demanding group project pairs her with Tele, a brilliant but guarded engineering student, and their frequent clashes gradually give way to romance. Adenike Adebayo-Esho directs the drama, whose cast includes Mike Afolarin, Daniel Etim Effiong, Ibrahim Chatta, Mercy Aigbe, and Olumide Oworu.

04 Agency for the Dead



Sisters Phebe and Sophia fake supernatural encounters to escape eviction, only to awaken real spirits. With ghostly visitors multiplying and suspicious detectives watching, they must find a way to contain the chaos their scam has unleashed. Shirley Frimpong-Manso directs the Ghanaian comic thriller, starring Joselyn Dumas, Yvonne Okoro, Mawuli Gavor, David Dontoh and Anita Erskine.

★★★★★

05 A Land Apart



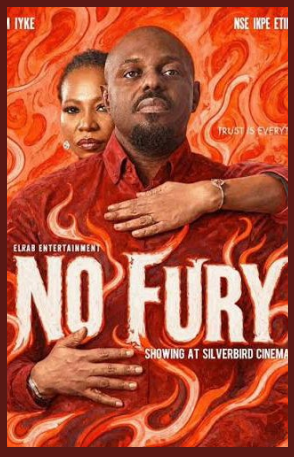
In an alternate Nigeria where agriculture drives national wealth, the illegitimate daughter of Africa's richest agripreneur inherits his empire. Her inheritance comes with a decision that extends beyond the family: which world power should receive her father's life-saving crop formula? Directed by Pever Bem, the drama features Richard Mofe-Damijo, Onyeka Onwenu, Sam Dede, Daniel Etim Effiong and Jide Bolarinwa.

06 Clayface



Rising Hollywood star Matt Hagen undergoes a horrifying transformation when scientific ambition strips him of his identity and humanity. His descent into a revenge-driven monster forms the centre of this horror thriller. James Watkins directs, with Tom Rhys Harries, Naomi Ackie, Max Minghella, Eddie Marsan and Nancy Carroll among the cast.

07 No Fury



A couple's seemingly perfect life falls apart when a hidden betrayal comes to light. The wife's pursuit of revenge sparks a conflict that threatens the bonds between their families, leaving her to confront whether their love can survive the deceit. Akay Mason directs the drama, starring Nse Ikpe-Etim, Jim Iyke, Nosa Rex, and Kameel Audu.

08 Arnie & Barney



Two clumsy ants with big ambitions stumble through life in the meadow, causing trouble wherever they go. Their misadventures turn everyday setbacks into a story of friendship, failure and small victories. Directed by Sean Heuston, the animated comedy features the voices of David Cameron, David Collins, Juliette Crosbie and Shane Dundas.



Prawn and avocado salad



by Chidinma Enweani

Pan-seared prawns, ripe avocado, and crisp greens make a quick lunch. Add boiled eggs and cherry tomatoes, then finish with a creamy citrus dressing.

Ingredients

For the prawns

- 300 g large prawns, peeled and deveined
- 1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

For the salad

- 4 cups mixed salad greens or chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 large ripe avocado, peeled and sliced
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ medium red onion, thinly sliced
- ½ medium cucumber, sliced (optional)

For the dressing

- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon or lime juice
- 1 teaspoon ketchup or sweet chilli sauce
- A pinch each of salt and ground black pepper

Method

1. Boil the eggs. Put the eggs in a small saucepan and cover them with cold water. Bring to a boil, then turn off the heat, cover the pan, and leave the eggs for 10 minutes. Transfer them to a bowl of cold water to cool, then peel and cut into quarters.

2. Cook the prawns. Pat the prawns dry with kitchen paper and toss them with the garlic, paprika, salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook the prawns for about two minutes on each side, until pink and opaque. Set them aside to cool slightly.

3. Make the dressing. Whisk the mayonnaise, lemon or lime juice, ketchup or sweet chilli sauce, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Add a teaspoon of water if you prefer a thinner dressing.

4. Assemble the salad. Spread the greens on a platter or in a shallow bowl. Top with the avocado, cherry tomatoes, red onion, cucumber, eggs and prawns. Serve straight away with the dressing on the side or drizzled over the salad.

Pornstar martini



Passion fruit and lime give this cocktail its tart kick, while vanilla vodka and sugar syrup balance the flavour. Serve it with a small glass of chilled Prosecco or Champagne.

Ingredients

- 45 ml vanilla vodka
- 15 ml passion fruit liqueur, such as Passoã
- 30 ml passion fruit purée or the pulp of one ripe passion fruit
- 15 ml fresh lime juice
- 15 ml sugar syrup
- Ice cubes, for shaking
- ½ fresh passion fruit, to garnish
- 60 ml chilled Prosecco or Champagne, to serve

Method

1. Chill a martini or coupe glass in the freezer for 5 to 10 minutes. You can also fill it with ice water while you mix the drink.

2. Pour the vanilla vodka, passion fruit liqueur, purée, lime juice, and sugar syrup into a cocktail shaker. Fill it with ice and shake hard for 10 to 15 seconds.

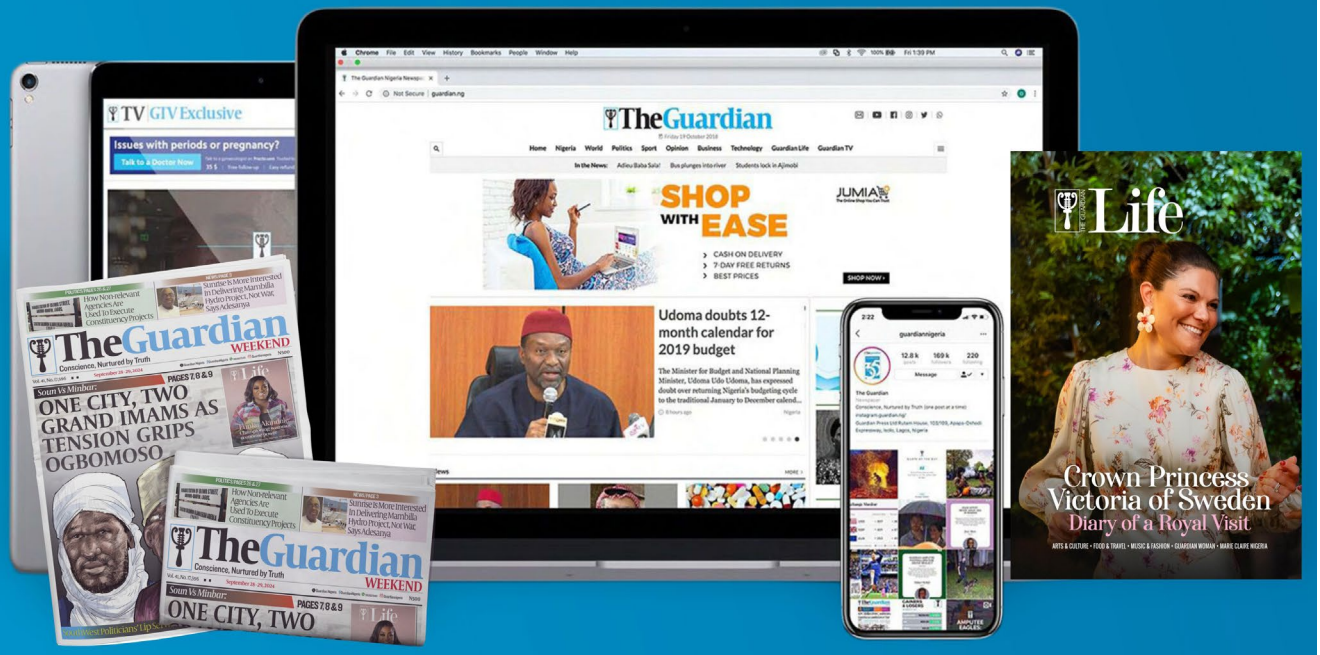
3. If you used ice water, empty the glass. Pour the cocktail through the shaker's strainer and a fine sieve into the chilled glass to catch any seeds.

4. Float the passion fruit half on top with the cut side facing up. Serve the chilled Prosecco or Champagne in a small glass on the side.

How to serve

Alternate sips of the cocktail and sparkling wine, or pour the wine into the cocktail for a fizzy finish.

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