

## Nigeria

<b>Country name</b>	Nigeria
<b>State title</b>	Federal Republic of Nigeria
<b>Name of citizen</b>	Nigerian
<b>Official language</b>	English [en] <sup>1</sup>
<b>ISO-3166 codes (alpha-2/alpha-3)</b>	NG/NGA
<b>Capital</b>	Abuja <sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

Nigeria is located in west Africa and gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1960. It shares land borders with Benin in the west; Chad and Cameroon in the east; and Niger in the north. Nigeria's south coast lies on the Gulf of Guinea, where the River Niger flows into the Atlantic Ocean. It is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh in the world.<sup>3,4</sup> The population is roughly split half and half between Muslims in the north and Christians in the south.

### Geographical names policy

Geographical names in Nigeria are found in Roman script and where possible should be taken as found on official Nigerian sources. These sources may not always be consistent<sup>5</sup>, and where inconsistencies arise, use of the most up-to-date or authoritative source is advised.

### Languages

Exact figures for the number of languages spoken in Nigeria are difficult to ascertain with most estimates being in the region of 500. The official language and *lingua franca* is English, which is used for official written purposes, although spoken by most Nigerians as a second-language. The use of English is a legacy of the colonial era, when it became a lingua franca for the administration of the country in an attempt to unify the country's linguistic variety. Knowledge of English is lower in rural areas.

The recognised national languages<sup>6</sup> are Hausa [ha], Igbo<sup>7</sup> [ig] and Yoruba [yo]. Igbo and Yoruba belong to the Niger-Congo family of languages; each is spoken by approximately 13-14% of the population as a first language and is written in Roman script. Hausa is an Afro-Asiatic language, which is spoken by around 13% of the population as a first language and also has a significant presence as a second language. Hausa was previously written in a modified Arabic script (*Ajami*) but is now written in Roman script.

Yoruba is spoken predominantly in the south west of Nigeria and its influence can be seen in geographical names in this area, which is sometimes known as Yorubaland. It is a tonal language<sup>8</sup> and is written in Roman script. Its alphabet contains three letter-diacritic combinations /ẹ/, /ọ/, and /ș/ (which are sometimes seen with underbars or vertical sub-stalks instead of sub-dots), although these marks are often omitted. These three characters are considered separate letters: the first two are modified vowels and the last represents the sound

<sup>1</sup> ISO 639-1 codes are given for languages mentioned in this factfile.

<sup>2</sup> Lagos was the capital until December 1991 and is the most populous city in Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup> CIA World Factbook.

<sup>4</sup> 182.2 million (2015 UN), 181.6 million (2015 estimate CIA Factbook).

<sup>5</sup> There may be spelling discrepancies between official sources, both between the names shown on different products and between different sheets in the same series.

<sup>6</sup> Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ch.V, Pt.1, B, 55.

<sup>7</sup> Sometimes called Ibo.

<sup>8</sup> Tone is the use of pitch in language to distinguish meaning. ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tone\\_\(linguistics\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tone_(linguistics))).

/sh/. An example of the use of /s/ is found in the name of the state of Osun which should properly be written Oṣun, but is also sometimes seen as Oshun, reflecting its pronunciation. Usage of the Yoruba characters by the Nigerian Government is rare and representation of the Yoruba phoneme /sh/ is inconsistent. The state name is given as Osun in the Constitution (no diacritics used), but in the administrative structure below that, some of the names in the Yoruba area which include this letter are shown with /sh/ and some with /s/. This inconsistent approach makes it difficult to ascertain official Nigerian Government practice with regards to Yoruba names.

**Inventory of characters (and their Unicode encodings)<sup>9</sup>**

The following are characters that may appear in names of Yoruba origin:

ẹ	1EB9	Ḙ	1EB8
ọ	1ECD	Ṣ	1ECC
ş	1E63	Ş	1E62

**Territorial and toponymic issues**

**1. Bakassi Peninsula (04°37'00"N 008°35'00"E)**

The Bakassi Peninsula is an area of Cameroon, consisting, prominently, of mangrove, stretching into the Gulf of Guinea neighbouring part of the Nigerian border. Nigeria and Cameroon have disputed ownership of the area for many years and whilst the underlying conflict concerns natural resources (oil) it has become an ethno-cultural struggle. The issue was taken to the International Court of Justice in 1994. Their verdict, reached in 2002<sup>10</sup>, awarded sovereignty to Cameroon but maintained that the existing population could retain residence and Nigerian nationality. Nigeria rejected the sovereignty ruling and refused to withdraw troops from the peninsula. With the threat of possible UN action a dialogue was set up between the presidents of the two countries to come up with a peaceful solution. In 2006 an agreement was reached that Nigeria would withdraw all troops within 60 days which was achieved. However, in 2007 the Nigerian Senate declared the withdrawal to be illegal<sup>11</sup>, a declaration that was ignored by the Nigerian government. Since 2011, with support from the UN, the border has been largely peacefully demarcated.<sup>12</sup>

Though populated mostly by Efiks whose natural allegiance is to Nigeria rather than Cameroon, Bakassi is a sovereign area of Cameroon both in *de jure* sense and in a *de facto* sense therefore on UK Government products the peninsula should be recognised as territory of Cameroon. Since it falls into an English-speaking province, it should be labelled in English as Bakassi Peninsula.

**2. Biafra**

Between May 1967 and January 1970 a secessionist state existed in the south-east of Nigeria. In Nigeria's first constitution post-independence in 1960, the country was divided into three regions, roughly delineated by the tribal boundaries: Hausa and Fulani in the north, Yoruba in the south-west and Igbo<sup>13</sup> to the south-east. On the 30<sup>th</sup> May 1967, after a coup and counter-coup and the resultant increase in ethnic tension and inter-tribal conflict, the head of the Eastern Region unilaterally declared the secession of the independent Republic of Biafra. Biafra was located in the south-east of Nigeria, approximately the area now covered by Bayelsa, Rivers, Imo, Abia, Anambra, Enugu, Akwa Ibom, Ebonyi and Cross River States. By 1970, following a civil war, the leaders of Biafra agreed to reincorporate into Nigeria, although there still remains today a minority who call for the reestablishment of an independent Biafra.

<sup>9</sup> See [www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?pr=294&code=cn&p1=3&p2=3&p3=6&case=94&k=74>

<sup>11</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7537020.stm>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/feb/16/cameroon-nigeria-border-settlement-development-challenges>

<sup>13</sup> Like the language, this is also seen as Ibo.

**Administrative structure**

At first-order administrative level Nigeria comprises 36 states and one Federal Capital Territory (Abuja). The creation of these states has happened in a relatively short space of time, at independence in 1960 there were only 3 provinces. The most recent changes occurred in 1996 resulting in the present number as detailed below. The states are sub-divided into 768 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 6 area councils at second-order level. All the LGA names are given in the Constitution<sup>14</sup> and a list and map of the LGAs in most states are available on the website for the Nigeria Congress<sup>15</sup>.

<b>1. Abia (05° 25'N 07° 30'E )</b>	
Long form name	Abia State
Centre	Umuahia (05° 32'N 07° 29'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.abiastate.gov.ng">http://www.abiastate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 17 ADM2s	

<b>2. Adamawa (09° 20'N 12° 30'E )</b>	
Long form name	Adamawa State
Centre	Yola (09° 12'N 12° 29'E)
State Website	<a href="http://adamawastate.gov.ng/">http://adamawastate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 21 ADM2s	

<b>3. Akwa Ibom (05° 00'N 07° 50'E )</b>	
Long form name	Akwa Ibom State
Centre	Uyo (05° 03'N 07° 56'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.aksgonline.com.ws033.alentus.com/">http://www.aksgonline.com.ws033.alentus.com/</a>
Consists of 31 ADM2s	

<b>4. Anambra (06° 20'N 07° 00'E )</b>	
Long form name	Anambra State
Centre	Awka (06° 13'N 07° 05'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.anambrastate.gov.ng/">http://www.anambrastate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 21 ADM2s	

<b>5. Bauchi (10° 30'N 10° 00'E )</b>	
Long form name	Bauchi State
Centre	Bauchi (10° 18'N 09° 50'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.bauchistate.gov.ng/">http://www.bauchistate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 20 ADM2s	

<b>6. Bayelsa (04° 45'N 06° 05'E )</b>	
Long form name	Bayelsa State
Centre	Yenagoa (04° 55'N 06° 15'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.bayelsa.gov.ng/">http://www.bayelsa.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 8 ADM2s	

<b>7. Benue (07° 20'N 08° 45'E )</b>	
Long form name	Benue State
Centre	Makurdi (07° 44'N 08° 32'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.benuestate.gov.ng">http://www.benuestate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 23 ADM2s	

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.nigeria-law.org/ConstitutionOfTheFederalRepublicOfNigeria.htm>

<sup>15</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20040207110136/http://www.nigeriacongress.org/fqn/administrative/lgs.asp>

<b>8. Borno</b> (11° 30'N 13° 00'E )	
Long form name	Borno State
Centre	Maiduguri (11° 50'N 13° 09'E)
Variant names for Centre	Maidiguri; Maidugari
State Website	<a href="http://www.bornonigeria.com/">http://www.bornonigeria.com/</a> (suspended)
Consists of 27 ADM2s	

<b>9. Cross River</b> (05° 45'N 08° 30'E )	
Long form name	Cross River State
Centre	Calabar (04° 57'N 08° 19'E)
Variant names for Centre	Canaan City; previously Atakpa (Jukun language name)
State Website	<a href="http://www.crossriverstate.gov.ng/">http://www.crossriverstate.gov.ng/</a> (suspended)
Consists of 18 ADM2s	

<b>10. Delta</b> (05° 30'N 06° 00'E )	
Long form name	Delta State
Centre	Asaba (06° 11'N 06° 45'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.deltastate.gov.ng">http://www.deltastate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 25 ADM2s	

<b>11. Ebonyi</b> (06° 15'N 08° 05'E )	
Long form name	Ebonyi State
Centre	Abakaliki (06° 20'N 08° 06'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.ebonyistate.gov.ng/">http://www.ebonyistate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 13 ADM2s	

<b>12. Edo</b> (06° 30'N 06° 00'E )	
Long form name	Edo State
Centre	Benin City (06° 20'N 05° 38'E)
Variant names for Centre	Benim; Bénin
State Website	<a href="http://www.edostate.gov.ng">http://www.edostate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 18 ADM2s	

<b>13. Ekiti</b> (07° 40'N 05° 15'E )	
Long form name	Ekiti State
Centre	Ado-Ekiti (07° 38'N 05° 13'E)
State Website	<a href="http://ekitistate.gov.ng/">http://ekitistate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 16 ADM2s	

<b>14. Enugu</b> (06° 30'N 07° 30'E )	
Long form name	Enugu State
Centre	Enugu (06° 26'N 07° 29'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.enugustate.gov.ng/">http://www.enugustate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 17 ADM2s	

<b>15. Gombe</b> (10° 15'N 11° 10'E )	
Long form name	Gombe State
Centre	Gombe (10° 17'N 11° 10'E)
State Website	<a href="http://services.gov.ng/gombe">http://services.gov.ng/gombe</a> (Nigerian government information website) <a href="http://www.gombestate.gov.ng/">http://www.gombestate.gov.ng/</a> (suspended)
Consists of 11 ADM2s	

16. Imo (05° 30'N 07° 10'E )	
Long form name	Imo State
Centre	Owerri (05° 29'N 07° 02'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.imostate.gov.ng">http://www.imostate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 27 ADM2s	

17. Jigawa (12° 00'N 09° 45'E )	
Long form name	Jigawa State
Centre	Dutse (11° 46'N 09° 20'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.jigawastate.gov.ng/">http://www.jigawastate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 27 ADM2s	

18. Kaduna (10° 20'N 07° 45'E )	
Long form name	Kaduna State
Centre	Kaduna (10° 31'N 07° 26'E)
State Website	<a href="http://kdsq.gov.ng/">http://kdsq.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 23 ADM2s	

19. Kano (11° 30'N 08° 30'E )	
Long form name	Kano State
Centre	Kano (11° 59'N 08° 31'E)
Variant name for Centre	Cano
State Website	<a href="http://services.gov.ng/kano">http://services.gov.ng/kano</a> (Nigerian government information website) <a href="http://www.kano.gov.ng">http://www.kano.gov.ng</a> (suspended)
Consists of 44 ADM2s	

20. Katsina (12° 15'N 07° 30'E )	
Long form name	Katsina State
Centre	Katsina (12° 59'N 07° 35'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.katsinastate.gov.ng/">http://www.katsinastate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 34 ADM2s	

21. Kebbi (11° 30'N 04° 00'E )	
Long form name	Kebbi State
Centre	Birnin Kebbi (12° 27'N 04° 11'E)
State Website	<a href="http://kebbistate.ng/k/">http://kebbistate.ng/k/</a>
Consists of 21 ADM2s	

22. Kogi (07° 45'N 06° 45'E )	
Long form name	Kogi State
Centre	Lokoja (07° 48'N 06° 44'E)
State Website	<a href="http://services.gov.ng/kogi">http://services.gov.ng/kogi</a> (Nigerian government information website) <a href="http://www.kogistate.gov.ng/">http://www.kogistate.gov.ng/</a> (suspended)
Consists of 21 ADM2s	

<b>23. Kwara (08° 30'N 05° 00'E )</b>	
Long form name	Kwara State
Centre	Ilorin (08° 30'N 04° 33'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.kwarastate.gov.ng/">http://www.kwarastate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 16 ADM2s	

<b>24. Lagos (10° 30'N 10° 00'E )</b>	
Long form name	Lagos State
Centre	Ikeja (06° 35'N 03° 20'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng">http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 20 ADM2s	

<b>25. Nasarawa (08° 30'N 08° 15'E )</b>	
Long form name	Nasarawa State
Centre	Lafia (08° 29'N 08° 31'E)
Variant name for Centre	Lafia Beriberi
State Website	<a href="http://www.nasarawastate.gov.ng/">http://www.nasarawastate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 13 ADM2s	

<b>26. Niger (10° 00'N 06° 00'E )</b>	
Long form name	Niger State
Centre	Minna (09° 36'N 06° 33'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.nigerstate.gov.ng">http://www.nigerstate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 25 ADM2s	

<b>27. Ogun (07° 00'N 03° 35'E )</b>	
Long form name	Ogun State
Centre	Abeokuta (07° 09'N 03° 21'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.ogunstate.gov.ng">http://www.ogunstate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 20 ADM2s	

<b>28. Ondo (07° 10'N 05° 05'E )</b>	
Long form name	Ondo State
Centre	Akure (07° 15'N 05° 12'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.ondostatemoi.gov.ng/">http://www.ondostatemoi.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 18 ADM2s	

<b>29. Osun (07° 30'N 04° 30'E )</b>	
Long form name	Osun State
Variant names	Oshun; Oṣun; Oshun State
Centre	Osogbo (07° 46'N 04° 34'E)
Variant names for Centre	Oshogbo; Oṣogbo; Eshogbo
State Website	<a href="https://www.ondostate.gov.ng/new/">https://www.ondostate.gov.ng/new/</a>
Consists of 30 ADM2s	

<b>30. Oyo (08° 00'N 04° 00'E )</b>	
Long form name	Oyo State
Centre	Ibadan (07° 23'N 03° 53'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.oyostate.gov.ng">http://www.oyostate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 33 ADM2s	

<b>31. Plateau (10° 30'N 10° 00'E )</b>	
Long form name	Plateau State
Centre	Jos (09° 55'N 08° 54'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.plateaustate.gov.ng">http://www.plateaustate.gov.ng</a>
Consists of 17 ADM2s	

<b>32. Rivers (04° 45'N 06° 50'E )</b>	
Long form name	Rivers State
Centre	Port Harcourt (04° 47'N 06° 59'E)
State Website	<a href="http://www.riversstate.gov.ng/">http://www.riversstate.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 23 ADM2s	

<b>33. Sokoto (13° 05'N 05° 15'E )</b>	
Long form name	Sokoto State
Centre	Sokoto (13° 03'N 05° 13'E)
State Website	<a href="http://services.gov.ng/sokoto">http://services.gov.ng/sokoto</a> (Nigerian government information website) <a href="http://www.sokotostate.gov.ng">http://www.sokotostate.gov.ng</a> (suspended)
Consists of 23 ADM2s	

<b>34. Taraba (08° 00'N 10° 30'E )</b>	
Long form name	Taraba State
Centre	Jalingo (08° 53'N 11° 22'E)
State Website	<a href="http://services.gov.ng/taraba">http://services.gov.ng/taraba</a> (Nigerian government information website)
Consists of 16 ADM2s	

<b>35. Yobe (12° 00'N 11° 30'E )</b>	
Long form name	Yobe State
Centre	Damaturu (11° 44'N 11° 57'E)
State Website	<a href="http://services.gov.ng/yobe">http://services.gov.ng/yobe</a> (Nigerian government information website) <a href="http://www.yobestate.gov.ng/">http://www.yobestate.gov.ng/</a> (suspended)
Consists of 17 ADM2s	

<b>36. Zamfara (12° 10'N 06° 15'E )</b>	
Long form name	Zamfara State
Centre	Gusau (12° 09'N 06° 40'E)
State Website	<a href="http://oeg.zamfara.gov.ng/">http://oeg.zamfara.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 14 ADM2s	

<b>37. Federal Capital Territory (08° 50'N 07° 10'E )</b>	
Long form name	Abuja Federal Capital Territory
Variant names	Abuja Capital Territory; Abuja (FCT); FCT
Centre	Abuja (09° 05'N 07° 32'E)
State Website	<a href="http://fcta.gov.ng/">http://fcta.gov.ng/</a>
Consists of 6 ADM2s (Area Councils)	

**Other Significant Locations**

<b>PCGN Approved Name</b>	<b>Variant Names/Spellings</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Feature Type</b>
Benue River	Benue [short form]	7° 47' 10" N 6° 45' 47" E	River
Bight of Benin		5° 30' 00" N 4° 00' 00" E	Bight
Burutu		5° 21' 03" N 5° 30' 27" E	Populated Place/Port
Chappal Waddi	Tchabal Ouadé [CM]	7° 02' 00" N 11° 43' 00" E	Mountain
Chibok	Chibuk	10° 52' 10" N 012° 50' 48" E	Populated Place
Gulf of Guinea		2° 00' 00" N 2° 30' 00" E	Gulf
Ilesa	Ilesha	7° 37' 00" N 4° 44' 00" E	Populated Place
Jos Plateau		10° 00' 00" N 9° 30' 00" E	Plateau
Koko	Koko Town	6° 00' 04" N 5° 28' 03" E	Populated Place/Port
Lagos	Eko [Yoruba]	6° 27' 11" N 3° 23' 45" E	Populated Place/Port
Lake Chad	Lac Tchad [NG, CD, CM]	13° 19' 43" N 14° 07' 18" E	Lake
Ogbomoso	Ogbomosho	8° 08' 00" N 4° 16' 00" E	Populated Place
River Niger	Niger [short form]	5° 18' 06" N 6° 25' 00" E	River
Saki	Shaki	8° 40' 00" N 3° 23' 00" E	Populated Place
Sapele		5° 53' 39" N 5° 40' 36" E	Populated Place/Port
Warri		5° 31' 00" N 5° 45' 00" E	Populated Place/Port



## Useful references

US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server: <http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/>

The Unicode Consortium: [www.unicode.org](http://www.unicode.org)

International Organisation for Standards (ISO): [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

Languages: [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com) , [www.omniglot.com](http://www.omniglot.com)

Administrative divisions: <http://www.statoids.com>

National Bureau of Statistics: <http://nigerianstat.gov.ng/>

Nigeria Data Portal, 2006 Census data: <http://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org/xspplpb/nigeria-census>

The English Language in Nigeria – National Open University of Nigeria (2010):  
[http://www.nou.edu.ng/uploads/NOUN\\_OCL/pdf/pdf2/ENG353%20Noun%20new%20edited1.pdf](http://www.nou.edu.ng/uploads/NOUN_OCL/pdf/pdf2/ENG353%20Noun%20new%20edited1.pdf)

BBC Country Profile: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13949550>

CIA World Factbook – Nigeria: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html>

[www.nigeria.gov.ng](http://www.nigeria.gov.ng) – not currently available (accessed 14June16), described as to be 'uploaded shortly'

Nigerian National Assembly: <http://www.nass.gov.ng/page/about-the-house>

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Compiled by PCGN  
Version 2  
July 2016  
Tel. 0207 591 3120  
[info@pcgn.org.uk](mailto:info@pcgn.org.uk)