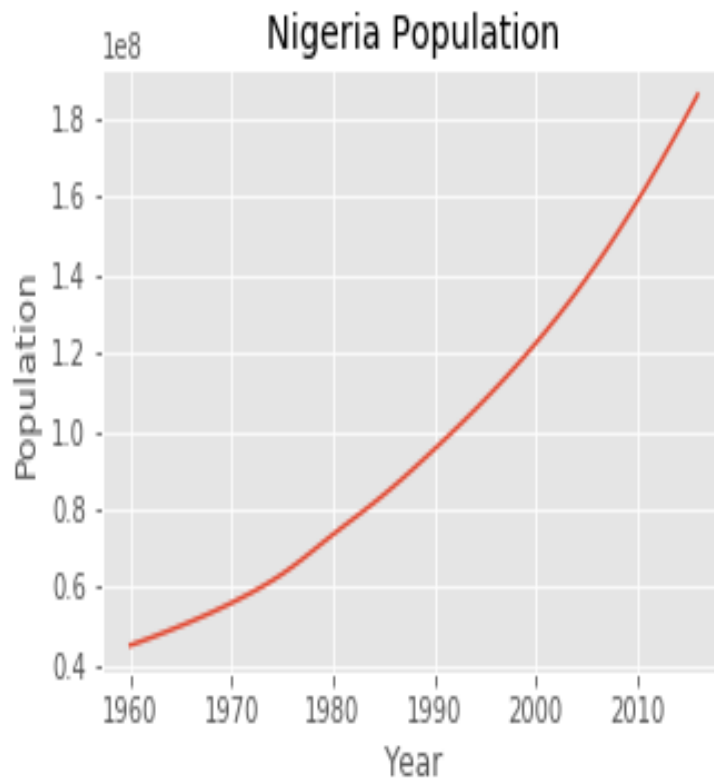


# Nigeria



The Federal Republic of Nigeria /naɪˈdʒɪəriə/ ( listen), commonly referred to as Nigeria, is a federal republic in West Africa, bordering Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. Its coast in the south lies on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. It comprises 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, where the capital, Abuja is located. Nigeria is officially a democratic secular country. Nigeria has been home to a number of kingdoms and tribal states over the millennia. The modern state originated from British colonial rule beginning in the 19th century, and took its present territorial shape with the merging of the Southern Nigeria Protectorate and Northern Nigeria Protectorate in 1914. The British set up administrative and legal structures whilst practising indirect rule through traditional chiefdoms. Nigeria became a formally independent federation in 1960. It experienced a civil war from 1967 to 1970. It thereafter alternated between democratically elected civilian governments and military dictatorships until it achieved a stable democracy in 1999, with the 2011 presidential election considered the first to be reasonably free and fair.