**Myths**: Edo is said to be the ‘City of Blood’, the ‘Land of Witches and Wizards’, and the headquarters of witchcraft in Nigeria since the late century.

**Facts**: Not true. Today’s Edo is nothing like what is circulated on the news and shared among neighbours. It is a decent place of approximately 8 million people living healthily, and celebrating their art and culture. Fetish? Well a little bit. But there’s a good reason. These people originate from a long line of traditionalist pioneers who founded the Benin Empire, one of the oldest and most highly developed states in the coastal hinterland of West Africa. Their customs, ranging from human sacrifices to female circumcision has been intrinsically woven into each successive generation that, like all other African cultures, may take decades of Western influence to completely eradicate.

A tough one but on the bright side, everything is changing dramatically as multitudes begin to stomach the penetration of other civilised religions — Christianity and Islam to be precise. Still, the monarchy and it’s provision thrive just as before.

It was not until the early 1990’s that a global conference of witches was said to convene at Benin, Edo state. Of course, that news presented itself just after the dedication of The Faith Arena, then the largest Church Auditorium in the whole of Africa at Upper Adesuwa, GRA, Benin, by the late Archbishop Benson Idahosa. Obviously, haters didn’t like what they were seeing and tried to counteract. The aftereffect—people spotlighted Edo state as the main office of witches.

**Crux**: They are mostly vague rumours bent on tarnishing the image of these good people.

**Prostitution**

Prostitutes on the streets of Abuja

**Myth**: Edo state, the *asawo* central station.

**Fact**: Again, not true. Of recent, Lagos boasts of a staggering number of prostitutes roaming the streets, seconded by a growing class of illiterate Enugu Igbos in Abuja.

Prostitution is a global phenomenon spreading widely in both developing and developed countries. In Nigeria, the phenomenon started way back to the era of the 1980 economic recession where Edos living in Italy succumbed to selling their bodies just to counter the economic crisis and put food on their tables. Finding it to be a lucrative venture, made it so enticing for their fellow women having a hard time in Nigeria to opt in on the business with the notion, ‘ashawo no dey kill’.

All thanks to NGOs and law enforcement and WOTCLEF, the rate of human trafficking for sexual exploitation has fallen stupendously and created, instead, awareness for young girls and women to see it for what it is. Many of them have taken up trades and are entrepreneurs now. Suffice it to say, edo prostitutes are old news.

**Newsflash**: Watch out for Lagos.

**The People**

A group of Esan men

**Myth**: All Edos are Benin

**Fact**: Obviously a misconception. There are 18 local governments in Edo state, all of which speak different languages; uneme, estako, esan, edo, itsekiri, Ihievbe, ison, to name a few. And all of which have their distinct customs and practices that distinguish them as members of a particular ethnicity. Dismissing an Edo for a Benin person is like asserting all Yorubas are Lagosians which apparently is not true.

**Food for thought**: The next time someone tells you he/she is Edo, chances are, he is 85% not Benin.

**Statues**

Benin bronze sculpture from the kingdom of Benin

**Myth**: The sculptures/figurines are fetish, diabolical.

**Fact**: So false. They are made of bronze and ivory and the art man’s ingenuity; historic monuments of a fascinating civilisation adored not only by it’s people but by the western world, who, if given the chance, will ship them away from us.

Benin possesses a rich cultural heritage that set them at the tiptop of most tourist’s destination, and not to mention, it’s a haven of archaeological wonder.

The statues carry heart-felt meaning. Like the one at Sakponba road junction, Ring Road, Benin city, in memorial of a valiant, brave man, Asoro n’lyokuo who died resisting the invading British forces during the expedition of 1897, serve more as a historic reminder than a diabolic or fetish symbol.

Before you even entertain another thought of it being fetish, rest assured, these sect of people express their way of life not only in the way they dress or the way they sound, or the way they eat, but in their architectural taste too, a property not all states in Nigeria have. When you’re in Benin, you feel you’re in Benin. And last time I checked, it was only a handful of areas whose buildings and landscape bolster, to a great degree, this *I’m a proud African* feeling.

**Tip**: The Edos are a cultural bunch, you notice this in their surroundings. The sculptures are just a stepping-stone to the real deal of authentic art and culture.

**Temperament**

Benin bride

**Myth**: harsh, cunning and generally unpleasant bunch.

**Facts**: Another attempt at stereotyping. A typical Edo man is nothing like this. He is among the most hospitable, intelligent, hardworking and dutiful civilian you will find in Nigeria. He has a sense of morality, of justice. He is not a proud man but a self-respectful one. And most of all, he is accommodating. Many underrate this unique quality.

The women are the other icon in the big picture. If I was asked to describe Edo women using only one word, I would say they are resilient. In short, marrying an Edo is equivalent to ushering in joy, love, peace and strength to your home. Yet, belief has traveled far and wide that introducing Edo blood into one’s lineage is a taboo against one’s tradition. Some even pray against it.

The Edos may be every single bad thing you can ever think of, they may be ruthless and uncaring, they may be touts and beggars and thieves, but one sure thing they’re not; they aren’t idiots, and that should suffice.

**Spoilers**: They wear a lot of beads.

[African](https://medium.com/tag/african?source=post_page-----c3e6367fe401---------------african-----------------)

[Edo State](https://medium.com/tag/edo-state?source=post_page-----c3e6367fe401---------------edo_state-----------------)

[Myths](https://medium.com/tag/myths?source=post_page-----c3e6367fe401---------------myths-----------------)

[Culture](https://medium.com/tag/culture?source=post_page-----c3e6367fe401---------------culture-----------------)

[People](https://medium.com/tag/people?source=post_page-----c3e6367fe401---------------people-----------------)

9