SEPTEMBER 19 - 20, 2026

THE GUARDIAN

Life

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Fragrance Fading?

Make your perfume last longer

LAGOS CALLING!
5 EVENTS TO CATCH THIS QUARTER

+

Kemuel

On Borokiri, borderless music and global dreams

TIMI DAKOLO:

The soul-searching singer

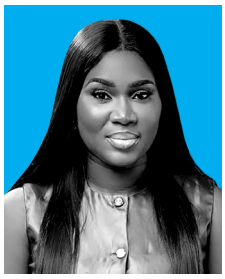
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Everything you need to live well



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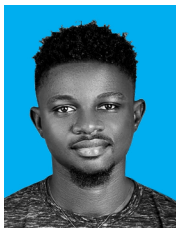












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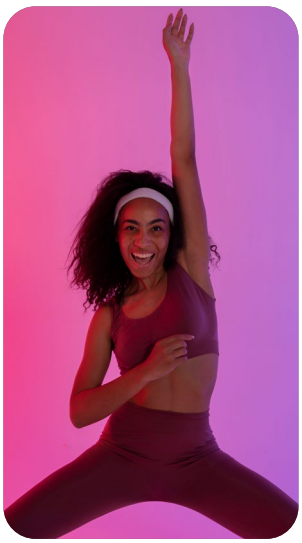
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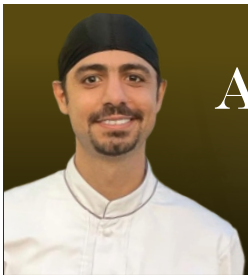
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5 events happening this quarter

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

There is never really a quiet weekend in Lagos. Between food pop-ups, creative events, exhibitions, and festivals, there is usually something to do if you know where to look. As we head into the final months of the year, here are five events to add to your calendar.

1 Everything But Coffee Pop-Up Week



Date: September 28 – October 1, 2026

Location: Purple Mall, Lekki, Lagos
If coffee, tea and trying new drinks are your idea of a good time, this one is for you. Everything But Coffee is hosting a four-day pop-up with coffee, tea, milkshakes, tastings and demonstrations. There will also be games and activities for people who want to hang around rather than just grab a drink and leave. Each day has a different theme, so there should be something new to check out throughout the week.

2 Órúpézá Festival

Date: October 1, 2026

Location: Freedom Park, Lagos Island, Lagos
Independence Day is a good excuse to get out of the house, and Órúpézá Festival gives you another reason to do so. The festival brings together African culture and contemporary creativity, with entertainment and cultural experiences planned for the day. If you want to spend October 1 doing something other than staying home or attending the usual parties, Freedom Park is worth considering.



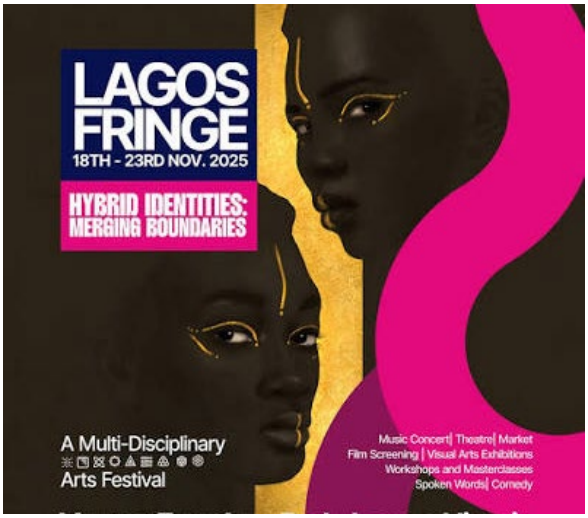
3 Design Week Lagos



Date: October 18–25, 2026

Location: Multiple venues across Lagos
Design Week Lagos is back, and it is not limited to one venue. The week-long event will feature exhibitions, installations, workshops, talks, open studios and other activities centred on design and creativity. The National Theatre in Iganmu will serve as the main hub, while other activities will take place at different locations around Lagos. Fashion lovers, creatives and anyone who enjoys good design will probably find something worth seeing.

4 Lagos Fringe

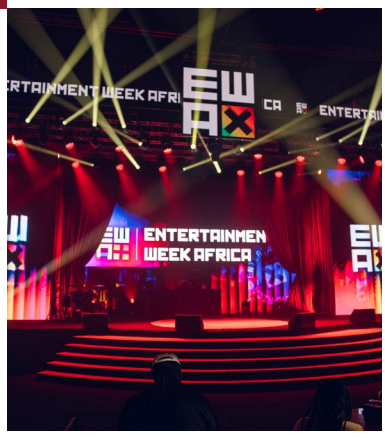


Date: November 3–8, 2026

Location: Multiple venues across Lagos

Lagos Fringe is returning in November with six days dedicated to independent and emerging creatives. The festival covers different forms of art, including theatre, performance, visual art and workshops. It is also a chance to see the work of creatives who may not always get space on the bigger entertainment stages. If you are tired of doing the same things every weekend, this could be a good reason to try something different.

5 Entertainment Week Africa



Date: November 17–22, 2026

Location: Multiple venues across Lagos
Entertainment Week Africa brings together some of the biggest parts of the creative industry in one week. The programme will cover music, film and television, fashion, beauty, art, animation, technology and live entertainment. There will also be showcases, markets, runway events, premieres and nightlife activities.
You do not have to attend everything. Pick the events that interest you and make a day or evening of it.
Lagos will be busy over the next few months, so if you have been looking for an excuse to step out, these events are a good place to start.



Timi Dakolo:

The soul-searching singer

by Musa Adekunle



NEED TO KNOW

- Born in Accra, Ghana, Timi Dakolo grew up with his grandmother in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.
- He began singing in church, co-founded Purple Love in 2003 and later studied songwriting at Berklee College of Music.
- Dakolo rose to national fame after winning the first season of *Idols West Africa* in 2007.
- His albums include *Beautiful Noise, Merry Christmas, Darling* and *The Chorus Leader*.
- In 2015, Dakolo won three Headies awards for *Wish Me Well*, including Best Recording and Best Male Vocal Performance.



A song can wake Timi Dakolo from sleep. When it does, he grabs his phone and records whatever arrives, whether it is a melody or two unfinished lines. He has lost ideas to sleep before. Now, he acts before the moment disappears.

On *Brotherly*, Dakolo turns his attention to men who carry heavy responsibilities but rarely speak about the strain. He challenges the pressure to provide, stay strong and hold everyone together, even when life begins to break them. To him, the command to "be a man" can silence emotions until men lose themselves.

Dakolo entered music by accident, but he refuses to leave his craft to chance. He studies songwriting, questions every idea and removes anything that weakens the song. He also resists labels and algorithms that try to dictate his sound. If a song no longer carries the idea he started with, it is not finished.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with *Guardian Life*, Dakolo discusses *Brotherly*, growing up, his creative process, marriage and why he rejected a UK tour.

> *"Sometimes, I failed to record an idea when it comes because I allowed sleep or laziness to win."*
>
> — TIMI DAKOLO

Your latest single, *Brotherly*, speaks to men who carry pressure quietly. What personal experience or conversation pushed you to the song?

The word "man" is synonymous with responsibility. I thought about it every day for a long time.

We have been taught as men not to express ourselves or be vulnerable because that is not considered a man's thing. No matter how much the pressure is breaking your back, you are expected to remain calm. Do not let the world see it. Do not share it. Go through it quietly.

That is how a lot of men break. That is how many become numb, lose their minds, lose focus and lose themselves. Emotions are like energy, and energy must be expressed, lest it kill the host.

Nigerian men struggle. We are the people who are told to show up for everybody and keep everything together. We must keep our lives together while doing things for everyone else.

We are told not to question or argue about it. Just do it. "Be a man" is a very dangerous phrase, but it is what it is.

You have described yourself as an "accidental musician", yet your writing process is deliberate. What did studying songwriting teach you that raw talent could not?

When I say I am an accidental musician, I mean it. Music was not the first thing on my mind. In fact, it was not on my mind at all.

I simply wanted to go to school, get a job or become my own boss and start something. But music came along. Like they say, sometimes you meet life on the road you take to avoid it.

Once I accepted that music might be the path for me, I began studying it. I studied everything I could. I wanted to understand what makes



> *"I do not sing for algorithms. I sing for myself first."*
>
> — TIMI DAKOLO

a great song, the beauty of writing impactful music and how a song can evoke emotion.

That is the kind of person I am. I value both knowledge and instinct because they play different roles in writing and singing. You must always find a balance.

Sometimes, knowledge gets in the way of creativity. But you cannot leave everything to talent either. You must add knowledge to it.

Take us into that moment: when an idea arrives, how do you know it deserves to become a song, and what happens between the first voice note and the final recording?

More often than not, I wake up with songs in my head. Sometimes, it is just two phrases. Other times, it is a beautiful melody.

It feels like you are sleeping and someone suddenly taps you. I have trained myself to know what to do when that happens.

Before now, I would tell myself that I would attend to the idea in the morning. But when morning came, I might no longer have it. The drive that comes with acting immediately may also be gone.

Sometimes, I failed to record the idea because I allowed sleep or laziness to win. But I have grown beyond that. Now, whenever an idea comes, I develop it a little, record it and do something with it.

***Iyawo Mi* became part of Nigerian wedding culture, while *Great Nation* found a life at national events. Does the public ever give a song a meaning you did not intend, and how has that changed the way you write?**

When writing or developing an idea, one thing is very important: the first person you must please is yourself.

If the idea is true and comes from the soul, it becomes universal because everyone has a soul. People will connect with it.

I do not think the public has given my songs meanings different from what I intended. From the beginning, I always know what I want to say.

Sometimes, beautiful ideas come while I am writing, but if they do not belong in that particular song, I leave them out. I remain focused on the central idea.

I always tell myself, "Timi, this sounds good, but it does not belong in this song." It may work in another song or another verse, but not in that particular one.

In an industry driven by labels and algorithms, has refusing a box protected your freedom or made your music harder to market?

I refuse to be boxed, and that is true. I sing music the way I hear and feel it.

I am the first person I want to please because it is my story to tell. The idea was given to me, and I heard it in a certain way, so I must sing it that way.

Honestly, I do not sing for algorithms. I sing for myself first. Sometimes, I let the music lead, and sometimes, I lead. It depends on the song and the collaboration between us.

I also do not want to be marketed in certain ways. I have a strong head. That is why I work with only a few producers who understand what I am trying to say. When the song is finished, I still want to recognise the original idea.

> *"One danger of being creative is wanting to say everything at once. Maturity comes from knowing what to leave out, so you still have something to say later."*
>
> — TIMI DAKOLO

After nearly two decades in the industry, how do you experiment without losing the emotional honesty that made listeners trust your voice?

I have done this long enough to



know what works for me and what does not. I have written songs that I knew were not meant for me.

I like to say what I want to say in a way only I can. Once you hear it, you should know that only Timi could have said it that way.

As they say, experience cannot be bought. You must live through certain things, and that comes with time.

I stay true to myself. I can tell myself, "Timi, your voice cannot carry this," or, "Timi, this is not you. Give it to somebody else."

Before I commit to an idea, I ask whether it is true, important and impactful. I question the idea and then question the answers. Eventually, I find a way to say what I want to say in a voice that remains mine, regardless of the genre.

You have said that too much knowledge can choke creativity and that songs are rewritten, not simply written. How do you silence your inner critic during the first draft, and how do you decide when a song is finally finished?

Sometimes, the song wants to lead. A song often knows what it needs, so you must follow it instead of forcing too many ideas into it. If it wants to be simple, allow it to be simple. Too much knowledge can get in the way of creativity and make a universal idea too complex.

One danger of being creative is wanting to say everything at once. Maturity comes from knowing what to leave out, so you still have something to say later. Learn the rules, then add, subtract and spice things up, but not too much.

What was growing up with your grandmother like?

I grew up with my grandmother in Port Harcourt, while my mum and aunties lived in Lagos. I did not know anybody else, just my grandma. It was a beautiful experience.



You and Busola have lived through seasons when your family became part of a difficult national conversation. What did that period teach you about love when public opinion becomes loud?

We stuck together because we knew what was true and important. We also understood the pressure that came with everything happening around us. We loved each other enough to weather every storm

We stuck together because we knew what was true and important. We also understood the pressure that came with everything happening around us. We loved each other enough to weather every storm

A recent disagreement linked to a proposed UK tour placed questions about contracts and integrity in the public space. What do you owe your audience when a private business dispute becomes public?

We were supposed to have a UK tour, but after one or two conversations, I realised the organisers were not technically prepared. I have worked too hard to travel to another country and deliver a mediocre show, so I told them to put their house in order and leave me out until they were ready.

I do not pay attention to claims that are untrue. Every show must meet the standard of those I have staged in Nigeria or America. I will not accept anything less.



The essence of makeup isn't just to enhance your beauty; it's also expected to give you a flawless, classy appearance. You do not have to break the bank to look luxurious. With the right technique, you can achieve a polished and sophisticated finish while still maintaining your beauty. Check out five secrets to adopt for flawless, classy makeup.

Makeup tricks that work

by Ese Oghenetega





Your eyes and brows matter

Your brows play a major role in how your makeup will appear. Keep your eyebrows well-groomed and defined. Blend them with the right eyeshadow to give them a strategic look. Poorly drawn eyebrows can ruin your makeup. Hence, it is important that you adopt this secret judiciously.

Prepare your skin for a flawless finish

Before you begin your makeup, clean your face thoroughly. You can achieve a flawless, classy makeup look from what you apply to your face before the foundation. Wipe your face with cleanser, moisturise it, and apply sunscreen before applying makeup. This helps your makeup to blend properly without breaking during the day.

Let your foundation blend with your complexion

Choosing the right foundation is very important. It fulfils the purpose of using makeup, which helps to highlight your beauty and not to make you look awkward. Your foundation should blend perfectly into your complexion, without it breaking or looking cakey. In your quest to look classy and flawless, do not undermine the importance of a perfect foundation.

Avoid over-contouring your face

You don't need heavy makeup to look enchanting. At times, little can be more than enough. Mild contouring on your face can give you a beautiful look. Carve your face and map out the areas where you want to add extra layers of makeup. The goal is to look gorgeous and not give you a loud and exaggerated appearance.

Balance your look effortlessly

One important secret to a lovely makeup look is your ability to balance your look effortlessly. In this case, using the right amount and quality of makeup products will give you the type of enhanced look you desire.

From your setting spray to your foundation, powder, eye shadow, liner, and other essentials, ensure that they are applied in the right quantity and shade. Perfect makeup is not the one with bolder colours, but the one that looks flawless and classy.

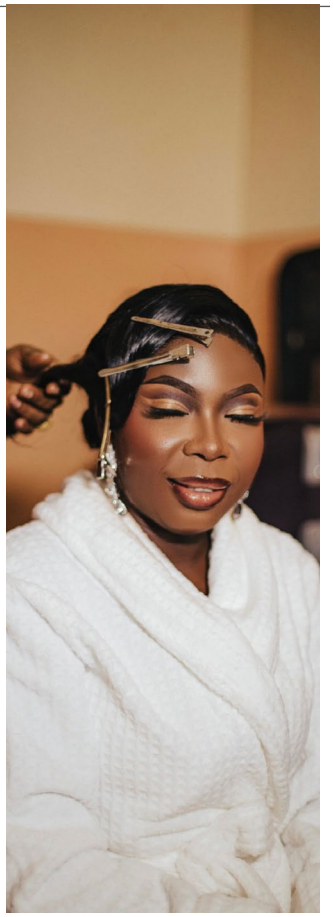




Photo credit: Pexels



Kemuel...

Melodies from Borokiri

by Chinonso Ihekire

Ever since Kemuel, born Kemuel Emmanuel, broke out in 2022 with Champagne Girl, Nigerians have been introduced to his conceptual pop soundscape. Bridging lounge pop, soul and Afropop, the Port Harcourt-bred troubadour has since crooned his way into a distinct style, with his melodic songwriting and intimate storytelling keeping him within the broader Afrobeats conversation.

His latest EP, Borokiri Boy, captures his South-South identity, dwelling on memories and experiences from his beloved Garden City. Across the eight-track project, which features DJ Tunez on the opener "Seki," Kemuel develops his songwriting, blending familiar PH lingo and references with catchy melodies and exciting storytelling.

From a humble church musical background, Kemuel has morphed into an inspiring artiste, always carrying pieces of Borokiri within his masterpieces themselves. A versatile bard, he's snowballed through different phases of neo-soul, RnB, house, Afropop and other melodies. At the core of his artistic growth, he remains hesitant to box himself into a fixed genre.

Catching up with Guardian Music, Kemuel discusses growing up in Borokiri, learning music through instruments, the making of Borokiri Boy, his evolving sound, the artists he hopes to work with and the global future he imagines for his artistry.

Your new project is titled Borokiri Boy. What does that title mean personally to you?

I mean, that's who I am. I am a Borokiri boy. I grew up in Borokiri, and I'm a product of where I grew up.

For people who have never been to that part of Nigeria, what was it like growing up there as a young creative person?

I would say it's a very testing environment. It will test your resilience. It will test your faith in God, your spirituality, your confidence, everything. It will test your faith in your safety also, because it's a place that romanticises gun violence and all of that. But I was mostly inside. I was barely outside. Even though I grew up in the belly of the ghetto, I knew all the slangs and everything, but I preferred reading the dictionary. I preferred watching cartoons when my friends would go out and play football or do regular boy things.

I soaked in a lot of things from movies, cartoons and books. I was mostly reading comic books. I didn't really have access to these things on a daily basis, so sometimes I had to outsource them from very random places. The place is also really surrounded by talent. You can see somebody who is straight-up involved in gang shit and he's a very talented drummer. It's crazy. It's a colourful place.

When did music enter the picture for you?

Music kind of came in after I started getting a hang of instruments in church. There was a time my dad wanted me to get into it, so I started learning. While I was learning the keyboard, I developed an interest in other instruments. I played the keyboard for about three or four years, then I got into bass guitar during the lockdown. I kind of mastered the basics of the bass guitar during lockdown, and in 2021 I started playing bass in church. But I started singing mostly because of the bass guitar. Most of the time when I was rehearsing the bass, there wasn't really power supply. Sometimes we could go three months with zero light.

That resulted in me having to sing the notes. Since I already knew the notes from playing keys, I would rehearse the bass by literally singing the notes out. I know all the notes by heart. That got me more confident with melodies. I started writing more songs with the bass. Then from the bass, I migrated back to the piano and started writing songs with the piano.

I think what actually grew my confidence with writing was freestyling. I originally wanted to be a rapper because I really enjoyed listening to Kanye. He was very expressive. I listened to a lot of Kanye, Drake and Bryson Tiller. I listened to a lot of raps - Tupac and J. Cole too. But when I started learning instruments, I leaned more towards R&B. I went back to pop, Michael Jackson, and older music from the '70s, '80s and '90s. I listened to a lot of Mary J. Blige and Erykah Badu.

I just had to listen to a wide range of music because it helped me grow my confidence with the instruments I was playing. I would play along to them, and I guess those things stayed with me.

At what point did you decide you wanted to take music professionally and build a career from it?

I didn't really see it becoming a career at first. I think it started becoming a career around 2022 or 2023 for me. It was always something I used to express myself because I'm not a very expressive person. If you go through my socials, you'll probably just see me doing music stuff. You barely see me doing anything else, and you barely find information about me or about how I feel about certain things.

I'm not really heavy on expressing myself with words. But with music, there are melodies, so it's more enjoyable. If I'm listening to myself talk about an experience and it's guided by melodies, it doesn't feel like I'm naked as much as when I'm just saying my mind straight up. It started becoming a career for me in 2022 or 2023 when I moved to Lagos. When I was in PH, I was just pushing it. It was something I enjoyed doing. I don't want to call it a hobby because it was more than a hobby for me. I really put my life into it, but I didn't see it as something I was going to make money from. I was more concerned about the expression. I just wanted to create good stuff, good music.

You started with rap and now



"I want to be remembered for how I make people feel, not so much for what I accomplished."

— KEMUEL

Photos credit: Lucas Somto



your music moves through RnB, Afropop and other sounds. What was it about this style of music that made you want to stick with it?

It's tricky because I didn't really think I had a style. I was just trying to express myself the best way I could. I knew I enjoyed really detailed and quiet sounds. I didn't really like overdoing stuff. I liked creating moments in music because most of my favourite songs had very unique moments.

You can be listening to a song and there's a moment in the first 53 seconds that never comes again. Then by one minute, 20 seconds, there's another moment there. That keeps you alive while listening to the song. That's something I try my best to translate into my own music.

I can't even tell you what my style is because at some point it used to be neo-soul, then it became R&B, then I had a whole house phase. Now I'm having an Afrobeats phase, an Afropop phase, and I can literally feel myself going back to my R&B phase again. I'm like a chameleon when it comes to the music. I'm like a vessel. I don't really believe that the music is coming from me, like I'm the one doing the music. I just feel like I've humbled myself to a point where music likes passing through me.

I can't say I have a style. I am making. The only things I would say are unique or distinct to me are my voice, my enunciations, the way I pronounce things and maybe my own story. But we all kind of go through the same things, and that's what makes music relatable.

> *"Music has become more of an escape for me, less of a career thing."*
>
> — KEMUEL

On Borokiri Boy, which song took the most out of you creatively?

I don't think any of them were really a hassle, but the one that was the most complicated to make, where the process was really long, would be "Osi Baby."

What is "Osei Baby" about?

I wouldn't say it's a direct person. Osi is just a traditional name from where I'm from, Kalabari, and it's a famous name back home in Borokiri. You can stumble on multiple Osei's. I was trying to maintain a theme for the project very subtly.

PLAYLIST OF THE WEEK

by Mayowa Iyiola



IT'S OVER
Fola ft Bella Shmurda, Zlatan



OH NO
Rema



OSEI BABY
Kemuel



AWAY
Yemi Alade ft Teni



BACK 2 U
Seyi Vibez



MOVE
Shoday



HEALING
Phyno



Make *your perfume* last longer

by Geraldine Akutu





Perfume is more than a quick spritz before stepping out; how you apply it can determine how long the fragrance lingers. If your scent fades within a few hours, your application technique may be the culprit. Experts say applying perfume to the right areas and using the correct method can help the fragrance last longer. Instead of spraying randomly, focus on pulse points such as the wrists, neck and behind the ears.



Refrain from rubbing your wrists together, as this can alter the scent. With these simple tricks, you can enjoy your favourite fragrance for longer.

Apply to your pulse points

There's actually a functional reason why we tend to apply perfume to our pulse points (like the insides of your wrists and elbows, behind your ears, on your neck, the back of your knees, etc.): The skin is the thinnest at those points, which means it's closer to your blood and body heat. As you apply it, the fragrance warms; the warmth helps to diffuse the fragrance. Your fragrances smell stronger and last longer.

Keep your skin hydrated

Before applying (or reapplying) your fragrance, moisturise your skin (especially your pulse points) with your favourite unscented oil-based body lotion, but if you want to mix and match your scents, then feel free to use a fragranced moisturiser. The oil-based lotion serves as a fixative on your skin, which in turn helps your fragrance stick to your skin and project more. Dry skin will not hold on to your fragrance as long as moisturised skin will.

Avoid rubbing your wrists together or rubbing on your pulse points

Once you apply on your pulse points, it may feel natural to rub them together to blot the fragrance, especially if your skin feels pretty damp. Rubbing on your skin after applying a fragrance will break down the structure of the perfume. It makes the top notes burn off a little quicker and messes with its longevity.

Spray on clothes

Ever thrown on a sweater to discover it still smells like last week's perfume, or borrowed a loved one's scarf and notice how it carries their signature scent? Fabrics hold on to fragrance and the memories tied to it, especially fabrics like silk, wool and cotton.

Know your ingredients

There are perfume ingredients that are Natural fixatives, which help a perfume last longer. Most fragrances have top, middle and base notes. Top notes are the first you smell in a perfume. They quickly evaporate. The middle notes are the "body" of the perfume and take longer to develop on the skin than top notes. The base notes are the final scent to develop and last the longest. They are the fixative that slows down the evaporation of the fragrances on the body.

You have to store your perfumes properly

Store your fragrance in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Exposure to sunlight over a long period of time will definitely lead to a deterioration in the quality of your fragrances.

Guardian Woman
EMPOWERMENT • ENTREPRENEURSHIP • LEADERSHIP • MENTORSHIP



Naomi Osemedua:

Women have extraordinary stories, but many struggle to tell

by Ijeoma Thomas-Odia

Naomi Osemedua is a human physiologist, certified life coach and chief strategist at The Centrestage Company. With more than a decade of experience across leadership, communication, storytelling, visibility and human development, through The Irreplaceable Advantage™, she works with leaders, executives, entrepreneurs, institutions and women who are ready to understand and express the value that makes them distinctive. In this interview, she speaks on driving human capacity development and women in leadership.

What has shaped you into the woman you are today?

I have always been fascinated by people. Fun fact, as a little girl, I wanted to be a medical doctor. It was not really because I was fascinated by medicine itself. I wanted to be a doctor because I wanted to help people. I wanted to understand people, make a difference in their lives and somehow leave them better than I met them. Life took me in a different direction. I did not become a medical doctor, but I graduated as a Human Physiologist. Looking back now, I realise that the desire underneath that childhood dream never left me. It simply found different expressions. That curiosity about people has followed me into everything I have done, from understanding the human body, to understanding behaviour, communication, leadership, stories, identity and influence. If curiosity shaped me, resilience has strengthened me. I have lived many lifetimes in one lifetime. I have experienced pain. I have experienced betrayal. I have experienced seasons that could have broken me. I am still standing.

There is something powerful about being able to look at your life and say, "I have been through some things, but those things did not get the final word." My faith in God has also been very, very loud in my life. I genuinely believe I am not here merely to be part of the census. I am here on an assignment. That belief changes how I approach my life, my work, my relationships and even my failures. I do not believe the gifts and talents God has given me were given accidentally. I believe they are part of what I have been entrusted with, and I have a responsibility to develop them, use them and pour them into other people. Being a mother to two adult children and two approaching pre-teen and teenage years, has also shaped me profoundly. Motherhood has taught me another dimension of love, responsibility, patience, sacrifice and legacy. It constantly reminds me that who we become is not only about what we accomplish, but also about what we model and what we leave behind.

I would be incomplete if I did not acknowledge the role my family has played in this journey. I have been incredibly blessed to have a family that has supported me, believed in what I carry and given me room to pursue the things that matter to me. They have celebrated the beautiful moments, encouraged me through the difficult ones and, in many ways, made the journey lighter. I don't take that kind of support for granted. There are some things you build publicly that are only possible because you have people quietly standing behind you privately. Having that kind of support has also made me more conscious of the season of life I am in. At 48, I am thinking much more intentionally about who I am becoming and what I want the years ahead to represent. This season is about becoming the best version of myself, not a perfect version, but the fullest expression of what God has placed in me.



Looking at your journey, from Human Physiology to Life coaching, Corporate communication, Storytelling and now leading the CentreStage Company, what do you think was really guiding you through all those different chapters?

When I look back at my journey, I don't see a collection of disconnected careers. I see a pattern. The titles changed, the industries changed, the rooms changed, but the question underneath my work remained remarkably consistent: How do we help people understand themselves, communicate what matters and make a meaningful difference? Human Physiology taught me to look beneath the surface. The body is a system, and what you see on the outside is often connected to things happening underneath. Corporate communication taught me something similar about organisations and people. What an organisation says, what it does, what people experience and what others believe about it all have to connect. That is where reputation lives. Storytelling taught me the power of meaning. People do not simply respond to information. They respond to what that information means to them. Leadership and strategic visibility brought those things together. Today, I am interested in the intersection of how people think, what they see, what they communicate, how they are perceived and the kind of influence they ultimately create. I also think there has been a divine hand in the journey. There were chapters I did not plan. There were doors I did not know I was preparing to walk through. There were experiences that only made sense much later. Sometimes what looks like a detour is actually preparation. That is probably one of the biggest lessons my journey has taught me. You don't always need to understand the entire map. Sometimes you simply need to keep developing what is in your hand.

What have you noticed about brilliant people that made you realise that being good at what you do is sometimes not enough?

Talent gets you noticed. Distinction gets you remembered. I have met incredibly brilliant people who are excellent at what they do, yet their value is not fully understood by the people who need what they carry. That is the problem we exist to solve. We live in a world where competence is no longer enough of a differentiator.

> *"I want women to understand that their lived experiences contain knowledge, wisdom and possibility for somebody else."*
>
> — NAOMI OSEMEDUA

Women creating wealth

...with Raquel Kasham Daniel



Over the last three years, Guardian Woman Festival has brought together women leaders, policymakers, business executives, entrepreneurs, creatives, development practitioners, media professionals and other stakeholders committed to advancing opportunities for women and girls.

As we prepare for the 2027 edition hosted by Federal Palace Resort, with the theme, 'Women as wealth creators', we spotlight Raquel Kasham Daniel, a social entrepreneur and creator of Voluserve, a digital platform that uses volunteering as a pathway to learning, talent development, and impact. She is also the Founder of Beyond the Classroom Foundation, expanding educational opportunities for children and young people in underserved communities.

Take us through your career path?

I like to say that my career actually started before I got into university. Very early, I found that my heart really beats around children and adolescent girls and some of the issues affecting them. I was still very clear that I wanted education to be part of my life, so I studied Education at the university. And while I was in university, I formally registered Beyond the Classroom Foundation. So I was studying and building an organisation at the same time. After graduation, I've had quite a diverse career. Over the last 15 years, I've written over 30 books for children, developed educational board games, and built programmes for girls and young people.

More recently, I've moved into technology, where I'm building Voluserve to make it easier for young people to find volunteering opportunities in Nigeria. And now I'm also actively working in the media space, where a big part of what I do is tell stories. So, even though the things I've worked on have changed over the years, I think there has always been this thread of people, stories, opportunities and building things that can make a difference.

What does women creating wealth mean to you?

For me, it means women being able to create value and actually benefit from the value they create. Women are working. We're building things, supporting families, raising children, creating businesses, working in organisations. But sometimes, after all that work, we're not necessarily building anything for ourselves. So I think we need to start asking ourselves, What am I building that I own? It could be a business. It could be property. It could be investments. It could be intellectual property. It could even be a skill that gives you more earning power.

How are you creating sustainable wealth as a woman?

I'm actually much more intentional about this now. For a long time, I was very focused on impact. I was building organisations, programmes and projects and thinking a lot about the people we were trying to help. But I realised at some point that impact alone doesn't pay the bills, and you can't keep building everything around passion and goodwill. So, a couple of years ago, I started thinking differently about money. That means saving and investing. Now, I invest in things like stocks, bonds and mutual funds, and I'm working towards bigger assets like real estate. I'm also building businesses, developing products and building platforms that can continue to generate value beyond the hours I personally put into them.

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.

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Olubukola Olatosi: Every child deserves a healthy smile

by Geraldine Akutu

Professor Olubukola Olatosi is a Pediatric Dentist, clinician-scientist, and pediatric oral health researcher currently undertaking postdoctoral research at the University of Manitoba, Canada. With a career spanning pediatric dentistry, public health, research, and community service, her work focuses on preventing early childhood oral disease and improving access to care for underserved populations. She is the Founder and Executive Director of Smiles of Hope for Children Foundation (SHCF), through which she is translating her research and longstanding commitment to children's oral health into community action across Nigeria. In this interview, she speaks on caring for undeserved children.

What is the inspiration behind Smiles of Hope for Children Foundation (SHCF)?

The inspiration for Smiles of Hope for Children Foundation came from both my professional journey and something very personal. Community service has always been close to my heart. Over the years, I had participated in many outreach programmes collaborated with different foundations and initiatives, and served as lead dentist at several community events. But after completing and defending my PhD at the University of Manitoba in December 2025, I began thinking more deeply about what I wanted the next chapter of my life to represent. On December 14, 2025, I had what I can only describe as a very clear vision placed on my heart: it was time to give back in a more intentional and sustainable way, particularly to children who might otherwise remain unreached. That became Smiles of Hope for Children Foundation. Our philosophy is very simple: every child deserves a healthy smile, regardless of where that child is born or the circumstances in which they live.



What makes our approach particularly meaningful to me is that we go into the communities where children actually live. Rather than asking families to leave their environment and come to us, we bring oral health education, screening and, where feasible, preventive and basic care directly to them. It is not always the easiest environment in which to provide care, but being physically present allows us to listen, understand the realities families face, and serve in partnership with the community. That is what Smiles of Hope represents to bringing hope, one smile at a time.

How has the journey been so far?

The journey has been incredibly rewarding and, in many ways, humbling. When we conducted our first outreach in Ago-Egun Community in Lagos, the response was overwhelming. More than 500 children participated, and over 100 volunteers came forward to support us. The level of community participation made me feel as though people had been waiting for something like this. Since then, we have continued to reach children in other communities, including Sangotedo, Lagos Island and Abeokuta.

Across our first four outreaches, 721 children received oral health education and oral hygiene resources, 502 children were screened, and 92 preventive and basic treatments were provided. But the journey has also taught me that impact is not just about numbers. It is the child receiving a toothbrush and learning how to use it correctly. It is identifying disease in a child who has had little opportunity to see a dentist. It is a caregiver asking questions about prevention. And it is seeing professionals from different backgrounds volunteer their time because they believe in the mission. The response has exceeded what I imagined when we started.

How do you source funds? Do you have sponsors?

We have been very fortunate to receive support from individuals, colleagues, friends, volunteers and organisations who believe in what we are trying to accomplish. Much of our funding so far has come through individual donations and in-kind contributions. For our first outreach, for example, my PhD supervisor, Dr. Robert Schroth, and the Healthy Smile Happy Child team in Canada donated 500 toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss and fluoride supplies.

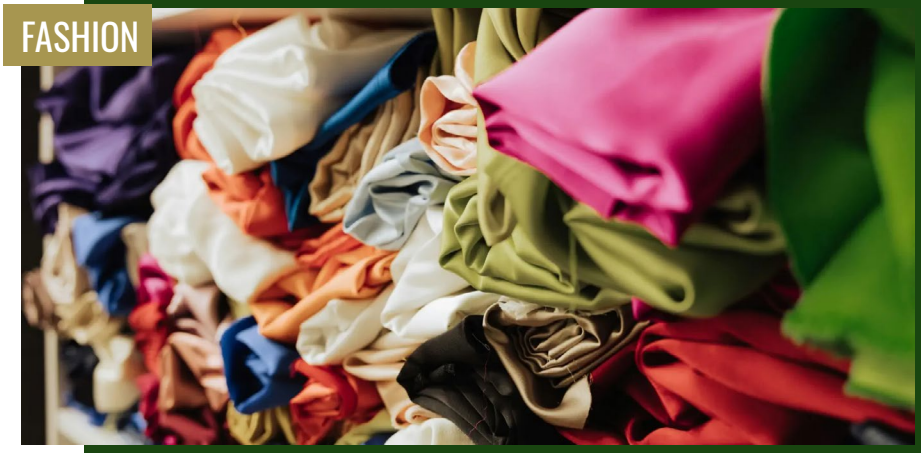
We have also received financial and material support from people from different walks of life, and many professionals have donated something equally valuable their time and expertise. We are still a young organisation, so building sustainable funding is one of our priorities. We are actively seeking partnerships with corporate organisations, healthcare institutions, professional bodies and philanthropic organisations. For us, transparency is extremely important. We want our supporters to be able to see where their contributions go and, most importantly, the children and communities their support is reaching.

What life experiences most shaped who you are today?

Two experiences immediately come to mind. The first is my journey through dentistry. I trained in Nigeria, and those early years shaped my understanding of both the possibilities and inequalities within healthcare. I later specialized in pediatric dentistry and have spent much of my professional life caring for children. That has allowed me to see firsthand how something as preventable as dental caries can cause tremendous pain and affect eating, sleeping, schooling and quality of life.

marie claire NIGERIA

FASHION



Here's how the trillion-naira Nigerian fashion industry currently sources fabrics

by Oyindamola Adebiyi

The Nigerian fashion industry is a major contributor to the economy, with the textile, apparel and footwear sector contributing ₦1.224 trillion to GDP in 2024. As Nigerian designers gain international visibility and local brands build global audiences, traditional fabrics are also finding new life in contemporary fashion.

Yet, much of the fabric powering this growth is imported. Textile imports rose from ₦82.53 billion in 2020 to ₦726.18 billion in 2024, reaching about ₦1.06 trillion in 2025. While local producers still weave, dye and make fabrics by hand, they operate alongside a strong import market.

This dependence matters because fabric sits at the beginning of the fashion supply chain. The growth of Nigerian fashion, therefore, does not necessarily mean the growth of Nigerian textile manufacturing.

So, where do we actually go when we need fabric?

Lagos markets

Best for: imported Ankara, lace, George, chiffon, satin, brocade and other fashion fabrics.

Lagos has several major fabric markets, each serving a different kind of shopper. Balogun Market on Lagos Island is one of the biggest textile hubs, particularly for Ankara and lace. Tejuosho Market in Yaba offers lace, George, chiffon, brocade, Ankara, and aso-ebi materials. Oshodi Fabrics Market is another option for more affordable fabrics and a broad range of materials. Much of the Ankara, lace, George, and other fashion textiles sold across Lagos are imported from China, India, and Pakistan, alongside imports from countries including Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana. Balogun, in particular, has a strong concentration of importers and retailers.

Kano markets

Best for: imported Ankara, Atampa, lace, shadda, chiffon and brocade.

Kantin Kwari Market is one of Nigeria's most important textile markets and a major sourcing point for buyers in Northern Nigeria and beyond. Its shops carry everything from lace and shadda to Ankara, chiffon and other imported fabrics. Much of what is sold here is imported, including Atampa fabrics brought in from Cotonou. The market has also historically been an important distribution point for Chinese-made textiles entering Nigeria and the wider West African market.

Abeokuta, Ogun State markets

Best for: locally made Adire, tie-dye and batik.

Itoku, Abeokuta has long been associated with the production and sale of Adire and Kampala, with local makers producing fabrics through techniques including tie-dye, batik and resist-dyeing. The market remains a major destination for people looking to buy directly from the community that produces the fabric. The trade is still largely local, with more than 1,500 women reportedly involved in the production, marketing and sale of Adire around the Itoku and Kemta areas in 2024. Many makers inherited the craft from their families, while platforms such as Adire Abeokuta now make it easier to buy directly from verified local artisans.

Iseyin, Oyo State markets

Best for: locally handwoven Aso Oke.

Iseyin in Oyo State has long been associated with Aso Oke weaving, and the craft remains an important part of the town's cultural and economic life. Unlike the imported Ankara and lace found in major fabric markets, Aso Oke bought directly from Iseyin weavers is locally made.

The real cost of sourcing fabrics in Nigeria

Nigeria has the textile traditions, designers, artisans and consumers. What it lacks is the manufacturing system to connect them.

Visit www.marieclaire.ng to read more

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BEAUTY



If you're new to makeup, here are the products you actually need to build a makeup bag

by Ashim Ojeh

Makeup can feel overwhelming at first, especially with so many products and trends to choose from. It's easy to end up buying things you don't actually need. If you're looking to get into makeup or simply refresh your collection, here are the essential products worth having in your makeup bag.

Primer
Other than sunscreen, primer is the one thing you need to have in your makeup kit.
Primer goes on before your foundation and helps give you a smoother base to work with. It can minimise the look of pores and help your makeup sit better on your skin. It also helps keep your makeup from breaking down too quickly, especially when your skin starts producing oil throughout the day.

Foundation
Foundation is one of the key products you need in every routine. It creates an even base and provides the coverage needed for the rest of your makeup to sit smoothly on top.
There are different types of foundation for different skin types and finishes. You just have to pick one that works best for your skin type and matches your skin tone.

Powder
Powder helps set your makeup and control shine, while giving your skin a smoother, more finished look. It's especially useful for keeping your base in place and stopping it from becoming too oily.
The two most common are setting and pressed powder. Loose setting powder sets foundation and concealer, while pressed powder adds coverage and is ideal for quick touch-ups.

Blush
Blush helps add a flush of colour, warmth and dimension to your face, especially after foundation, which can sometimes leave your complexion looking a little flat.
Each type (cream and powder) has its own benefits, so try both and see what fits best.

Eyeshadow
Eyeshadow is where you can have a little fun. Keep things simple with neutral shades or experiment with shimmers, brighter colours, and different combinations. It's an easy way to add depth to your look while making your eyes stand out.

Lip products
Lip products are essential to completing your makeup look. Once you've done your base, added colour to your cheeks and finished your eyes, your lips are the final step that can pull everything together.
The three essentials are a lip liner for your favourite lip combos, a good lipstick and a lip gloss to finish. You can also add a tinted or regular lip balm.

Mascara
Mascara can help define your lashes even without an eyelash curler or false lashes. It makes them look fuller and darker and can really make your eyes pop.

Setting spray
Setting spray is the final step in your makeup routine. After spending all that time perfecting your base, brows, eyes and lips, the last thing you want is for everything to start moving around a few hours later. Setting spray helps lock your makeup in place, helps the different products melt together more naturally and can give your skin a more seamless finish.

Don't forget the tools
The right tools can make makeup application much easier, but you don't need a huge collection to get started. A makeup sponge or foundation brush, fluffy



Explore

Seriki Faremi Williams Abass slave museum

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

In Badagry, the Seriki Faremi Williams Abass Slave Museum keeps the old slave cells where people were held before being taken away. But the story of the man behind the museum is just as complicated as the history of the place.

Who was Abass?

The museum takes its name from Seriki Faremi Williams Abass, whose own life is closely tied to the history of the compound. Born Ifaremilekun Fagbemi in Joga Orile, present-day Ogun State, Abass was captured as a child during a raid by the Dahomeans and taken to Abomey before he was sold to a European slave trader, Mr Williams.

He was taken to Brazil, where he was given the name Abass Williams, and eventually gained his freedom before returning to West Africa. By the 1830s, he had settled in Badagry and later became involved in the slave trade, working as a middleman between African suppliers and European merchants.

This is the part of Abass's story that makes the museum particularly difficult to view

through a simple victim-and-survivor narrative. He had experienced enslavement himself, yet later became involved in the same trade that had taken away his freedom. His participation brought him wealth and influence in Badagry, and his position remained significant after the abolition of slavery. In 1913, during British colonial rule, he was appointed Paramount Ruler.

His influence in the area is also remembered in local accounts of the founding of Aiyetoro and Idogo, adding another layer to the story of a man whose life moved from captivity to wealth and political influence.



The compound

From the road, the Seriki Faremi Williams Abass Slave Museum in Badagry, Lagos State, looks like an ordinary old compound. Located on Marina Road, close to the Badagry post office, it does not have the imposing entrance or grand architecture that might suggest the weight of the history preserved within it. Yet behind its old wooden door are the remains of a period when Badagry was an important point in the transatlantic slave trade.

Also known as the Brazilian Barracoons, the site is believed to have been established between 1840 and 1844. The barracoons were used to hold enslaved people before they were taken to the coast and transported across the Atlantic, particularly to Brazil. The compound is believed to contain about 40 cells, although only two were open to visitors when heritage researcher Faye Sayer visited in 2018. Some of the others were empty, while others were being used as living spaces.

That detail is part of what makes the museum unusual. The compound has not been turned entirely into a conventional museum space; it remains family property, with parts of it still used as living quarters. At the entrance, a large sign and cast-metal plaque introduce visitors to the site, while inside, photographs, newspaper cuttings, documents and other materials provide an account of the compound and the people connected to it. Chains, shackles and other objects associated with the slave trade are also displayed.

Inside the cells

The museum's guided tour takes visitors through different stages of the slave trade, beginning with the goods that were exchanged for enslaved people. Umbrellas, tobacco, whisky and guns are among the items used to explain how European merchants and African traders conducted business before the tour moves to the capture and confinement of people.

Chains and other restraints are displayed as the guide explains what happened to those who were captured and how their identities were stripped away as they were prepared for sale. The men's section contains two main rooms, with the first displaying photographs, shackles and other objects, as well as a life-size wax figure of Abass.

The second room is the actual slave cell, a dark, windowless space where chains and manacles remain part of the display. During Sayer's visit in 2018, visitors were briefly left inside with the door closed before the tour continued. The moment does not recreate what enslaved people endured, but standing inside the confined room offers a physical sense of how limited the space was for those who were held there.

The women's cell

The women's slave cell follows a similar arrangement, with photographs, chains, shackles and other materials relating to the slave trade. Around the compound are also objects from different periods, including pottery and a gramophone, showing how the property continued to evolve long after the period of the slave trade.

The tour eventually leads to the courtyard, where visitors find a well and the mausoleum of Seriki Faremi Williams Abass. For his descendants, the mausoleum represents an ancestor who survived enslavement and later became a wealthy and influential man in Badagry, but his position in the slave trade remains an unavoidable part of his legacy.



A statement displayed at the museum expresses regret over Abass's involvement in the trade, acknowledging the difficult history attached to his name.

Other places to visit

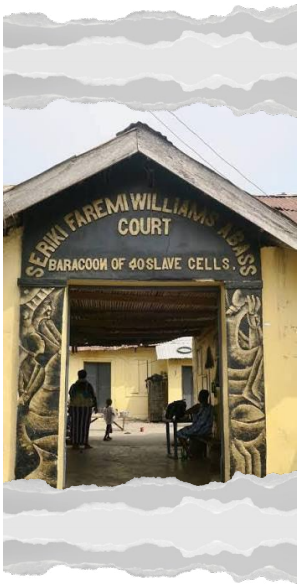
The museum is one of several heritage sites that make up Badagry's wider slave-trade history. Visitors can continue to the Vlekete Slave Market, Mobee Royal Family Slave Relics Museum, Gberefu Slave Route and the Point of No Return, each offering a different part of the journey from capture and sale to the eventual movement of enslaved people towards the coast.

Getting there

Badagry is about an hour and a half from Ikeja Lagos by road, although traffic along the Lagos-Badagry Expressway can make the journey longer. The museum is located close to the Badagry post office, making it relatively easy to find once visitors reach the town, and having a local guide can make the experience more informative because much of the history is explained during the tour rather than through written displays alone.

Before you go

Entry fees and guide charges can change, so visitors should confirm the current rates before making the trip. The museum is best approached as part of a wider Badagry heritage visit, particularly for anyone interested in understanding how the town became connected to the transatlantic slave trade.



SPOT REVIEW



Luxury stay at ***Fraser Suites Abuja***

by Chidinma Enweani

If you love travel experiences that feel personal, smooth, and genuinely refreshing, stepping into Fraser Suites Abuja feels like discovering a hidden sanctuary right inside the bustling capital of Nigeria. The massive, modern structure stands tall in the skyline, glowing with a sleek glass facade that looks like it belongs in Dubai or London. Abuja is a city where luxury hotels can sometimes feel a bit dated or old-fashioned, Fraser Suites feels like a breath of fresh air. It is contemporary, stylish, and incredibly high-tech.

If you love travel experiences that feel personal, smooth, and genuinely refreshing, stepping into Fraser Suites Abuja feels like discovering a hidden sanctuary right inside the bustling capital of Nigeria.

The massive, modern structure stands tall in the skyline, glowing with a sleek glass facade that looks like it belongs in Dubai or London.

Abuja is a city where luxury hotels can sometimes feel a bit dated or old-fashioned; Fraser Suites feels like a breath of fresh air. It is contemporary, stylish, and incredibly high-tech.

From the moment the heavily guarded security gates swing open, you feel a sense of absolute calm. The hotel is designed as an oasis for international business travellers, diplomats, and families who want a premium home away from home.

Walking through the front doors, the lobby immediately grabs your attention. It is huge, bright, and lined with polished marble that reflects the warm lighting. Unlike traditional hotels where you just get a tiny bedroom, Fraser Suites specialises in serviced apartments. That means the spaces are designed for living, not just sleeping.

The hotel features 126 modern rooms and apartments, ranging from cozy studios to massive four-bedroom penthouses. The interior design uses soft, neutral colors creams, browns, and soft grays which make the rooms feel incredibly relaxing after a long day of meetings.

The Highlights
Food, Fun, and Floating. One of the biggest selling points of this hotel is the pool area. It is styled like a luxury resort. The pool is crystal clear, surrounded by comfortable sun loungers, cabanas, and lush green palm trees.

At night, the lighting around the water creates a beautiful, romantic atmosphere. It is the perfect spot to sit with a cold drink and enjoy the cool Abuja evening breeze. When it comes to dining, the main restaurant serves a fantastic mix of international dishes and local Nigerian favorites.

Whether you want a perfectly cooked ribeye steak or a rich, spicy bowl of native soup with pounded yam, the chefs deliver. There is also an executive lounge and a poolside bar that serves great mocktails and light snacks. For fitness lovers, the gym is top-tier.

It isn't a dark, cramped basement room like in many other hotels. It is spacious, packed with high-end cardio machines and free weights, and looks out over the gardens.

NEED TO KNOW

Location
Fraser Suites is located at Plot 294, Leventis Close, Central Business District (CBD), Abuja, Nigeria.

Opening hours
Open 24 hours daily.

Dress Code
Smart Casual or polished traditional attire is fine. While daytime or poolside relaxation allows for casual wear, slippers are generally restricted.

Reservation
Dining table & Sunday brunch quickly sells out. Table reservations are highly recommended.

How to style heeled boots

by Ese Oghenetega

One special feature about fashion is its evolving nature. People rock what is trending and modify fashion items from the past to fit into the latest trends. Heel boots are evolving fashion items that give a distinct and confident look. If you are looking for how to redefine your look and exude sophistication with heel boots, then read on.

Style it with minimal colours

You can still look sophisticated if you adopt a single- or two-coloured outfit look. This will give room for your heel boots to shine and take centre stage in your appearance. Heel boots are statement pieces that can stand alone and elevate your look. Hence, do not use too many colours in your outfit and accessories to lessen its essence.

Blend it with quality fabrics

If you want to refine your look, quality fabrics should be your focus. Look radiant with beautiful Ankara, suede, leather, satin, velvet, or simple fabrics that can spice up your heel boots. You do not have to break the bank to look gorgeous; simply wear what will elevate your personality.

Your style matters

As you add a pair of heel boots to your collection, keep in mind that it is not every outfit style can be rocked with. Your style matters, and it is what will determine if you will look sophisticated or classless.

A short dress or knee-length dress is a perfect match for heel boots. It does not just add some spice to your look; it allows your heel boots to have their moment.

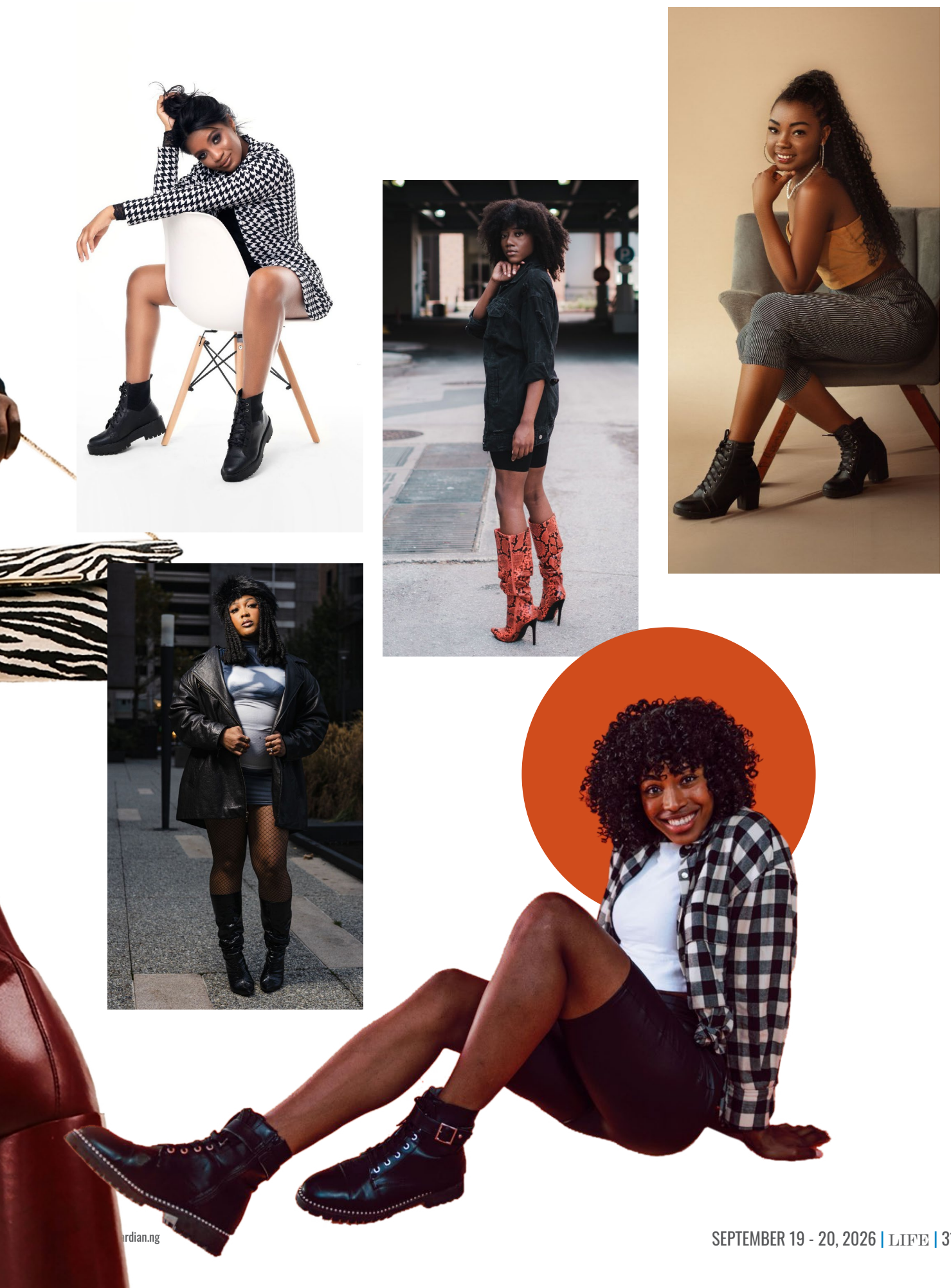
Be intentional about your accessories

The accessories you wear go a long way to complement your heel boots. For instance, have you thought about how fashionable you would look when you rock a hat and neck scarf with heel boots? You will turn heads and become the centre of attention. Your jewellery can be minimal; however, you can adopt other fashion ideas to complement your look.

Rock your heel boots with confidence

When you decide to own heel boots, wear them with confidence. This plays a major role in how you will be perceived in the fashion space. Walk tall and show some steeze as you grace that event. In fashion, how you carry yourself is as important as what you wear. With heel boots, don't just embrace fashion; slay with confidence.

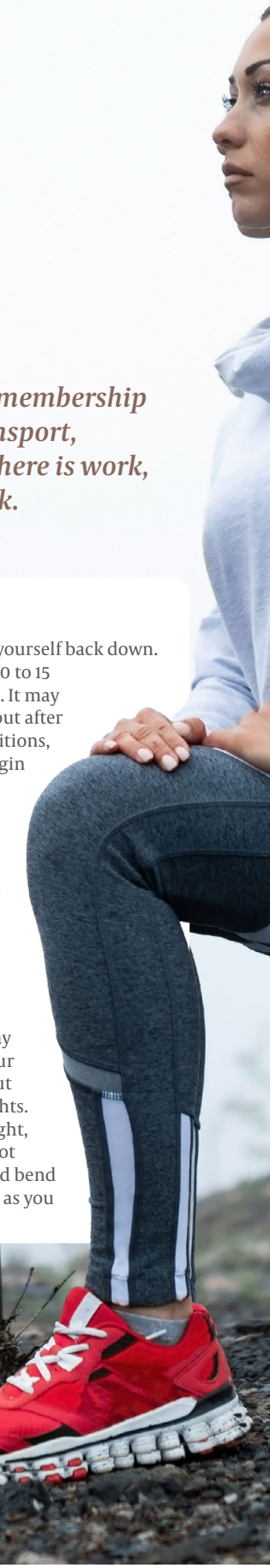




Home workouts without the gym

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare

Not everyone has the time or money to go to the gym. For some people, the membership fee alone is enough to put them off. For others, there is the extra cost of transport, especially when getting to the gym means crossing town after work. Then there is work, school, house chores and the general tiredness that comes with a busy week.



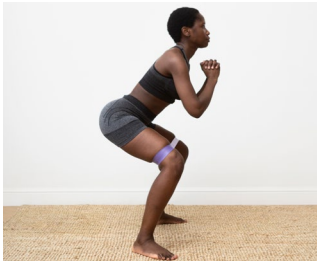
After spending hours at work or school, the last thing some people want to do is get dressed again and travel somewhere else just to exercise.

This is where working out at home can make things easier. You do not need a treadmill in your sitting room or a collection of expensive equipment before you can exercise. Sometimes, all you need is enough space to move, a few minutes and the willingness to start. Your room, sitting room or compound can become a workout space.

Squats

Squats are one of the simplest exercises to add to a home routine because they do not require any equipment.

Stand with your feet slightly apart and your back straight. Push your hips backwards as if you are about to sit on a chair, bend your knees and lower yourself before standing back up.



If you are new to exercising, start with about 10 repetitions, take a short break and repeat. Squats work the thighs, hips and glutes. If you are not comfortable with the movement yet, place a chair behind you and practise sitting down and standing back up. You also do not have to squat as low as possible. Start with a comfortable movement and focus on doing it properly.

Glute bridges

If you have some floor space, glute bridges are another exercise you can try.

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Slowly lift your hips, squeeze your glutes at the top



and lower yourself back down. Start with 10 to 15 repetitions. It may look easy, but after a few repetitions, you will begin to feel the muscles around your hips, glutes and the back of your legs working.

Lunges

Lunges are another way to work your legs without using weights. Stand upright, step one foot forward and bend both knees as you





lower your body. Push yourself back up and repeat with the other leg.

If you are still working on your balance, place one hand on a wall or sturdy chair for support. You can also try stepping backwards instead of forwards. Start with a few repetitions on each leg and increase gradually as you become more comfortable.

Push-ups

For many beginners, push-ups can seem difficult at first. But you do not have to start on the floor.

Try wall push-ups instead. Stand facing a wall and place your hands against it at about chest

level. Bend your elbows as you bring your chest towards the wall, then push yourself back. When that becomes easier, you can move to a sturdy raised surface before eventually trying regular push-ups on the floor.

The idea is to start at a level you can manage. There is no need to compare yourself with someone who has been exercising for years.

Dance

If you enjoy music, put on a few songs and dance around your room. Walk around the compound. Take the stairs instead of the lift when you can.

If you have been sitting at your desk for hours, get up, stretch or walk around for a few minutes. You can even play your favourite songs while doing some housework and get some movement in at the same time.

For people who spend most of the day sitting, these small breaks can help reduce long periods of inactivity.

The World Health Organization recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week, alongside muscle-strengthening activities on at least two days.

But if you are not currently exercising, you do not have to start by trying to reach that target immediately. Ten or 15 minutes is better than doing nothing because the full target feels too difficult.

The important thing is to find something that fits into your routine and that you can keep doing.

Use what you have at home

You may already have a few things at home that can be useful during a workout.

A sturdy chair can provide support during some exercises. Bottles filled with water can provide light resistance, while a backpack with a few books can add some weight when bodyweight exercises become easier.

Just make sure whatever you use is stable and strong enough for the exercise. Safety matters, especially when using household items as workout equipment.

There is also no need to turn your home into a mini gym overnight. If you have never had a regular exercise routine, start with what you have. Try different movements and see what works for you.

The goal is not to have the most impressive workout setup. It is simply to find a way to keep moving, even on days when going to the gym is not practical.

NIGHTLIFE

...rhythms after dark

by Oluwagbemisola Sadare and Ajuluchukwu Brown



Photos by Pexels

By 10 p.m., Lagos is still wide awake. By 11 p.m., Abuja is beginning to reveal its other self. Across both cities, music spills from lounges, restaurants fill up, friends gather, bottles arrive with sparklers and the night stretches into a lively mix of pleasure, performance, networking and business. This is the thriving and unmistakably Nigerian culture of going out.

At 10 p.m., Lagos is not winding down. It is warming up.

As some people settle in for the night, others are choosing outfits, calling friends, ordering rides and making their way towards the city's restaurants, clubs, lounges, concerts, raves and late-night food spots. Music travels through the streets. DJs take over rooms. Tables fill up. Groups of young people move from one plan to the next, often with no intention of going home early.

In Abuja, the evening follows a different rhythm. At about 11 p.m. on a Friday night, the capital begins to reveal the part of itself that daylight carefully conceals. Ministries and government offices are mostly dark. The convoys have thinned

out. The men and women who spent the day discussing policy, contracts, budgets, elections, diplomacy and the affairs of state have exchanged formal workwear for something less bureaucratic.

Then the music begins.

From Wuse 2 to Jabi, Garki, Maitama and the Central Area, lounges glow against the night. Cars pull up. Security personnel take their positions at entrances. Waiters move between tables. DJs work the room. Bottles arrive with sparklers. Friends embrace. Strangers become temporary companions.

Abuja is awake.

For two cities known for their relentless energy in different ways, nightlife has become a vital part of everyday life. It is where people relax after a long week, celebrate birthdays, listen to their favourite artists, meet friends, make professional connections or simply step outside the routines of work and home.

The night is bubbly, but it is not without its complications. There is traffic, the cost of transport, rising menu prices, expensive tables, concerns about safety and the pressure to look as though one is having the best time possible.

Still, people continue to go out. They buy tickets, book tables, order drinks, dance until late and find new reasons to gather.

Lagos: A city that does not clock out

Lagos nightlife is as varied and fast-moving as the city itself. There are high-end clubs where table reservations can cost hundreds of thousands of naira, intimate lounges designed for drinks and conversation, live-music venues, concerts, beach parties and raves where the dance floor is the main attraction. Different parts of the city have developed their own identities. Victoria Island and Lekki are associated with some of the city's larger clubs and nightlife venues, while Ikeja, Yaba and other parts of the mainland offer their own crowds and more affordable options.

Music sits at the centre of it all.

Afrobeats, Amapiano, house and other sounds move through clubs and parties, while DJs and live performers have become essential to Lagos' entertainment economy. A night out may begin with dinner, continue at a lounge and end with a late-night meal. A concert can lead to another venue. A birthday celebration can stretch into a full weekend itinerary.

For **Shadrach Agbebaku,** who has worked as an artist, artist manager, event organiser and consultant to clubs and lounges, one of the biggest changes has been the evolution of the industry itself.

"One of the biggest differences I see between the nightlife I was heavily involved in from around 2012 to 2022 and what exists today is scale and sophistication."

The modern nightlife venue is increasingly concerned with more than music and drinks. Ambience, branding, positioning, content and customer experience have become central to the way businesses present themselves. Clubs and lounges are being run less like standalone entertainment spots and more like structured businesses.

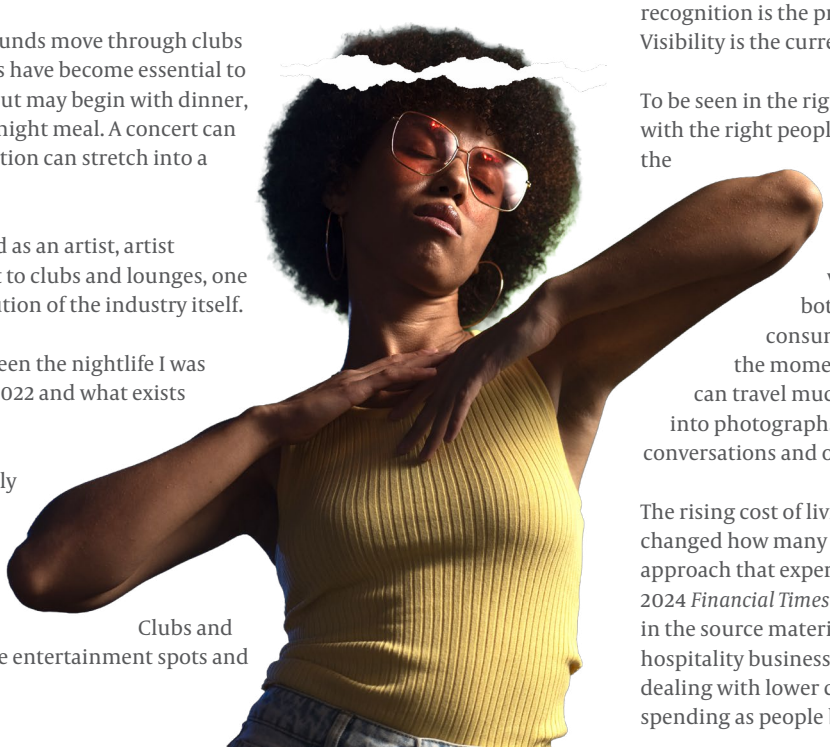
That sophistication can be seen in the way venues build their identities, curate their interiors and use social media to turn a night out into a visual event. A table, a bottle-service moment, a performance or a crowded dance floor can quickly become content on Instagram or TikTok, extending the life of the night beyond the venue itself.

But the traditional club experience is becoming harder for some people to justify.

> *"In Nigerian nightlife, recognition is the product. Visibility is the currency."*
>
> — Fiyin Audu

A 2026 Associated Press report on Lagos rave culture, highlighting the growing appeal of events that do not revolve around expensive tables and bottles. At Group Therapy, a rave in Lekki, thousands of young people reportedly gathered without the usual emphasis on table reservations and bottle service.

The appeal is that people want somewhere they can dance, meet others and have a good time without feeling pressured to spend hundreds of thousands of naira.



The rise of raves does not mean that Lagos has abandoned its clubs. It suggests that the city's nightlife is broadening. There is room for a table at a major venue, a smaller party, a house gathering, a live-music show and a rave where the only essential purchase is the ticket.

The price of a night out

In Lagos, the cost of going out begins before the actual fun. There is transport to the venue, the entry fee in some cases, food, drinks and the journey home. For those visiting clubs, table reservations and bottles can quickly raise the bill. Even a casual night can become expensive when several small purchases begin to add up.

But spending in nightlife is not always simply about buying a drink.

Fiyin Audu, who has worked in and around the alcoholic beverage and nightlife industry, describes visibility as an important part of the spending culture. "In Nigerian nightlife, recognition is the product. Visibility is the currency."

To be seen in the right place, with the right people and at the right table can carry its own social value. The bottle may be consumed, but the moment it creates can travel much further: into photographs, videos, conversations and online posts.

The rising cost of living has changed how many people approach that experience. A 2024 *Financial Times* report cited in the source material described hospitality businesses in Lagos dealing with lower customer spending as people became

more careful about what they ordered. Rather than buying bottles, some customers were choosing individual glasses of wine or less expensive meals. That shift is also visible in the growing interest in raves and other events where people pay an entry fee and spend the night dancing, rather than sitting around a table.

People have not stopped going out. They are becoming more selective about how they spend. For one person, a good night may still mean a table with friends. For another, it may mean buying a rave ticket, dancing for hours and finding an affordable meal afterwards. Someone else may prefer dinner, live music and a ride home before midnight.

There is no single way to experience Lagos after dark.

People who keep Lagos moving

Behind every busy night is an entire network of people whose work depends on the city leaving home. DJs, singers, bartenders, waiters, security personnel, event organisers, photographers, makeup artists, drivers, food vendors and other workers all benefit from the movement that happens after dark.

Drawing from his years in entertainment and nightlife, Agbebaku sees this as one of the less obvious sides of the industry. "A functioning



nightlife ecosystem creates work for DJs, hype men, promoters, bouncers, waiters, bartenders, photographers, videographers, content creators, marketers, designers, security personnel, transport providers and even fashion businesses."

A busy weekend can therefore mean income for more than the venue hosting an event. Drivers pick up late-night trips. Food vendors serve customers looking for something to eat after dancing. Entertainers find spaces to perform. Event organisers, decorators and sound companies depend on the steady demand for parties and celebrations.

Nightlife is not simply leisure. It is part of Lagos' wider entertainment and hospitality economy.

The same pressures affecting customers also affect businesses. Venues must cover the costs of staff, security, electricity, rent, performers and other operations, even as customers become more cautious about how much they are willing to spend.

That tension is one of the defining features of Lagos nightlife: the demand for a memorable experience remains high, but the money available to create or enjoy it is under pressure.

Abuja: Where the night carries status

Abuja's nightlife is shaped by the city's unusual mix of people and possibilities.

The capital houses politicians, senior civil servants, diplomats, expatriates, business executives, creatives, young professionals and thousands of people drawn to the city in search of opportunity. After dark, these worlds often meet in restaurants, lounges and clubs.

A friday night can produce an unusual social tableau.

A diplomat may be discovering amapiano. An expatriate may be singing along to an Afrobeats chorus. A Nigerian banker may be explaining the cultural significance of a song to a foreign colleague. A government official may be seated at the next table. Young Nigerians may be dancing without giving a second thought to the diplomatic credentials of anyone around them.

The music becomes the common language.



This is one of Abuja's most underrated cultural assets: the city consumes Nigerian popular culture alongside global culture in real time. Its nightlife offers a place where diplomacy, business, entertainment and social life can overlap without requiring a formal introduction.

But the capital's night comes with a distinct price tag.

The Abuja price tag

There may be no better way to understand Abuja's nightlife economy than to follow the price of a bottle.

Outside the premium nightlife circuit, a bottle of beer might sell for around ₦1,100. Walk into a beautifully designed Abuja lounge, however, and the same beer can command about ₦5,000.

Nothing about the liquid inside has changed. What has changed is the environment surrounding it: the lighting, furniture, architecture, music, service, security, location and, perhaps most importantly, the feeling that comes with consuming it there.

The economics of Abuja nightlife is therefore not only the economics of drinks. It is the economics of ambience and status.

A bottle of water offers an even more striking example. Ordinary bottled water that might sell for about ₦250 elsewhere can reportedly appear on a premium lounge table at around ₦2,000.

The lounge sells more than drinks. It sells atmosphere. It sells exclusivity. It sells comfort. It sells access. Sometimes, it sells the feeling that the person sitting at the table has arrived.

Wine offers another glimpse into the peculiar mathematics of the Abuja night. A bottle that might retail for ₦10,000 in an



"A functioning nightlife ecosystem creates work for DJs, hype men, promoters, bouncers, waiters, bartenders, photographers, videographers, content creators, marketers, designers, security personnel, transport providers and even fashion businesses."

— Shadrach Agbebaku

ordinary setting can command substantially more in a premium entertainment venue. Depending on the brand, establishment and level of service, a bottle that might normally cost ₦50,000 can be marked up considerably, sometimes several times the retail price. In some clubs and lounges, the final price can run into millions of naira.

This is where Abuja nightlife begins to resemble theatre. The bottle arrives. The lights change. The music rises. The table cheers. A phone comes out. Someone records. The bottle becomes content.

And the price disappears into the performance. Food is not exempt. Grilled fish, one of Nigeria's enduring nightlife favourites, can become a surprisingly expensive item on Abuja menus. Depending on its size, preparation, location and establishment, it can cost between ₦10,000 and ₦15,000, rise to ₦20,000 and, in some premium settings, approach ₦30,000.

The supplied material also points to a wide spending spectrum across Abuja venues, from establishments positioned around ₦10,000–₦20,000 per person to others listed in the ₦30,000–₦40,000, ₦50,000-plus and higher ranges. Blake Resort, Restaurant, Live Music Lounge and Bistro, Garki Abuja; Sofa Lounge; and Tokyo Nightlife Abuja are among the venues referenced in that material. There is the ₦10,000 Abuja and the ₦100,000 Abuja. Both exist in the same city. Both are part of the same nightlife economy. But they offer very different versions of a night out.

More than bottles and tables

Not every Abuja night is built around conspicuous spending. Karaoke has become part of the city's entertainment culture, offering an experience in which patrons are not merely spectators but performers. The microphone moves around the room. Someone sings brilliantly. Someone else sings terribly. Everybody laughs. Someone demands another song. Someone records the moment. The night becomes less about how much money a person can spend and more about how much fun a group can create.

For **Harrison Idara,** a DJ, the energy of Abuja nightlife is tied to the changing musical preferences of the crowd. Different days and occasions call for different sounds, and finding the balance between current hits and beloved classics is part of creating an unforgettable night.

That balance matters because Abuja's audience is diverse. A room may contain people seeking the latest Afrobeats release, others waiting for a familiar classic and still more interested in the communal energy of amapiano, karaoke or live performance.

For **Sarah Femi,** a club-goer and banker, nightlife can function as a form of therapy after the pressures of work. Aesthetically pleasing venues, creative cocktails and vibrant atmospheres draw her in despite the costs. The same spaces can also become informal networking rooms, where friendships and professional connections begin over music and conversation.

Night's necessary caution

The freedom of the night comes with responsibilities for venues and patrons. People may want to party until 3 a.m. or 4 a.m., but they also want to get home safely. That makes security personnel, surveillance, controlled entrances, parking arrangements and reliable transportation part of the nightlife infrastructure.

The concern extends beyond



the club. It includes late-night movement through the city, drink-driving, fights, street crime, harassment and the vulnerability that can accompany intoxication.

Musa Tijani, a security personnel, says the hours between 11 p.m. and 4 a.m. are particularly busy, with incidents ranging from drunk driving to conflicts. He also observes a positive shift, with clubs increasingly collaborating with security teams to help ensure that patrons have a safe experience. Challenges remain, including underage drinking and drug use, but the broader aim is to keep the fun alive while helping everyone get home safely.

Danladi Jabbal, a club bouncer, has worked across several clubs and understands the atmosphere from the entrance. The nightlife crowd includes influential individuals and people simply looking for somewhere to celebrate. While tips can be generous, bouncers also carry the responsibility of managing capacity, assessing situations and preventing trouble before it starts, all while maintaining a welcoming environment.

> ***Abuja has an extraordinary opportunity. Because its contemporary identity is still evolving, the city can deliberately decide what kind of cultural capital it wants to become. The future should not simply be another collection of restaurants, clubs and luxury lounges competing for the same audience. The more ambitious possibility is an interconnected ecosystem where art, music, food, fashion, technology, heritage, performance and conversation coexist.***
>
> — Rowland Yohanna Goyit

Tayo Akinyemi, a club owner, describes Abuja nightlife as dependent on both security and spending power. Busy nights can bring significant sales, but annual rents and operational costs



a[illegible]pressure. A single incident, such as a police raid or a fight, can damage a venue's reputation. Investing in security measures and maintaining strong relationships with local authorities are therefore essential to surviving and thriving in the sector.

The risks are not limited to Abuja. In Lagos, customers worry about phones and bag theft, particularly in crowded environments. Transportation is another concern for people leaving venues late at night. Audu points to street-level harassment and extortion, particularly when people visibly appear to have money.
"If the street between the car park and the club door becomes a place where that same visibility gets you flagged, followed or shaken down, the incentive structure starts working against itself."
The observation reveals a contradiction at the heart of modern nightlife. The same car, outfit or public display of wealth that can signal status inside a venue may attract unwanted attention outside it.

Drink safety is another concern. In April 2026, a social-media user and his friends became ill after visiting a club in Lagos. The club denied the allegation and requested evidence. The allegation, as presented, does not establish that counterfeit or adulterated drinks are commonly served in Lagos clubs. It does, however, show why such complaints require serious attention from businesses and customers.

A popular club, Quilox partnered with the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) in December 2024 to raise awareness about counterfeit drinks in nightclubs.
For people going out, safety often comes down to ordinary decisions including keeping an eye on personal belongings, being careful about accepting drinks from strangers and arranging reliable transportation before the night gets too late.

Chris Eze, a vigilante patrolling the area, highlights the sense of community that can exist in Abuja's nightlife despite safety concerns. The transitions from clubs to streets can be precarious, but there is also a strong instinct among people to look out for one another.
His advice, "stay in groups and remain discreet with valuables."

A cultural economy in the making

Nightlife is often described as consumption: drinks, food, music, tickets, tables and transport. But it is also creation.

Rowland Yohanna Goyit, a curator and cultural development practitioner, believes Abuja's nightlife should be understood as part of a broader cultural economy. The city, he argues, has the potential to grow beyond its administrative roots into a vibrant hub for diplomacy, business and culture.

That future could include more than restaurants, clubs and luxury lounges. It could make room for theatre, galleries, live music and festivals, contributing to the city's identity after dark.

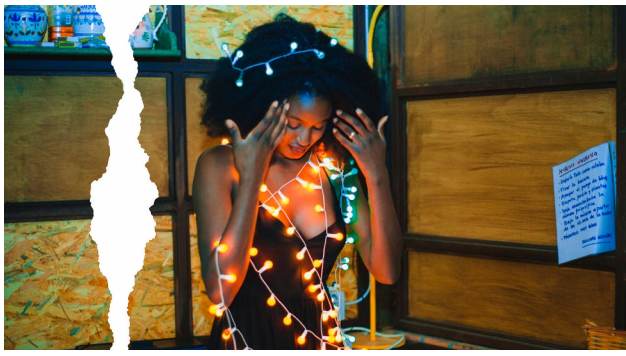
The nightlife economy already supports a wide range of careers, from musicians and artists to event producers and hospitality workers. Its chain of activity extends beyond the venue: into fashion, photography, transportation, food, design, security, marketing and content creation.

Goyit sees an opportunity to make that ecosystem more connected. "Abuja has an extraordinary opportunity. Because its contemporary identity is still evolving, the city can deliberately decide what kind of cultural capital it wants to become. The future should not simply be another collection of restaurants, clubs and luxury lounges competing for the same audience. The more ambitious possibility is an interconnected ecosystem where art, music, food, fashion, technology, heritage, performance and conversation coexist"
It is an ambitious vision, but it speaks to a truth already visible in both Lagos and Abuja: nightlife is no longer only about where people go to drink. It is about who performs, who creates, who serves, who documents, who connects and who gets to participate.

Two cities, one appetite for the night

Lagos and Abuja do not party in the same way.
Lagos is vast, restless and constantly in motion. Its nightlife reflects the city's scale: major clubs, packed concerts, beach parties, raves, mainland gatherings and a stream of new events competing for attention. It is expensive, social, energetic and increasingly cost-conscious. The city's nightlife is learning to accommodate both the luxury table and the ticketed dance floor.

Abuja, by contrast, carries the influence of power, diplomacy, status and ambience. Its nightlife is shaped by the people who live and work in the capital, as well as by the city's premium lounges, international connections and appetite for polished experiences. Yet beyond the price of drinks and tables, there is also karaoke, live music, networking and the possibility of a richer cultural scene.



In both cities, nightlife is a release from the pressures of the day. It is a place for celebration and escape, but also for work, visibility and connection.

For one person, a night out is an expensive indulgence. For another, it is a shift at work. For a DJ, artist, photographer or promoter, it may be an opportunity. For a banker, civil servant, diplomat or creative, it may be a chance to meet someone new. For a club owner, it is a carefully managed business. For friends, it may simply be the first time all week that everyone is in the same room.

That is the real life of the night.

It is exciting, expensive, social, unpredictable, and constantly changing. It is the glow of a lounge in Wuse 2, the pulse of a rave in Lekki, the cheer that follows a karaoke performance, the arrival of a grilled fish, the sparkler on a bottle, the late ride home and the conversation that continues long after the music stops.

Where to go

25 places for a night out in Lagos

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



Bogobiri House

Address: Ikoyi, Lagos
Opening Hours: Daily (Open during standard hospitality hours)

Overview: Bogobiri House brings together art, Nigerian food, and live music in an unmistakably Afrocentric setting. Its carved furniture and paintings provide plenty to admire while performances on selected nights keep the evening lively. It is an ideal spot for anyone who wants to enjoy good food and music while still holding a comfortable conversation across the table.

NOK by Alára

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

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

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

The House Lagos

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

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

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

Cactus Restaurant

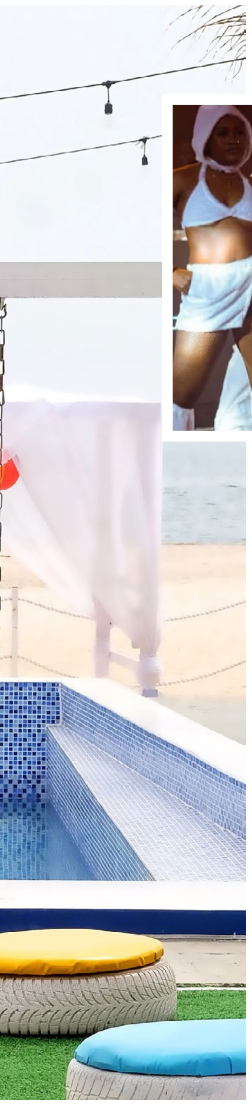
Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

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

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







New Afrika Shrine

Address: 1 NERDC Road, Agidingbi, Ikeja

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

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

Dynasty Lagos

Address: 24 Idejo Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

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

Buzz Barr

Address: 30 Adetokunbo Ademola Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

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

Shiro Lagos

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

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

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

Terra Kulture

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

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

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

Piano Bistro

Address: Delborough Lagos, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily (Operating during hotel dining hours)

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

RSVP Poolside

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily (Evenings and late night)

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

Circa Non Pareil (Penthouse/Lounge)

Address: 12 Mandilas Road, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos

Opening Hours: Daily

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

W Bar Lounge

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

Opening Hours: Daily

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

Escape Nightclub

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

Opening Hours: Nightly

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

355 Restaurant and Lounge

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

Opening Hours: Daily

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

Nitro Nightclub

Address: 14 Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos

Opening Hours: Nightly

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

Island Breeze

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

Opening Hours: Daily

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

Bay Lounge

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

Opening Hours: Daily

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





The Vibe Lagos

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

Opening Hours: Daily

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



Cage Lagos

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

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

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

Club Quilox

Address: 873 Ozumba Mbadiwe Avenue, Victoria Island

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

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

Sky Bar Rooftop

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

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

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



Zaza Lagos

Address: 19 Agoro Odiyan Street, Victoria Island

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

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

Kaly Restaurant and Bar

Address: Victoria Island, Lagos

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

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

Hard Rock Cafe Lagos

Address: Oniru, Lagos

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

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

9 spas to *unwind*

by Dorcas Ayoola



Lagos can wear you out. Sometimes, a few hours away from the noise is all you need. A spa day does not have to look the same for everyone. You might want a long massage, a facial, or simply time to get your nails done without watching the clock. These nine spots give you options on the mainland and the Island.



ORÍKÌ Spa

Want the full spa experience? ORÍKÌ offers massages, facials, body treatments, and spa packages at several Lagos locations. Pick a treatment, put your phone away, and let the day slow down.



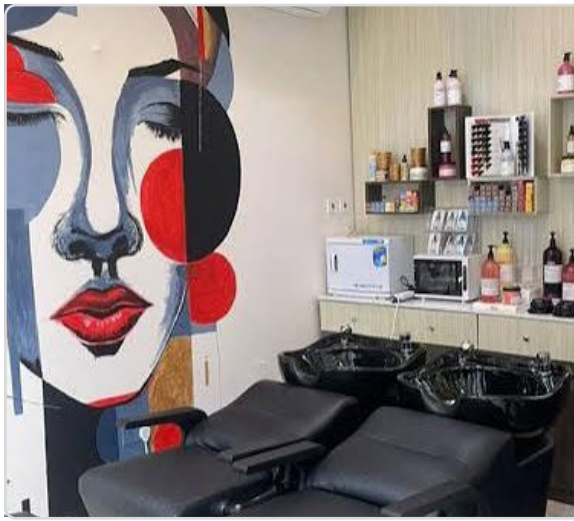
Mom & I Beauty Studio

At the Radisson Blu Anchorage Hotel in Victoria Island, Mom & I Beauty Studio combines massages and body therapy with makeup and nail services. It works well when you want to unwind and get a little beauty maintenance done in the same visit.



The Wheatbaker Spa

The Wheatbaker Spa in Ikoyi offers massages, facials and body treatments. Make an afternoon of it if you can. A spa appointment feels better when you are not rushing back into Lagos traffic five minutes later.





Spa Naturale

If you are around Lekki Phase 1, Spa Naturale could make a self-care outing easier to plan. Ask about its current treatments before you book, then choose what you actually feel like doing.



Amani Spa & Wellness

You do not need to cross the bridge for a hotel spa day. Amani sits inside the Radisson Blu Hotel in Ikeja GRA, giving mainland readers a place to step out of their usual routine for a few hours.



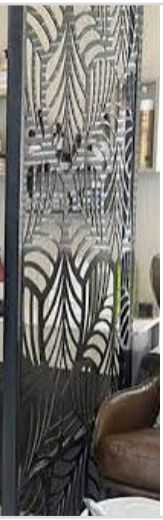
Proskin

Proskin is for the day you want to give your skin some attention. The Lagos clinic offers facials and body treatments, so it is worth a look if skincare matters more to you than a long massage.



Neubelle Med & Wellness Centre

Neubelle offers massages, facials and hammam treatments alongside aesthetic services. You could go in for a massage, or visit all about your skin. Just be clear about the treatment you want when booking.



SAALT Spa & Wellness Centre

A massage sounds good. So does getting your nails done afterwards. SAALT offers both, along with hair and skin services, if your idea of a spa day includes more than one appointment.



Lua Spa

Lua combines spa treatments with salon services, including nails, hair and waxing. Go when you want a break and a beauty appointment in one outing.

Book ahead, especially if you are going on a weekend. Then give yourself enough time to enjoy the appointment.



Where will *tomorrow's* leaders come from?

by Toye Sobande

A quiet crisis sits beneath the AI headlines, and it is not about which jobs get eliminated this quarter. It is about which leaders never get made.

Dr Toye Sobande is a professor of management, strategic leadership expert, executive coach, public speaker, and award-winning author. He is CEO of Stephens Leadership Consultancy LLC, a strategy and management consulting firm that offers creative insights and solutions to businesses and leaders.

For most of the last century, careers moved up a pyramid. You started at the bottom (the mailroom, the call centre, the junior analyst desk), and the sheer volume of entry-level roles meant there was always room for a beginner to learn by doing, fail cheaply, and rise. That pyramid is collapsing. A new industry report from the talent research firm Seramount describes what is replacing it as a "career diamond": a shape with a narrow bottom, a wide middle, and no shortage of demand for experienced talent, but far fewer doors for anyone trying to get in.

The numbers back up the shape. Recent college graduates now face an unemployment rate of roughly 5.7 to 5.8 per cent, for the first time in decades higher than the unemployment rate for the workforce as a whole. LinkedIn's own research on the graduating



class of 2026 puts entry-level hiring down about 7 per cent year-over-year and still below pre-pandemic levels. Employers say they will hire barely more new graduates this year than last. Put simply: the first rung of the ladder is being sawed off, one automated workflow at a time.

It is tempting to file this under "AI took the jobs" and move on. That misses the more important story. Entry-level jobs were never really about the task: answering the phone, drafting the first version of a memo, reconciling the spreadsheet. They were about the apprenticeship hidden inside the task. That's where a 23-year-old learns to read a room, absorb a rebuke without collapsing, watch a senior leader manage a crisis, and slowly build the judgment that no onboarding module can install. Strip out the entry-level task, and you don't just strip out a job. You strip out the training ground where leaders used to be grown.

Joe Infantino, who led the Seramount research, put it plainly: "With fewer entry points and learning opportunities, (employees) face less predictable paths to advancement. Organisations need more deliberate, evidence-based approaches to identify future leaders and develop the capabilities they need to navigate complexity, uncertainty, and change." That is a polite way of saying the old system is broken, and nobody has finished building the replacement.

I have spent a career moving between institutions that have thought hard about exactly this problem, because they had no choice. The military cannot afford to discover, three years too late, that it failed to develop enough sergeants and captains, so it builds deliberate leadership pipelines into the structure itself, with stretch assignments, mentorship, and evaluation built in from day one rather than left to chance. The pulpit and the classroom operate the same way: nobody hands a twenty-five-year-old a congregation or a classroom of freshmen without some form of supervised apprenticeship first. Business spent a generation assuming the market would supply enough entry-level reps to sort itself out. It won't anymore.

So, what do organisations do with a diamond instead of a pyramid? Seramount's own answer is a start: build deliberate stretch assignments that let junior people work real problems (return-to-office policy, AI adoption itself) alongside senior colleagues, rather than waiting for a traditional rung that no longer exists. Stop assuming every strong performer wants to manage people and build parallel tracks that reward deep expertise as seriously as supervisory rank. Most of all, stop treating leadership development as something that happens automatically through years of low-stakes task work, and start treating it as a designed system, the way the best militaries, seminaries, and universities already do.

The companies that get this right won't just avoid a talent shortage. They will have a real advantage over the ones still waiting for a pyramid that isn't coming back. The ones that don't will wake up in five years having automated their way out of a generation of leaders, and by then, the diamond will look a lot more like an hourglass with nothing left to hire from.

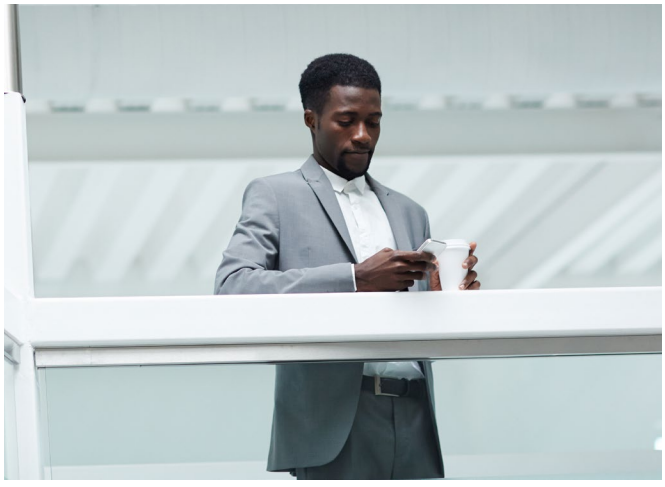


Photo credit: Magnific



10 new Lagos dining spots





by Musa Adekunle

Lagos has welcomed fresh dining spots serving French pastries, Moroccan dishes, matcha drinks, Nigerian favourites and waterfront meals. Here are 10 places worth trying.



1. Panu

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

2. BYD Café



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



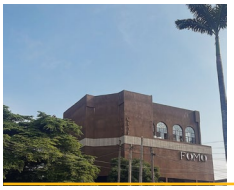
3. Mila Lagos

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

4. Shore by Sailors



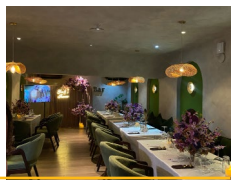
Shore by Sailors combines food, drinks and waterfront views at Plot 1, Block 12, Admiralty Road. Guests can settle indoors or enjoy the open-air section while eating, sipping cocktails and watching life move across the water.



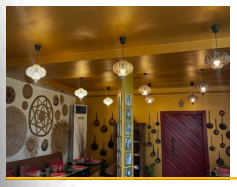
5. Cusp Patisserie

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

6. Brunch Bar Lagos



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



7. Saffron by Alexis Galleries

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

8. Gogi Lagos



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



9. The Pepper Soup Shop

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

10. Mamatcha Café



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

Crispy potato and Chorizo tacos recipe

These tacos bring together smoky, spiced chorizo and golden, crispy potatoes wrapped in a warm tortilla. It is a comforting, texture-packed meal that is simple to put together.



Ingredients

- 3 medium-sized potatoes (peeled and diced into small cubes)
- 200g Mexican-style chorizo sausage
- Get 8 small corn or flour tortillas
- 2 tablespoons oil or butter (for frying the potatoes)
- 1 medium onion (finely chopped)
- 2 cloves (minced)
- ½ teaspoon chili powder, salt, and black pepper to taste
- Crumbled cheese (feta or cotija), chopped fresh cilantro, and lime wedges.

Instructions

- Boil the diced potatoes in salted water for about 5 minutes until just tender, then drain well and pat dry. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the potatoes, season with a pinch of salt and pepper, and fry until golden brown and crispy. Remove from the pan and set aside.

- In the same skillet, add the chorizo. Break it apart with a wooden spoon and cook over medium heat until browned and fully cooked through.

- Add the chopped onion and minced garlic straight into the skillet with the chorizo. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes until the onions are soft and fragrant. Toss the crispy potatoes back into the pan, mixing everything so the potatoes absorb the rich chorizo oils. Taste and add a little chili powder or salt if needed.

- Warm the tortillas in a dry skillet over medium heat for about 30 seconds on each side until soft and pliable.

- Spoon the warm potato and chorizo mixture generously into each tortilla. Top with crumbled cheese, fresh cilantro, and a squeeze of fresh lime juice. Serve hot and enjoy.

Zobo vodka smash

by Chidinma Enweani

A Zobo Vodka Smash is a vibrant, refreshing cocktail that blends the bold, spiced tartness of traditional Nigerian zobo (hibiscus) with crisp vodka, fresh citrus, and mint. It is an elevated twist on the classic smash cocktail, bringing local flavor profiles into a sleek, modern drink.



Ingredients

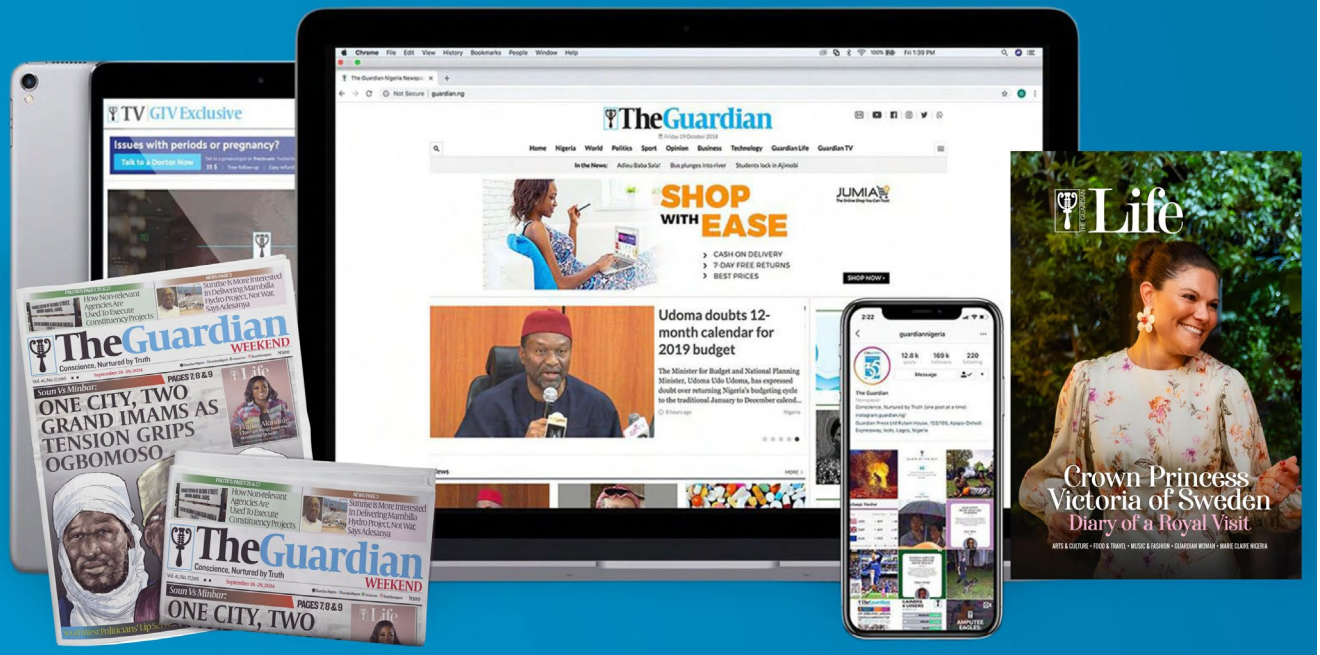
- 2 oz Vodka
- 3 oz Concentrated Zobo infusion (sweetened with ginger and cloves)
- 0.75 oz Fresh lime juice
- 0.5 oz Simple syrup (adjust depending on how sweet your zobo base is)
- 8 to 10 Fresh mint leaves
- Ice (crushed or cubed)
- A sprig of fresh mint and a lime wheel

Instructions

- Place the fresh mint leaves and simple syrup into the bottom of a cocktail shaker. Gently muddle them a few times to release the aromatic oils without tearing the leaves into tiny bits.
- Pour in the vodka, concentrated zobo infusion, and fresh lime juice.
- Fill the shaker generously with ice. Seal tightly and shake vigorously for about 10 to 15 seconds until the outside of the shaker is frosty and chilled.
- Double strain the mixture into a rocks glass filled with fresh ice (or crushed ice for a traditional smash texture).
- Top with a fresh sprig of mint and a lime wheel. Serve immediately and enjoy!



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