General Overview of Nigeria

Demographics of Nigeria

# Who are the Nigerians?

**Nigerians** are citizens of Nigeria or people with ancestry from Nigeria. The name Nigeria was given in the late 19th century by British Journalist Flora Shaw. She gave the name because of the Niger River running through the country. Nigeria is composed of various ethnic groups and cultures and for one to be called Nigerian, he or she has to have a citizenship-based civic nationality. Nigerians are derived from over 250 ethno-linguistic groups. Though there are multiple ethnic groups in Nigeria, economic factors result in significant mobility of Nigerians of multiple ethnic and religious backgrounds to reside in territories in Nigeria that are outside their ethnic or religious background, resulting in the mixing of the various ethnic and religious groups, especially in Nigeria's cities. The English language is the *lingua franca* of Nigerians. Nigeria is divided roughly in half between Muslims, who live mostly in the north, and Christians, who live mostly in the south; indigenous religions, such as those native to the Igbo and Yoruba ethnicities, are in the minority.

In Nigeria, more than fifty percent of Nigerians live in villages of two different types. The first type used by the Igbo, Ibibio and Tiv involves a collection of dispersed compounds, while the second type used amongst the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Kanuri involves nuclei of compounds. These villages compose members of the ethnicity-related through ancestry as well as strangers who have been assimilated into the ethnicity. Since the time prior to colonisation until the present, it has been a common practice of Nigeria's tribes to adopt strangers into the tribes. A male elder in the community commonly serves as a village chief or Baale.

Ethnic, religious, and regional disputes and tensions have commonly divided Nigerians on political issues. In particular, cultural and political divisions between the Muslims (north) and the Christians (south) has politicised religion and caused significant political disputes in Nigeria. Ethnic-motivated and religious-motivated violence by extremists has increased these tensions as well.

### Why do Nigerians Immigrate?

Immigration is the international movement of people to a destination country of which they are not usual residents or where they do not possess nationality in order to settle as permanent residents. Commuters, tourists, and other short-term stays in a destination country do not fall under the definition of immigration or migration; seasonal labour immigration is sometimes included, however, as for economic effects, research suggests that migration is beneficial both to the receiving and sending countries. Research, with few exceptions, finds that immigration on average has positive economic effects on the native population, but is mixed as to whether low-skilled immigration adversely affects underprivileged natives. Research shows that country of origin matters for speed and depth of immigrant assimilation, but that there is considerable assimilation overall for both first- and second-generation immigrants.

In the large cities of Nigeria, there is a substantial intermingling of Nigerians with foreigners, especially Europeans, Lebanese, and Indians. The economic importance of Nigeria's cities has resulted in migrations of people from their traditional ethnic or cultural homeland to cities outside those territories. Igbo, Hausa-Fulani and Ibibio people have commonly migrated to Lagos and many southerners migrate to the north to trade or work while a number of northern seasonal workers and small-scale entrepreneurs go to the south.

However, despite instances of extremism, most Nigerians continue to peacefully coexist, and a common Nigerian identity has been fostered amongst the more educated and affluent Nigerians as well as with the many Nigerians who leave small homogeneous ethnic communities to seek economic opportunities in the cities where the population is ethnically mixed.

## **References**

1. [Nigerians - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerians)