SEPTEMBER 12 - 13, 2026

THE GUARDIAN

Life

Vol. 21, Iss. 1218

Cinema Date?

10 films to watch this September

STAY STYLISH!
STATEMENT LOOKS MADE TO TURN HEADS



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BoyPee

on Ogechi, doubt and finding his rhythm

Uzoamaka Oshogwe:

The smiling face of hospitality

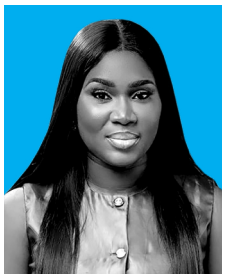
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THE GUARDIAN **Life**

Everything you need to live well



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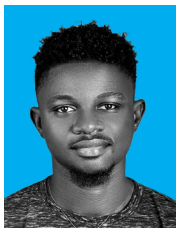












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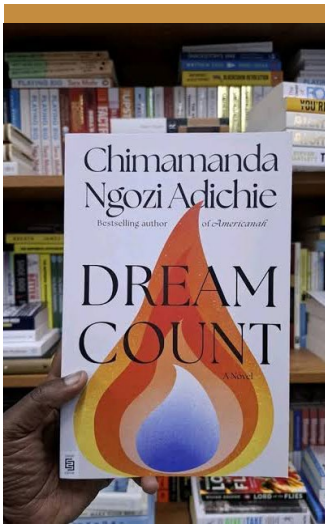
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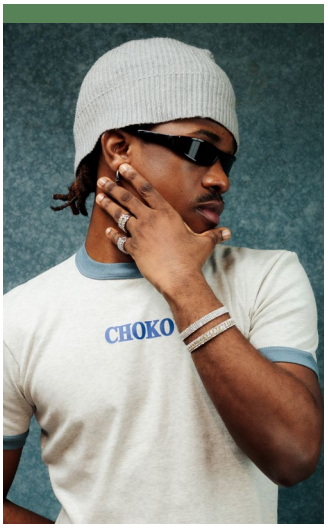
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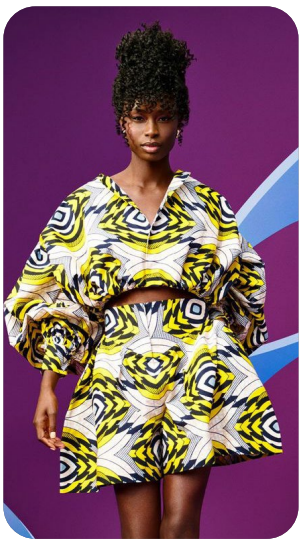
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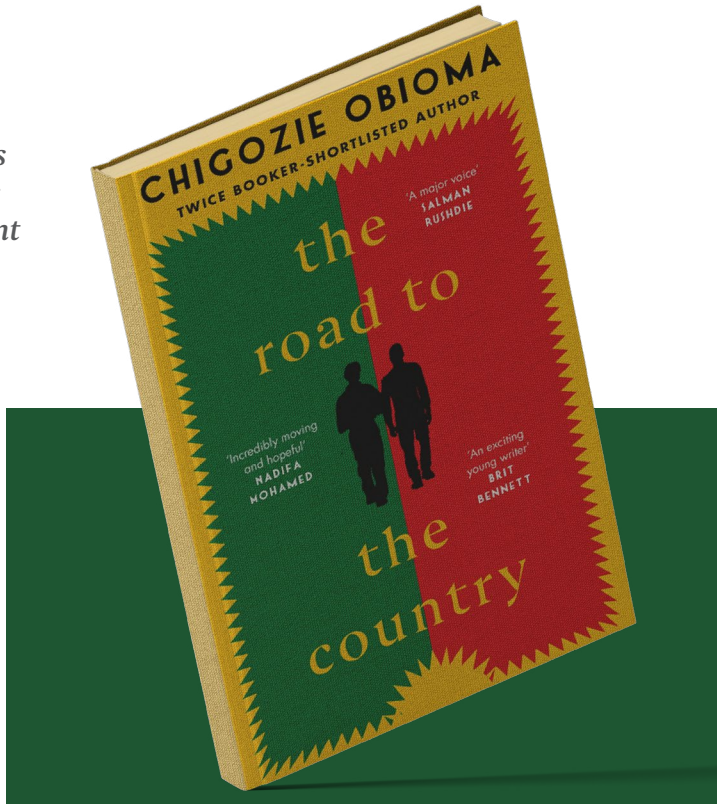
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Five Nigerian books to read before the year ends

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

Need somewhere to play games, go bowling or just hang out with your friends? Lagos has quite a few places where you can do exactly that. From PlayStation lounges and arcades to bowling alleys and family entertainment centres, these five spots offer something different from the usual restaurant or cinema outing.



Dream Count

1 **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**
Adichie's first novel in ten years follows four women whose lives are connected by friendship, love, family, ambition, and the choices they have made. Set between Nigeria and the United States, it is a good pick if you want something contemporary and character-driven.



The Road to the Country

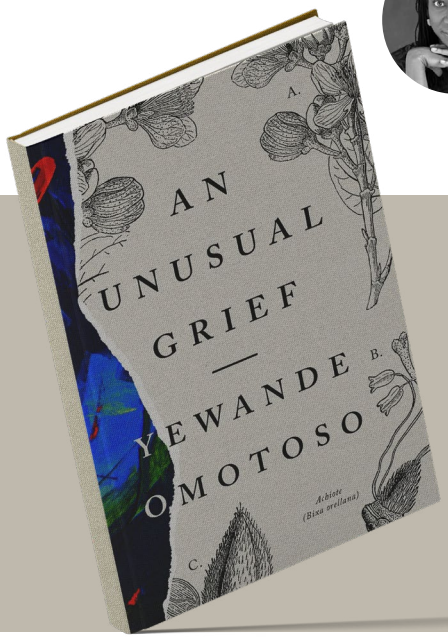
2 **Chigozie Obioma**
Set during the Nigerian Civil War, the novel follows Kunle, a young university student who sets out to find his missing brother and eventually becomes caught up in the war. It mixes history, family, mythology, and survival without treating the war as distant history. The book was also a finalist for the Nigeria Prize for Literature.

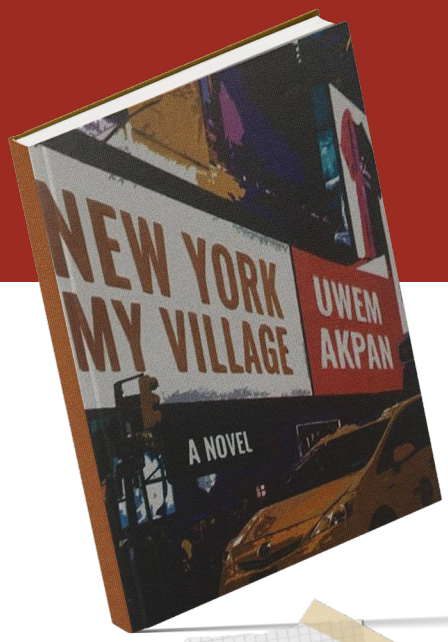


An Unusual Grief

3 **Yewande Omotoso**
This is for readers who prefer stories that sit with difficult emotions. The novel follows Mojisola after the sudden death of her daughter and looks at grief, family, identity, and the life she begins to discover after loss.







New York, My Village

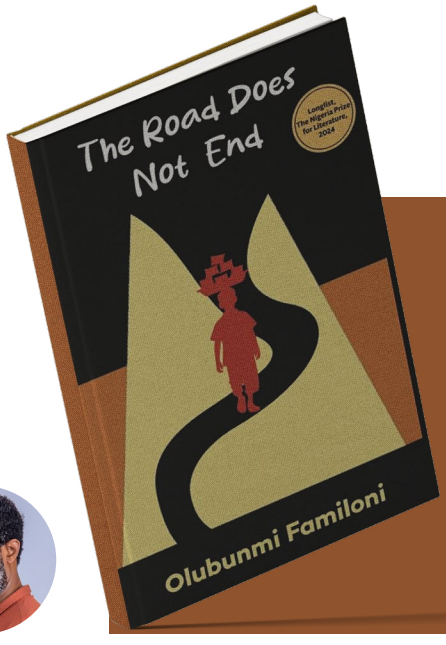
4 **Uwem Akpan**
Uwem Akpan's novel follows a Nigerian editor who travels to New York hoping to work on his first novel, only to find himself confronting questions about race, identity, publishing, and how Africa is understood abroad. It is a sharp choice for readers interested in the complicated relationship between Africa and the West.



The Road Does Not End

5 **Olubunmi Familoni**
Winner of the 2024 Nigeria Prize for Literature, the novel follows Rilwan, a young boy who loses his parents and is pushed into street hawking. His life changes when he meets Saka Pepper, a man connected to the Fuji music scene. It is a relatively short read, but it tackles child labour, poverty, friendship, and survival.







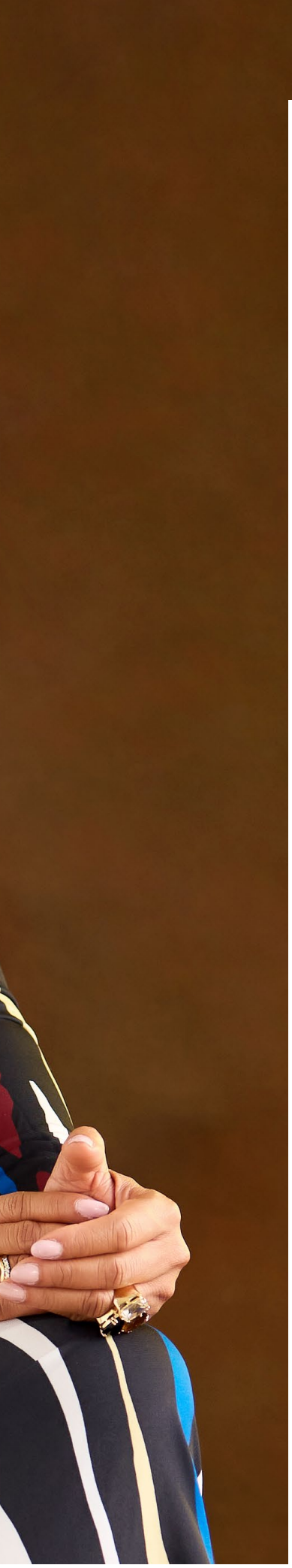
Uzoamaka Oshogwe: The smiling face of hospitality

by Musa Adekunle



NEED TO KNOW

- Uzoamaka Oshogwe has more than 30 years of experience across technology, banking, real estate and hospitality.
- She began her career in the United Kingdom, working with Ford Motors, J. Sainsbury and Accenture before returning to Nigeria.
- Before joining Transcorp Hotels Plc, she worked with United Bank for Africa and later served as MD/CEO of Afriland Properties Plc.
- She holds a degree in Chemistry from Ambrose Alli University and a master's degree in Information Systems Design from the University of Westminster.
- Oshogwe became MD/CEO of Transcorp Hotels Plc in January 2025 and now leads the company's growth across hospitality, events and lifestyle experiences.



There is hardly a public appearance by Uzoamaka Oshogwe without her familiar smile. It makes her seem warm and approachable, but it also tells a deeper story about how she handles pressure. For the MD/CEO of Transcorp Hotels Plc, which owns the iconic Transcorp Hilton Abuja and the 5,000-seat Transcorp Centre Abuja, smiling is not an escape from difficult moments. It is her way of meeting them with courage and optimism.

Oshogwe's journey did not begin in hospitality. She studied Chemistry before building a career that took her through technology, banking and real estate. Over more than three decades, she worked with organisations including Ford Motors, J. Sainsbury, Accenture and United Bank for Africa. She later led Afriland Properties Plc before taking charge of Transcorp Hotels in January 2025.

Under her leadership, the company has continued to grow despite Nigeria's difficult business climate. Transcorp Hotels recorded ₦97.04bn in revenue and ₦21.85bn in profit after tax in 2025. Yet Oshogwe believes the real story lies beyond the figures. For her, a successful hospitality company begins with employees who feel valued and guests who leave with a reason to return.

> *"My smile represents optimism, resilience and the strong belief that even in the most difficult moments, there is always a way forward."*
>
> — UZOAMAKA OSHOGWE

Speaking in an exclusive interview with *Guardian Life,* Oshogwe shares the journey that prepared her for leadership, the strength behind her smile and why caring for people makes good business sense. She also discusses family, Nigeria's hospitality industry and her plans for the next chapter of Transcorp Hotels Plc.

Before becoming the MD/CEO of Transcorp Hotels Plc, who was Uzoamaka Oshogwe, and which early experiences shaped the woman and leader you are today?

My journey has not been a straight line, and I think that has shaped the leader I am today.

I studied Chemistry at Ambrose Alli University, but my career took me into technology. I moved to the UK, earned a master's degree in information systems design from the University of Westminster and went on to work with organisations including Ford Motors, J. Sainsbury, and Accenture. Those early years exposed me to very structured environments and taught me the importance of systems and processes, discipline, attention to detail, and delivering to a high standard.

When I returned to Nigeria, my career evolved again. I worked with United Bank for Africa and later moved into real estate, eventually becoming MD/CEO of Afriland Properties Plc, formerly known as UBA Properties Ltd.

So, before Transcorp Hotels, I spent more than three decades working across different industries, countries, and roles. Perhaps the biggest lesson across all those years is that you have to remain open to learning and change. I certainly did not begin my career thinking I would one day lead one of Nigeria's foremost hospitality companies. Every experience prepared me for the next one.



> *"Leadership, for me, has been more about responsibility than position."*
>
> — UZOAMAKA OSHOGWE

Was there a defining moment when you realised that you wanted to lead, and how did it influence the direction of your career?

I don't think there was one defining moment when I decided I wanted to be a leader. Leadership, for me, has been more about responsibility than position.

As my career progressed and I was entrusted with greater responsibilities, I became increasingly conscious of the impact a leader can have on people; their confidence, development and willingness to give their best. This hindsight has shaped the kind of leader I am today. I am clear about expectations and performance, and equally conscious of the people responsible for delivering them.

What was your first reaction to your appointment as MD/CEO, and how did you prepare for the responsibility that followed?

There was an instant sense of humility and gratitude, followed immediately by a strong sense of responsibility.

Transcorp Hotels Plc is a premium Nigerian brand with a strong legacy, redefining standards of hospitality in Africa, so I understood the weight of what I had been entrusted with. My focus was on understanding the business deeply, listening to our people and building on the strong foundations already in place.

The question I knew my team and I had to answer and execute was: "How do we protect what makes this business special while positioning it for its next phase of growth?"

You often speak about taking care of people as a business strategy. How do you sustain that philosophy when difficult commercial decisions must be made?

People-first leadership is sometimes misunderstood as being soft. I don't see it that way.

My philosophy is: if you take care of your people, they will take care of your business. People want to feel heard, valued, trusted and empowered to make a difference. They want to know that their contributions matter.

That does not mean difficult decisions are eradicated. It means that even when those decisions must be made, you communicate honestly, listen, and treat people with respect.

You can care about people and still demand excellence. In fact, I believe the two reinforce each other.

Transcorp Hotels has delivered strong financial results despite Nigeria's challenging economy. Which decisions have contributed most to the company's performance?

Our performance reflects several things working together: operational discipline, cost management, a strong focus on the guest experience, and, importantly, teamwork.

We entered 2026 following a record year, with 2025 revenue of ₦97.04 billion, up 38%, and profit after tax of ₦21.85 billion, representing 47% growth. In the first half of 2026, despite a more challenging operating environment, profit before tax grew 12% to ₦13.7 billion and profit after tax increased 21% to ₦10.5 billion.

> *"My philosophy is: if you take care of your people, they will take care of your business."*
>
> — UZOAMAKA OSHOGWE

Those numbers are important, but behind each of those numbers is a human decision: a guest deciding to book, return, recommend us, dine with us or host an event with us.

So, we remain focused on delivering experiences that create value for our guests while maintaining the operational discipline required to create value for our shareholders.

Your smile has become a recognisable part of your public identity. What difficult seasons, sacrifices or personal experiences have shaped the strength behind it?

My smile has certainly become a recognisable part of who I am, but for me, it represents a lot more. It represents optimism, resilience and the strong belief that even in the most



difficult moments, there is always a way forward. Life has taught me this.

I have learnt that as a leader, the energy you bring into a room matters. My smile helps me remain approachable and gives people the confidence to engage with me, even when the conversations are difficult. While it comes naturally to me, I am also intentional about it, consistent with the warmth, home-feel and aura that our hotel exudes.

Smiling does not mean that I take challenges lightly. If anything, it reflects my determination not to allow difficult circumstances to define the way I lead. I believe people need to see that their leader has the courage to confront challenges, while still having the confidence to believe that better days are ahead.

Sometimes it is my way of saying to myself and the people around me, "Relax, it's not the end of the world." That doesn't mean difficult moments don't affect me. They do. Leadership comes with pressure, difficult decisions, and demanding expectations. The smile is not an absence of those realities but a choice about how I respond to them.

Some people might see smiling, warmth and empathy as "soft" leadership qualities. Do you believe they can influence business performance?

Absolutely. Warmth should never be confused with weakness. In hospitality, how people feel has commercial consequences. A guest who feels genuinely welcomed is more likely to return, speak about the experience, and build a relationship with the brand.

The same principle applies internally. People who feel valued contribute more and are more likely to take ownership of the experience they create for customers.

So, I do not see people and performance as separate conversations. Taking care of people is not simply good leadership; in hospitality, it is good business.

Hospitality is built around how people feel. How do you ensure that every guest experiences the warmth, excellence and attention that Transcorp Hotels promises?

The real question is: when a guest walks out of our hotel, what do they remember? How did we make them feel? What makes them want to come back again and again?

Beautiful rooms matter. Great restaurants matter. Efficient systems matter. Exceptional service cannot be achieved through processes and systems alone; it comes from people who feel seen, valued and empowered. I describe hospitality as an emotion.

I therefore try to create an environment where our people understand that they are not simply completing tasks – they are creating experiences. I encourage them to take ownership, make decisions, listen to our guests and, where necessary, go beyond the expected to solve a problem or, most importantly, create a memorable moment.

I also believe that empowerment must be supported by clarity and accountability. Our people need to know what we stand for, what excellence looks like and that their leaders will support them when they take the right initiative.

Ultimately, our guests experience our culture through our people. The confidence that comes from the feeling of being respected, heard and trusted translates into warmer interactions, greater attention to detail, and a genuine desire to exceed every expectation. That is how we build a culture that is not merely delivered - it is felt.

> *"My family has been part of this journey, so the milestones reached are theirs as much as mine."*
>
> — UZOAMAKA OSHOGWE



How do you balance the demands of leading a major company with family life, and what has that journey taught you about sacrifice and support?

Balance is something I continue to work at rather than something I would claim to have perfected. Leadership at this level is demanding, and there are periods when the business requires a great deal of your time and attention.

Two things have helped me a lot. The first is a great support system at home that has carried me through many long days. The second is a capable team.

Continue reading on guardian.ng/category/life/



Inside joyous rhythms of BoyPee

by Chinonso Ihekire

Ever since the smash-hit, highlife-leaning Afro Pop jam Ogechi broke out in 2024, establishing three young voices BoyPee, Hyce and Brown Joel has drawn an exciting spotlight on their talents.

What began as an almost accidental studio collaboration grew into a run of records, followed by their six-track joint EP, *Synergy,* last year. A Davido feature on the official remix of "Ogechi" pushed the song even further, eventually earning them two nominations at the 17th Headies for Afrobeats Single of the Year and Viewers' Choice.

Among the three artists, BoyPee, born Sopuruchukwu Odunze, has also maintained a stealthy solo run of his own. Away from their shared catalogue, the Onitsha-raised singer has continued building through records including Choice, First Sight and Summer Adina, while collaborations with Duncan Mighty and Rord Kelly have kept him close to the Eastern Nigerian musical community that soundtracked his earliest years. His new record, For You, returns to the subject matter love, and, this time, he is interested in the happier version of it.

Catching up with Guardian Music, BoyPee goes back to his beginnings as an Igbo rapper in Onitsha; nearly quitting music; the unlikely Chief Priest link-up that changed his trajectory, the lore behind Ogechi; his connection to the South East, and why he is in no hurry to force what comes next.

When did your interest in music begin?

I think 2010. I've always been a lover of music. I just loved music and studied music. I was still in secondary school then, in junior class.

Were you already writing and rapping at the time?

Yeah, I was a rapper.

Were you rapping in English or Igbo?

Igbo. I loved Phyno then, and some other rappers like Nigga Raw, Slowdog and Zoro.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Onitsha, Anambra State. I left Onitsha when I wanted to enter a higher institution. When I finished school, I came back to Onitsha around 2020, 2021. Then I left Onitsha again for Lagos in 2022.

Had you always known you would eventually relocate?

Yeah, I knew, because me, I dey find way forward. Anybody wey wants more and wants to push harder, you go dey plan: "Okay, where I go next? Wetin I go do? What am I doing next?" I always ask myself that question at every stage of my life.

What did you study?

Business Administration at Federal Polytechnic, Nekede.

Did you ever imagine yourself taking a regular office job after school?

No. I just knew it was going to be music because na the thing wey dey give me joy be that. You know when you get something wey, if you do am, you no dey feel pressured? You just want to do your thing. That's how I feel whenever I'm making music.

Was there ever a period when you seriously doubted whether music would work?

That was around 2017. The people around me were always ginger me to go harder, but at that time I was in school and a lot of things were happening. I was asking myself whether this music thing was really something I was going to do. Then in 2018, one of my friends told me there was this man he wanted me to make a song for. I was like, "Who be that again? I don't want to do music. I don tire." I was depressed at the time. Anything anybody told me to do just felt like they wanted to stress me because when you have been trying and trying and everything still no dey work out, you get tired. My friend said, "Okay, I want you to make a song for Chief Priest." I asked, "Who be Chief Priest?" I didn't know him then. He told me Chief Priest was somebody everybody knew and that he was hot on Instagram. He felt if I made a song for him, he might like it and push me. I still said no. My friend even gave me money. He first gave me N20,000 because where we had to record the song was far from where I was. It was almost a three-hour journey. I still didn't want to go. Then he said he would give me N30,000, which was a lot of money for me then, so I went. He sent me details about Chief Priest. I started seeing the things the man was doing and then I understood why my friend wanted me to make the song. I recorded it and came back. He said, "Ah, this song sweet. Post am." At the time, I only had about 200-and-something followers on Instagram. I was like, "Who wan see am if I post am?"

He told me to just post it, so I did. I had another friend who worked for Chief Priest then. She told me she would send the song to him because she believed he would like it. The next day, he reposted me on his Story, then moved it from his Story to his page. He said if the post got about 5,000 comments, he would make me a star. The comments started rolling in. Since then, he has been the one helping me out with different things.



Before you started regularly working with Hyce and Brown Joel, you had already been making music on your own. How did that chemistry between the three of you begin?

First of all, I'm not joining any group. It's just synergy. I had one of my guys, Topboy Zyno, in Enugu. We went on a university tour. At the time, I didn't really know Brown Joel and Hyce like that. After the tour, we went to a club. They played my song there, and the song was already making waves in the East. They were like, "Ah, this song sweet. Who sing am?" My people told them na me. Hyce told me inside the club that when we got back to Lagos, he would like us to record. Brown Joel overheard us and was like, "I go join o."

The synergy on that tour was everything. All of us were just vibing with each other. The energy was pure. When we got back to Lagos, we set up the session. That's how we started making music. We did "Ogechi." It was just artists coming together and saying, "Okay, let's make a song together." "Ogechi" was actually the first song we ever recorded together.

Where did the name BoyPee come from?

BoyPee is like Boy Precious because my name is Precious. I changed the name in 2022. At the time, I entered a label, Big G Entertainment, and they suggested I

> *"I like to write about happy love. Love where there is understanding and both parties just want to make each other happy."*
>
> — BOYPEE

Photos credit: Lucas Somto



change my name from SPee to BoyPee because BoyPee sounded easier for people to recognise and remember. I thought it was nice, so we changed it. We're not together now, though.

A lot of your music revolves around romance. What kind of love stories interest you as a songwriter?

I like to write about happy love. Love where there is understanding and both parties just want to make each other happy. I have been with somebody wey fuck me up before. Along the line, I felt like, "Okay, I want to do bad boy now. I no wan do anything." But at the same time, if you do bad boy, I feel like it will affect you and even your songs because to dey do bad boy no easy, moving from one person to another. I'm not that kind of person. I like to focus on whatever I'm doing, one step at a time. I know many people, but I'm not attached to so many people. I have boundaries for anything I do. So the story I'm writing now is about happy love that is fuelled by understanding. Hyping your woman and letting her know that no matter how she is, she's the best.

Is that where "For You" comes from?

> *"I know many people, but I'm not attached to so many people. I have boundaries for anything I do."*
>
> — BOYPEE

Yeah. I'm not in a relationship now, but I'm very sure about what I want. You know when you say you want something to come to you and you talk about it, then maybe it will happen later. I don't want love wey go make me vex or put me in some kind of mood. I want the one wey go make me happy. That's why I sing about happy love. If you listen to this new song and "Choice," which I dropped last year, you'll understand what I'm saying. It is about hyping your woman and letting her know that however she is, she's beautiful. That's the main story I'm writing now: songs that make women feel special.

PLAYLIST OF THE WEEK

by Mayowa Iyiola



AS WE GET HIGH
Bees & Honey ft Omah Lay, Beam, Gyptian



HEAVEN BABY
Ayra Starr



YOU AND I
WurlD



WHO THIS
Victony ft BNXN



CHOKEHOLD
Rhythm Vault ft T.I BLAZE



LAYE MI
Kunmie ft G4ZI



LAGOS
SAMAD ft Bella Shmurda


SAMSUNG
Galaxy S26 FE
Galaxy AI
The Worthy Upgrade
Image simulated. Samsung account login may be required for certain AI features. Visit samsung.com for details. Contains AI-generated images with edits.

5 things to *consider* before choosing a perfume collection

By Ese Oghenetega

The need to smell good cannot be overemphasised, and it is important to have the right perfume collection. Your choice of perfume defines your taste and personality. Before you consider adding to your perfume collection, check out these five factors to note.



1. Focus on the performance

It is only natural that several people would prefer perfumes that would last long after spraying it on their outfits. Selecting perfumes because they have 12 hours longevity is not a bad idea. It ensures that you stay smelling nice for a long period without bothering about applying another spray halfway into your activities for the day.

2. Your personality counts:

The kind of perfumes you use should match your personality. Some people go for designer brands because

it reflects the kind of person they are. Besides, the desire for enchanting fragrances draws attention at occasions. Regardless of the kind of personality you have, ensure that your perfume is not disturbing or choking the other person.



3. Check out your preferred scent

Before you add to your collection of perfumes, consider the fragrance you love the most. It will guide you on what you should buy. Some people buy perfumes based on their budget, which is not a bad idea. However, if you prefer floral scents or simply mild perfumes and you go for different aromas just to save funds, you may not be satisfied with what you will eventually get.



4. The event matters

If you are a lover of harsh perfumes, wearing such fragrance to a corporate setting is not appropriate. When you are next shopping for a brand, consider the event or occasion you are rocking it to. If a party is your next stop, then you can select a more sophisticated scent.



Photo credit: Magnific

5. Consider the quality

The essence of quality perfumes cannot be underestimated, and it beats having several low-quality perfumes. Consider having quality perfumes that will spark up your personality rather than having several bottles of fragrances that do not give you the satisfaction that you desire.

Guardian Woman Festival









Guardian Woman Festival 2027 opens sponsorship, partnership opportunities

The Guardian Woman Festival and Federal Palace Resort invite brands, organisations and institutions to partner on a month-long celebration of women as wealth creators

The Guardian Nigeria, in partnership with Federal Palace Resort, Victoria Island, is inviting corporate organisations, government agencies, development institutions, NGOs and philanthropists to partner with the Guardian Woman Festival 2027, a month-long celebration of women, enterprise, leadership and wealth creation.

Scheduled for March 1–31, 2027, the festival will hold under the theme "Women as Wealth Creators," with activities taking place at Federal Palace throughout the month and a flagship Guardian Woman Festival anchoring the programme.

The month-long platform offers organisations an opportunity to sponsor, host or co-create conferences, masterclasses, exhibitions, networking sessions, CSR initiatives and other programmes that advance women's economic participation and leadership.

The initiative builds on the successful expansion of the Guardian Woman Festival into a month-long programme in 2026, creating a sustained platform for engagement rather than limiting conversations on women to a single day

or event.

Guardian Woman Festival Convener and Executive Director of Federal Palace Resort, Anita Athena Ibru, said the 2027 edition recognises the growing contribution of Nigerian women to enterprise, innovation and economic development.

"When we invest in women through knowledge, networks, opportunity, contacts and mentorship, we strengthen families, organisations, and the economy," Ibru said.
The 2027 festival will also connect with the global International Women's Day conversation around "Balance the Scales," reinforcing the need for greater equity and opportunity for women and girls.

For partners, the festival provides an opportunity to align corporate purpose, CSR and ESG priorities with a high-impact platform focused on women while gaining access to The Guardian's extensive media ecosystem and the diverse audiences of Guardian Woman.
Federal Palace Resort adds another dimension to the partnership. The historic venue was opened around Nigeria's Independence celebrations in 1960 and has hosted significant national and cultural gatherings, including FESTAC '77.

The 2027 festival will commemorate the 50th anniversary of FESTAC '77, highlighting the role of culture, creativity and women in building economic and social value.
Ibru described Federal Palace as "a living property, not just a building where events happen," underscoring its role as a space for leadership, culture, connection and national development.
Organisations can book spaces and propose programmes for March 2–30, with opening and closing ceremonies scheduled for March 1 and 31, respectively.

The Guardian Woman Festival 2027 presents partners with an opportunity to move beyond statements about women's empowerment and invest directly in platforms that create visibility, knowledge, connections and opportunities for women.

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











marie claire NIGERIA

BEAUTY



Full glam keeps making a comeback — and perhaps that's a good thing

by Ifedayo Osinowo

The concept of a "beauty influencer" did not spawn until the YouTube era that brought us the likes of Jackie Aina, Dimma Umeh and many others. Heavy concealer, deep contour, and the ever-so-glimmering shine of highlighter: makeup was, in and of itself, the most accessible form of artistic expression.

The idea that makeup is a thing of muchness is deeply patriarchal, and within that ideal, makeup is something that should be hidden and latent. If it's not hidden, then it's not you, but rather a façade being put on.

You've become a deceitful person by wearing obvious, glaring makeup. The rhetoric suggests that a woman's beauty exists in her "most natural" state and that, therefore, less makeup is more appropriate to appease the male gaze. A dot of concealer here and a pinch of blush there; no glittery eyeshadow or a powdered face. Thus the birth of the "clean-girl makeup" epoch.

The questionable roots of the clean girl era

Often associated with the "no-makeup makeup" look, beauty minimalism has been particularly popularised in recent years by public figures such as Hailey Bieber and Sofia Richie Grainge, whose pared-back beauty looks have helped cement the aesthetic in mainstream culture. While the trend came across as a simpler way for makeup beginners to participate in its rubrics, it was also tied to Western ideals, where whiteness was tied to softness and purity — something that should not be tainted or hidden by heaps of foundation.

A slicked-back bun, brushed eyebrows – not drawn – simple lip gloss, unblemished skin, and straight hair. Social media's idea of clean, then, is deeply Eurocentric, and anything otherwise is dirty and unclean. Not only does this definition of clean diminish creativity, but it also places a dubious emphasis on white femininity, reminiscent of the Victorian era. There is no room for the loud, expressive, large-bodied, and braided-haired.

The way of the blush-blind

There's always that one part of your make-up routine that you just can't put a limit on. Not only is it your favourite part of your make-up routine, but, in your eyes, it ties the entire look together. For some it's eyebrows; for others, it's a good lip-combo. But for many, it's blush. The phenomenon of blush-blindness, if anything, is an indicator of people's desire for excess. We have become so inundated with austerity that it is impossible not to crave more.

Full-glam's rebirth

When "Love Island's" Olandria Carthen stepped out of the villa, her allure wasn't the only thing that caught the internet's attention – so did her makeup, crafted by Ngozi Esther Edeme, better known as Painted by Esther. The Nigerian native, known for her signature doll-like, saturated makeup looks, popularised the transition blush, turning the blush-blindless craze into a rebuttal to the lasting pangs of the clean-girl beauty era.

Edeme's rise also shed light on Nigerian makeup artists who rarely embraced the minimalist trend. In fact, on some corners of the internet, Nigerian Owambe makeup is considered the apex of makeup artistry. Full coverage, sharp cut-crease eyeshadow, ombré lips, and an airbrushed finish – a true celebration of excess and playfulness.

Beauty trends have always moved in cycles. The return of full glam, if anything, shows its lasting influence on the beauty industry since its genesis.

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more

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FASHION



I've had Ayra Starr's "Starrgirl" on repeat, so here's how I'd dress if I were a song from the album

by Ashim Ojeh

After spending the past few weeks listening to Ayra Starr's album "Starrgirl" on repeat, I started imagining what each song would look like as an outfit. So, naturally, as a fashion writer, I had to bring those visions to life, at least on paper. Maybe it'll even inspire you to dress like your favourite "Starrgirl" track too. Although, judging by the purple geles already taking over, I think we're all doing our part.

"Ms. Paper" (feat. Theodora) — short skirts and bad decisions

With "Ms. Paper", you already know the mood is unmistakably one of being outside. Channeling my 2019 Ayra Starr, I'd probably be wearing the shortest skirt I could find in my wardrobe, paired with a halter-neck top. For shoes, a good pair of boots is non-negotiable. The accessories need to be just as bold, because subtlety is clearly not the assignment here. Makeup has to be full glam. Think gems, an unapologetic amount of blush, and enough glow to be seen from across the club.

"Misunderstood" — Casual fits for the girl who loves being herself

For "Misunderstood," I'd probably go for a normal more casual silhouette. I'm thinking wide-leg trousers, or a maxi skirt paired with a top shirt and Adidas Sambas. Headphones, maybe a simple headband, and definitely a bag. The makeup would be just as minimal. Trying to capture the rawness of the song, and this is where my mind goes.

"Heaven Baby" (feat. ZAYN) — A ball gown for my imaginary prince charming

The song just screams romance, weddings, relationships, and everything love. So, for "Heaven Baby", I see myself in the most beautiful gown. The dress could be bespoke or ready-to-wear, but either way, it has to feel special. Of course, we can't forget the jewellery and the perfect pair of shoes to complete the look. Basically, if I'm dressing like "Heaven Baby", I'm going all out.

"Dangerous" — Boss lady energy

For Dangerous, Sunglasses absolutely have to be part of the look. I'm also bringing the purple gele in here because yes. Black leather gloves would complete the whole look, and I can see a sharply tailored suit working perfectly here. Maybe an oversized blazer with matching trousers, or even a skirt suit if we want to lean further into the mob-boss-wife fantasy. If we're leaning into the song's traditional side, an Oleku lace set would also look phenomenal.

Forever in my Starrgirl era

There's something special about an album that can make you feel so many different things that you can almost see yourself inside each song and "Starrgirl" gave me all of that. Now all that's left is to find the actual occasions to wear these outfits. Until then, I'll keep the purple gele close by, because clearly, my "Starrgirl" era is just starting.

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Jennifer Uloko:

Nigerian women are not limited by where they start

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

Jennifer Lisa Uloko is the Founder and CEO of YangaBeauty, a Nigerian beauty brand she founded in 2014 with women of African heritage in mind. With over a decade of experience as a beauty entrepreneur, makeup artist and business leader, Uloko earned a degree in Business Administration, and holds a certificate in Entrepreneurial Management from the Enterprise Development Centre at Pan-Atlantic University. In this interview, Uloko speaks on championing confidence, self-expression and inclusivity through beauty alongside empowering women.

What gap did you see in Nigeria's beauty and makeup market that convinced you there was room to build something of your own?

At the time, I was working as a makeup artist, and like many makeup artists, I would test products on myself first. If I liked a product and it worked well, I would buy an extra for my clients and add it to my kit. I remember buying an eyeliner that turned out to be inferior and, unfortunately, I had a reaction to it. It affected me so badly that I could not do my work properly, and for someone whose work depended on being able to do makeup, it was a very painful and frustrating experience. During that recovery period, I started thinking beyond the pain and asking myself, "What can be done differently?" Around the same time, a colleague of mine had bought a lip gloss from a beauty market and had a reaction to it as well. Her lips were burnt, and that really stayed with me. I started thinking about how often we were buying beauty products without necessarily knowing enough about the quality or safety of what we were putting on our skin.

Then there was another challenge I experienced constantly as a makeup artist. I would have a client with a particular skin tone and have to mix different shades of foundation to get the right match. Sometimes you have an hour to complete a makeup booking, and you are spending valuable time trying to create a shade that should already exist. At the time, there simply were not enough products and shades that properly catered to our skin tones.

Those experiences made me realise there was an opportunity to create something better. I wanted to build a beauty brand that understood our skin, our needs and our reality, while giving women access to quality products they could trust. So, YangaBeauty did not start with me thinking, "I want to build a beauty company." It started with me experiencing a problem, asking questions and deciding to look for a solution. And that solution eventually became YangaBeauty.

> *"We want to continue creating products that solve real problems, while ensuring that our quality and standards remain consistent as we enter new markets."*
>
> — JENNIFER ULOKO:

You recently opened Yanga Beauty's newest store in Ikeja. What does this milestone mean to you personally, and what does it represent in the larger story of the brand?

Honestly, opening the Ikeja store was a very special and emotional moment for me. I grew up in Ikeja, and I remember being a young girl buying my first beauty product around Allen Avenue. So, years later, to be opening the doors to a YangaBeauty store in the same Ikeja felt incredibly full circle. But beyond the personal significance, it was also a significant milestone for YangaBeauty. It represents growth, not just in the number of stores we have, but in the team, we are building, the systems we are putting in place and the vision we have for where the brand is going. For me, it was a moment to pause and appreciate how far we have come, while also recognising



that there is still so much more to build. More than anything, I am very grateful to God for the journey and for the opportunity to build something meaningful in a place that is such an important part of my story.

Beyond selling beauty products, what kind of beauty experience do you want a Yanga Beauty customer to have when she walks into one of your stores?

For us, the beauty experience starts long before a customer gets home with a product. It starts from the moment they walk through our doors. We want our stores to be spaces where people feel comfortable exploring beauty without feeling judged or pressured. Whether you are a professional makeup artist, a beauty enthusiast or simply curious about finding products that work for you, you should feel welcome. That is why we pay attention not just to our products, but to the entire customer experience. The way our team engages with you, the ability to test and discover products, the environment we create and the support you receive all matter.

What is your vision for taking the brand across Africa, and which markets do you see as the biggest opportunities?

My vision is to build YangaBeauty into a brand that is proudly local yet global. A brand that is deeply rooted in Africa, understands the African consumer and is still able to compete confidently on a global stage. We are already taking steps in that direction, and for me, expansion is not simply about putting YangaBeauty in different countries. It is about understanding each market, building the right partnerships, having the right distribution and creating an experience that feels consistent wherever our Jewels and Gems interact with us. I see huge opportunities across Africa because we have a growing beauty industry, a young and increasingly beauty conscious population and consumers who are looking for brands that understand them. Nigeria will always be an important part of our story, but I want YangaBeauty to grow beyond being known as a Nigerian beauty brand. I want someone in Canada, United Kingdom, United States, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa or anywhere else in the world to experience and feel that this is a brand that understands them. Ultimately, I want us to build from Africa, serve Africa and take what we have built to the world. Local in our roots, global in our ambition.

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Tola Makinde:

Treat Down syndrome individuals with dignity, respect

by Geraldine Akutu

Tola Makinde, Founder and Executive Director of Morainbow Down Syndrome Foundation, is an educator, humanitarian and certified Early Intervention Specialist committed to improving the lives of children with Down syndrome. Through her foundation, she advocates for inclusion, dignity, education and protection of persons living with the condition. She collaborates with Save Down Syndrome Inc. in the United States to develop educational resources and campaign against the mistreatment, abuse and alleged genocide of people with Down syndrome. Her organisation is also a member of Down Syndrome International, UK. In this interview, Makinde discusses her motivation and advocacy

What is the inspiration behind Morainbow Down Syndrome Foundation?

Morainbow Down Syndrome Foundation was born out of a deeply personal journey. As a parent of a child with Down syndrome, I experienced firsthand the uncertainty, lack of information, limited support systems, and the many misconceptions that surrounded the condition. While navigating those early years, I realised that no family should have to walk that path alone. My heart was broken and my whole world stopped after my daughter's diagnosis. What began as a desire to support my own child gradually evolved into a commitment to creating opportunities for many others. I also felt blessed that I could make huge sacrifices for my daughter which had a positive impact on her health and overall outcome.

Leaving a six-figure job in 2011, getting various trainings abroad and leaving the country for a while for specialised care, was all part of God's plan. There were moments of down time, low self-esteem, denial and depression yet, I saw through the eyes of pain that it was only a test of my faith. God had given me beauty for ashes although it was difficult to see that having a child like Moyin is a blessing in disguise. I wouldn't be telling this story of how I turned my mess into a message today. Morainbow was established to ensure that children and young people with Down syndrome are given access to quality education, therapy, vocational training, healthcare advocacy, and, most importantly, the opportunity to live meaningful and fulfilling lives. Our vision has always been to build an inclusive society where individuals with Down syndrome are recognised not by their diagnosis, but by their abilities, potential, and contributions.

> *"Society's low expectations and lack of inclusion not Down syndrome itself that create the greatest barriers."*

What were the initial challenges when you started and how has the journey been so far?

Like many organisations pioneering a cause that was not widely understood, one of our biggest challenges was changing mindsets. There was very little awareness about Down syndrome, and many families struggled with stigma, isolation, and misinformation. Access to specialised educational support and therapeutic services was also extremely limited. Another challenge was funding. Building sustainable programmes that truly meet the needs of children and families requires significant resources, and in the early years we relied heavily on the generosity of individuals who believed in our vision. I was out to preach about early intervention because I was already seeing benefits of all I had begun to do with my daughter since birth when she clocked three. Despite these



challenges, the journey has been incredibly rewarding. Over the years, we have watched children exceed expectations, families regain hope, and communities begin to embrace inclusion more intentionally. We have expanded our programmes, partnered with organisations and professionals who share our mission, and continue to advocate for policies and practices that improve the lives of people with Down syndrome. There is still much work to be done, but every milestone reminds us that change is possible when people choose inclusion over prejudice.

Can you talk about your new project, Rainbow Readers Room? What is it all about?

Rainbow Readers Room is a specialised one-on-one literacy programme designed to help learners with Down syndrome and or learning difficulties develop strong reading skills through personalised plan and systematic instructions. It's a paid service that provides families with access to focused, evidence-based reading support tailored to each child's individual learning needs meeting the child where they are and working with them through the journey. Research and experience have particularly shown that children with Down syndrome can become successful readers when taught using approaches that leverages on their strengths. However, access to specialised literacy instruction remains limited for many families.

Through Rainbow Readers Room, each child works individually with a trained reading instructor using structured, engaging, and research-informed strategies that promote reading, language development, comprehension, and communication. The one-on-one format allows lessons to be paced according to each child's unique abilities, helping them build confidence while making meaningful and notable progress as time passes. For us, this is more than learning to read. It's magical. Literacy opens doors to greater independence, improved educational outcomes, increased confidence, and fuller participation in everyday life. Rainbow Readers Room is our way of ensuring that more children have access to the specialised support they need to reach their full potential.

What misconceptions do you think society has about Down syndrome?

One of the biggest misconceptions is that people with Down syndrome are incapable of learning, working, or living productive lives.

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Transform your look with statement *Fascinators*

By Ese Oghenetega

The quest to look polished and sophisticated can be achieved with a stylish fascinator. It elevates your look and makes you the centre of attention at events.

Are you looking for ways to transform your look with stylish statement fascinators? Check out some of them below:

The right size matters

Don't just select any fascinator because it is beautiful; ensure that it is the perfect size for your outfit. If your dress has a simple design, ensure you go for a small fascinator.

However, if you are rocking a more flamboyant dress, you can slay in bigger fascinators.
Beyond the size, consider how the fashion piece looks on your face so that you do not look out of place.

Select bold shapes

Some fashion lovers use fascinators to enhance their looks, and for this reason, bold shapes become the perfect choice.

Let the flowers, feathers, and other detailing be bold and catchy, while you keep other accessories simple. This makes your fascinator the centre of attraction.





Photos by Pexels

Let your fascinator match your outfit

Your outfit should influence your choice of fascinator. You can adopt a monochromatic look, or you can blend two colours in your outfit. The most important factor is that your fascinator complements your attire and does not make it look out of place. You can rock a fascinator whose colour is already in your outfit, shoes, accessories, or handbag.

Your hairstyle is important

How your fascinator appears on your head depends largely on your hairstyle. Adopt hairstyles that will allow your fascinator to be balanced without you having to adjust it regularly. Always consider your hairstyle before you slay in your stylish fascinator.



Elevate your personality with stylish fascinators

When you wear a fascinator, you are not only transforming your look; you are elevating your personality. If you are rocking a simple outfit, adding a fascinator can turn your look into something fabulous, admirable, and cause heads to turn. With proper styling, you will inspire other ladies to add a stylish fascinator to their fashion collections.



Oron Museum's famous Ekpu collection

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

In a coastal town shaped by fishing and trade, the National Museum Oron is home to the Ekpu, the carved wooden figures that once stood in the ancestral compounds of Oron families.

Oron is a town built around water. Located along the Cross River estuary in Akwa Ibom State, the town has long been connected to fishing, trade, and travel by water. Boats and waterways have played a role in how people moved goods and connected with communities across the region.

Away from the riverbanks is the National Museum Oron, one of Nigeria's national museums and the place most closely associated with the Ekpu Oro.

The museum was established to preserve these carved wooden figures, which were collected from Oron communities in large numbers in the years before independence.

Ekpu collection

The story of the museum is closely tied to Kenneth C.



Murray, a British art teacher and antiquities officer who became interested in the Ekpu in the late 1930s and 1940s. The figures were kept in ancestral shrines and family compounds. Many had been exposed to rain, termites, and other forms of damage. Murray began documenting and collecting them, bringing hundreds of the carvings together.

The museum opened in December 1959 to house the collection. For the Oron people, the Ekpu were not made simply to be displayed. They represented ancestors and were connected to family and burial traditions. The figures served as reminders of people who had died and remained part of the relationship between the living and their ancestors.

Some of the figures have large heads and distinctive facial features, while others are more restrained in their design. They were made by different artists at different periods, so they do not all look alike. The Ekpu collection also attracted attention outside Nigeria. Today, Oron figures are held by major institutions including the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

During the war

The museum's collection suffered heavily during the Nigerian Civil War. The museum was damaged during the conflict, and a large part of its collection was lost. More than 800 Ekpu figures had been associated with the collection, but only a little over 100 were recovered after the war. Some were destroyed. Others were stolen or ended up elsewhere. The loss is difficult to separate from the museum itself because the Ekpu are the reason it became internationally known in the first place. It also raises a question that remains relevant today: what happens when cultural objects are removed from the communities that made and used them?

Some Oron figures are now in museums and private collections outside Nigeria. Their presence abroad has become part of the wider discussion around African artefacts, colonial collecting and the return of cultural objects.

Preserving Oron carvings from before independence.

Beyond Ekpu

There is more to see at the museum than the ancestral figures. Its collection includes other objects connected to the culture of Oron and the Cross River region, including traditional crafts and ceremonial pieces. The museum grounds also contain bunkers from the Civil War.

There is an adjoining crafts village as well, giving visitors a chance to see some of the traditional skills associated with the area. The result is a museum that brings together two very different periods of Nigerian history. The Ekpu point to older traditions and family histories, while the bunkers are reminders of a war that took place within living memory.

Oron town

Oron is not usually among the first places mentioned when Nigerians talk about places to visit in Akwa Ibom. But the museum gives visitors a reason to look beyond the state's better-known attractions. Part of its appeal is the collection itself. The Ekpu are unusual objects, and seeing them in the place they are associated with gives the visit a context that photographs cannot provide.

In 2026, the Akwa Ibom State Government announced plans for a marine terminal in Oron, with proposed facilities for fishing, passenger transport and other commercial activities. For a town whose history has always been closely tied to the water, it is a return to something familiar.



SPOT REVIEW



Exclusive

Federal Palace pool club

by Chidinma Enweani

When it comes to the best leisure spots, The Federal Palace Hotel's pool takes the lead, whether you want an ice-cold drink by the water, a family-friendly oasis under the Lagos sun, or a chic escape to unwind. With its excellent environment, warm and welcoming vibe, first-class amenities, and stylish surroundings, it offers an atmosphere that turns a regular afternoon into a mini-vacation.

Location

Situated at 6 - 8 Ahmadu Bello Way, 100001, Victoria Island, Lagos, the Federal Palace Hotel & Casino sits right in the heart of the city's bustling commercial and social hub. As part of the iconic, legacy Federal Palace Hotel property, the Pool Club benefits from a prestigious address that overlooks the stunning expanse of the Atlantic coastline and the Lagos lagoon corridor.

Facilities

The crown jewel of the club is its expansive, glistening outdoor swimming pool, framed by tall palm trees and open-air lounging decks. Beyond the main adult pool, the facility features a dedicated mini water world complete with water slides, children's pools, and a fun jumping pillow to keep younger guests thoroughly entertained. Additionally, the club offers well-maintained tennis courts and an adventure golf area, making it a comprehensive recreational destination rather than just a simple swimming spot.

Offerings

The Pool Club operates on an exclusive membership and guest access structure. Hotel residents enjoy complimentary access to the pool club for the duration of their stay. For non-residents, options range from single-day guest passes to quarterly and annual memberships. Annual family memberships (covering two adults and up to two children under 18) are priced at N1,800,000, while individual adult annual memberships go for N550,000, with quarterly and monthly payment tiers also available. Access includes swimming and tennis privileges, though minimal fees may apply for specific activities like adventure golf or towel hire.

Opening Hours & Environment

Trading hours run daily from 07:00 AM to 21:30 PM for hotel residents, and from 09:00 AM to 21:30 PM for club members. The environment is a sophisticated blend of tranquil resort luxury and vibrant social energy. Gentle breezes sweep off the water, and the sleek poolside layout creates a relaxed, upscale atmosphere where guests can lounge comfortably in the sun or shade.

What to Expect

Expect a polished, secure, and family-friendly crowd enjoying a mix of leisurely laps, poolside dining, and weekend relaxation. The service is attentive, professional, and geared toward high-end comfort. Whether children are splashing around the water slides or adults are sipping cold cocktails by the deck, the vibe is effortlessly breezy, exclusive, and lively.

Verdict

The Federal Palace Pool Club remains a premier destination for anyone looking to escape the chaotic pace of Lagos without leaving the city limits. While memberships require a notable financial commitment, the combination of historic prestige, top-tier recreational facilities, and unmatched waterfront views makes it a brilliant investment for families, corporate elites, and leisure seekers alike.

NEED TO KNOW

Location: 6 - 8 Ahmadu Bello Way, 100001, Victoria Island, Lagos.

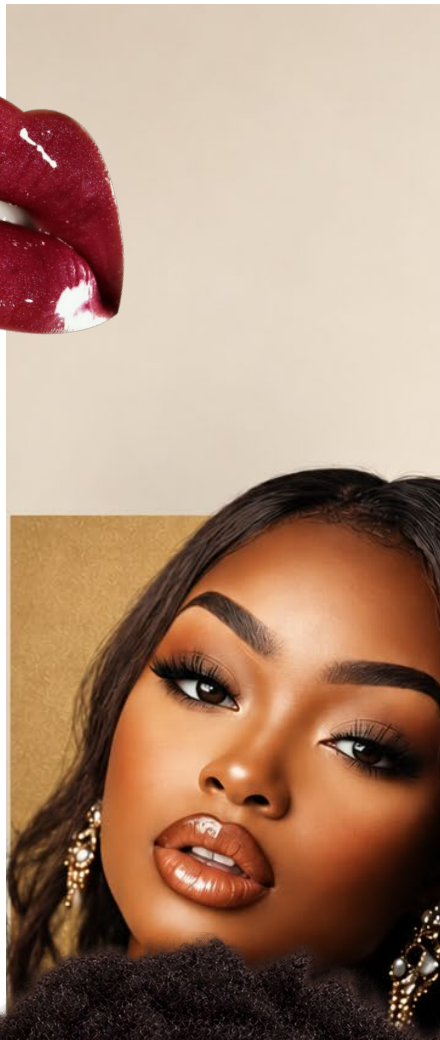
Opening Hours: 7:00 AM to 21:30 PM for hotel residents, and from 09:00 AM to 21:30 PM for club members.

Dress Code: Dress ready to have fun.

Reservations: Recommended, particularly for peak weekend hours and large groups.

Trendy glossy lips







By Geraldine Akutu

The lips play an important role in our appearance, communication and self-expression. Yet, they are also some of the most vulnerable parts of our skin, constantly exposed to the sun's rays, dry air, and chilly winds. This daily exposure can leave them feeling parched, cracked, and in need of tender care.

Lip gloss is a widely loved cosmetic product designed to give the lips a shine and a hint of colour. Available in various forms and finishes, it typically comes in a liquid or gel-like texture that delivers a sheer or pigmented glow.

Oftentimes, people pay less attention to lip gloss and see it as a superficial beauty product, but what they don't know is that it is for the lips because, apart from adding that shine to the lips, it nourishes it. Below are some of the merits.

Enhances lip appearance

One of the major advantages of gloss is its ability to instantly enhance the appearance of the lips. Its glossy texture reflects light, creating a fuller and more plump look. Clear or tinted, it adds a fresh and youthful finish to any makeup style. It also helps define the natural shape of the lips, making them stand out more prominently.

Keeps lips hydrated

Most modern lip gloss formulas are enriched with moisturising ingredients that not only add shine but



also provide hydration, preventing chapped and dry lips. Unlike some matte lipsticks that can cause dryness, it often acts as a protective barrier, locking in moisture throughout the day. In addition, it can also provide a bit of protection for the lips, helping to shield them from the sun's harmful UV rays.

Easy to apply

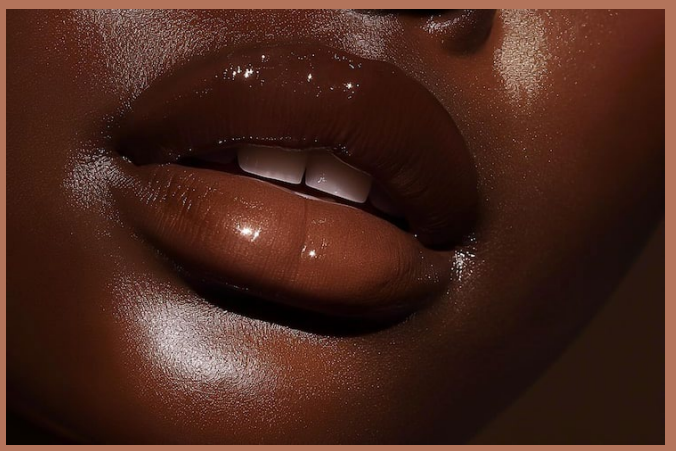
Lip gloss is easy to apply, often coming with applicators that allow for precision. It can be quickly applied on the go, making it a convenient beauty essential. 35 per cent of women say they feel more confident when wearing lip gloss, and it's easy to see why.

Gives smooth, glossy look

Lip gloss helps to create a smooth, glossy look. This can be a great look for special occasions or everyday wear, depending on the type of lip gloss you use. Some lip glosses are very sheer and natural-looking, while others are more opaque and can be used to create a more dramatic look. It can also be used to add a bit of shine to your lips, which can make them look fuller and more plump.

Worn with or without lipstick

Lip gloss is very versatile. When worn alone, it enhances the lips with a subtle shine and a hint of



A little bit of shine can make your lips look fuller and plumper, and it can also help to disguise any fine lines or wrinkles. It is also incredibly easy to apply and can be worn on its own or over your favourite lipstick.

Variety of shades and finishes

It comes in a variety of shades and finishes. You can find a lip gloss to suit any occasion, mood, or outfit. Whether you want a natural look or something more glamorous, there's lip gloss for you. And if you can't find the perfect shade, you can always mix and match to create your unique colour.

colour, perfect for a natural or casual look. Pairing it with lipstick, on the other hand, can create a more defined and dimensional effect, giving the lips a fuller and glossier appearance. It's great for adding a finishing touch to any lip looks.

Ideal with SPF protection

Some lip gloss products are formulated with SPF protection, which helps shield the delicate skin on the lips from harmful UV rays. This added benefit ensures that lips remain not only beautiful but also protected from sun damage.



by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

As schools reopen across the country, parents and children are transitioning from the freedom of the holidays back to the demands of a new academic year. Beyond school supplies and new uniforms, helping children prepare emotionally, mentally and physically can make the transition smoother.

For some children, school resumed this week. For others, the countdown continues, with just a few days left before the school bags come out, uniforms are ironed and early mornings become the norm again.

After weeks of sleeping in, playing, travelling, spending more time with family and generally enjoying a slower routine, returning to school can bring mixed emotions. Some children are excited to see their friends and teachers again, while others may feel anxious about a new class, new expectations or the academic demands ahead.

For parents, therefore, back-to-school preparation should go beyond buying books and replacing worn-out school shoes. It is also an opportunity to help children mentally and emotionally transition into a new academic year.

One of the most important things parents can do is start a conversation about school. Ask your child how they feel about returning. Are they excited? Nervous? Worried about their grades? Looking forward to seeing their friends? Creating room for honest conversations allows parents to understand what may be happening beneath the excitement or reluctance.

This is particularly important for children who may





be returning after an academically challenging previous session. Poor grades, missed targets or difficult experiences at school can affect a child's confidence.

Rather than beginning the new academic year with reminders of what went wrong, help your child see the new term as an opportunity for a fresh start. Talk about what they can do differently. Encourage them to identify areas where they need support and reassure them that one difficult academic experience does not define their ability or future.

Then comes the more visible part of back-to-school preparation: shopping. School bags, textbooks, notebooks, stationery, lunch boxes, water bottles, uniforms, shoes and other school essentials are once again likely to feature prominently on parents' shopping lists.

Beyond the shopping, parents should begin rebuilding the school routine. The transition from holiday hours to school hours can be difficult when children have become accustomed to staying awake late and waking up much later than usual. Rather than waiting until the night before resumption, gradually adjust bedtime and wake-up times in the days leading to school.

A consistent sleep routine can help children return to school more alert and ready to learn. The same principle applies to study. Children who have spent much of the holiday away from academic work may need time to regain their concentration. A short period of reading, revision or educational activity each day can help them ease back into learning without making the final days of the holiday feel like an extended classroom.

Parents can also use this period to revisit some of the previous academic year's work. This should not become a punishment or another source of pressure. Instead, go through selected areas where your child struggled and discuss what could be improved. The objective is not simply to remind them of their mistakes, but to help them understand what those experiences can teach them.

As the school gates reopen, parents can help make the transition less stressful by focusing not only on whether their children are ready with their books and uniforms, but whether they are ready in mind and spirit for the journey ahead.



Tips for parents

Start the routine early
Gradually restore school-day sleeping and waking times before resumption.

Have the conversation
Ask your child how they feel about returning to school and pay attention to signs of anxiety or reluctance.

Check before you shop
Take inventory of school supplies that can still be reused before buying replacements.

Involve your child
Allow them to participate in age-appropriate back-to-school preparations and budgeting.

Ease into academics
Introduce short reading or revision sessions rather than overwhelming them with long study hours.

Review, don't reprimand
Use previous academic challenges to identify lessons and areas for improvement.

Set realistic goals
Help your child establish specific academic and personal targets for the new term.

Protect their sleep
A well-rested child is better positioned to concentrate, learn and manage the demands of school.



Keep communication open
Let your child know that they can talk to you about academic pressure, friendships, teachers or anything else affecting their school experience.

Celebrate progress
Focus on effort, improvement and consistency, not just grades. Children need to know that growth is also an achievement.



Up your fashion game

by Dorcas Ayoola



Sometimes, all your wardrobe needs is one new piece that makes getting dressed exciting again. It could be a blazer dress that fits perfectly, a colourful skirt or a neckline that makes a simple outfit stand out. If you are ready to try something different, here are eight stylish looks worth adding to your wardrobe.

1. Bold prints and playful patterns

If your wardrobe feels too plain, a colourful print can change that quickly. Floral patterns, Ankara, Adire and geometric designs can bring life to a simple outfit. You do not need to mix several prints at once. One printed dress, skirt or top can make enough impact. If you are new to bold patterns, pair the printed piece with a plain colour taken from the design to keep your outfit coordinated.



2. Aso Oke blazer dress

A blazer dress brings the sharp structure of tailoring to the elegance of a dress. When made with Aso Oke, it also gives the traditional Nigerian fabric a fresh and modern look. The result is confident without feeling too formal. You can wear it to a wedding, dinner or special event with simple heels and understated jewellery. The fabric and cut already provide enough drama, so you do not need to overload the outfit with accessories.



3. Mini dress with built-in shorts

A short dress looks great until you spend the entire outing pulling it down or worrying about a sudden gust of wind. Mini dresses with built-in shorts solve that problem by combining the appearance of a dress with the coverage and freedom of shorts. You can walk, sit and dance without constantly checking whether your outfit is still in place. It is a simple combination of style, comfort and confidence.

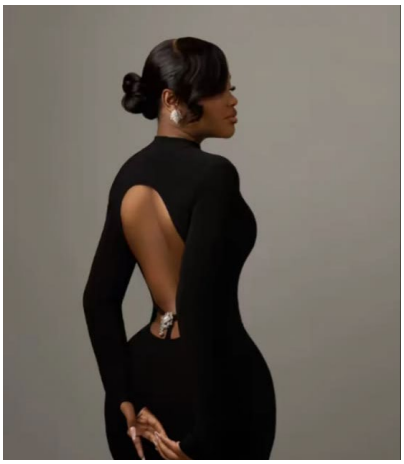


4. Statement mini dress

Some dresses need several accessories, while others handle the entire assignment on their own. A statement mini dress uses details such as oversized bows, dramatic sleeves, sculpted shapes or textured fabrics to attract attention. Keep the rest of the outfit simple by choosing a small bag, clean heels and minimal jewellery. This allows the dress to remain the focus without making the complete look feel too busy.

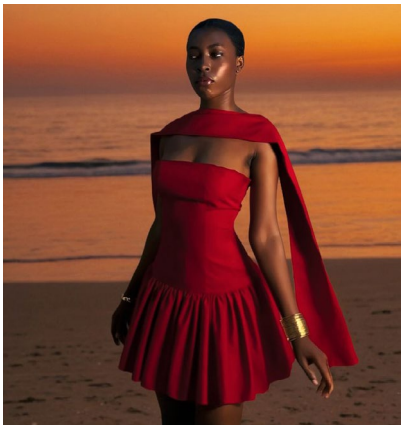
5. Backless dress

A backless dress proves that the most striking part of an outfit does not always have to be in front. The open-back detail can transform a simple dress into something memorable. You can choose a subtle cut for quiet elegance or a deeper opening when the occasion allows more drama. Consider the right underwear or body tape before stepping out, then choose a hairstyle that keeps the back visible.



6. Statement neckline

Criss-cross straps, halter necks, asymmetrical cuts and off-shoulder designs can give a simple dress more character. These necklines draw attention to the shoulders and collarbone, making them ideal for occasions when you want to look elegant without wearing a heavily decorated outfit. Avoid pairing them with a large necklace. Earrings or a bracelet can complete the look without competing with the dress.





7. Handkerchief skirt

The handkerchief skirt gets its charm from its uneven, flowing hem, which brings movement and drama to an outfit. The style works with fabrics such as Ankara, chiffon, lace, satin and Aso Oke. Pair it with a fitted top to balance the volume or choose a matching set for a bolder appearance. Because the skirt already makes a strong statement, the rest of the outfit can remain simple.



8. Mesh two-piece

A mesh two-piece is sheer, layered and daring without revealing too much. It usually combines a mesh top with a matching skirt or trousers worn over a solid underlayer. Its biggest advantage is versatility. You can wear both pieces together for a complete look or pair the top with jeans and the skirt with a fitted blouse. One set can give you several outfits, making it a smart choice for anyone who wants more from her wardrobe.

Wear what feels like you

Good style is not about following every trend or buying new clothes each week. It is about choosing pieces that fit your body, suit the occasion and make you feel confident. You can wear a structured blazer dress today and choose a playful print tomorrow. Experiment with your wardrobe, but do not lose yourself in the process.

Where to go

20 best bars across the city

by Chidinma Enweani



LAGOS

Bature Brewery

Location: 256 Etim Inyang Crescent, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM (Extending to 1:00 AM on Saturdays)

Is a chic taproom and microbrewery that trades stuffy corporate luxury for a relaxed, community-driven social space. The wooden benches and large open brewing tanks give it an authentic, raw feel that sets it apart from typical Lagos lounges.

What to Expect: A rotating selection of craft beers brewed on-site, accompanied by an easygoing crowd of expatriates, creatives, and tech enthusiasts. The atmosphere is loud and vibrant, usually backed by live acoustic performances or DJ sets.

Why Visit: To escape mainstream commercial drinks, sample unique artisanal ales you cannot find anywhere else in the city, and enjoy an open, friendly atmosphere perfect for a relaxed Friday evening or a casual weekend hangout.

W Bar Lounge

Location: Cowries Terminal, LASWA Yard, 5 Falomo Bridge, Ikoyi, Lagos

Opening Hours: Thursday to Sunday, 7:00 PM – 3:00 AM

A sleek, upmarket waterside lounge perched dramatically by the lagoon. With chic contemporary decor, comfortable outdoor seating, it blends high-energy nightlife with cool, refreshing coastal breezes.

What to Expect: A trendy, upscale crowd dressed to impress, dancing to a vibrant mix of Afrobeats and hip-hop curated by top-tier local DJs. Expect premium bottle service, expertly mixed cocktails, and a steady stream of energetic nightlife seekers.

Why Visit: The beautiful night views of the Lagos skyline reflecting off the water are unmatched. It offers a weekend atmosphere that captures the absolute peak of Lagos nightlife, making it the ultimate destination for celebrations and late-night social mingling.

Ikeja, Lagos

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 11:00 AM – 2:00 AM

It is a spacious, high-end restaurant and bar in the mainland. It features plush leather seating, warm ambient lighting, an expansive central bar, and a sophisticated layout that easily transitions from a corporate lunch spot to a pulsing nightclub.

What to Expect: A bustling crowd ranging from business executives winding down after

looking for good food and strong drinks. The service is brisk and professional, and the music scales up as the evening progresses, moving from smooth lounge jazz to high-tempo party anthems.

Why Visit: It bridges the gap between mainland accessibility and upscale island luxury. Visit for its extensive international menu, top-tier cocktail list, and a foolproof energetic atmosphere that guarantees a lively night out without needing to cross the bridge to Victoria Island.



The View Rooftop

Location: Twinwaters Entertainment Centre, Okunade Bluewater Scheme, Off Remi Olowude Street, Lekki, Lagos

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 12:00 PM – 10:30 PM (Closed Mondays)

A breathtaking, upscale sky-high lounge perched far above the Atlantic coastline. Sleek minimalist architecture and breezy open-air deck seating create a luxurious, airy atmosphere where the ocean horizon stretches out endlessly before you.

What to Expect: A smart-casual crowd of urban trendsetters sipping premium cocktails while taking in the cool sea air. The mood is chic, relaxed during the afternoon lunch hours, and intensely glamorous as the sun sets and the venue illuminates against the dark ocean backdrop.

Why Visit: Come for the stunning sunset vistas, an elite rooftop experience that makes any ordinary evening feel like a luxury holiday.

Sailor's Lounge

Location: Block 12, Plot 6, Admiralty Way, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 1:00 PM – 3:00 AM

A sprawling, nautical-themed floating bar and lounge built directly over the water of the Lekki lagoon. Wooden decking, marine decor, private cabanas, and open-air seating give it a distinct coastal-holiday feel right in the middle of the city's bustling mainland-island corridor.

What to Expect: A lively, eclectic crowd of weekend revelers enjoying generous platters of grilled fish, barbecue, and ice-cold drinks. The atmosphere is loud, communal, and intensely social, featuring live band performances on select nights and continuous energetic DJ playlists.

Why Visit: The unique floating structure allows you to dine and drink right on the water while catching the cooling evening lagoon breeze. It is an iconic Lagos favourite loved for its unpretentious fun, great seafood, and unmatched waterfront views that make weekend unwinding effortless.

PORT HARCOURT

Beer Barn

Location: 22 Forces Avenue, Old GRA, Port Harcourt

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

Wooden communal tables, high ceilings, and open-air seating sections give it a welcoming, rugged charm.

What to Expect: A buzzing crowd of corporate executives, oil and gas expats, and local socialites gathered around large screens for sports matches or enjoying robust platters of spicy suya and grilled fish. The beer selection is massive, served ice-cold in buckets.

Why Visit: The spot is famous for its unmatched socializing energy, speedy service, and vibrant atmosphere that guarantees you will never drink alone.

Wine Bar GRA

Location: 37 Aba Road, GRA, Port Harcourt

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 4:00 PM – 12:00 AM (Closed Mondays)

Is an intimate, sophisticated sanctuary designed for quiet conversations. Soft jazz music, low ambient lighting, and minimalist brick-and-wood decor create a cozy, European-style wine cellar feel.

What to Expect: A mature, discerning crowd of wine connoisseurs and corporate high-flyers exploring an extensive, global collection of red, white, and sparkling wines paired with artisanal cheese platters.

Why Visit: It offers a rare escape from the booming, high-decibel nightlife of Port Harcourt, providing a classy, peaceful environment to unwind over an exceptional glass of wine.

TapOut Bar & Grill

Location: 120 Woji Road, GRA Phase 2, Port Harcourt

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 1:00 PM – 1:00 AM

A sleek, executive-style lounge featuring dark wood finishes, leather booths, and dynamic mood lighting that transitions smoothly from a relaxed afternoon hangout to a high-tempo night spot.

What to Expect: A stylish, trendy crowd of young professionals sipping signature cocktails and sampling rich local grills. The sound system pumps a steady rhythm of classic hip-hop and contemporary Afrobeats.

Why Visit: Its central location in GRA makes it an ideal spot for after-work networking, casual date nights, and enjoying some of the finest pepper soup and grilled meats in the city.

The Sands Beach Bar & Grill

Location: Reclamation Area, Old GRA, Port Harcourt

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM

A breezy, open-air waterfront oasis styled with sandy patches, thatched-roof cabanas, and wooden loungers that capture the cooling river breeze coming off the adjoining water bodies.

What to Expect: A relaxed, holiday-mode crowd kicking back in slippers and shorts during the afternoons, shifting into a lively weekend party with live band performances.

Why Visit: It brings a coastal vacation vibe straight into the heart of the city, offering great grilled seafood, cold drinks, and scenic views.



Signature Lounge

Location: 56 Abacha Road, GRA, Port Harcourt

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 5:00 PM – 3:00 AM

An upscale nightlife destination featuring futuristic neon installations, mirrored walls, a heavily stocked central bar, and plush VIP booths.

What to Expect: An energetic crowd of glamorous partygoers dressed to kill, dancing to the heavy bass of weekend DJ sets playing the biggest club hits.

Why Visit: It's the pulse of Port Harcourt's modern party scene, making it the perfect spot for high-energy nightlife and celebratory bottle service.

KANO

Zaro Lounge

Location: Sarkin Yaki Street, GRA, Kano

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 2:00 PM – 11:30 PM

A contemporary, modern lounge nestled in a secure urban enclave, featuring clean lines, comfortable indoor booth seating, and a well-lit courtyard for open-air relaxation.

What to Expect: A diverse mix of local professionals, business expatriates, and urban elites enjoying a curated menu of non-alcoholic mocktails and hearty continental dishes.

Why Visit: It stands out as a safe, stylish, and welcoming social hub that captures the emerging cosmopolitan lifestyle of northern commercial life.



Mundubawa Bar & Lounge

Location: Mundubawa Avenue, Nassarawa GRA, Kano

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 12:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Its a neighborhood garden-style relaxation spot shaded by mature trees, offering casual plastic seating and a laid-back, community-centric atmosphere.

What to Expect: A loyal community of regular patrons gathering in the evenings to catch up over plates of spicy barbecued meat and cold refreshments.

Why Visit: It offers an authentic look into the traditional weekend social fabric of Kano, valuing comfort, good grilled food, and easygoing conversations above all else.

Safzak Drinks & Snacks

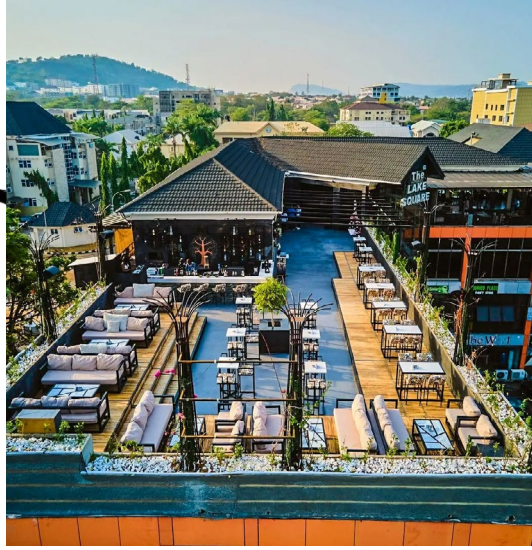
Location: Dorayi Babba, near Bayero University Kano old site, Kano

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM

A student-friendly spot bustling with activity, featuring simple outdoor tables, bright signage, and a lively, youthful energy.

What to Expect: A steady stream of university students and young locals grabbing quick snacks, pastries, ice cream, and chilled drinks between lectures.

Why Visit: It is affordable, centrally located near the academic hub, and serves as an energetic baseline for youth culture and casual daytime hangouts in Kano.



Club Road Bar

Location: Club Road, Government Reserve Area, Kano

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 1:00 PM – 11:00 PM

A historic administrative-district social hub framed by colonial-era with spacious, shaded verandas that offer a quiet retreat from the city heat.

What to Expect: A mature, professional crowd looking for a quiet space to conduct afternoon meetings or wind down with evening refreshments in a secure setting.

Why Visit: The peaceful ambiance make it a landmark choice for those seeking classic comfort and understated relaxation.

Church Road Lounge

Location: Church Road, Sabon Gari, Kano

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM

Is a bustling neighborhood bar located in the heart of the lively Sabon Gari district, featuring energetic music and eclectic indoor and outdoor seating arrangements.

What to Expect: A diverse crowd of people enjoying a high-energy social environment with constant chatter and affordable drinks.

Why Visit: It offers a raw, unfiltered slice of Kano's cultural melting pot, where the music is loud and the nightlife is deeply communal.

ABUJA



Piper Lounge & Bar

Location: 241 Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 12:00 PM – 3:00 AM

Is a multi-layered nightlife spot featuring an open-air garden terrace, an enclosed sports viewing bar, and an elevated VIP section.

What to Expect: A high-energy mix of Abuja's corporate players, media personalities, and politicians unwinding over shisha, cocktails, and massive platters of grilled suya. The energy peaks late into the night with live DJ sets.

Why Visit: The legendary landmark delivers consistent crowds, excellent grills, and an atmosphere that effortlessly balances casual socializing with intense weekend party vibes.

Aura Lounge

Location: 33 Euphrates Crescent, Maitama, Abuja

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

Is an ultra-luxurious, upscale sanctuary nestled in the quiet diplomatic heart of Maitama, featuring gold accents, and a sophisticated, intimate lighting design.

What to Expect: An elite crowd of diplomats, high-net-worth individuals, and celebrities enjoying premium bottle service, gourmet finger foods, and impeccably smooth service.

Why Visit: It epitomizes Abuja's quiet luxury, offering a discreet, ultra-chic environment where privacy meets high-society glamour.

Sky View Abuja

Location: 4th Floor, Statement Hotel, 102 Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja

Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM

Is an elevated, chic rooftop lounge wrapped in glass panels, offering sweeping views of the glittering Wuse 2 skyline under a canopy of stars.

What to Expect: A stylish, well-dressed crowd sipping artisanal cocktails while ambient lounge music plays softly in the background before ramping up into deep house and Afrobeats later in the night.

Why Visit: The romantic, high-altitude panoramic views of Abuja make it one of the most picturesque spots in the capital for a memorable date night or sophisticated evening cocktails.

Speakeasy

Location: 68 Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 5:00 PM – 3:00 AM (Closed Mondays)

Is a hidden-gem concept bar that recreates the clandestine allure of the 1920s Prohibition era, featuring vintage decor, dim lighting, and a secret-door aesthetic.

What to Expect: A bohemian-leaning, eclectic crowd of creatives, diplomats, and expats indulging in masterfully crafted mixology cocktails and listening to curated vintage jazz or soul music.

Why Visit: It provides a wonderfully moody escape from the cookie-cutter club scene, focusing on cocktail artistry and an exclusive, intimate hideaway vibe.

A Bar Called Paper

Location: 120 Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja

Opening Hours: Wednesday to Monday, 3:00 PM – 2:00 AM (Closed Tuesdays)

A minimalist art-bar with industrial concrete finishes, neon art installations, and an open layout that doubles as a creative gallery space.

What to Expect: Abuja's trendiest creative class, fashion designers, musicians, and digital nomads mingling over drinks and avant-garde visual displays.

Why Visit: It is the undisputed cultural epicentre for Abuja's youth and creative movement, offering a forward-thinking, artistic atmosphere unlike anywhere else in the capital.

FILMS

to watch in cinemas this September

★★★★★

by Musa Adekunle

When it comes to the best leisure spots, The Federal Palace Hotel's pool takes the lead, whether you want an ice-cold drink by the water, a family-friendly oasis under the Lagos sun, or a chic escape to unwind. With its excellent environment, warm and welcoming vibe, first-class amenities, and stylish surroundings, it offers an atmosphere that turns a regular afternoon into a mini-vacation.

01 *BY ANY MEANS*



Set in 1966 Mississippi, *By Any Means* follows a young Black FBI agent investigating the murders of civil rights leaders. Desperate for answers, he forms an uneasy partnership with a notorious Mafia hitman. Directed by Elegance Bratton, the crime thriller stars Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Mark Wahlberg, Nicole Beharie and Giancarlo Esposito.

02 *PROPERTIES OF THE GODS*



Love comes up against an old and painful tradition in *Properties of the Gods*. The film examines the Osu caste system and the difficult choices it forces on people seeking freedom, acceptance and a life beyond inherited prejudice. Its cast includes Pete Edochie, Zack Orji, Hilda Dokubo, Enyinna Nwigwe and Maria Chike Benjamin.

05 *NNE MGBAFOR*



Rooted in the warrior traditions of Ohafia, *Nne Mgbafor* follows a courageous woman who challenges an age-old custom and risks everything to change her people's future. The cultural drama blends power, betrayal, sacrifice and destiny, with Femi Branch, Sam Dede and Zubby Michael leading the cast.

04 *KING KOSOKO: THE BATTLE FOR LAGOS*



King Kosoko: The Battle for Lagos tells the story of Kosoko, who survives a difficult childhood and grows into one of Lagos' most powerful rulers. The Yoruba historical drama follows his battles for the throne and control of the city. It stars Femi Adebayo and Gabriel Afolayan.

05 IKENGA: THE LAST FESTIVAL



Tradition holds a community together until one man's forbidden power threatens to tear it apart. *Ikenga: The Last Festival* explores ambition, honour and the price of challenging ancestral law. Directed by Darlington Obodo Kelechi, it features Nollywood veterans Pete Edochie, Nkem Owoh, Patience Ozokwor and Kanayo O. Kanayo.

06 A FATHER'S SECRET



Anita has rebuilt her life after Juwon denied her pregnancy and disappeared, but his return ten years later reopens wounds she thought had healed. A Father's Secret asks whether an absent parent deserves forgiveness simply because he wants another chance. Timini Egbuson, Diva Gold, Odunlade Adekola and Princess Nkwocha star in the emotional family drama.

07 MUTINY



Jason Statham steps into another explosive role as Cole Reed, a former Special Forces officer framed for the murder of his billionaire friend. His attempt to clear his name leads him into an international conspiracy filled with enemies, gunfire and dangerous secrets. *Mutiny* is an easy pick for viewers who enjoy fast, hard-hitting action.

08 THE DOG STARS



After a deadly flu wipes out most of humanity, former pilot Hig lives in isolation with his dog and a heavily armed ex-Marine. A mysterious radio signal soon pushes him beyond the safety of their home and into a dangerous search for other survivors. Directed by Ridley Scott, The *Dog Stars* stars Jacob Elordi, Josh Brolin and Margaret Qualley.

09 SPIDER-MAN: BRAND NEW DAY



Peter Parker now lives in a world where the people closest to him no longer remember who he is. Alone and focused entirely on protecting New York, he faces fresh danger when a powerful enemy emerges. Tom Holland returns as Spider-Man in a story that explores what remains of the hero when Peter Parker has nobody left to lean on.

10 THE ODYSSEY



Christopher Nolan brings Homer's ancient epic to the big screen, with Matt Damon playing Odysseus, the Greek king struggling to return home after the Trojan War. His journey throws him against deadly waters, mythical creatures and powerful enemies. Anne Hathaway, Tom Holland, Zendaya, Robert Pattinson, Lupita Nyong'o and Charlize Theron complete the star-filled cast.



PREGNANCY SYMPTOMS

you should never ignore

Pregnancy showed me... fill in the blank.
Shege. Pepper.

by Isioma Okolo

Dr Isioma Okolo is a Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Harvard-trained global public health researcher, and women's health writer. She writes about the intersection of medicine, women's lives, and the social systems that shape health across Africa and the diaspora.

How many times have you heard those words, or said them yourself, hand on your back, side-eyeing the woman who once told you pregnancy would glow? I have heard them in different languages, dialects, and cultures, and the meaning never really changes. Like it or not, pregnancy will humble you.

As a birth worker, it keeps me humble too. No two pregnancies are the same. I say it all the time: never trust a baby; your baby is in charge.

I am a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, and I have caught, delivered, assisted or cheered on the birth of thousands of babies. For every birth, there are a hundred more women whose paths have crossed mine: in antenatal clinic, in triage, in the emergency department, and once on a plane, where a baby who could not decide between Ghanaian and Nigerian jollof arrived mid-air and settled the matter by being born thirty-five thousand feet over Cotonou.

Pregnancy is beautiful. It is also full of surprises, and after almost two decades in this work, some of them still surprise me. When I sat down to write this, I asked the women around me one question. *What is one surprising thing you experienced during your pregnancy?* Close to a hundred answers came rolling in.

Pink lips. A nose that swelled like it had its own pregnancy. The life-or-death need to crunch ice like sweets. Darkened

nipples, armpits and groin. A love affair with the smell of hot tar on the road. Random floods of saliva. A helpless new devotion to nonsense TV. Bread and jam cravings in a woman who hated bread and jam. An aching jaw. Teeth that changed colour, new moles, new hair in ungodly places. Stronger body odour. Sudden aversion to the things she loved most, like coffee. Restless legs, and pain down one leg so fierce she could not walk or sleep without a support band. Ankles that swelled and vanished for nine months. Feet that grew a whole shoe size. Piles. Headaches paracetamol would not touch. Leaking urine. Vivid, strange dreams. Anxiety and intrusive thoughts, before the baby and after. A surge in sex drive in the third trimester. And tiredness that swallowed whole days: one woman slept twenty-three hours, woke for one, then slept another ten.

Funny. Humbling. And every one of them, in its own way, possibly normal. Some I recognised instantly. A few made me sad. One or two I had never heard of in my life. All of them made me marvel at what women carry, quietly, without complaint.

The truth is that people are scared of pregnant women. Pregnancy is not an illness, but its ordinary symptoms can be genuinely debilitating. Pregnant women are routinely excluded from clinical trials, so we know far less than we should about what is safe and what works. So clinicians are cautious about anything that might touch the baby. Women are left to put up with symptoms that wreck their quality of life.

Fear, underinvestment and the normalisation of women's pain add up to a paradoxical silent neglect. Paradoxical, because pregnancy raises your status: pregnancies are treasured, women handled like eggs. Yet the same pregnancy invalidates her. It's just pregnancy. We all went through it. Why are you complaining? At least you're pregnant. How did you get here in the first place? Women are not offered the nuance of being happy to be pregnant and deeply unhappy with what it is doing to them. Saying so is heard as complaining, ungrateful, weak. I wonder if this is why women reach my clinic so late.

Now read that pregnancy symptom list again, because here is the whole point of this article.

Buried inside the weird and the wonderful are a few signs that are not so wonderful. The ice. The painful leg. The leaking. The dark thoughts. We laugh them off, we normalise them, we pass them down with a shrug and "na so e be." And in doing so, we sometimes miss the body waving a small red flag. The danger is rarely the strangeness. More often, the danger is the familiarity.

So here are the ones I want you, and your husband, your aunty, your sister and your brother, to learn by heart. Not to frighten you. To free you.

While you are carrying: get seen today, not tomorrow

Your baby goes quiet

Reduced fetal movement may be the first sign your baby is in distress. Babies have their own rhythms, and there is no magic number of kicks. But if your baby is moving less than is usual for them, do not reach for something sugary and wait it out. That old advice costs time we cannot afford to lose. Contact your hospital or maternity unit the same day, and let them assess your baby's wellbeing. Trusting that instinct is not being dramatic. It is being a mother.

Swelling that comes on suddenly, especially in your face

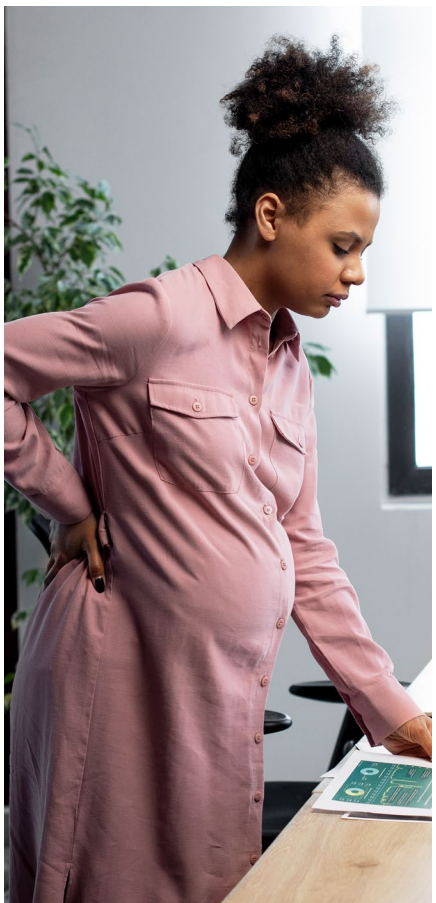
Puffy feet after a hot day in traffic is normal. But swelling that appears fast, in your face and hands, with a headache that will not shift, blurred vision or flashing lights, or pain high on the right side of your tummy, can be pre-eclampsia: dangerously high blood pressure in pregnancy. It remains one of the leading reasons women in Nigeria die in childbirth. Get your blood pressure and urine checked the same day.

One leg that is hot, swollen, and tender. Or sudden breathlessness

This is the one too few of us are warned about. Pregnancy, and the weeks just after birth, make our blood more likely to clot. A clot in the leg, a deep vein thrombosis (DVT), usually shows as one calf that is swollen, warm, red, and painful, different from the everyday aches and shooting nerve pains so many women get. A clot that travels to the lungs, a pulmonary embolism (PE), can leave you suddenly breathless, your chest tight, your heart galloping for no reason. Do not file this under "I am just tired and heavy." Treat it as an emergency and get to hospital.

A craving to crunch ice, morning, noon, and night

It made the funny list, but chewing ice or other non-food things can be your body telling you your iron is low. The scientific name for this is pica. Why does that matter so much? Because going into birth anaemic, your reserves already running on empty, leaves you with far less in the tank if you bleed afterwards. And bleeding after birth, postpartum haemorrhage, is still the single biggest reason Nigerian women lose their lives in childbirth. Here is the good news, and it is genuinely good: anaemia is found with a simple blood test and treated with iron. So eat your dark green vegetables (efo riro, ugu, bitter leaf), pair them with something rich in vitamin C like orange, pepper, or tomato, because it helps your body absorb the iron. Take the iron your doctor gives you even when it quarrels with your stomach. Get your blood checked. One red flag, one very simple answer.



A change in your discharge, or a fever

Never ignore vaginal discharge with a new colour, a new smell, a sudden gush of fluid, or simply feeling unwell and feverish. This can signal infection, or your waters leaking early. Both warrant checking, not waiting.

After the baby comes

Leaking urine: This is called incontinence. It affects roughly one in three of us, even after a caesarean birth. We have been taught to laugh it off and live with it for the rest of our lives. Don't. Pelvic floor exercises help enormously, and if you can find a pelvic floor physiotherapist, they can change your life. This is not the unavoidable tax of motherhood.

A sadness that will not lift: Up to eight in ten women feel the baby blues in the first days: weepy, low mood, raw, undone by a nappy advert. That usually passes within about two weeks. But if the sadness, the anxiety, the intrusive thoughts, the sense of not coping or not bonding with your baby stay longer than that, that is postnatal depression. It is common, it is treatable, and it is not a judgement on you as a mother. In our culture, we expect a new mother to be glowing and grateful, and that silence is dangerous. Say it out loud to someone you trust and to a health worker. You are allowed to need help.

When you go to visit a new mother, ask about her, not just the baby. *How are you eating? How are you sleeping? Who is holding you?*

The long game: what pregnancy is trying to tell you

Here is what I most want you to leave with. Pregnancy is a stress test for the body you will live in at age fifty.

If you had pre-eclampsia, your risk of high blood pressure and heart disease in later life is around two to four times higher, so those are numbers worth watching from now. If you had pregnancy (gestational) diabetes, up to half of women go on to develop type 2 diabetes within ten years. And if you simply have not felt like yourself since the baby, know that it can take women years to find their new normal.



9 easy back to school hairstyles for girls

by Chidinma Enweani

Getting children ready for school can turn every morning into a race against time.

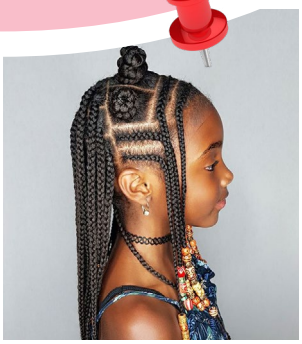
A neat, comfortable hairstyle makes the routine easier and helps children move through lessons and playtime without constant adjustments.

From cornrows and twists to Afro puffs and space buns, here are nine practical hairstyles to consider for your daughter this school term.



Afro puffs

Afro puffs are simple, playful and easy to maintain. The hair can be divided into two or more sections and secured with soft bands to keep it tidy throughout the school day.



Bantu knot halo

This protective style arranges small Bantu knots around the head to create a crown-like effect. It keeps the hair tucked away while giving a simple school look more character.



Bubble braids

Bubble braids use hair bands placed at intervals along a ponytail or pigtails. Colourful bands can make the style more playful, but they should not be tied too tightly.



Halo braid with cornrows

This style combines cornrows with a braid wrapped around the head like a crown. It keeps the hair away from the face and can reduce the need for daily styling.



High bun

A high bun gathers the hair neatly at the top of the head. It is a practical choice for warm days, sports and other school activities.



Parted ponytail with twists

This hairstyle combines clean sections, ponytails and simple twists. It offers room for creativity while keeping the hair organised and easy to manage.



Cornrows

Cornrows remain a popular protective hairstyle for children. They are easy to maintain and can be styled in simple straight lines, curves or other age-appropriate patterns.



Lemonade braids

Lemonade braids feature cornrows swept neatly to one side. For school, shorter and lighter versions may feel more comfortable and place less pressure on the scalp.



Space buns

Space buns divide the hair into two sections and secure each one at the top of the head. The result is a fun hairstyle that keeps the hair away from the face during lessons and playtime.
One useful safety line should also be added:

Whichever style you choose, avoid tight braids, heavy extensions and hairstyles that pull painfully on the child's scalp.

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Oral care guide to healthy teeth, gums

by Geraldine Akutu



Healthy teeth and gums is good for oral health. When there is teeth problems, it affects one's overall health. Every now and then, people of all ages have issues with their teeth. Below are tips to help you keep your teeth and gums healthy.

Brush your teeth thoroughly

Daily brushing of teeth is twice a day is important. Brush your teeth properly. The way you brush your teeth is important.Take your time, moving the toothbrush in gentle, circular motions to remove plaque. Unremoved plaque can harden, leading to gingivitis.

The right toothbrush for oral hygiene

The first step is to buy a toothbrush that's right for you. Some are designed for adults, others for children. Generally speaking, we recommend using a small, soft-bristled toothbrush. This way, you'll be able to clean all the nooks and crannies of your mouth, as well as the spaces between your teeth. Remember to change your toothbrush every three months for optimum efficiency. This is a strictly personal accessory.

Brush your tongue

Plaque can build up on your tongue. Not only can this lead to bad mouth odor, but it can lead to other oral health problems. Gently brush your tongue every time you brush your teeth.

Use a fluoride toothpaste

When it comes to toothpaste, there are more important elements to look for than whitening power and flavours. Fluoride works by fighting bacteria that can lead to decay, as well as providing a protective barrier for your teeth.

Floss on a daily basis

Flossing every day is important for good oral hygiene. Flossing is an important oral hygiene habit. It cleans and dislodges food stuck between your teeth, which reduces the amount of bacteria and plaque in your mouth.





Photo credit: Magnific

Plaque is a sticky film that builds up on teeth and contributes to cavities and gum disease. To floss, use dental floss or interdental brushes.

Drink more water

Water continues to be the best beverage for your overall health, including oral health. Drinking fluoridated water is good for oral health.

Limit sugary and acidic foods

Sugar converts into acid in the mouth, which can then erode the enamel of your teeth. These acids are what lead to cavities.

Dental checkup

Visit your dentist once or twice a year. Note that your dental visits could be more depending on your oral health. Dental checkup is important because it helps the doctor to spot any problem affecting your oral health and proffer solutions or treatment.

HOMEMADE CHICKEN PIZZA

by Chidinma Enweani

Making your own pizza from scratch gives you total control over every single element, from the thickness and chew of the dough to the quality of the cheese and the freshness of the toppings. While takeout is always an option, knowing how to make Pizza at home elevates a casual meal into a culinary project.



Ingredients for the dough

- Flour
- Yeast
- Salt
- A pinch of sugar
- Warm water (105°F–115°F)
- A splash of olive oil

For the pizza & toppings

- Pizza sauce (crushed tomatoes or diluted tomato paste)
- Shredded mozzarella cheese
- Seasoned, cooked chicken pieces
- Vegetables (sliced onions, peppers, etc.)
- Optional: Fresh herbs or hot honey for garnish

Instructions

- In a large bowl, mix your flour, instant yeast, salt, and a pinch of sugar. Pour in your warm water (105°F–115°F) and a splash of olive oil. Stir until a shaggy dough forms.
- Turn the dough out onto a clean, floured surface. Knead firmly for 5 to 10 minutes until the surface is smooth and elastic.
- Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover it with a damp towel or plastic wrap, and let it rise in a warm spot for 1 to 2 hours, or until it has doubled in size.
- Roll out your proofed pizza dough on a well-floured surface to your desired thickness, keeping the edges slightly thicker to form a nice crust.
- Transfer the dough to a parchment-lined baking sheet or a preheated pizza peel. Spread an even layer of your chosen sauce across the surface, leaving a small border around the edges.
- Scatter a generous handful of freshly shredded cheese over the sauce, followed by your seasoned, cooked chicken pieces and any additional vegetables like sliced onions or peppers.
- Bake in a preheated oven at the highest temperature possible, typically 250°C (480°F), for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the crust is golden brown and the cheese is melted, bubbling, and lightly browned in spots.
- Allow the pizza to rest for a couple of minutes before slicing to let the cheese set, then garnish with fresh herbs or a drizzle of hot honey before serving hot.



Iced Tea Recipe

Enjoy your Pizza Chicken with a glass of homemade iced tea, it's a simple and complete non-alcoholic drink. The ultimate refresher.

Ingredients

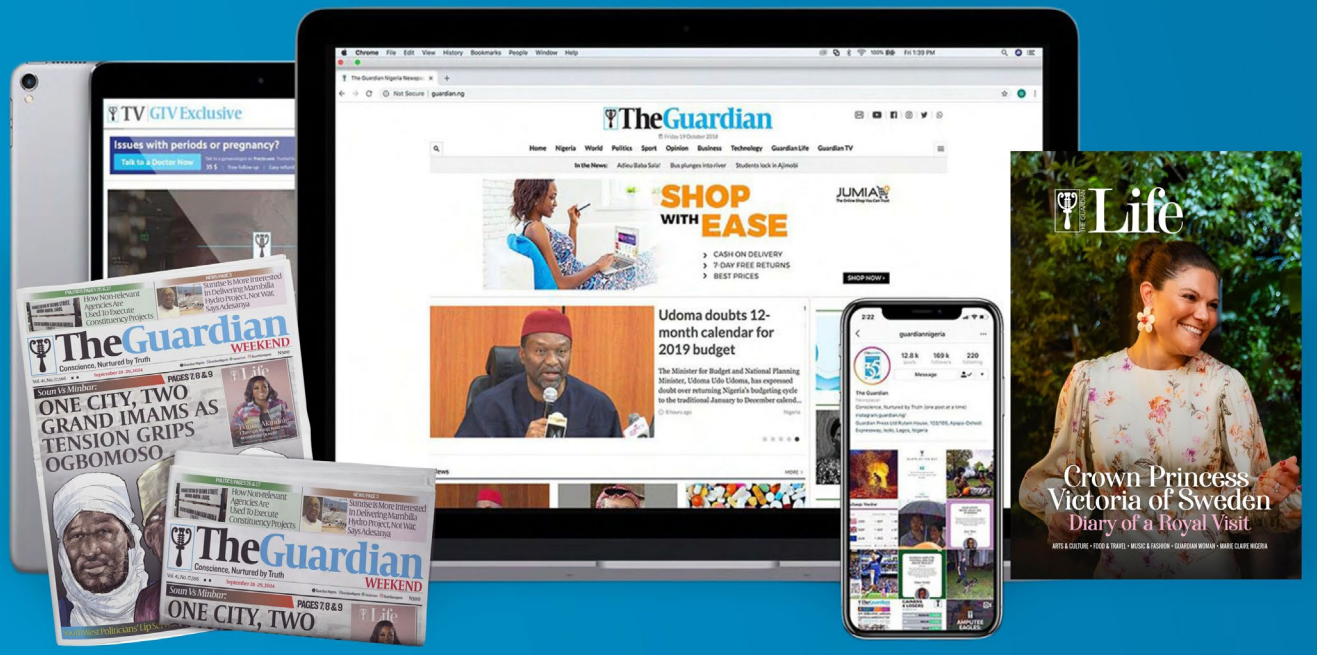
- 4 bags of black tea (or 3 tablespoons of loose-leaf tea)
- 4 cups of boiling water
- 4 cups of cold water
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup of granulated sugar, honey, or simple syrup (adjusted to your preferred sweetness)
- 1 large lemon, sliced into rounds
- Fresh mint leaves (optional, for garnish)
- Ice cubes (plenty of them)

Instructions

- Place your tea bags or loose-leaf tea into a large, heat-safe pitcher or bowl. Pour the 4 cups of boiling water directly over the tea.
- Allow the tea to steep for 4 to 5 minutes. Do not leave it much longer, or the tea can become bitter. Remove and discard the tea bags or strain out the loose leaves.
- While the tea is still hot, add your sugar, honey, or simple syrup. Stir thoroughly until the sweetener is completely dissolved.
- Pour the remaining 4 cups of cold water into the pitcher and stir well. Place the pitcher in the refrigerator for at least 1 to 2 hours until it is thoroughly chilled.
- Fill tall glasses generously with ice cubes. Pour the chilled iced tea over the ice, garnish with fresh lemon slices and a sprig of mint, and serve immediately.



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