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THE GUARDIAN

Life

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Your Weekly Guide

to the best of Nigeria

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Marycolette's secrets to healthy hair

BOLAJI OGUNMOLA:

More than Nollywood

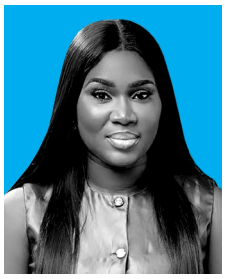
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THE GUARDIAN **Life**

Everything you need to live well



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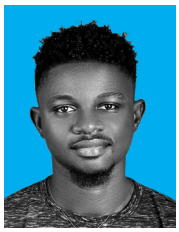












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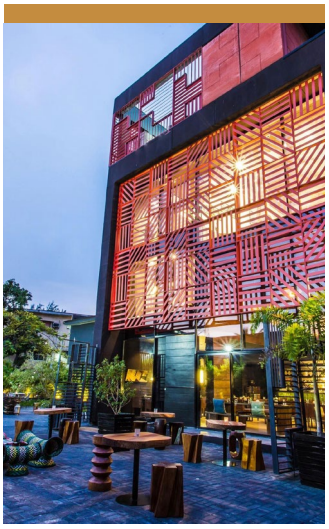
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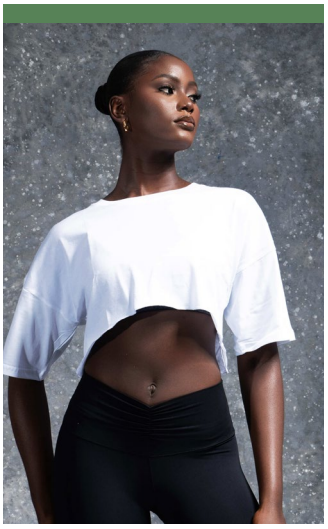
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5 unusual restaurants in Nigeria



Some restaurant structures give you more to talk about aside from the food. These five spots in Nigeria offer unusual settings, including cave-inspired interiors and beach-style spaces.

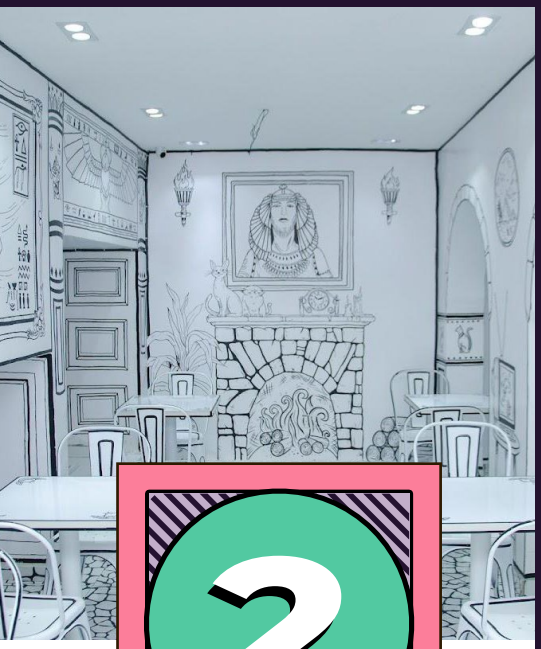
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Kapadoccia, Abuja

Location: Wuse II, Abuja

Walking into Kapadoccia is different from stepping into your usual Abuja restaurant. Inspired by the rock formations and cave dwellings of Cappadocia in Turkey, the space features sculpted surfaces, textured walls, and lighting that gives the interior a distinctive atmosphere. It is an unusual setting for a meal, particularly in a city better known for its modern buildings and busy streets. The Turkish-inspired menu gives diners another reason to visit, but the surroundings are what make the restaurant stand out. If you enjoy discovering places with a bit of character, Kapadoccia offers a change from the familiar restaurant setting. It is the sort of place where you may find yourself looking around the room almost as much as you look at the menu.





2

Sketch, Lagos

Location: Lagos

Some restaurant structures give you more to talk about aside from the food. Sketch is one of them. Its illustration-inspired interiors play with perspective, making parts of the space look as though they have been drawn on a page rather than built in the usual way. The result is a dining environment that feels closely connected to art and visual design.
For anyone who enjoys finding unusual corners of Lagos, the restaurant offers a different kind of outing. The interiors give you plenty to look at, while the overall concept makes the experience feel distinct from a conventional restaurant visit. It is a place to consider if you like your meals accompanied by an interesting setting, rather than the familiar arrangement of tables, chairs, and plain walls.

3. The Barlance, Abuja

Location: Abuja

Not every restaurant outing has to be about sitting at a table, eating and heading home. At The Barlance, the beach-inspired setting gives the experience a more leisurely feel, with cabana-style spaces and colourful structures creating room for guests to relax and socialise.
The layout makes it an option for people who want to meet friends, enjoy a meal, and spend some time outside the usual restaurant environment. It has a more recreational feel than a traditional dining room, which is part of its appeal. For visitors to Abuja who want somewhere to unwind without leaving the city, The Barlance offers a setting that encourages them to settle in for a while rather than rush through a meal.

4. The House, Lagos

Location: Lagos

There is something familiar about the idea of eating in a house. The House draws on that feeling, offering a restaurant experience shaped by a residential-style setting rather than the usual open dining floor. The arrangement of its spaces gives the venue a more intimate feel, making it an alternative for diners who prefer somewhere that feels less formal.
For visitors exploring Lagos, the appeal lies in the idea of turning a home-like environment into a place to eat and spend time with others. It offers a different atmosphere from restaurants built around a single, expansive dining room. If you enjoy discovering places through their interiors, The House is worth considering. Check its current location and setting before making the trip.

5

NOK by Alára, Lagos

Location: Abuja

Not every restaurant outing has to be about sitting at a table, eating and heading home.
At The Barlance, the beach-inspired setting gives the experience a more leisurely feel, with cabana-style spaces and colourful structures creating room for guests to relax and socialise.
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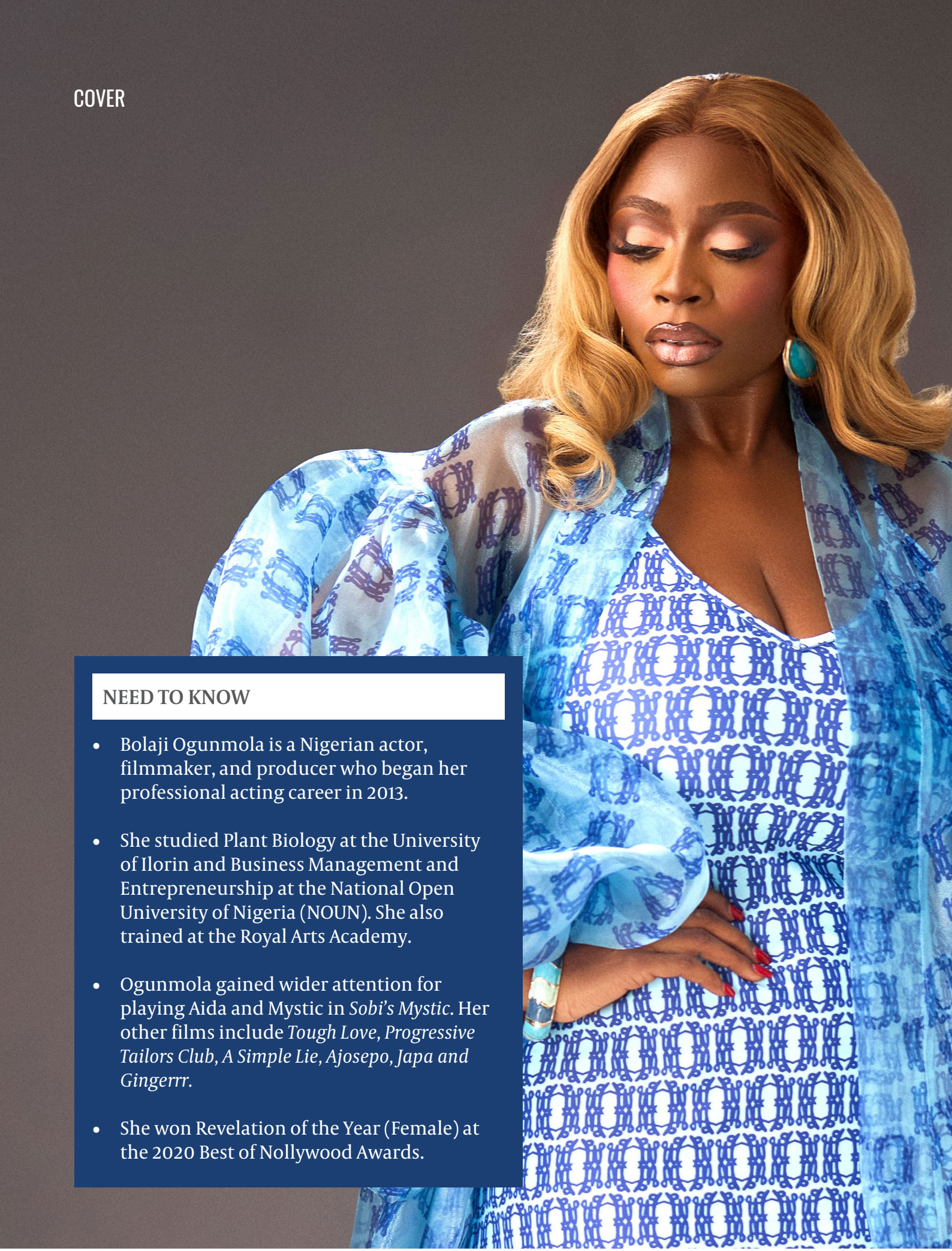
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Bolaji Ogunmola:

More than Nollywood

by Musa Adekunle



NEED TO KNOW

- Bolaji Ogunmola is a Nigerian actor, filmmaker, and producer who began her professional acting career in 2013.
- She studied Plant Biology at the University of Ilorin and Business Management and Entrepreneurship at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). She also trained at the Royal Arts Academy.
- Ogunmola gained wider attention for playing Aida and Mystic in *Sobi's Mystic*. Her other films include *Tough Love, Progressive Tailors Club, A Simple Lie, Ajosepo, Japa and Gingerrr.*
- She won Revelation of the Year (Female) at the 2020 Best of Nollywood Awards.



Most people know Bolaji Ogunmola as the woman who brings love, heartbreak, and complicated relationships to life on screen. They know the tears, the romance, and the emotional characters that have made her a familiar face in Nollywood.

Her performances feel so believable that some viewers struggle to separate the actor from the women she plays. Ogunmola has faced criticism for romantic scenes and assumptions about her personality, even though the woman away from the camera lives a much quieter life.

She describes herself as deeply introverted. When she is not filming, she is often at home reading scripts, watching films, spending time with family or attending to her businesses.

Speaking exclusively with *Guardian Life*, Ogunmola talks about the difference between her real life and screen characters, the demands of filmmaking and the future she is building as an actor, producer, and other issues.

> *"Acting was not something I planned to do. I tried it, and it worked out."*
>
> — BOLAJI OGUNMOLA

Before Nollywood knew Bolaji Ogunmola, who was the young woman behind the ambition, and what did she dream of becoming?

Before Nollywood knew Bolaji Ogunmola, I was just a normal girl trying to make ends meet, to be honest. I went to university and earned two degrees. I also attended the Royal Arts Academy in 2013, which was around the same time I started acting. I just wanted to make ends meet. That was the beginning of all this.

What did you study, and where did you earn your degrees?

My first degree was in Plant Biology from the University of Ilorin. I later studied Business Management and Entrepreneurship at the National Open University of Nigeria.

Why did you choose those courses?

I did not know much about the first course when I chose it. For the second, I wanted to study something useful and in line with what I was trying to do in life. I run a business now, so Business Management made sense.

What was life like while you were growing up?

I was not born with a silver spoon, but my family was comfortable. I grew up with my grandfather, so I spent much of my early life with him. That experience shaped me and made me grow up early.

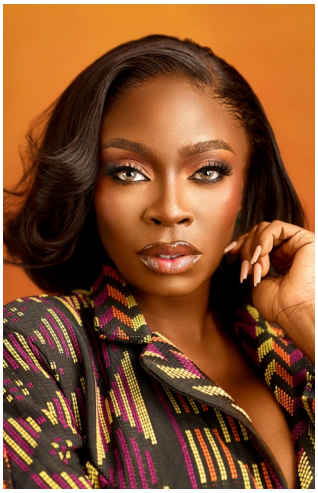
Did you always plan to become an actor?

No. Acting was not something I planned to do. I tried it, and it worked out. It stayed with me, but it was not something I knew from the beginning that I wanted to pursue. I acted in church, and the rest is history.

When did you realise that people had started noticing you?

I still see myself as a regular person who is fortunate enough to work in front of the camera. I have never thought that I am bigger than anybody else. It is a job, and the only difference is that I work in front of the camera.

I think people began to notice me around 2016, during the ROK era. ROK gave many of us a lot of work, and we were



> *"Being judged by my body before talent does not happen anymore, and I am grateful to God."*
>
> — BOLAJI OGUNMOLA

consistent. After some of those films, people started noticing me. That was the beginning.

You once left acting after attending several auditions without getting roles. What made you return?
Yes, I left in 2013. A friend told me, "I think you are very good at this. You should keep going and try again." I later attended a masterclass where I met Biodun Stephen, and she gave me a chance. I have acted consistently since 2016.

How would you describe your relationship with Biodun Stephen today?
It is very, very good.

Many people consider *Sobi's Mystic* a turning point in your career. What did the film reveal about your ability as an actor?
It showed that I could play two different characters in one film and portray them so well that people had to check whether the same person played both roles. The characters were quite distinct, so that became a turning point for me.

You have spoken about being judged by your body before your talent. Has that changed?
It does not happen anymore, and I am grateful to God for that. That was a long time ago. People now recognise the talent. That is the beauty of life. You keep evolving as a person.

Audiences often associate you with romance and emotional films. Do you worry that success in one genre could limit how filmmakers see you?
People also say that I cry a lot and appear in many emotional films. I do not think it is limiting. Those are simply the films that have gone viral. It does not mean those are the only roles I am good at.

Romantic roles sometimes make viewers confuse an actor with the character. How do you protect your identity when people struggle to separate Bolaji from the women she plays?
When you do your work very well, that tends to happen, but those assumptions are not true. I am very different from my characters.

The people close to me are the ones to whom I owe an explanation, not the whole world. I cannot convince everybody that a character is not who I am. My family and close friends know it is a job and that I do it very well.

What part of your personality would surprise people who know only the confident and glamorous women you play?
I am extremely introverted. I hardly go out. My life revolves around work, home, my business, and my family. Those are the things I care about most.

You produce films for YouTube and cinemas. Which platform is easier to work with?

> *"I cannot convince everybody that a character is not who I am."*
>
> — BOLAJI OGUNMOLA

The process is largely the same, although each YouTube project has its own demands. Cinema is more intensive and not as easy as the other platforms.

Why did you create your YouTube channel?
I initially made lifestyle content, but I had films that I had licensed to Africa Magic and IROKO. When the licensing periods expired, I wondered where else I could put them, so I uploaded them to YouTube.

The audience responded immediately. I realised that I could build a community around other things I wanted to do. The experience also sharpened my skills as a producer and helped me understand the details of filmmaking.

You once said YouTube was not designed for films. Why do you believe that?
Films are expensive to make. You can spend heavily on a production and put it on a platform where nothing is guaranteed. I still believe YouTube was not initially designed for films because filmmaking requires a considerable budget.

How much does it cost to produce a film?
I cannot give one figure because films differ. The cost depends on what you want to make, the scale of the production and the actors involved.



Has YouTube genuinely created opportunities for filmmakers, or has it introduced another difficult system to survive?
YouTube has created opportunities. Filmmakers can sharpen their craft, find an audience and build a community. It may not always be as lucrative as people

expect, but it is a starting point for anyone interested in the business.

It has also created jobs and introduced new stars. We simply want it to become better. We want to produce films with the same high quality people expect on other platforms, but nobody wants to invest heavily in a project without a reasonable return.

That is where the problem lies. When producers can expect a certain return on their investment, they become more willing to improve the quality and scale of their productions.

What advice would you give someone who wants to enter filmmaking?

Research and learn. Watch interviews and films. Ask questions. Attend seminars and masterclasses. That is the first step. Do not simply jump into it because you cannot do something well when you know nothing about it.

Start with whatever opportunity is available to you. The important thing is to begin instead of sitting around and hoping. If an opportunity is available, take it.

How do you balance production costs with the quality audiences demand?

We try our best. It is not easy, and not every film can operate on the same scale. A channel needs both smaller and bigger productions because you have to manage risk. We try as much as possible to find a balance.

As both an actor and a producer, which role gives you greater control, and which brings more pressure?

Both. I enjoy being in front of the camera and playing different characters. It is beautiful to create characters with whom people connect.

I also enjoy the creative side of producing. When you are at the helm, you put all the pieces of the puzzle together. It is interesting and demanding. I am a creator at my core, so it is an amazing privilege to do both.



Does promoting a film heavily guarantee better returns on YouTube or in cinemas?

I cannot say because people approach these things differently. You should promote both. If you have a YouTube film, ensure people see it. It is a project, regardless of the platform, and every producer wants the project to be seen.

You once described yourself as one of the smartest people anyone could meet. What did you mean?

The question in that interview was about why people often assume that certain people are not intelligent. I said I was one of the smartest people anyone could meet because there is a stereotype that an attractive person cannot also be intelligent.

We all have brains, and we develop them. People did not watch or read the full interview to understand the context. They simply took that line and ran with it, but that is fine.

If you have to dance for people to notice your YouTube film, please go ahead.

What does Bolaji Ogunmola do when she is not in front of the camera?

I watch films at home, read scripts, go to the gym, and attend to my other businesses. There is always something to do outside acting.

We are currently in pre-production for six films that we will begin shooting next week. There is a lot of planning and running around. It has been a crazy week. I come home, sleep, wake up, and return to work. It is not easy, but I thank God.

You often interact with people on X. Do you still intend to continue doing that, and why?

X used to be a place where people could relate and have intelligent conversations. I also wanted to speak personally with fans and audiences so they would not feel that I lived in a bubble and ignored them. I wanted them to feel invested in my journey, even when we disagreed.

However, that may no longer be the right approach in 2026. Things are easily misconstrued. People create drama where there is none and give meaning to things you did not even consider.

Continue reading on guardian.ng/category/life/

WORDS TO LIVE BY

Wisdom from our archive of cover stars





"If you do something well enough and long enough, it becomes prestigious. People do not care about what you do; they care about why you do it."
Tunde Onakoya, 2026



"Feminism is good for men because it advocates loosening the rigid 'roles' men are expected to play just because they are men."
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, 2019





"Stay true to your vision, even when the path is difficult."
Mo Abudu, 2024





"In life, change happens, and you have to take risks."
Davido, 2020



"Remember where you are coming from. Remember your family values."
Linda Ejiofor-Suleiman, 2026







Amino Kano Crescent Abuja

The street that shaped my sound

DJ Romie on a decade behind the decks and the art of reading a crowd

AMINO KANO CRESCENT has been central to my journey as a DJ, particularly through my years as resident DJ at Beerbarn. It was there that I developed a distinctive sound, learning to understand the crowd and the expectations that come with a familiar nightlife setting.

For me, DJing is about connection. I have worked with many DJs over the years, and we feed off one another's energy and experience. Music is a natural feeling. If you have an audience of one person and that person dances, it is a successful set.

Every day behind the decks brings something memorable and another lesson in understanding people through music.

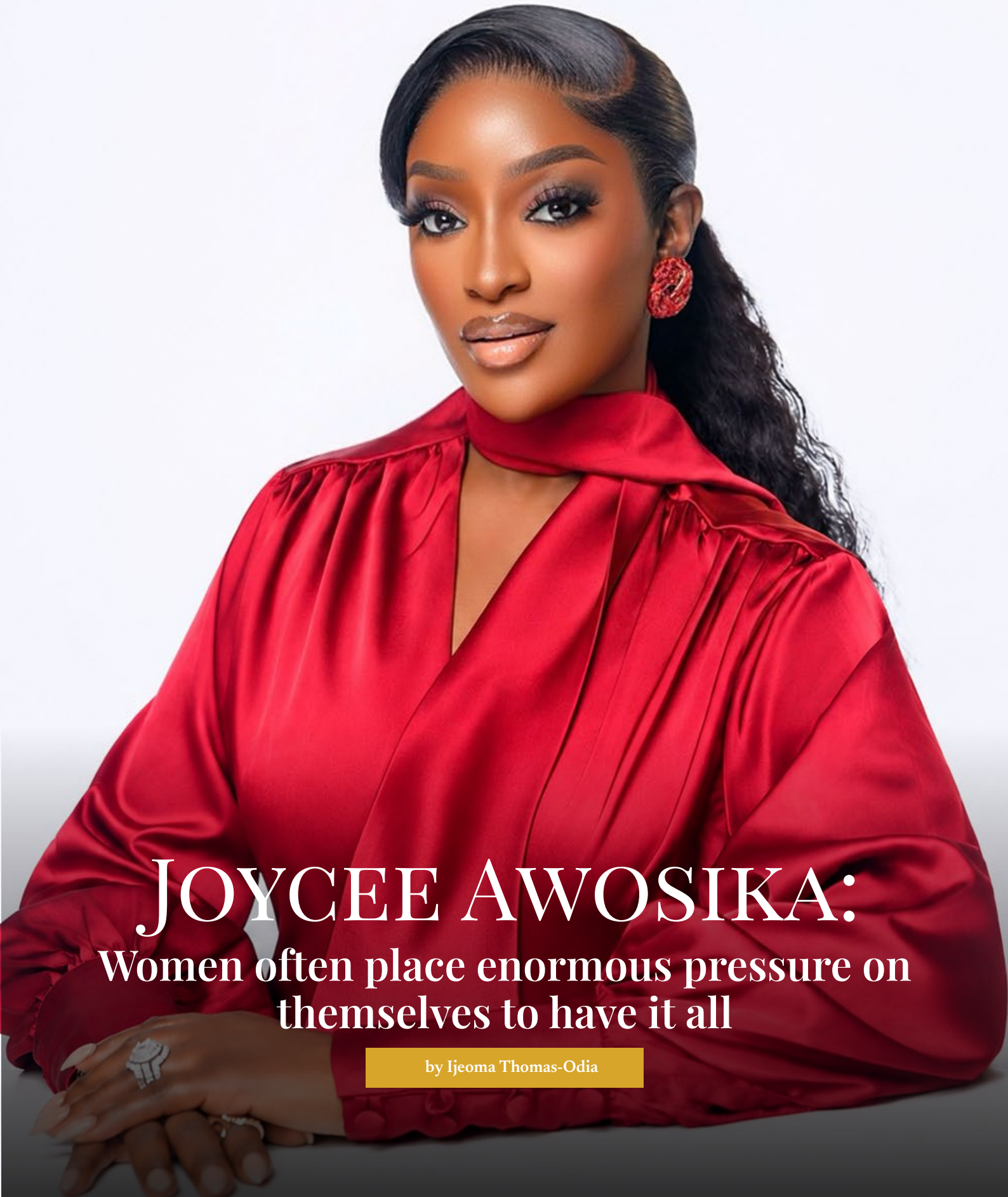
The crowd changes, but good music remains universal. Returning to a familiar place and recognising elements of its identity reminds me of the importance of consistency, even as audiences and musical tastes evolve.

After more than a decade, my experience has taught me that being a DJ is not simply about playing records; it is about understanding the people in front of you.

Interview by Ajuluchukwu Brown.

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JOYCEE AWOSIKA:

Women often place enormous pressure on themselves to have it all

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

Joycee Awosika, founder and managing director of Oríkì Group, is an entrepreneur and energy economist building a globally competitive African wellness and beauty enterprise. Founded in 2015, Oríkì operates across wellness destinations, cosmetics manufacturing, technology, professional training, consumer products, and social impact, with a presence in Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, and the United Arab Emirates. Through this integrated ecosystem, Awosika is advancing African beauty, creating jobs, developing industry talent and expanding African wellness brands into international markets. She also founded SOAR, a leadership and business growth platform for entrepreneurs. Before entering entrepreneurship, she served as a technical adviser to Nigeria's Minister of Power, contributing to the country's power sector privatisation reforms. In this interview, she discusses leadership and her commitment to building sustainable African institutions through innovation, manufacturing and enterprise.

What does taking an African wellness brand to the global market require that many African entrepreneurs underestimate?

Many entrepreneurs underestimate how much structure it takes to make excellence repeatable across borders. A business may work beautifully when the founder is present every day, but entering another country tests whether that excellence lives in the organization, in its people, processes and standards. At Oríkì, I often say that our SOPs are our pulse. We have had to document how we train, deliver treatments, manage products, respond to customers and resolve issues. The promise we make to a customer must be supported by a system that allows our teams to fulfil it consistently, wherever they are. You also need humility to understand each market. Africa itself is not one uniform market. Customer expectations, regulations, workplace cultures and commercial realities differ between countries. Going into the UAE adds another layer of learning. You have to understand what needs to adapt locally while protecting the essence of your brand. Another underestimated requirement is developing leaders you can trust with both responsibility and authority. You cannot be physically present everywhere. Expansion requires people who understand the vision, exercise sound judgement and uphold standards without waiting for the founder to make every decision. Our African identity is a strength. Our botanicals, knowledge and stories have value. The responsibility is to translate that value into products and experiences that earn trust through quality and consistency. My conviction is to build it so well at base that wherever it goes, the work speaks for itself.

> *"I want women to see that they can build institutions, enter unfamiliar spaces and pursue ambitious ideas."*
> — JOYCEE AWOSIKA

What do you believe the world still misunderstands or undervalues about African beauty, wellness and indigenous knowledge?

I believe the world still undervalues Africa's role as a creator of beauty and wellness knowledge. There is often greater recognition of our ingredients than of the expertise, formulation, rituals and businesses that give those ingredients value. We should be recognised across that entire value chain. African beauty is also incredibly diverse. Our continent holds different botanical resources, traditions and approaches to caring for the skin, hair and body. A-Beauty creates an opportunity to bring that richness into global conversations while acknowledging where particular ingredients and practices come from. For me, indigenous knowledge deserves both respect and rigorous investigation. Knowledge passed down through



generations can offer valuable starting points for research and product development. Our responsibility as manufacturers is to examine it carefully, establish safety and efficacy, and translate it into consistent, high-quality products. That strengthens its credibility and protects the people who use it. I also believe African wellness is too often presented through a narrow aesthetic lens. There is a deeper understanding of care, restoration and community that deserves attention alongside the products themselves. Through Oríkì, I want us to demonstrate that African businesses can own the formulation, manufacturing, brand and customer experience. The ambition is for African beauty and wellness expertise to help shape the global industry and for more of the value created from that expertise to remain with African businesses and communities.

Why was building the infrastructure behind the industry as important to you as building the consumer-facing brand?

Because a brand's promise is only as strong as its ability to deliver. Customers experience the treatment, the product and the service, but the quality of those experiences depends on what sits behind them: manufacturing, training, supply chains, technology and leadership.

As we grew Oríkì, it became clear that we needed to invest in those foundations to achieve the consistency we wanted. Manufacturing gives us greater oversight of product quality and development. Training helps us equip people to deliver our standards. Technology supports access, coordination and customer service. Together, these capabilities make growth more sustainable. It also mattered to me that what we built could serve others. Through FSC Manufacturing, other entrepreneurs can develop products without having to establish their own factories. Through our training institute, people can build practical skills and careers in wellness. The infrastructure creates value beyond our own locations. There is a responsibility that comes with this approach. Every part must have a clear purpose, capable leadership and commercial discipline. Vertical integration requires us to understand how each business strengthens the others while remaining accountable for its own performance. Ultimately, I want ORÍKÌ to contribute to an industry that can produce, train, innovate and compete at a higher level.

Women creating wealth

...with Lillian Nkechi Adegbola



Guardian Woman Festival has brought together women leaders, policymakers, business executives, entrepreneurs, creatives, development practitioners, media professionals and other stakeholders committed to advancing opportunities for women and girls. As we prepare for the 2027 edition, hosted by Federal Palace Resort under the theme 'Women as wealth creators', we spotlight Coach Lillian Nkechi Adegbola, an executive strategy consultant, master coach, and lead consultant at Success 360 Degrees Consortium. With over 25 years of experience, she discusses sustainable growth and building lasting legacies as a woman creating wealth.

Take us through your career path.

My career began as a French teacher and translator for the military in North East Nigeria. I moved into healthcare administration, serving as an Admin Officer and Hospital Administrator handling multidimensional functions across HR, finance, training, and business development. After several years, I transitioned into Nigerian International Bank (NIB)/Citibank, where the rigors, institutional discipline, and operational excellence of corporate banking became part of my professional DNA.

Expanding into education, I led Springforth Educational Services, deepening my commitment to human capital.

Today, as Lead Consultant and Strategic Advisor at Success 360 Degrees Consortium, I synthesize these experiences as a Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants (FIMC), Certified Management Consultant (CMC), and ILO-SIYB Facilitator, guiding corporate leaders and MSMEs to achieve clarity, structure, and sustainable growth.

What does women creating wealth mean to you?

To me, wealth creation for women transcends financial abundance, it is about building multi-dimensional capacity, autonomy, and legacy. It means equipping women with the mastery, governance, and ownership required to convert innate potential into enterprise power. When a woman creates wealth, she disrupts intergenerational poverty, funds innovation, and elevates entire communities. Sustainable wealth grants women a seat at decision-making tables, transforming them from passive economic participants into architects of national economic development and enduring institutions.

How are you creating sustainable wealth as a woman?

I create sustainable wealth by engineering high-impact capacity frameworks and guiding entrepreneurs and MSMEs to build structured, strategy-driven, and legacy-focused organisations.

Through Success 360 Degrees Consortium and proprietary models like the Success 360 Degrees System, the 60@60 Diamond Coaching Program, and The Sovereign Shift, I help leaders align the three planes of life, Spirit, Soul (Will, Intellect, Emotions), and Body, to build sustainable enterprise governance. By focusing on human capital, the ultimate non-depreciating asset, I translate internal alignment and operational discipline into long-term economic dividends.

What is your charge to other women on living purposefully?

Live by design, not by default. Purpose is not a passive discovery; it is a conscious decision to align your unique gifts with disciplined execution across your spirit, soul, and body. Do not allow limiting narratives or fear to shrink your operational footprint. Seek crystal clarity on your vision, invest continuously in your executive capacity, and build systems that extend beyond your lifetime. Shift your focus from seeking mere success to engineering significance because a purpose-driven woman operating with clarity, structure, and institutional excellence is an unstoppable force.

> *"Sustainable wealth is a combination of earning, learning, owning, investing, building relationships and creating value that can continue to grow."*
>
> — LILLIAN NKECHI ADEGBOLA

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Olusola Fadina:

We need to reinstitute core values into children

by: Geraldine Akutu



With over two decades of experience, Olusola Fadina has dedicated her career to supporting vulnerable children who have suffered abuse, neglect, or trafficking. Her foundation, Olusoga & Alaba Sonoiki, provides essential services, including educational support, healthcare, and moral guidance. Olusola also works with parents to address issues of abuse and neglect, fostering healthier communication within families. In addition to her foundation work, Olusola writes profiles for prospective adoptive families. She is married and has six children of her own. With over two decades of experience, Olusola Fadina has dedicated her career to supporting vulnerable children who have suffered abuse, neglect, or trafficking. Her foundation, Olusoga & Alaba Sonoiki, provides essential services, including educational support, healthcare, and moral guidance. Olusola also works with parents to address issues of abuse and neglect, fostering healthier communication within families. In addition to her foundation work, Olusola writes profiles for prospective adoptive families. She is married and has six children of her own.

"Nigerian youths face a web of complex crises that strike at the very fabric of our nation."

– Olusola Fadina

What inspired you to set up a not-for-profit organisation that caters to the needs of the young ones?

My inspiration for the Olusoga & Alaba Sonoiki Foundation (the Sonoiki Foundation) comes from a proud family legacy of community service, a profound personal loss, and a direct encounter with a community in need. My parents set a powerful example. My late father, Chief Isaac Olusoga Sonoiki, was a dedicated councilor in Ikenne-Remo and was passionately involved in civic development. Over twenty years ago, he fought to ensure our town built a large water reservoir- a structure that still stands tall today, reliably serving the people. Growing up with that model of selfless leadership, combined with my long career as a social worker and child welfare administrator with the Department of Human Services (Children & Youth), instilled in me a lifelong love for youth development. This came from the intersection of a lifelong professional calling, a profound personal loss, and a direct encounter with a community in need. For decades, after emigrating to the United States of America, I dedicated my professional life to child welfare; I served as a social worker and eventually rose to become an administrator with the Department of Human Services, specifically within the Children and Youth Department, protecting and supporting abused and neglected children. When I retired in 2018, my deep love for children didn't disappear; I knew my service was not over. The exact vision for the Foundation revealed itself during a time of profound grief, when I lost my beloved mother, Princess Adeola Alaba Sonoiki. During her funeral ceremony in my native town of Ikenne-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria, I witnessed an image that shocked me to the core: local children scampering for leftover meals, and seeing that raw, immediate vulnerability in their eyes affected me deeply. In that moment of grief, I resolved to turn our family's sorrow into a sustainable legacy of hope. In 2021, we founded The Sonoiki Foundation in honor of my late parent. To give the organization a strong anchor of trust, we based our programs within the very church where my late father worshipped. Incidentally, the Church's history also revealed that my grandfather, the late Chief Emmanuel Adebayo Sonoiki, was the first person to engage in adult education and teach the elderly to read the Holy Bible in the Yoruba language. Our goal is to combine my professional expertise with the church's spiritual and moral framework to alleviate poverty, keep children focused on their education, and raise them to be responsible, thriving citizens.

Can you share some of the success stories you have recorded so far?

Since inception, we have been blessed to record significant milestones across education, healthcare, and spiritual mentorship. However, none of these achievements would be possible without the extraordinary dedication of our coordinator, Mrs. Catherine Temitope Adeniyi. She leaves no stone unturned: she maintains constant liaison with our pharmaceutical partners. She ensures our scholars' welfare, tuition, and daily needs are met meticulously, on time, and regularly. She has truly been the operational anchor for all our success stories. Our success has come from working closely with the community; we have turned our vision into a tangible, life-changing program. Through Mrs. Adeniyi's steadfast management, we have realised that education is a core tool for breaking the cycle of poverty. We currently fully sponsor the education of two young women at Olabisi Onabanjo University: one pursuing a degree in education and the other in accountancy.

marie claire NIGERIA

BEAUTY



My Beauty Hack — Marycolette on how she maintains healthy hair with L'Oréal Professionnel

by Chinazam Ikechi-Uko

Marycolette's haircare routine initially appears to be quite simple. With her hair wrapped in a white towel, she shares the products she depends on to maintain healthy hair despite the constant styling and transformations that come with her roles as an actress, digital creator, and media personality. But when the towel comes off, revealing her thick, dark hair, the focus shifts to what it takes to care for it between looks.

For this edition of #MyBeautyHack, Marycolette shares her experience with L'Oréal Professionnel's Absolut Repair Molecular Mask, a deep-repair treatment she massages into her hair section by section. With peptide bonders and five amino acids, the mask is designed to repair damage and strengthen the hair fibre. She works it through each section, twists her hair and sets a timer for two minutes, appreciating both how quickly it fits into her routine and how good it smells.

As the mask works, the conversation turns to how her relationship with beauty has changed. Marycolette reflects on the pressure she once felt to return to an earlier version of herself, particularly as a woman moving through different stages of life. Now, she is more interested in a routine that works for her, without the elaborate, 10-step process she once followed. As she puts it, "Sometimes all you need is a mask."

After rinsing out the treatment, she moves on to blow-drying her hair, sticking to low or medium heat rather than high. Her next step is L'Oréal Professionnel's Absolut Repair 10-in-1 Oil, which she massages through her hair for added softness, smoothness and shine without the heaviness she typically associates with hair oils. Together, the two products form the Transformation Duo she relies on to care for her hair between styles.

Before she leaves us, Marycolette offers a reminder that feels central to her approach: "Don't just care about how your hair looks today; think about how you want your hair to feel tomorrow." It is a simple lesson in looking beyond the finished look and giving your hair the care it needs along the way.

Watch the full video on YouTube @MarieClaireNG

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more

marie claire NIGERIA

FASHION



These Nigerian fashion creatives remind us that it's never too late to pursue your dreams

by Ashim Ojeh

Corporate dressing can easily become a uniform of black trousers, neutral shirts and structured blazers, especially when looking professional feels like the priority. But your work wardrobe should do more than meet office expectations; it should reflect your personal style, too. From sharp tailoring and colourful suits to feminine silhouettes and playful details, Nigerian brands are making a case for workwear that feels polished without being predictable. If you're ready to move beyond the usual corporate staples without compromising on professionalism, these are the brands to know.

Be as bold and fearless as the Kai Collective woman

If your office wardrobe needs a more commanding presence, start with Kai Collective.

Adeola printed brocade bubble skirt

The Adeola Printed Brocade Bubble Skirt is hardly the quietest thing you could wear to work, and that is precisely why it works here. Cut from a metallic damask fabric, its long silhouette is defined by a sculptural tiered bubble shape, a gathered underskirt, and a deep waistband.

Sloane sculpted cotton shirt

Pair the Bubble Skirt with the Sloane Sculpted Cotton Shirt, a crisp white shirt with a more considered shape than the standard office button-down. The result is a look that can take you from a creative-office morning to a client meeting without losing its personality.

Odessa structured double-breasted jacket

Perhaps for days when you need a little more authority, the Odessa Structured Double-Breasted Jacket is the answer. In black, it brings the familiar power of a tailored jacket but with a stronger, more sculpted silhouette. Wear it with tailored trousers for a boardroom presentation or over a simple dress when you want the blazer to do most of the work.

Rele Apparel makes a case for women who love good tailoring

Rele Apparel is where you go when you need a suit piece that lets your shoulders sit exactly where they should.

The Nessa Muse set

The Nessa Muse set takes the structure of a three-piece suit and adapts it for warmer weather. The pinstriped waistcoat and wide-leg trousers bring the formality of traditional tailoring, while the sleeveless cut keeps the look lighter. The red also gives the set enough confidence to stand out from the usual corporate neutrals.

The Crimson Allure

The Crimson Allure brings a more elevated edge to corporate dressing. Its red jacquard wrap blazer features structured shoulders and a defined waist, while the matching mini skirt gives the set a polished feel that works for client dinners, networking events, and after-work plans.

Sovereign set

Then there is the Sovereign Set, with its collarless high-neck jacket, covered buttons, fitted waist, and slightly elongated peplum hem, paired with high-waisted wide-leg trousers. It is a look that works equally well for a board meeting, speaking engagement, or business dinner, as it appears exquisite without seeming overworked.

The Tweed Soleil

For women who like their power dressing with a little more colour, the Tweed Soleil makes a strong case for moving beyond navy, grey and black. The chartreuse tweed blazer and matching skirt retain the structure and polish associated with traditional suiting, while the colour gives the look a distinctly more playful edge. The best part of shopping from Rele Apparel is that each set is an investment beyond the initial look. The pieces can be worn together or separately, giving you plenty of combinations to work with long after the full set has had its moment.

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more

Perfume etiquette

by Dorcas Ayoola



You stop noticing your perfume halfway through the day, so you reach for the bottle again. Before adding another spray, remember that the people beside you could still smell the first application.

Repeated exposure to a smell reduces how strongly you notice it. Researchers describe this through olfactory adaptation and habituation, sometimes loosely called “nose blindness”.

That helps explain why a familiar fragrance becomes less noticeable to its wearer.

However, perfume also fades. Your inability to smell it does not tell you, on its own, whether it has disappeared or whether you have simply grown used to it.

That distinction matters when you wear fragrance around other people.

Consider where you are going

A perfume you enjoy at home accompanies you into the office, a shared car or a crowded bus. The people nearby have their own preferences, and some are sensitive to fragranced products.

According to the American Lung Association, fragrances trigger headaches, nausea, or irritation in some people. They also trigger breathing symptoms in susceptible people, including those with asthma. Reactions vary between individuals.

Someone asking you to use less perfume is therefore not necessarily criticising your taste. They could be responding to physical discomfort.

Before applying it, consider how closely you will sit beside others and whether the venue has a fragrance policy.

An outdoor event and a small meeting room call for different decisions.





Avoid chasing the scent

There is no useful spray count that suits every perfume and every setting. Counting sprays alone does not tell you how noticeable a fragrance will be.

Start lightly when wearing an unfamiliar perfume. Give yourself time to judge it before adding more, rather than applying several sprays in quick succession.

If you stop noticing the scent later, resist treating that as an automatic signal to reapply. Ask someone you trust whether it is still noticeable and whether it feels too strong at close range.

Their feedback offers another perspective, although it does not establish what everyone else will find comfortable.

Make room for other people

Enjoying perfume does not require wearing enough for a whole room to notice. In shared spaces, the practical question is how your choice affects those sitting nearby.

Follow fragrance-free rules where they apply. If a colleague, passenger, or friend says your perfume is causing discomfort, take the concern seriously and adjust what you wear around them.

Before your next top-up, check whether the first application is still noticeable.





See, taste, explore *Ekiti*

From bowls of pounded yam and traditional soups to forest waterfalls, rocky hills and a dialect shaped by generations of local history.

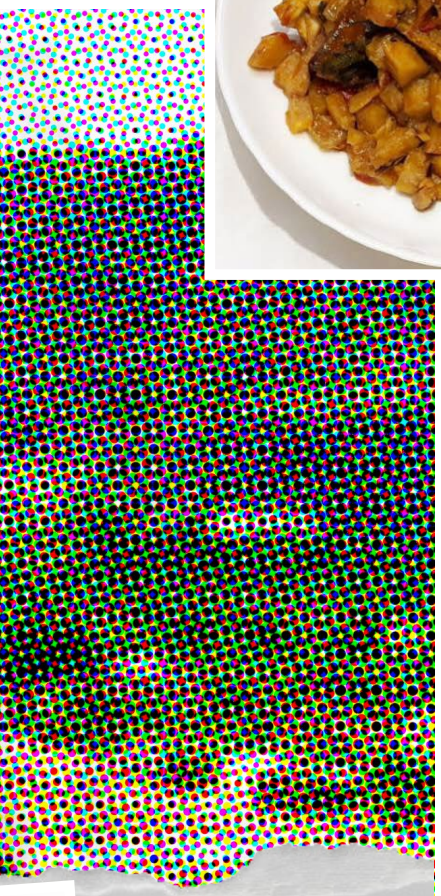
by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

Known for its hills, cultural traditions and strong Yoruba identity, Ekiti is a state worth exploring beyond its better-known attractions. Its natural sites offer opportunities for walking and adventure, while its towns invite visitors to learn about local food, language and customs. The experience can begin with a plate of pounded yam, continue with a walk beneath the trees at Ikogosi, and end with a conversation in a market where the words sound a little different from the Yoruba a visitor may already know.

The state government identifies attractions including Ikogosi Warm Springs, Arinta Waterfalls and Abanijorin Rock among its tourism assets.

It also recognises the variations in the Ekiti dialect across different communities, a reminder that the state is culturally connected but







not linguistically uniform.

Ten foods to look out for in Ekiti

Food is one of the most direct ways to approach a place. In Ekiti, pounded yam and soup provide a familiar starting point, while local names for snacks, vegetables, and other dishes offer a reason to ask questions. Some foods are part of the wider southwestern Nigerian culinary tradition rather than exclusive to Ekiti. Their preparation, however, can tell visitors something about the people and kitchens they encounter.

The following dishes are worth asking about as you travel through the state.

1. Iyán (Pounded Yam)

Pounded yam is a familiar feature of Yoruba meals and a natural starting point when exploring Ekiti's food. Prepared by boiling yam and pounding it until smooth and stretchy, iyán is usually served as an accompaniment to soup. Its mild taste makes it a good match for richly seasoned dishes, particularly vegetable and draw soups.

The texture matters as much as the flavour. A well-prepared serving should be smooth, firm, and easy to shape into small portions for eating with soup. It is a filling meal often enjoyed at family gatherings, celebrations and everyday lunches. For visitors, it offers a straightforward introduction to the place of yam and soup in local dining.

2. Ẹ̀fọ́ Worowo Soup

Ẹ̀fọ́ worowo is a traditional Yoruba vegetable soup made with worowo leaves. As with many Nigerian soups, its preparation can vary from one household to another, depending on the ingredients available and the cook's preference. The leaves are combined with seasonings and other ingredients to create a dish that can be served with pounded yam and other swallows.

For visitors interested in local food, it is worth asking about the vegetables used and how the soup is prepared. Traditional recipes are often passed down through families, and small differences in seasoning or cooking technique can shape the final dish. Served with a suitable swallow, the soup offers a taste of the vegetable-based dishes found in Yoruba cooking.

3. Ìṣápá Soup

Ìṣápá soup is made with the leaves of the roselle plant, which are known for their distinctive tangy taste. The leaves give the soup a flavour that sets it apart from dishes prepared with milder vegetables. As with other traditional soups, recipes differ between households, and ingredients may be adjusted to suit personal taste or what is available.

The slight sourness is part of its appeal. It offers a contrast to the richness of many Nigerian soups and pairs well with swallows such as pounded yam. For anyone exploring Ekiti through its food, Ìṣápá is a dish to ask about when sampling traditional cooking. Its ingredients and preparation also offer a glimpse into how local cooks make use of plants that grow in their surroundings.

4. Ògbòkúrú

Ògbòkúrú is among the traditional food names associated with Ekiti's local food culture. As with dishes whose names and preparations are rooted in particular communities, the exact ingredients and method may vary, so it is worth asking the person preparing it about the version being served.

Food is often best understood in the setting in which it is made: the ingredients chosen, the time spent preparing them, and the occasions on which the dish appears. Visitors who encounter Ògbòkúrú can use the opportunity to learn how it is prepared locally and how it fits into everyday meals or special gatherings. Asking questions at the table is a simple way to discover details that a menu may not explain.

5. Òjòjò (Water Yam Fritters)

Òjòjò is made from grated water yam, which is seasoned and fried into small fritters. The outside becomes lightly crisp while the inside remains soft, giving the snack a contrast in texture. Depending on the recipe, seasonings and other ingredients may be added to deepen the flavour.

It can be enjoyed as a snack or served as part of a larger meal. Water yam has a different texture from the more familiar white yam, and grating it creates a mixture that can be shaped and fried. For visitors exploring local food, Òjòjò is a useful reminder that traditional Nigerian cooking is not limited to soups and swallows. Roots and tubers also appear in snacks that are easy to eat between stops.

6. Olóùrúkú (Plantain Pottage)

Plantain pottage brings together plantain and the ingredients used to build a satisfying one-pot meal. Depending on the recipe, the plantain may be cooked with pepper, onions, oil, and seasonings, with other ingredients added to suit the household. The result is a dish in which the plantain absorbs the flavour of the cooking liquid and seasonings.

Ripe and unripe plantains produce different results: ripe plantains lend sweetness, while firmer, less ripe ones hold their shape and offer a more savoury taste. The balance depends on the cook's preference. For visitors, this is the kind of meal that shows how familiar ingredients can be prepared in different ways across Nigerian homes. It is hearty, practical and well suited to a relaxed meal.



7. Àbàrí (Maize Mọ́ímọ́í)

Àbàrí is a steamed maize-based dish associated with traditional Yoruba cooking. Like other steamed foods, it is prepared by mixing the main ingredient with seasonings and other additions before cooking the mixture until it sets. The final texture depends on the ingredients and method used.

Its preparation makes it an interesting dish for visitors who want to look beyond the better-known Nigerian staples. Steamed foods often require preparation before cooking, and their recipes can reflect household habits passed from one generation to the next. When trying Àbàrí, ask about the ingredients and how it differs from other maize-based dishes. The answer may reveal local preferences and the small distinctions that give traditional foods their character.

8. Obé Ẹ̀fírin (Scent Leaf Soup)
Obé ẹ̀fírin is a soup prepared with scent leaves, known for their distinctive aroma. The leaves bring a strong herbal note to the dish, while the other ingredients determine its richness and level of seasoning. As with many traditional soups, the recipe may differ between households.

Scent leaf is used in several Nigerian dishes, but its fragrance gives this soup a recognisable character. It can be served with a swallow, allowing the flavour of the soup to take centre stage. Visitors interested in local cooking can ask how the leaves are prepared and which ingredients are traditionally paired with them. It is a good way to learn more about the role of herbs and leafy vegetables in the region's food traditions.

9. Ẹ̀pípá Kòkò
Ẹ̀pípá kòkò is another local food name worth exploring when learning about Ekiti's culinary traditions. Preparation and ingredients can depend on the community and household, making it useful to ask local cooks to explain the version they know rather than assume that every recipe is the same.



For visitors, discovering a dish is about more than tasting it. Learning what goes into it, how it is prepared, and when it is usually eaten helps place the food within everyday life. Traditional names also carry local knowledge, and asking about their meaning can open a conversation about the people and customs behind the meal. When available, Ẹ̀pípá kòkò offers an opportunity to explore a less familiar part of Ekiti's food culture.

10. Fèrègèdè (Local Beans)
Beans are an important ingredient in Nigerian cooking, used in dishes ranging from steamed bean pudding to porridge and fried snacks. Fèrègèdè is a local food name associated with Ekiti's culinary traditions, and the particular preparation may vary. Asking a local cook about the ingredients and method is the best way to understand the dish as it is made in that community. Beans are valued for their substance and versatility, and they can form the centre of a meal. For visitors, trying local preparations is a way to discover how familiar ingredients are given different identities through naming, seasoning and technique. The experience can be as much about the story behind a dish as the food itself.

Ten Ekiti greetings and phrases to know

A greeting can be the start of a conversation. In Ekiti, visitors will hear Yoruba spoken in local forms that vary across the state. The differences are not simply a matter of accent: local vocabulary and pronunciation can also differ from one community to another. The Ekiti State Government notes these variations, particularly between areas such as Ado, Ijero, Ikole and Ikere.

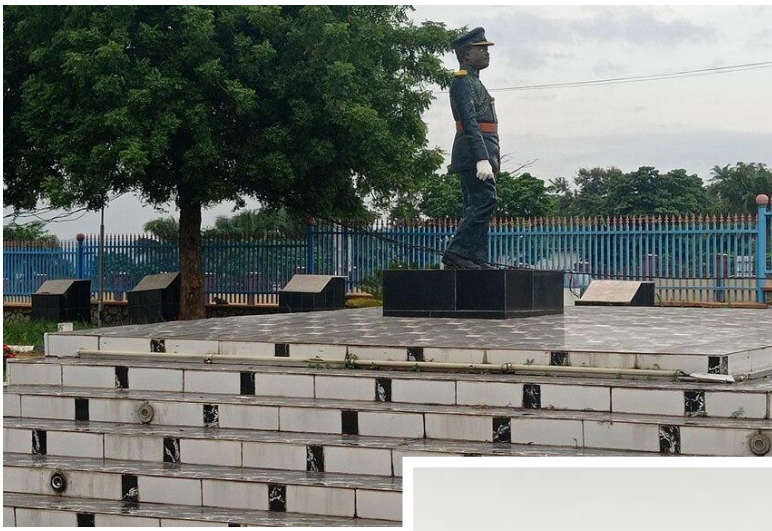
The phrases below are drawn from the local list supplied for this feature. Their spellings, translations, and precise use should be checked with fluent speakers from the communities concerned before publication or use as a definitive language guide.

1. Orah weye / Orah o
What it means: Hello or greetings to you.
When to use it: Presented in local word lists as a greeting. Ask a resident to demonstrate the pronunciation and explain when the expression is most natural.

2. Olúwa a d'úle d'ọ̀nà o
What it means: May God protect your home and your path.
When to use it: Supplied as a blessing associated with a traveller's journey or arrival. Confirm its wording and context with a local speaker.

3. Otún rìn o
What it means: Welcome, or well done for walking.
When to use it: Listed as a greeting for someone who has arrived on foot. Ask whether the expression is used throughout Ekiti or mainly in particular communities.

4. Káàsán o, o jire l'úle?



What it means: Good afternoon; is everyone at home well?
When to use it: Presented as an afternoon greeting that also asks after the household. A local speaker can help clarify its pronunciation and wording.

5. Ún k'úle o
What it means: Greetings to those at home.
When to use it: Supplied as a greeting for people inside a home or compound. Ask a host how they would normally greet people on arrival.



6. Ẹ mọ́ k'úṣe o
What it means: Well done with your work.
When to use it: Listed as an expression for greeting someone who is working. It is a useful idea for travellers to understand: acknowledging another person's effort can be a respectful way to begin a conversation.



7. Ún jẹun o
What it means: Come and eat, or join me.
When to use it: Supplied as an expression of hospitality around a meal. Ask a local speaker how to respond politely if someone offers you food.



8. Ẹ súnun o / O súnun o
What it means: Goodnight or sleep well.
When to use it: Listed as a parting expression for the end of the day. Confirm which form is appropriate for elders, peers or a group.

9. Ẹ ṣéun / Mo dúpẹ́ dúpẹ́
What it means: Thank you very much.
When to use it: Used as an expression of gratitude. Visitors should confirm the most natural local form and pronunciation with a speaker.

10. Odìbàbà / Ó d'àbọ̀
What it means: Goodbye or until we meet again.
When to use it: Listed as a farewell for leaving a place or parting from someone. Ask a local host which









expression they would use in everyday conversation.

For a reliable foundation, visitors can also learn widely used Yoruba expressions such as Ẹ káàárọ̀ (good morning), Ẹ káàsán (good afternoon), and Ẹ ṣé (thank you). These are standard Yoruba greetings, not necessarily expressions unique to Ekiti. The most useful lesson is to listen carefully, greet people respectfully, and be willing to learn the local form.



Places to explore in Ekiti

Ekiti's landscape provides a natural counterpoint to its food and language. The state has waterfalls, hills, springs and historic sites, some of which are recognised in official tourism listings. Visitors should confirm access, conditions and any local guidance before travelling to individual sites.



1. Ikogosi Warm Springs

Ikogosi Warm Springs is one of Ekiti's best-known natural attractions. Its defining feature is the meeting of warm and cold springs, whose waters flow towards one another while retaining their different temperatures. The site sits among green hills and vegetation, giving visitors a reason to spend time in the landscape as well as at the spring itself. The Ekiti State Government identifies the attraction as being in Ikogosi, in Ekiti West Local Government Area.



The springs are also connected to local oral tradition. One account tells of two wives who became the warm and cold springs, while their husband became the surrounding hills. The story forms part of the site's cultural history, alongside scientific explanations for the difference in water temperature.

The Ikogosi Warm Springs Resort advertises accommodation and visitor experiences, including hiking and dining. As facilities and arrangements can change, contact the resort before travelling to confirm current access, activities and opening arrangements.

2. Arinta Waterfalls

Located near Ipole-Iloro in Ekiti West Local Government Area, Arinta Waterfalls is a natural attraction surrounded by forested hills and vegetation. The falling water and the landscape around it make the site an option for visitors interested in spending time outdoors and exploring a different side of the state. Arinta is also listed among Ekiti's tourism attractions by the state government.

A visit can offer a change of pace from moving between towns and built attractions. The surrounding terrain, however, means visitors should plan sensibly, wear suitable footwear, and be mindful of weather conditions, particularly after rainfall when paths and rocks may be slippery.

Current opening hours, access conditions and available visitor facilities could not be independently confirmed. Before setting out, check with the Ekiti State Bureau of Tourism Development or local tourism representatives for the latest information.

3. Abanijorin Mountain and Cave

Abanijorin Rock is among the natural attractions promoted by the Ekiti State Bureau of Tourism Development. Its rocky terrain makes it an appealing prospect for visitors interested in the state's geological features and outdoor landscapes.

However, this is not a site to approach as an informal walk-in attraction. In a notice published on 1 November 2024, the Ekiti State Government warned against unauthorised activities at Abanijorin Rock and stated that visitors must obtain explicit permission from the state Bureau of Tourism Development before visiting or undertaking activities there. Anyone planning a visit should contact the Bureau through the official Ekiti State Government website to confirm the approval process, permitted activities and current access conditions. Do not join an unauthorised tour or attempt to enter the protected site without permission.

4. Fajuyi Memorial Park

Situated in Ado-Ekiti, Fajuyi Memorial Park commemorates Lieutenant-Colonel Adekunle Fajuyi, the military governor of the former Western Region who died during Nigeria's 1966 military coup. The Ekiti State Government identifies the park as a memorial site in the state capital.



The park offers a place to reflect on a significant moment in Nigeria's history. Fajuyi is remembered for his death alongside Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi during the coup, an episode that remains part of the country's political and military history. For visitors exploring Ado-Ekiti, the memorial provides a connection to events that shaped Nigeria's early post-independence years.

Before visiting, confirm current opening arrangements and access with local authorities or tourism representatives, as reliable, up-to-date official visiting hours could not be established.

5. Olosunta and Orole Hills

Olosunta and Orole Hills rise around Ikere-Ekiti and are recognised for their rocky landscapes and cultural significance. The Ekiti State Government lists the hills among the state's tourism attractions, while local tradition connects them with spiritual beliefs and the history of the community.

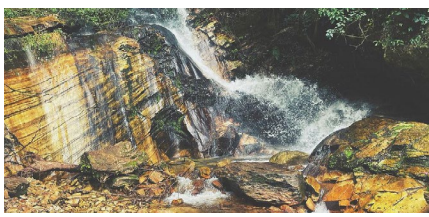
These are not simply places to view from a distance. Their significance to local people means visitors should approach them with respect and find out whether there are particular customs or restrictions to observe. Access arrangements, especially for culturally significant sites, may differ according to the location and occasion.

Before planning a visit or hike, contact local authorities or traditional custodians to confirm current access arrangements, whether permission is required and whether guided visits are available. This is especially important where a site has religious or ceremonial significance.

6. Ekiti Parapo Resort and War Museum

Ekiti Parapo Resort and War Museum in Okemesi-Ekiti is listed among the state's tourism sites in official state statistics. Its historical focus makes it a potential stop for visitors interested in the conflicts and alliances that shaped the history of Ekiti communities.

The name points to the wider history of Ekiti Parapo, the alliance associated with the nineteenth-century Ekiti and other eastern Yoruba communities during the Kiriji War. A visit to a site devoted to this history can provide another way to understand the region beyond its natural attractions, although the depth of interpretation available will depend on the facilities and information currently provided. Current opening hours, visitor facilities and guided-tour arrangements could not be reliably confirmed. Contact the relevant tourism authorities or local representatives in Okemesi-Ekiti before travelling to establish whether the museum is open and what arrangements are available for visitors.

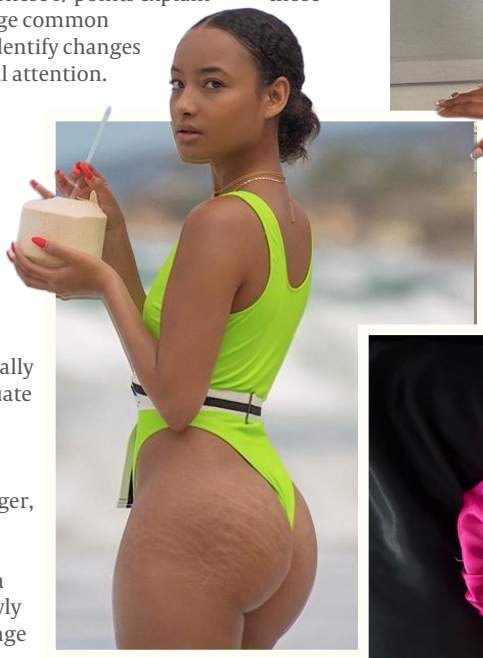


The female body unfiltered

by Dorcas Ayoola



Women's bodies vary in shape, skin texture, hair growth, and other features. These 17 points explain those differences, challenge common assumptions, and identify changes that deserve medical attention.



1. Cellulite

Cellulite creates a dimpled appearance, usually around the thighs, hips, and buttocks. It occurs when fat beneath the skin pushes against connective tissue and affects women of different sizes, including those who exercise regularly. It does not automatically indicate poor health or inadequate personal care.

2. Uneven breast sizes

One breast may naturally be larger, fuller, or positioned differently from the other. A longstanding difference is often normal, but a new lump, skin dimpling, a newly inverted nipple, or sudden change in size should be assessed by a healthcare professional.





3. Hip dips

Hip dips are inward curves between the hips and upper thighs. Their appearance reflects bone structure, muscle, and fat distribution. Exercise may change the surrounding muscles, but it cannot change the underlying bones. Hip dips are a natural variation, not a defect.

4. A stomach that is not flat

Abdominal shape varies with body fat, posture, digestion, hormonal changes and pregnancy. A woman's stomach may also look fuller after meals or around her period. Its appearance alone does not establish her health or fitness, although persistent swelling, pain, or other unusual symptoms need medical attention.



5. Body hair

Women naturally grow hair on their legs, arms, underarms, faces, and pubic areas. Genetics and hormones influence its thickness and distribution. Removing it is a personal choice, not a measure of cleanliness, and shaving or waxing can cause irritation and ingrown hairs.



6. Darker skin around the vulva

The vulva, the external genital area, may be darker than the surrounding skin. Its colour varies naturally and can be influenced by hormones, genetics and friction. Darker pigmentation does not reveal a woman's sexual history or mean she has poor hygiene.

7. Hair around the nipples

A few hairs around the nipples or areolae are a normal variation influenced by hormones and genetics. However, a sudden increase in coarse facial or body hair, especially alongside irregular periods or severe acne, deserves medical assessment.

8. Vaginal discharge

Discharge helps keep the vagina moist and carries away cells and secretions. It can be clear, white or creamy, with its amount and texture changing during the menstrual cycle. A new strong smell, unusual colour, itching, burning or pain should be checked.

9. Natural vaginal smell

A healthy vagina can have a mild scent that changes with menstruation, exercise or sex. It does not need to smell like perfume. The vagina cleans itself, while the external vulva needs gentle washing. Douching and scented products can cause irritation; a persistent fishy smell or accompanying symptoms deserve assessment.

10. Period bloating

Hormonal changes around menstruation can affect digestion and fluid retention, making the abdomen feel fuller and clothes tighter. This temporary change does not necessarily mean a woman has gained body fat. Severe, persistent, or worsening bloating, particularly with pain, should be assessed.

11. Darker underarms and inner thighs



Friction, hormones, genetics, and irritation can darken the underarms and inner thighs. This does not automatically indicate poor hygiene, and harsh scrubbing may worsen irritation.

12. Stretch marks

Stretch marks can develop during puberty, pregnancy, or changes in body size. They may initially look red, purple, or darker than surrounding skin, then fade over time. They are common skin changes, not proof of neglect, and creams or oils cannot reliably prevent or erase them all.

13. Periods can change over time

Menstrual patterns can change with age, stress, illness, contraception, pregnancy and breastfeeding. Bleeding and cramps also vary between women. Very heavy bleeding, bleeding between periods, severe pain or a sudden, persistent change should be discussed with a healthcare professional.

14. Different labia sizes and shapes

The labia, the folds of skin around the vaginal opening, vary in size, colour and symmetry. The inner folds may extend beyond the outer folds, and one side may be longer. Their appearance does not reveal sexual history or hygiene, although discomfort that affects daily activities warrants medical advice.



15. More discharge around ovulation

Around ovulation, cervical mucus may become clearer, wetter, and stretchier, sometimes resembling raw egg white. This can happen regardless of sexual activity and does not automatically indicate arousal or infection. Discharge alone cannot confirm ovulation or reliably determine whether pregnancy will occur.

16. Queefing or passing vaginal air

Queefing happens when trapped air leaves the vagina, sometimes during sex, exercise, or stretching. It is different from intestinal gas and is usually harmless. Persistent vaginal air accompanied by pain, foul-smelling discharge, recurrent infections, or stool leakage should be assessed.

17. Changes during arousal

During arousal, increased blood flow can make the clitoris and labia fuller, while lubrication may increase. These responses vary and do not establish consent. Persistent swelling, pain, itching, or sores should not be dismissed as arousal and deserve medical attention.

Baby girl, style *right*

by Dorcas Ayoola

A well-organised wardrobe and a few styling changes help you get more wear out of the clothes you already own.

Before adding another item to your shopping basket, take a closer look at your favourite pieces, the combinations you repeat and the clothes you rarely wear. These six tips will help you put them to use.



There comes a point in almost everyone's style journey when standing in front of a wardrobe full of clothes somehow feels like having nothing to wear. The pieces are familiar, the combinations predictable, and getting dressed begins to feel more like a routine than an expression of personal style.



Make room for your own ideas

Personal style gives you room to experiment. Try unexpected colour combinations, mix familiar pieces, or wear something differently from how you usually do.

British fashion designer Mary Quant spoke about individuality in an interview with the Associated Press:

"I think that at the moment in fashion the mood is for individuality. We don't want fashion rules, we don't want any of that. We want pieces and ideas that we can take and put together in our own way and be an individual. The desire for individualism has become stronger."

Use inspiration as a starting point. Adjust an outfit to suit your taste, rather than copying every detail.



Keep your wardrobe organised

Sometimes, clothes go unworn because they are difficult to find. An organised wardrobe makes it easier to see your options and spot combinations you have overlooked.

Group similar items together. Keep trousers in one section, separate tops from dresses, and store accessories where you can find them easily.

Set aside pieces you have not worn recently and try styling them differently before deciding whether to keep them. A forgotten top might work with trousers you already wear regularly.

Find the styles and fits you enjoy

You do not have to wear every trend or copy every outfit you admire online. Pay attention to the clothes you reach for and how you feel wearing them.

Do you prefer loose jeans, fitted tops, long skirts or structured jackets? Which colours do you enjoy? Notice whether a piece fits comfortably when you sit, walk, and move.

Try different combinations to understand your preferences. Borrow ideas from others, then adapt them to your wardrobe and daily life.

Build confidence through wearing

An outfit is harder to enjoy when you spend the day worrying about other people's opinions.

Start with clothes you feel comfortable wearing. If you are trying something unfamiliar, pair it with a favourite piece rather than changing everything at once.

Some experiments will work better than others. Notice what feels right, make adjustments, and try again. You do not need everyone's approval to enjoy your outfit.







Use accessories with purpose

A shirt and jeans will look different with a colourful scarf, a belt or bold earrings. Accessories offer a simple way to change a familiar outfit.

Iris Apfel, known for her colourful clothes and bold accessories, recalled her mother's influence in an interview with Vogue.

She said, "I always say she worshiped at the altar of the accessory."

Try a brooch on a jacket or a scarf tied around a bag. Choose a detail you want to emphasise, then consider how the other accessories work with it.

A statement bag might be enough for one outfit. Another might suit layered jewellery. Check the overall look before adding more.

Try one unfamiliar thing

If you usually wear black, introduce a brighter colour through a top or accessory. If your favourite are fitted clothes, try a relaxed shirt with trousers you already know work for you.

Keep the change manageable. Wear an unfamiliar shoe style, revisit a skirt you rarely use, or combine two pieces you have never worn together.

Give the outfit a proper try before dismissing it. Wear it, check how it feels, and note what you would change next time.



When the economy decides what is on your plate, something deeper than hunger is being taken from you.

When eating well becomes too expensive

by Jane Ibude

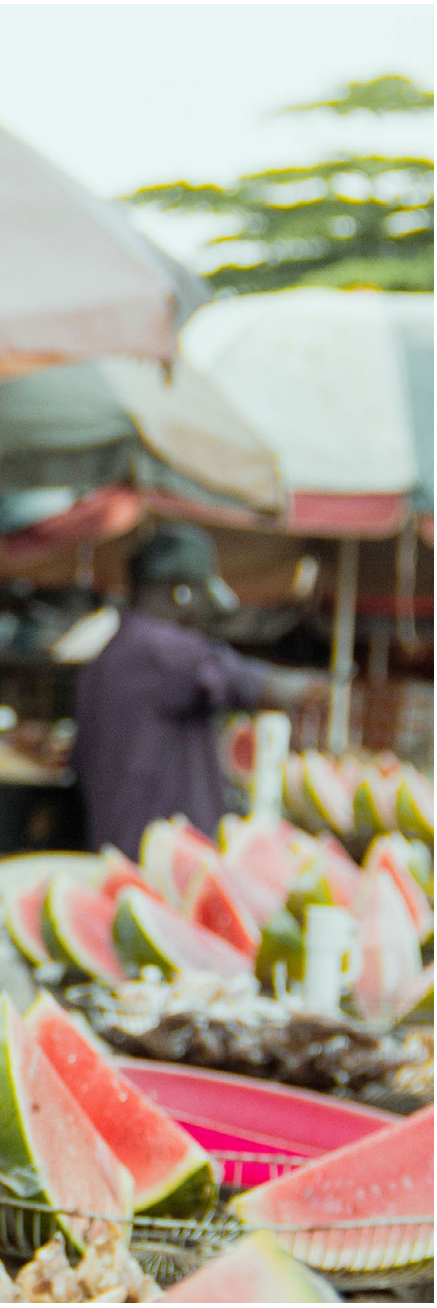
Jane Ibude is a mental health nutritionist and founder of Thrive and Heal Hub, a platform that creates safe spaces for Nigerians and people in the diaspora to unpack their experiences through food, culture, and mental wellbeing.

There is a version of eating that has nothing to do with choice. You do not decide what your body is asking for or what would nourish you best at the end of a long day.

You turn to whatever is there. You cook what you can afford and eat because the alternative is not eating at all, and you have already done that too many times this week.

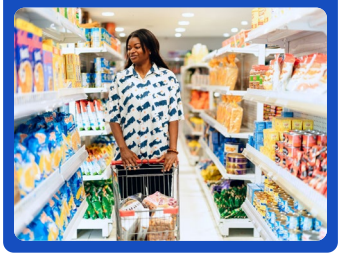
In my survey of 231 Nigerians, 92 people said that, compared with 2023, their eating patterns had changed and they were now eating whatever was available. They did not focus on healthy choices or dietary preferences, just whatever was available. That phrase makes it sound like our agency is leaving the room.





Financial stress

72 of the 92 rated their financial stress at 4 or 5 out of 5.



Sleep and eating patterns

46 are also sleeping less, while 45 are withdrawing socially and 40 are skipping meals on top of eating whatever is available.



Mental wellbeing

53 said they had felt anxious, overwhelmed, or hopeless often or almost always over the past three months.



Photos by Magnific

The 92 respondents represent about 40% of everyone I surveyed. When I looked more closely at who these people are and what else they are carrying alongside this change in eating patterns, the picture became much harder to look away from. The 92 people eating whatever is available are not a homogeneous group. They are students and full-time employees, young adults and people over 50, men and women.

However, they share a striking financial profile. Of the 92, 72 rated their financial stress at 4 or 5 out of 5.

Another 62 said the economy had severely or moderately affected their ability to afford nutritious food, while 80 said it had affected their mental health, either slightly or significantly.

What this tells me is that eating whatever is available rarely travels alone. It comes packaged with poor sleep, social withdrawal, skipped meals and persistent anxiety. These things feed each other in a cycle that is very hard to interrupt from the inside. The food situation worsens the mental state, and the mental state makes it harder to think clearly about food. And so it goes.

"It feels like I am constantly calculating." One respondent wrote that. Another said it feels like "a never-ending loop of living dangerously below your means." These are people doing the mathematics of survival every single day, and food is one of the hardest sums to solve.

The WHO definition of food security includes not just access to enough food, but access to nutritious food that supports an active and healthy life. By that definition, 92 people in my survey, about 40%, are living in a state of food insecurity, and most of them know it. Only one of the 92 said the economy had not affected their ability to afford nutritious food.

What people are doing

Within this group, 29 people said they were still trying to eat intentionally for their health. This is remarkable, given what they are working against. It means that almost a third of the people eating whatever is available are simultaneously trying to make that whatever count. They are being resourceful inside a very tight space.

God, prayer, family, and hope are common themes I see as anchors. One person wrote simply: "Nothing. I am hanging on a tiny line of hope that one day everything will be better."

Another said what keeps them strong is "my mom and fruits." That response made me smile and hurt at the same time because the fruits cost something too.

What can help

The FAO and WHO both frame nutrition under economic pressure as a question of food diversity, not food perfection. The goal is to widen the range of what is available slightly, using the cheapest possible additions, rather than trying to achieve an ideal diet that the budget cannot support.

As a mental health nutritionist, I recommend the following approaches, which are grounded in evidence and workable within Nigerian food realities:



1. Add colour where you can, not where you cannot

Dark green leaves like ugu, bitter leaf, and waterleaf are among the cheapest and most nutritious vegetables in Nigerian markets. Adding a handful to whatever soup or stew you are already making costs almost nothing and meaningfully improves a meal's nutritional profile.

2. Legumes are the most underused mental health food in Nigeria

Beans, cowpeas and lentils are affordable, filling and rich in folate, magnesium and tryptophan, all of which support mood regulation and reduce anxiety. Research published in nutritional psychiatry journals consistently identifies legume consumption as protective against symptoms of depression, even in low-resource settings. If there is one shift to make when the budget is tight, it is to eat beans more regularly.

3. Prioritise at least one intentional meal a day

Even if two meals are reactive and unplanned, deciding what one meal will be and preparing it with some thought changes the psychological relationship with food. Research on perceived dietary control shows that people who feel some agency over what they eat report lower stress and better mood, independent of the food's actual nutritional quality.

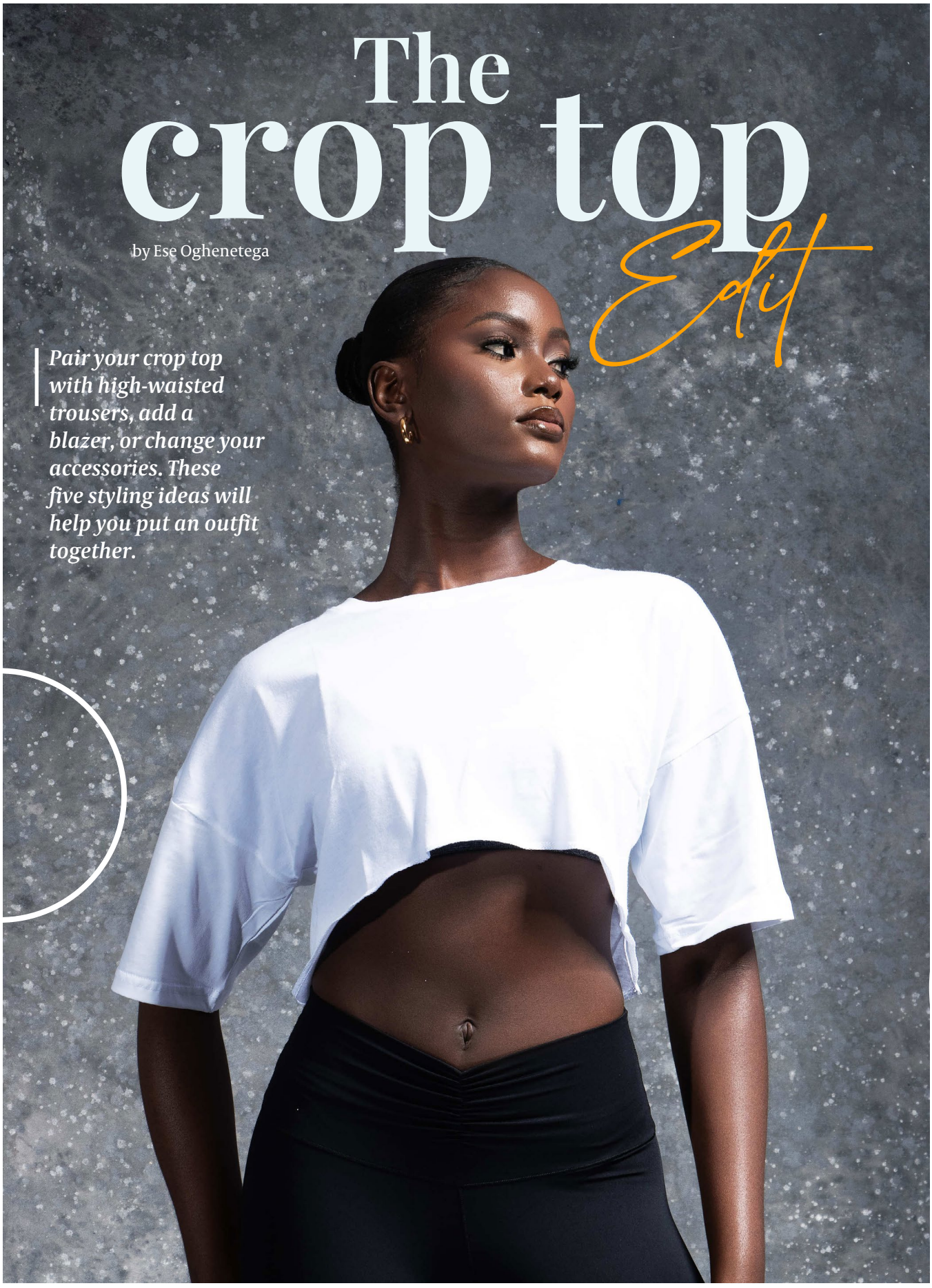
Whatever is available does not have to mean whatever comes. Even inside a tight space, small choices exist. Finding them, naming them, and prioritising them is where nutritional recovery begins.

Forty per cent of my survey respondents are eating whatever is available. This is a systemic problem that needs systemic solutions, but while we wait, the body still needs to eat tomorrow.

The crop top Edit

by Ese Oghenetega

Pair your crop top with high-waisted trousers, add a blazer, or change your accessories. These five styling ideas will help you put an outfit together.



Pair it with high-waisted pieces

Wear your crop top with high-waisted trousers or a skirt. Palazzo trousers work well with a fitted top, while a straight-cut skirt pairs neatly with a looser style. If you prefer more coverage, choose a crop top that meets the waistband.

Choose quality fabrics and complementary colours

Look for neat seams and fabric that holds its shape. Neutral colours are easy to combine, but bold shades also work for dressier occasions. Choose colours that complement the rest of your outfit rather than limiting bright pieces to casual wear.

Add a blazer

Layer a blazer over your crop top and pair it with well-tailored, high-waisted trousers or a knee-length skirt. Try neutral shades such as brown, black, grey, white, cream or beige, or introduce colour with a contrasting blazer.

Choose accessories carefully

A necklace, earrings or bangles add detail to a simple crop-top outfit. You do not need to wear them all at once. Consider your top's neckline, colour, and design, then choose accessories that work with it.

Finish with the right shoes

Pair your outfit with heels, sandals, loafers or trainers, depending on your plans. Consider the venue, how much walking you will do, and the length of your trousers or skirt. Choose shoes that complete the look and feel comfortable on your feet.









Photos by Magnific

The skin health triggers

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare



From prolonged sun exposure and urban pollution to harsh skincare products, stress and poor sleep, everyday conditions and habits can affect the skin in ways people may not immediately recognise.

The skin is the body's largest organ. It protects the body from germs and the elements, helps regulate temperature and allows us to feel heat, cold, pain and touch. Yet, it is also one of the parts of the body most exposed to and affected by everyday life.

From the moment a person leaves home, the skin comes into contact with sunlight, dust, heat and air pollution. There is sweat after a long day outside, soap and water during a bath, makeup and skincare products applied before leaving home, and whatever else comes into contact with the body throughout the day.

When a skin problem develops, identifying its cause is not always straightforward. Several factors can contribute to



changes in the skin, and what appears to be a single problem may have more than one underlying cause.

This is why caring for the skin is not simply about buying more products. It also involves paying attention to what the skin is exposed to and the habits that may be affecting it.

According to Dr Nwaiwu Obinna Michael, a general practitioner at Primrose Specialist Hospital, the biggest enemies of skin are too much sunlight, harsh skincare products, poor nutrition, lack of water, smoking, stress and not enough sleep.

The Sun

Sunlight is part of everyday life, but ultraviolet radiation can cause damage to the skin even when there is no obvious sunburn. Ultraviolet radiation can damage skin cells, contribute to premature skin ageing and increase the risk of skin cancer with long-term exposure. It can also contribute to changes many people notice as they get older, including wrinkles, uneven pigmentation and changes in skin texture.

In Nigeria, where people spend considerable time outdoors for work, commuting and other daily activities, sun exposure is difficult to avoid. For some outdoor workers, traders, drivers, dispatch riders and commuters, being under the sun is part of the working day. There is the common belief that people with dark skin do not need sunscreen. That melanin offers some natural protection against ultraviolet radiation, but it is noteworthy that this does not completely prevent sun damage.

Sunscreen is one option for reducing exposure, particularly on areas of skin that are regularly uncovered. Using hats, clothing, shade, and spending less time in direct sunlight are also useful.

For Mrs Ifunaya, a trader at Eko Market, the difference between the colour of her face and the rest of her body has become noticeable.

"The colour of my face and body doesn't match," she says. She believes years of trading outdoors have contributed to the difference. While other parts of her body remain covered by clothing, her face is regularly exposed to sunlight. She also attributes some of the changes she has noticed to the repeated application of products to her face, describing it as "too much rub, rub on the face".

Her experience reflects a concern shared by people who spend long hours outdoors. However, differences in complexion can have several causes, including sun exposure, existing pigmentation patterns and skin conditions. A medical assessment may be necessary to establish the cause of a particular change.

Temiloluwa Adebayo, a 27-year-old Lagos resident, says, "My first thought is usually, 'What can I use for this?' whenever I notice something different on my skin." When she started to notice dark areas around her cheeks, that's how she responded.

Temiloluwa commutes throughout Lagos for a large portion of the week, frequently spending a lot of time outside as she moves between bus stops, congested cars, and busy roads.

"I didn't even think the sun was part of the problem. I was just going to work every day and coming back home. I thought that was normal," she says.

Although she owned sunscreen, she did not use it consistently. "I only remembered it when I was going somewhere special. If I was going to work or taking a bus, I didn't think I needed it."

Dr Nwaiwu advises using sunscreen, wearing protective clothing and avoiding excessive sun exposure. For people who spend significant amounts of time outdoors, protection can also include seeking shade whenever possible and covering exposed areas of the body.

The aim is not to become fearful of sunlight, but to recognise that repeated exposure is part of the skin's daily environment. The air around us is another consideration. For people living and working in busy cities, an ordinary day can involve traffic fumes, dust, smoke and heat. A long commute may mean spending hours on the road,



walking beside moving vehicles or waiting at a bus stop in the middle of traffic.

Pollution

Research has linked exposure to air pollution, particularly traffic-related pollutants such as fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, with premature skin ageing and facial pigmentation changes. A 2020 review published in Current Environmental Health Reports examined evidence linking air pollution to skin ageing, while a separate review published in 2019 explored associations between particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide and changes in facial pigmentation. However, the strength of the evidence varies, and researchers are continuing to investigate how these pollutants affect the skin.

For people living and working in busy cities, an ordinary day can involve traffic fumes, dust, smoke and heat. A long commute may mean spending hours on the road, walking beside moving vehicles or waiting at a bus stop in the middle of traffic. Repeated exposure to environmental pollutants, particularly alongside sunlight, may contribute to changes in the skin, although individual outcomes vary.

Ademola Mustapha, a hail ride driver, spends much of his working day on Lagos roads, where he encounters sunlight, dust, smoke, and vehicle exhaust. Moving between the heat outside and the air conditioning inside his car is another part of his daily routine. He believes these conditions have affected his skin, particularly his face. After developing acne, he sought medical advice and was told during a consultation that clogged pores were contributing to the breakouts.

Acne develops when hair follicles become blocked with oil and dead skin cells, leading to inflammation. Research has also examined whether exposure to air pollution, including traffic-related emissions and fine particulate matter, can contribute to the development or worsening of acne. A 2026 systematic review published in Skin Health and Disease found evidence of associations between environmental pollution and acne exacerbation, although the researchers noted limitations in the available studies and said further research was needed to establish the relationship more clearly.

People who spend long hours on the road encounter several environmental exposures that may affect their skin. However, it is not possible to conclude that sunlight, dust, exhaust fumes or air conditioning caused Ademola's acne based on his experience alone. His account highlights a wider challenge for people whose jobs keep them outdoors or on busy roads for much of the day: maintaining a consistent skincare routine while managing the conditions they encounter at work.

Skincare

There is a point at which caring for the skin can become too much. Scrubbing harder, washing the face several times a day, using several exfoliating products or changing treatments every few weeks may seem like a way to get faster results. For some people, however, these habits can leave the skin irritated.

The American Academy of Dermatology advises people with acne-prone skin against scrubbing because irritation can make acne worse. Picking and squeezing spots can also increase inflammation and raise the risk of scarring and dark marks.

The same can happen when too many products are introduced at once. When the skin begins to burn, peel, sting or remain red,





“Healthy skin isn’t about chasing perfection or buying more products.
It’s about understanding your skin, protecting it from everyday damage, and building habits that help it thrive.”



it can be difficult to know which product is responsible, particularly when several new products were added around the same time.

Amaka Nwosu, 31, began changing her routine after watching skincare recommendations online. "I kept adding products because everybody was recommending something different. One person would say use this, another person would say try that," she says.

What started as an attempt to improve her skin eventually became uncomfortable. "At some point, my face started stinging whenever I applied anything. I actually thought maybe the product was working."

She continued until her skin began peeling. "When my skin started peeling, that was when I knew something was wrong. I had been trying to make my skin better, but I was making it worse."

According to Dr Nwaiwu, harsh soaps, bleaching products and inappropriate cosmetic products can irritate the skin and damage its protective barrier.

"The skin generally does not need an elaborate routine," he says, noting that gentle cleansing and appropriate moisturising are often sufficient.

The desire for clearer, brighter or smoother skin can make people more willing to experiment, particularly when products are promoted through social media. But irritation is not necessarily evidence that a product is working.

A routine that is simple and appropriate for an individual may be more useful than constantly changing products in response to online trends.

Sleep, stress and everyday habits

The relationship between sleep, stress and skin health has been examined in several scientific studies. Research suggests that psychological stress and poor sleep can affect the skin's protective barrier, although the effects vary between individuals.
A 2019 evidence-based review by M. Maarouf, C. L. Maarouf, Gil Yosipovitch and Vivian Y. Shi, published in the *British Journal of Dermatology*, examined 21 studies investigating stress and the skin's barrier function. The researchers found evidence that psychological stress can reduce skin hydration and increase transepidermal water loss, the process through which water passes from the body through the skin and evaporates. Their findings suggest that stress can interfere with the skin's ability to retain moisture and protect itself from external irritants.

Sleep has also been investigated in relation to skin ageing and recovery. In a study published in Clinical and Experimental Dermatology in 2015, researchers including Elma D. Baron and Althea Oyetakin-White examined 60 healthy women categorised according to their sleep quality. The study found that women who slept well had lower intrinsic skin-ageing scores and better recovery of their skin's protective barrier after experimental disruption than those who slept poorly. However, the study was relatively small and involved only Caucasian women, so its findings cannot automatically be generalised to everyone.

Sarah Williams, 29, says late nights gradually became part of her routine.

"I was sleeping very late, sometimes one or two in the morning, and I still had to wake up early for work. It became normal for me," she says.

She also noticed that periods of stress often coincided with changes in her skin.

"Whenever I was stressed, I noticed that my skin also started looking different. Sometimes I would break out and immediately start looking for another product."

Looking back, she believes she sometimes focused on changing her skincare routine when other aspects of her daily life also needed attention.

"There were times I was changing my skincare routine when what I probably needed was to rest."

Sarah's experience reflects how easily people can focus on visible changes in their skin without considering other aspects of their wellbeing. However, a breakout or change in complexion cannot automatically be attributed to stress or inadequate sleep. Hormonal changes, skincare products, existing skin conditions and other factors can also contribute.

For Dr Nwaiwu, adequate sleep is one of several lifestyle factors that contribute to healthier skin.

Diet is another subject that often comes up in conversations about acne. Although research has investigated links between particular dietary patterns and breakouts, the evidence does not support blaming every skin problem on a specific food.

Martins Kave says he stopped eating groundnuts and oily foods after being told that his skin was naturally oily and that these foods were contributing to his breakouts.

His experience reflects a common belief that eating oily food necessarily makes the skin oilier. However, dietary fat does not simply transfer to the skin, and the relationship between diet and acne is more complicated.

The American Academy of Dermatology notes that some studies have found an association between low-glycaemic diets and improvements in acne, although further research is needed.

Individual experiences differ, and eliminating foods without establishing whether they contribute to a particular problem may not resolve it.

A balanced diet provides nutrients needed for normal skin function, while adequate hydration supports the body's overall health.

Neither dietary changes nor drinking additional water should be treated as guaranteed solutions to acne or other skin conditions.

Smoking is another lifestyle factor with a well-established association with premature skin ageing. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, smoking can contribute to wrinkles and a dull or uneven complexion. It can also impair wound healing.

Dr Nwaiwu includes smoking among the factors that can work against healthier skin and recommends avoiding it.

Sleep, stress, nutrition and smoking affect the body in different ways, and none should be treated as the sole explanation for every skin concern. However, together with sun protection and an appropriate skincare routine, healthy everyday habits form part of a broader approach to maintaining skin health.

Building a healthier relationship with your skin

Healthy skin is not necessarily flawless skin. Breakouts, changes in pigmentation, dryness and other concerns can occur for different reasons, and understanding what contributes to them is an important part of managing them.

Dr Nwaiwu advises paying attention to everyday habits and avoiding practices that may cause unnecessary damage to the skin. Using sunscreen, choosing gentle skincare products, getting adequate sleep, eating a balanced diet, and avoiding smoking can all contribute to better skin health. For people who spend long hours outdoors, taking practical steps to reduce sun exposure and seeking shade whenever possible are also important.

However, not every skin concern can be resolved by changing a skincare routine or adopting healthier habits. Persistent acne, unusual changes in pigmentation, recurring irritation, and wounds that do not heal may require medical attention. Seeking advice from a qualified healthcare professional can help identify the underlying cause and prevent inappropriate treatments from making the problem worse.

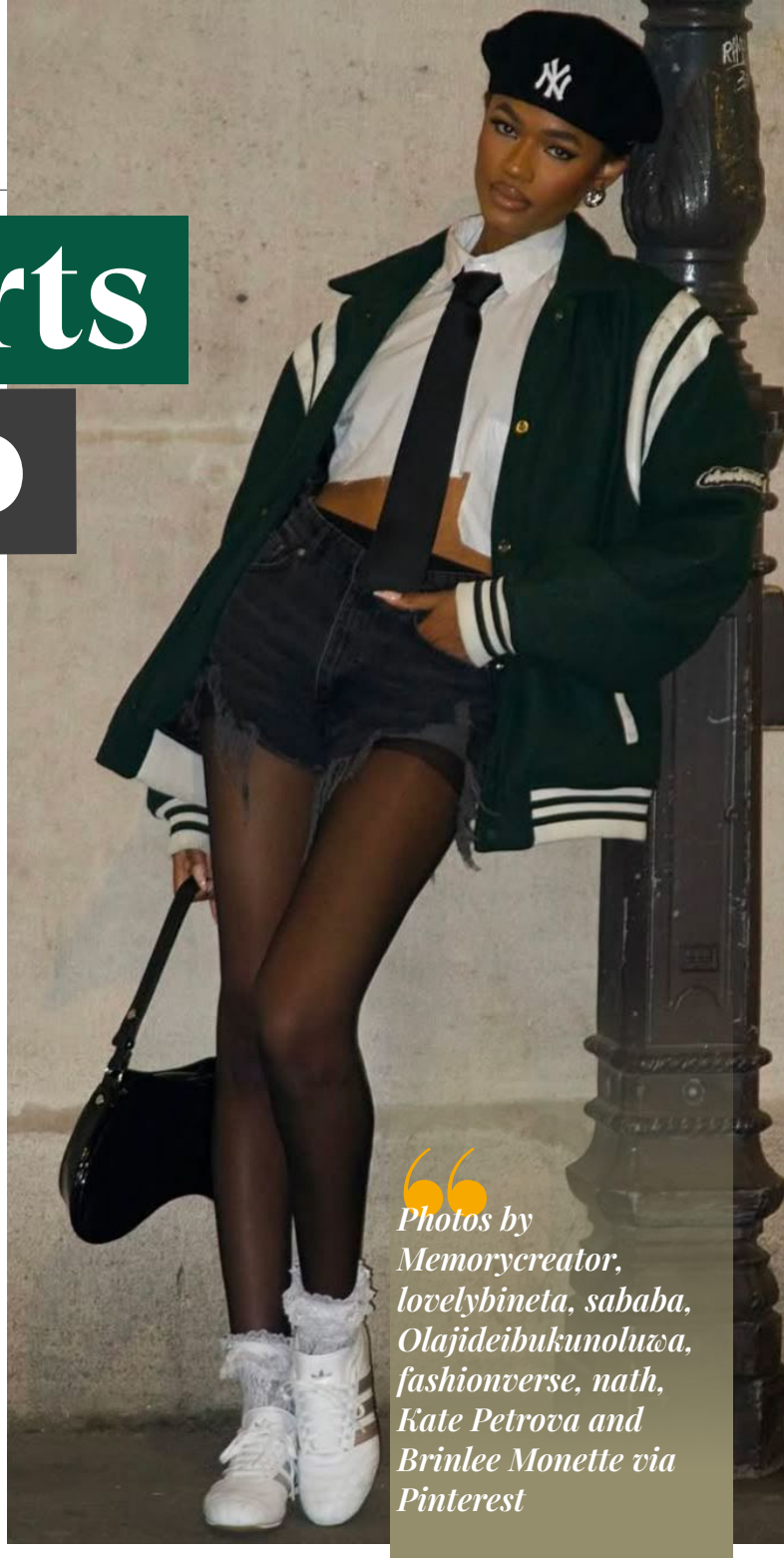
The skin responds to a combination of environmental, biological, and lifestyle factors. While not all of these can be controlled, understanding their potential effects can help people make more informed decisions about their care. Rather than chasing every new product or expecting immediate results, a consistent routine suited to individual needs, alongside appropriate medical advice when necessary, offers a more considered approach to maintaining skin health.



Style shirts like a pro

by Dorcas Ayoola

There comes a point in almost everyone's style journey when standing in front of a wardrobe full of clothes somehow feels like having nothing to wear. The pieces are familiar, the combinations predictable, and getting dressed begins to feel more like a routine than an expression of personal style.



Photos by Memorycreator, lovelybineta, sababa, Olajideibukunoluwa, fashionverse, nath, Kate Petrova and Brinlee Monette via Pinterest

Before you give in to the temptation of buying something new, consider revisiting one of the most underrated staples already hanging in your wardrobe: the classic shirt.

Whether it is a crisp white button-down borrowed from your office wardrobe, an oversized striped shirt you have owned for years, or a loose-fitting cotton style you usually reserve for casual days, the humble shirt has far more potential than most people realise. Its versatility lies in its ability to adapt. With a few styling tweaks and creative layering techniques, the same shirt can work for a coffee date, a business meeting, a weekend brunch or even an evening event.

Fashion is often less about owning and more about seeing familiar pieces differently. Here are six stylish ways to breathe new life into a wardrobe classic.

The open-front ease

There is something effortlessly cool about wearing a shirt as a lightweight jacket. Instead of buttoning it up, leave it open and layer it over a fitted tank top, camisole, crop top, or simple T-shirt.

This styling approach works particularly well with oversized shirts because the relaxed fit creates movement and gives the outfit a laid-back feel. A white linen shirt worn over a black tank top and jeans instantly creates that effortless off-duty look many women aim for.

For daytime outings, pair the look with trainers, sandals or loafers. For evening plans, swap the casual footwear for strappy heels and add statement jewellery.

This outfit is perfect for weekend brunches, shopping trips, casual Fridays, beach holidays and coffee dates.

The beauty of this styling trick is that it feels polished without appearing overly deliberate. It gives the impression that you have put thought into your outfit while keeping you comfortable and relaxed.

The cardigan layer

Some outfits strike that perfect balance between comfort and sophistication. Pairing a shirt with a cardigan is one of them.

Begin with a fitted or slightly relaxed shirt and layer a knitted cardigan over it. Allow the collar, cuffs, and perhaps even the hem of the shirt to peek through. These small details add visual interest.



A neutral cardigan over a striped shirt creates a timeless aesthetic, while a brightly coloured cardigan can add personality to a more understated shirt.

This combination works beautifully during transitional weather when you need an extra layer without sacrificing style.

Suitable settings include offices, university lectures, business-casual meetings, family gatherings, and travel days.

For a modern finish, pair the combination with tailored trousers and loafers. If you prefer a softer, more feminine look, a midi skirt and ankle boots work equally well.

The oversized layer

Oversized fashion continues to dominate because it combines comfort with contemporary style. If you own an oversized cardigan, try wearing it over a slightly oversized shirt.

At first glance, layering two loose pieces together may seem overwhelming, but the secret lies in balance. Pair the upper layers with slim-fit trousers, straight-leg jeans or a structured skirt to maintain proportion.

The resulting look feels cosy, artistic and fashion-forward. It is the kind of outfit often seen on creative professionals, fashion editors and style influencers who favour effortless dressing over rigid tailoring.

This look is ideal for creative workplaces, gallery visits, weekend activities, air travel and casual lunches.



Choose shirts in neutral shades like white, beige, blue or grey to create an elegant layered effect. Adding a leather handbag or structured footwear can further elevate the ensemble.

The corset statement

For those who enjoy experimenting with fashion, a corset worn over a shirt can completely change the garment's personality.

A relaxed shirt naturally drapes away from the body, while a corset introduces structure and shape. The contrast creates a striking silhouette that feels feminine, modern, and intentional.

A white oversized shirt paired with a black corset immediately becomes a statement outfit. Alternatively, a soft-toned corset over a pastel shirt creates a romantic appearance suitable for social occasions.

This styling option works well for fashion events, dinner dates, birthday celebrations, creative industry gatherings, and evening outings.

Wide-leg trousers help balance the fitted waist, while flowing skirts add softness and movement. Minimal accessories are often enough because the corset itself becomes the focal point.

The dress-over-shirt revival

If you have a sleeveless dress you no longer wear because the look feels repetitive, try layering it over a shirt to make it feel new.



This styling technique offers both practicality and sophistication. A crisp collared shirt underneath instantly adds structure, making the outfit look more polished and intentional.

Slip dresses, pinafore dresses and sleeveless midi dresses work particularly well with this approach. A fitted shirt creates a neat silhouette, while an oversized version offers a more fashion-forward interpretation.

This look suits work settings, religious gatherings, afternoon events, lunch dates and semi-formal occasions.
The layered effect also extends the wearability of dresses throughout the year, making it a smart styling solution for anyone looking to maximise their wardrobe.

The back-tie detail

Sometimes the smallest styling trick creates the most dramatic transformation.

To give a loose shirt a more fitted shape, gather the excess fabric at the back and secure it discreetly with a ribbon, elastic band or safety pin.

The result is a more tailored silhouette that defines the waist without requiring alterations. It creates the illusion of a custom-fitted shirt while maintaining comfort.
This trick works exceptionally well with oversized button-down shirts that might otherwise feel shapeless.

It is perfect for office meetings, day parties, casual dinners, networking events, and smart-casual occasions.
Pair the fitted shirt with tailored trousers, a pencil skirt, or wide-leg trousers for a polished finish.





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.

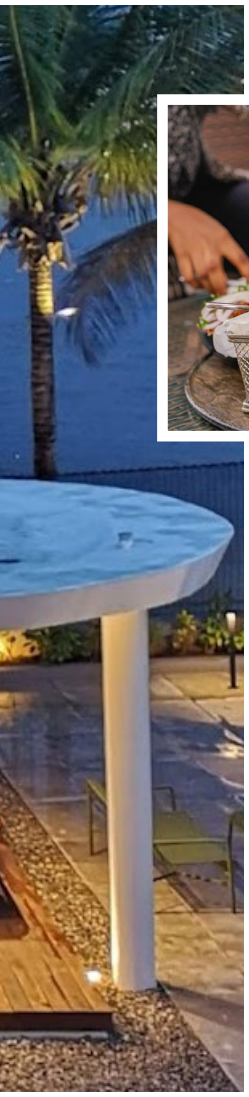
Cactus Restaurant

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



Craving a glamorous five-star date night, a high-octane blockbuster multiplex, or an intimate private screening lounge, here is our ultimate guide to the finest stages and screens 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.

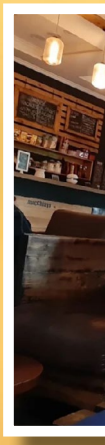
Why go: The vibe here is always electric and full of life. It is the best place to watch big action films or hilarious comedies because the crowd is super expressive; expect plenty of laughing, gasping, and shared fun.

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.





Café Flour

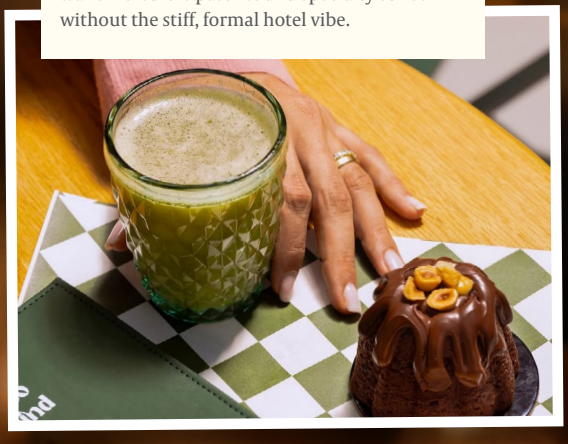
This intimate neighbourhood favorite smells entirely of comfort the second you cross the threshold. The ambiance is warm, unpretentious, and deeply welcoming, featuring rustic wooden accents and gentle lighting that encourages you to linger. They excel in artisanal baking, serving fresh-out-of-the-oven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

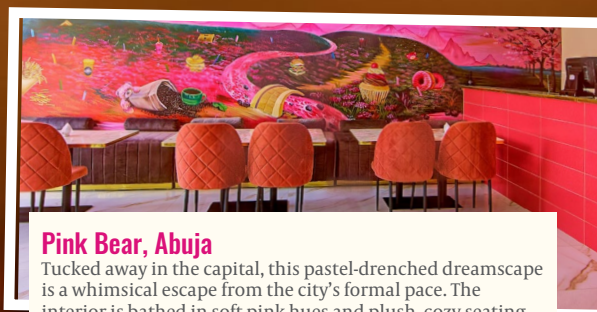
Why you should visit: Good for a quiet breakfast date or when you need a comforting slice of homemade cake paired with a hot cup of coffee to reset your day.

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.

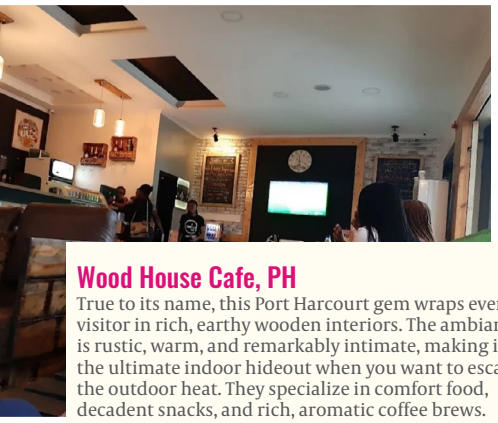




Pink Bear, Abuja

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.

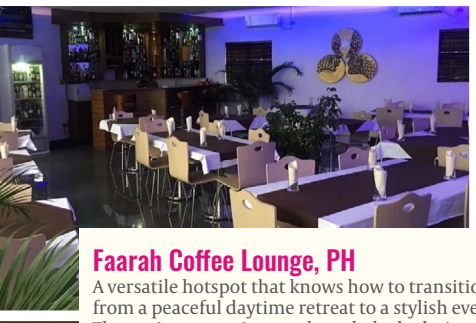
Why you should visit: Pay a visit when you want to bypass the scene-y pretension and simply enjoy a genuinely good cup of coffee served with a smile in a relaxed environment.



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

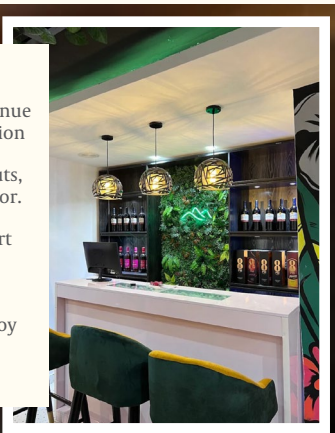
Nestled right in the pulsating heart of the mainland tech district, this space acts as an incubator for ideas and caffeine alike. The vibe is innovative, young, and dynamic, functioning seamlessly as both a collaborative workspace and a relaxed social lounge. They supply high-speed internet, steady workspace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

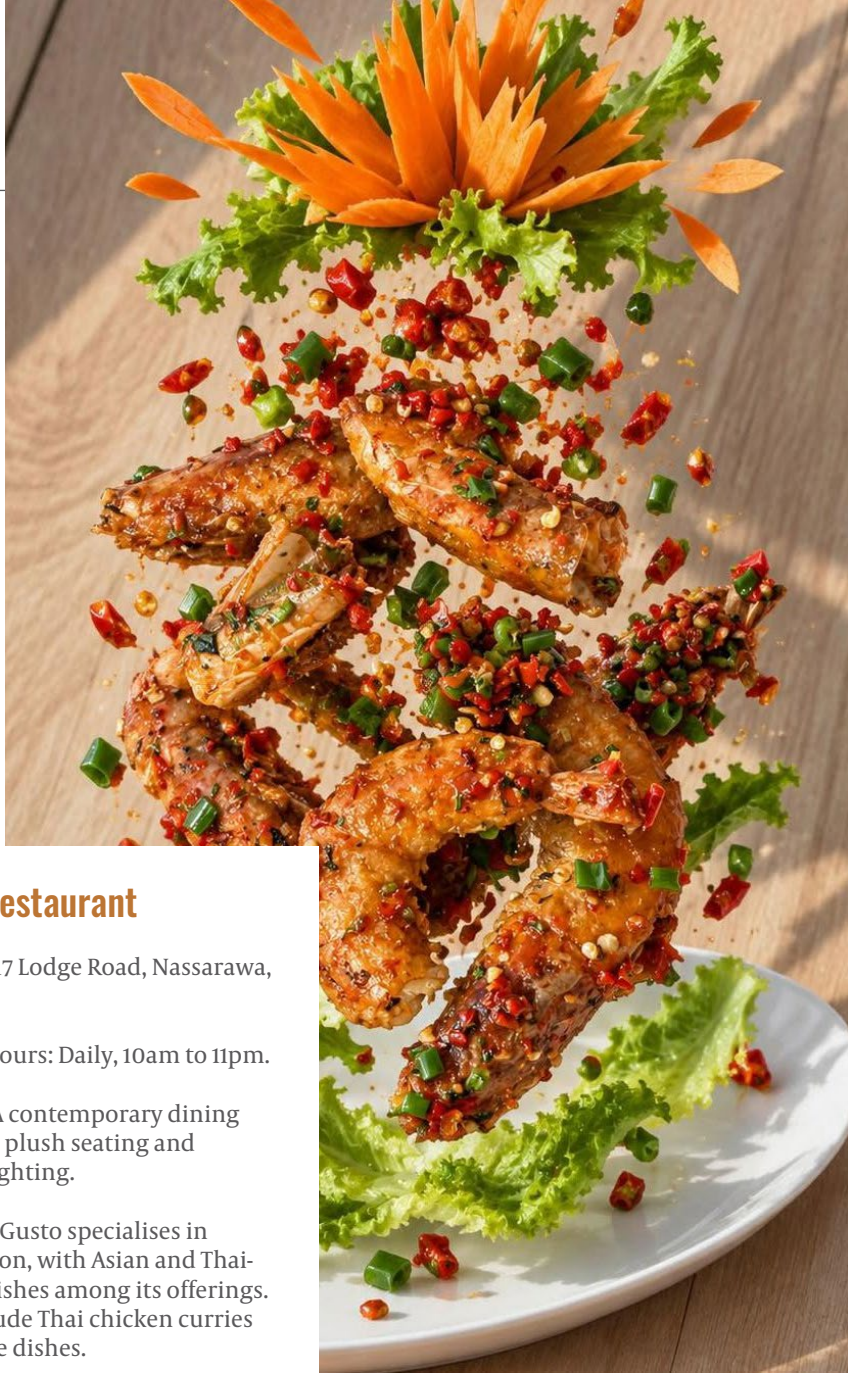
Miso Japanese and Thai Restaurant

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.

SAM IDIAGBONYA:

Keeping the cameras rolling in Abuja







Medical doctor and filmmaker Sam Idiagbonya has been making films in Abuja since 2013. In this interview with Ajuluchukwu Brown, he discusses rising production costs, the struggle to turn a profit, and what the capital needs to support its filmmakers.

Abuja, better known for government offices and diplomatic activity, is gradually developing a filmmaking community. For Dr Sam Idiagbonya, filmmaker, producer and President/Chief Creative Officer of Fedmas Studios, the city offers significant opportunities, but requires greater investment in infrastructure, training, funding and creative freedom.

A medical doctor and certified screenwriter, producer and director, Idiagbonya began filmmaking in 2013. Since then, he has combined production with professional training and an effort to understand the business side of the industry.

His credits include *Nini*, a film exploring love and identity; *Meadows (Colours of Desire)*, a series; *Turns,* which aired on DStv; and *Lami,* which won Best Film of the Year at the Inside Nollywood International Film Festival.

In this interview with Guardian Life, he reflects on the realities of filmmaking in Abuja, the business behind creativity, funding, cinema distribution, YouTube, collaboration, and the role government must play in Nigeria's creative future.

You entered filmmaking with passion. What did Abuja teach you about the difference between loving the craft and surviving the business?

Abuja is not the greatest film city in the world in terms of infrastructure and ecosystem, but there is a certain kind of story here. I find Abuja fascinating. I ventured into filmmaking because I wanted to present my films to the world. Along the way, I discovered that filmmaking is not just about passion. You have to understand the business side.

You can be a very talented filmmaker, but if you don't understand business, you will struggle. I had to learn about distribution, managing a company, building relationships, and understanding how the industry works.

In an industry that never stops changing, how have you kept yourself from becoming comfortable with what you already know?

You have to keep expanding. I have attended seminars, training, and media events. I am a certified director, producer, and writer, among other qualifications.

For me, filmmaking is continuous learning. Your story has to be solid, your production design has to work, and you must understand your industry and audience.

Behind every finished film is a long list of bills. How have you navigated the economics of filmmaking?

Technology has helped tremendously, but funding remains a serious problem. Passion alone cannot sustain filmmaking. You need equipment, people, logistics, and marketing.

Film equipment is expensive, and many filmmakers have had to find alternative ways of financing their work. Government support matters, but filmmakers also need to understand how to build sustainable businesses around their creativity.

If money is one obstacle, what is the human-capacity gap doing to the quality of Nigerian films?

We don't have enough properly trained crew. People sometimes think that because they can operate a camera, they are cinematographers. It doesn't work that way.

Film framing is a science. Lighting is both an art and a science. Production design, sound, and cinematography require professional knowledge and experience. Training and partnerships with universities are therefore important.

Abuja often appears more suited to bureaucracy than to creative rebellion. What does the city offer the filmmaker who chooses to create here?

Abuja is a plus. We have relatively stable electricity in many areas, a serene environment, good hotels, accessibility, and relatively easy movement. The problem is that we don't always take advantage of these advantages.

There are many creative people here who don't have enough exposure or platforms.

Does Abuja merely provide the backdrop for your films, or has the city begun to shape the stories you tell?

My market is the world. Earth is my market. If I make a story in Abuja and somebody watches it in London, they should still be able to relate to it.

Of course, if the story is specifically about Abuja, the environment becomes part of it. But generally, I don't want to limit my stories to one locality. A good story should travel.

Every creative ecosystem needs room to breathe. What freedoms and infrastructure are Abuja's filmmakers still waiting for?

Freedom. Creatives need the freedom to experiment, fail, criticise, and try again. Then there are infrastructural deficits. Equipment is expensive, training remains a challenge, and filmmakers need more opportunities to justify investments in equipment.

The future of creativity is collaboration. You cannot do this alone. I could write a script for a month, and my team could spend weeks criticising it. That criticism is necessary.

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FILMS

to watch in cinemas this October

★★★★★

by Musa Adekunle

October's cinema line-up includes Nigerian dramas, Indian thrillers and a documentary on MKO Abiola. These ten titles include new releases and films still showing in cinemas.

01 Jailer 2



A retired officer must return to action when a criminal organisation threatens his family. Protecting those closest to him means drawing on the skills he hoped to leave behind. Rajinikanth leads the cast of the sequel, directed by Nelson Dilipkumar, with Ramya Krishnan, Mohanlal and Jackie Shroff also listed.

02 Udta Teer



A spy throws an already confusing operation into chaos, leaving secrets exposed and loyalties uncertain. The trouble is that he seems as lost as everyone around him. Directed by Aakash Kaushik, this spy comedy stars Ayushmann Khurrana, Sara Ali Khan, Rahul Bose and Gulshan Grover.

03 East West Love



Tito's planned trip to Mombasa becomes a getaway with her best friend after she catches her boyfriend cheating. There, a local man named Juma gives her another reason to reconsider what she wants from love. Seko Shamte directs the romantic drama, starring Elma Mbadiwe, Efa Iwara, Sunshine Rosman, Brian Abajah and Emmanuel Mugo.

04 Drishyam: The Conclusion



The Salgaonkar family tries to conceal a murder in a crime thriller built around the consequences of keeping a dangerous secret. Directed by Abhishek Pathak, the film's cast includes Ajay Devgn, Tabu, Shriya Saran, Rajat Kapoor, and Jaideep Ahlawat.

05 Agbara Nla: The Return



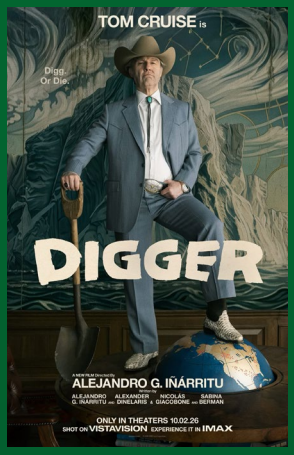
Olaboye and Olatomi leave their city lives to confront the power of Isawuru, a herbalist who controls the village of Muwonleru. Their mission also draws in Bose and Kola, whose personal struggles become part of the conflict. Damilola Mike-Bamiloye and Joshua Bamiloye direct the Yoruba and English-language Christian drama.

06 Black Market



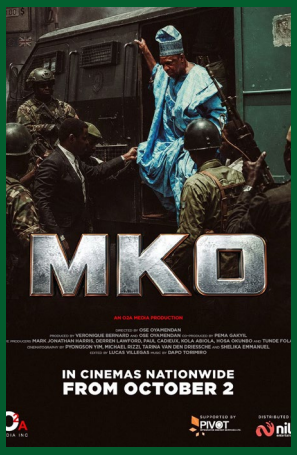
Four women must rescue a young girl after a smuggler kidnaps her to settle an old score. Bringing her home means navigating deception and betrayal, with their own relationships at risk as family ties become entangled with crime. Directed by Fatimah Binta Gimsay, the drama stars Lateef Adedimeji, Linda Ejiofor, Omowunmi Dada and Scarlett Gomez.

07 Digger



The world's most powerful man races to present himself as humanity's saviour before a disaster he caused destroys everything. His attempt to rescue his reputation drives this comedy-drama from Alejandro G. Iñárritu. Tom Cruise stars alongside Sandra Hüller, Riz Ahmed, John Goodman, Jesse Plemons and Emma D'Arcy.

08 MKO



Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola's political struggle forms the subject of this documentary by Ose Oyamendan. The film revisits the annulled 1993 presidential election, his imprisonment and his death in detention. Interviews with political figures, witnesses and members of his family examine the events and conflicting accounts surrounding them.

09 Verity



Writer Lowen Ashleigh accepts a job completing Verity Crawford's work, then discovers private notes containing disturbing accounts of the author's marriage. As she reads, separating confession from fiction becomes increasingly difficult. Michael Showalter directs the thriller, with Dakota Johnson, Anne Hathaway and Josh Hartnett leading the cast.

10 Heart of the Beast



A Special Forces officer and his combat dog survive a plane crash only to find themselves stranded in the Alaskan wilderness. With help out of reach, they must battle the harsh conditions to stay alive. Directed by David Ayer, the survival thriller stars Brad Pitt, Anna Lambe, and J.K. Simmons.

Italian potato salad

by Chidinma Enweani





This potato salad uses a garlic and herb dressing instead of mayonnaise. Tossing the potatoes in the dressing while they are still warm helps them absorb the flavour. Serve it as a side dish with your next meal.

Ingredients

1 kg baby potatoes
1 small red onion, finely sliced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
½ cup pitted Kalamata olives
2 tablespoons capers, drained
½ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
2 tablespoons fresh oregano or basil, chopped

For the dressing

cup extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar or fresh lemon juice
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Place the potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold, salted water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, or until tender when pierced with a fork. Drain well and leave to cool just enough to handle. Cut into halves or quarters, depending on their size.

2. While the potatoes cook, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar or lemon juice, garlic, mustard, salt and black pepper in a small bowl until well combined.

3. Place the warm potatoes in a large mixing bowl. Pour over half the dressing and toss gently. Dressing the potatoes while they are warm helps them absorb the flavour.

4. Add the onion, tomatoes, olives, capers and fresh herbs. Pour over the remaining dressing and gently mix, taking care not to mash the potatoes.

5. Serve warm, at room temperature or chilled. If serving chilled, refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavours to blend.

Homemade strawberry lemonade

This drink pairs well with salad. It combines the tartness of fresh lemons with the sweet flavour of ripe strawberries.



Ingredient

- 1½ cups fresh strawberries, hulled and chopped
- 1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice, from about 6 to 8 lemons
- Zest of 1 lemon, optional
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 4 cups water, divided
- Plenty of ice cubes, to serve
- Fresh strawberry slices and lemon rounds, to garnish
- Fresh mint leaves, optional

Instructions

1. In a small saucepan, combine the sugar with 1 cup of water. Heat over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves, about 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and leave the syrup to cool.

2. Place the chopped strawberries in a blender and blend until smooth. For seedless lemonade, press the purée through a fine-mesh strainer into a bowl. Otherwise, leave it unstrained for extra texture.

3. Roll the lemons firmly on the worktop before cutting them to help release their juice. Squeeze until you have 1 cup of juice.

4. In a large jug, combine the lemon juice, strawberry purée, cooled syrup, and the remaining 3 cups of cold water. If using lemon zest, add it now. Stir well.

5. Taste and adjust. If it is too tart, add a little more sugar, stirring until dissolved, or a splash of water. If it is too sweet, add a little extra lemon juice.

6. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavours to blend. Pour into tall glasses filled with ice. Garnish with lemon rounds, strawberry slices, and mint, if using.



10 new Lagos dining spots





by Musa Adekunle

Lagos has welcomed new dining spots serving French pastries, Moroccan dishes, matcha drinks and Nigerian favourites, with some offering waterfront views. Here are ten places to try.



1. Panu

Panu brings a taste of New York and Italy to Lekki through panuzzo, an Italian sandwich made with pizza-style bread. Located at 9 Otunba Adedoyin Ogungbe Crescent, the café also serves breakfast, pasta, pastries and drinks in a calm setting that suits coffee dates, casual meals and small gatherings.

2. BYD Café



Coffee inside a car showroom may sound unusual, but that is part of BYD Café's appeal. Located inside the BYD Nigeria showroom on Akin Adesola Street, the café serves coffee, sandwiches, salads and pastries to visitors seeking a quick meal or a quiet place to sit.



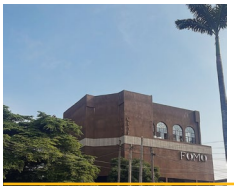
3. Mila Lagos

Mila Lagos keeps things warm and simple with its modern interior, soft lighting and comfortable seating. It is a relaxed spot for coffee, casual meals, quiet dates or conversations that need more time than one drink.

4. Shore by Sailors



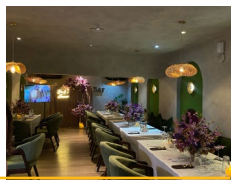
Shore by Sailors combines food, drinks and waterfront views at Plot 1, Block 12, Admiralty Road. Guests can settle indoors or enjoy the open-air section while eating, sipping cocktails and watching life move across the water.



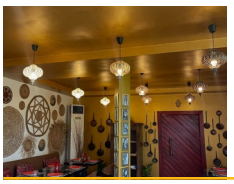
5. Cusp Patisserie

Cusp Patisserie serves pastries, bread, desserts and drinks at 3A Danmole Street. Its French-inspired offerings carry touches of West African flavour, making it a lovely stop for breakfast, a coffee date or an afternoon treat.

6. Brunch Bar Lagos



Brunch does not have to end before noon at this all-day restaurant on 33 Grace Anjous Drive. Brunch Bar Lagos serves breakfast favourites and comforting meals in a bright setting suited to weekend dates, friendly catch-ups and slow afternoons.



7. Saffron by Alexis Galleries

Saffron brings Moroccan-inspired dining to 282 Akin Olugbade Street. Its warm colours, patterned lamps and intimate seating create a cosy atmosphere for diners who want rich flavours and a quiet meal away from the usual Lagos rush.

8. Gogi Lagos



Gogi Lagos is a 24-hour food house at 69 Admiralty Way, serving burgers, rice bowls and other filling meals. Its easygoing setting makes it useful for quick lunches, casual hangouts and those late-night moments when hunger refuses to respect the time.



9. The Pepper Soup Shop

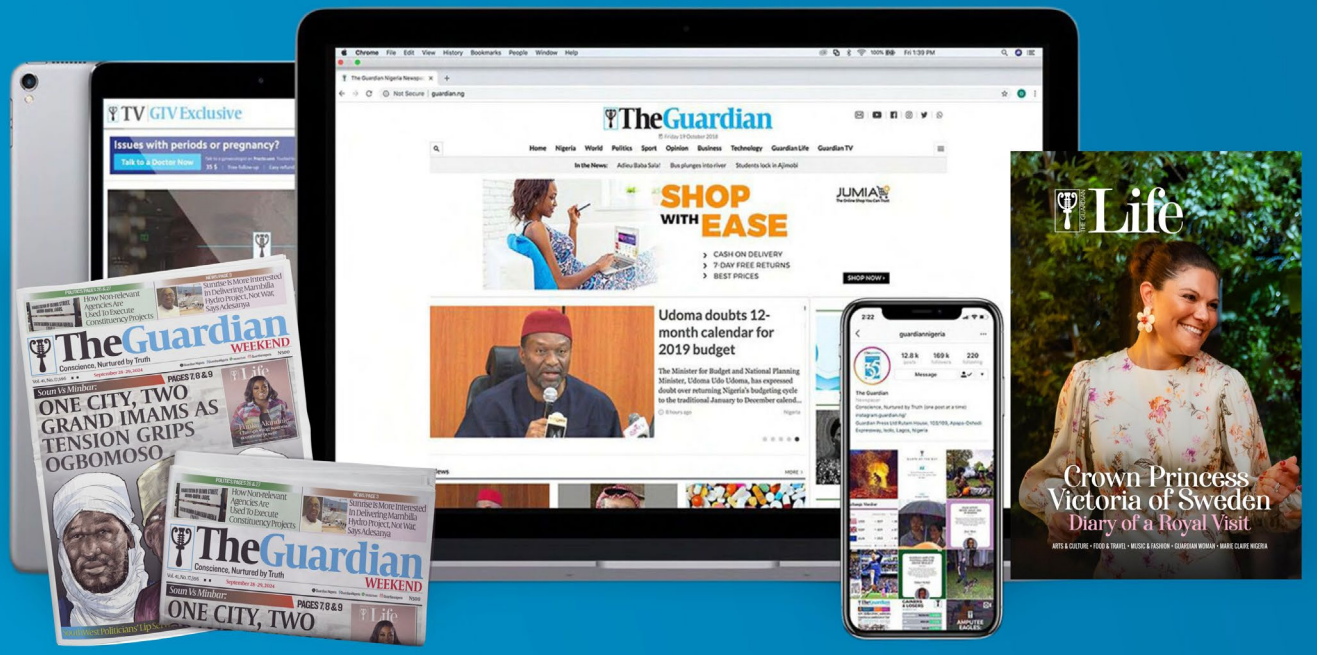
The Pepper Soup Shop builds its menu around one of Nigeria's most comforting meals. It serves rich pepper soup with local sides in a cosy setting, making it a fitting stop on rainy evenings or whenever you want something hot and familiar.

10. Mamatcha Café



Mamatcha Café gives matcha lovers plenty to enjoy at 30 Fola Osibo Road. Alongside its matcha drinks, the café serves coffee, pastries, breakfast dishes and light meals in a clean, modern space made for casual dates and afternoon catch-ups.

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