**HISTORY OF NIGERIA**

**MID TERM PROJECT**

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**BASIC 2 (TWO)**



EPILOGUE

The **history of**[**Nigeria**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria) can be traced to the earliest inhabitants whose remains date from at least 13,000 BC through early civilizations such as the [Nok culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nok_culture) which began around [1500 BC](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1500_BC). Numerous ancient African civilizations settled in the [region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Region) that is known today as Nigeria, such as the [Kingdom of Nri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Nri),[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-1) the [Benin Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benin_Empire),[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-2) and the [Oyo Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oyo_Empire).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-3) [Islam reached Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Nigeria) through the [Bornu Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bornu_Empire) between (1068 AD) and [Hausa States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hausa_States) around (1385 AD) during the 11th century,[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-4)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-5)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-6)[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-7) while [Christianity came to Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Nigeria) in the 15th century through [Augustinian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustinians) and Capuchin monks from [Portugal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_Empire).[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] The [Songhai Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songhai_Empire) also occupied part of the region.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-8) From the 15th century, European slave traders arrived in the region to purchase enslaved Africans as part of the [Atlantic slave trade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_slave_trade), which started in the region of modern-day Nigeria; the first Nigerian port used by European slave traders was [Badagry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Badagry), a coastal harbour.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-9)[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-10) Local merchants provided them with slaves, escalating conflicts among the ethnic groups in the region and disrupting older trade patterns through the [Trans-Saharan route](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trans-Saharan_route).[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-11)

[Lagos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lagos) was occupied by [British](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire) forces in 1851 and formally annexed by Britain in the year 1865.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-12) Nigeria became a [British protectorate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_Nigeria) in 1901. The period of British rule lasted until 1960 when an independence movement led to the country being granted independence.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-13) Nigeria first became a [republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Nigerian_Republic) in 1963, but succumbed to [military rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_dictatorship_in_Nigeria) after a [bloody coup d'état](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1966_Nigerian_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat) in 1966. A separatist movement later formed the [Republic of Biafra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Biafra) in 1967, leading to the three-year [Nigerian Civil War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_Civil_War).[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Nigeria#cite_note-14) [Nigeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria) became a [republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Nigerian_Republic) again after a new [constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution) was written in 1979. However, the republic was short-lived, as the military [seized power again](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1983_Nigerian_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat) in 1983 and later ruled for ten years. A [new republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Nigerian_Republic) was planned to be established in 1993 but was aborted by General [Sani Abacha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sani_Abacha). Abacha died in 1998 and a [fourth republic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourth_Nigerian_Republic) was later established the following year, which ended three decades of intermittent military rule.

[](https://www.nhcpsa.org/)

History of Nigeria

**The Name: NIGERIA**

The name Nigeria was taken from the Niger River running through the country. This name was allegedly coined in the late 19th century by British journalist Flora Shaw, who later married Baron Frederick Lugard, a British colonial administrator. The origin of the name Niger, which originally applied only to the middle reaches of the Niger River, is uncertain. The word is likely an alteration of the Tuareg name egerew n-igerewen used by inhabitants along the middle reaches of the river around Timbuktu prior to 19th-century European colonialism.

Nigeria today is marked by the emergence in various epochs of civilisations, kingdoms, states and empires, as well as a caliphate and colonial rule, before the founding of the Nigeria Nation-State in 1914 and its subsequent independence in 1960. Archaeological evidence from various parts of Nigeria suggests that parts of the country were occupied by man since the Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age period (500,000-9000 B.C.) and that such populations seem to have been physically and culturally contiguous with the present-day inhabitants. In the north, the most populous groups comprised the Hausa, the Kanuri, the Bolawa, the Ngizim, the Menga, the Margi, the Buduma, the Kotoko, and the Fulani who joined in the 19th Century through trade, Jihad and conquest. Of all these peoples, the Kanuri, the Hausa and the Fulani engaged in state formation and empire building process. The Kanuri people were closely connected with the people of Kanem in eastern part of Lake Chad, in which a kingdom comprising several small states emerged in about 9th Century. In AD 774, there emerged the Sefawa, who eventually came to dominate the whole Lake Chad area. The beginning of this empire coincided with the rise of Mali and Al-Kawkaw or Songhai, and with the period of Ghana’s greatness. For many years, what came to be known as the Kanuri Empire was made up of two parts, separated by the Lake: Kanem (in present-day Chad) and Borno (in Nigeria).

Hausa States

The Hausa people are by far the most numerous and occupy the greater part of northern Nigerian territory. They were made up of two major groups of seven states each. The first group of states included Biram, Daura, Katsina, Zaria, Kano, Rano, and Gobir, while the second group included Kebbi, Zamfara, Nupe, Gwari, Yauri, Ilorin and Kwararafa. Political and religious themes constituted the development of Hausa states up to the beginning of the 19th Century. The search for larger and more secure political entities stood out as the dominant theme of Hausa political life. Thus, from about the 15th Century, there had been intense rivalry and conflict between Katsina, Kano, and Zazzau (Zaria). Between 1500 and 1800 Century, there had been unsuccessful attempts to build lasting empires by welding together many of the numerous Hausa states. Consequently, during various phases, one power rose to pre-eminence only to be supplanted by another. During the 15th Century, Zazzau, under the legendary Queen Amina, established what the first Hausa Empire was, in effect, Zazzau dominion is said to have extended over territories as far as the Benue and the Niger and in some form over Bauchi, Kano, and Daura. Amina’s epoch was succeeded by the imposition of Borno overlordship on the Hausa states. Following the 19th Century Jihad of Uthman dan Fodio, the Fulani occupied northern Nigeria, dominated the Hausa states and established the Sokoto Caliphate. The Hausa/Fulani territory was renowned for leather works and exported shoes to Spain through trans-saharan trade routes.

Central Nigerian Kingdoms and Empires

To the south of Hausa land and Borno, the number of ethnic groups was legion. Ethnic heterogeneity reached its peak in the region of Bauchi Plateau, Adamawa province. The vast majority of the ethnic groups south of Hausa land and Borno seem not to have organized themselves into closely integrated states. In this politically fragmented region, the Jukuns (Kwararafa) of the Gongola Benue valleys, the Igala, the Igbira-Panda, Nupe, the Oyo Yoruba of the savanna belt, as well as the Borgawa and the Edo were organized into comparatively powerful kingdoms and empires.

Yoruba Kingdoms and Empires

The Yoruba kingdoms started in about the eleventh century. The various kingdoms shared the belief that their several founders originated from Ife. The kingdom was the unit of political power. But cultural identity went beyond the kingdom to include sub-ethnic groups speaking the same dialect. Of these sub-ethnic groups, the principal ones were Oyo, Egba, Egbado, Ijebu, Ijesa, Ekiti, Ondo, Akoko, and Owo. The most successful of the Yoruba kingdoms in building up its power was the Oyo Kingdom. Taking advantage of its location, it built up a cavalry force which gave it dominance not only throughout the Oyo area, but also over the neighbouring parts of Borgu and Nupe, over Egbaland and Egbado, as well as over Dahomey and Porto Novo. By the end of the 18thCentury, Oyo Empire had gone long way in disintegrating due to challenges to the authority of the Alaafin in the second half of the 18th century by leading civil and military chiefs. In about 1837, it collapsed completely due to civil wars and effects of the Fulani jihad.

Benin Kingdoms and Empires

The heartlands of the Benin Kingdom belong to the Edo group. The kingdom has almost certainly been in existence for less than a millennium. The traditions preserved by the monarchy itself traced with a fair degree of conviction to an origin around the 13th Century. Some thirty rulers are reckoned to have reigned in that span of time. Beyond that, we encounter much vaguer accounts of an earlier monarchy extending back over another thirty reigns to the supposed first settlement of the Edo in that area. Tradition insists that the hereditary order of Uzama chiefs existed in Benin before the present line of kings was established and that theirs are the oldest of all the Benin chieftaincy titles. It is also possible that there evolved from within this Edo community a paramount chieftaincy of either an hereditary or elective character which would have given Benin an early experience of kingship.

Kingdoms and Autonomous Communities of the Delta Region and Eastern Nigeri

To the south of the Edo and the Yoruba are the people of the Delta region and the Igbo in the east of the Niger. Several types of social and political institutions are found among the peoples of the Delta region. They include the kingdoms of Aboh and Itsekiri, and the fragmented societies of the Ukwuani, Urhobo, Isoko and Ijaw. The Itsekiri kingdom appears to have already developed by the middle of the 16th century. The Kingdom, ruled by an Olu and a Council of Ojoye, is very compact; it comprises the capital of Ode- Itsekiri and a few settlements scattered along the Forcados, Escravos and Benin Rivers. The Ijo, also settled in this region over several Centuries have scattered kingdoms, including the Egbema, Gbaramatu and Ogbe-Ijo around the Escravos river in present day Delta State, Nembe in Bayelsa State, etc. Although the development of Aboh kingdom was uncertain, it was apparently powerful enough to have influence over most of the riverine clans as well as some upland clans. Intelligence Report compiled by the British in the 1930s lists Ogume, Ashaka, Amai, Ossissa, Afo, Adiai, Aso, Umuolu, Okpai, Utuoku, Akarai and Onya as some of the clans which recognized the authority of the Obi of Aboh.   
The Igbo are often categorised among the non-centralised societies. This categorization is due to the fact that the Igbo did not come under the umbrella of a single state or evolve state system of any great size. However, in spite of this, Igbo society and culture enjoyed a basic uniformity of pattern and of cosmological and social ideas. But through their military dominance, and their position as spokesmen of the Oracle, the Aro established what amounted to a theocratic state over eastern Nigeria.   
The Lagos Colony came into existence in 1861 following the conquest of Lagos by the British. The colony was administered by a Governor with a legislative council.

External Influences up to 1861

The first external influence came from trading activities of the Muslim merchants from North Africa and Arabia. The Muslim merchants carried with them to Nigeria the Koran, and converted people. These Arabs traded in gold, ivory, iron, hides, kola nuts, slaves, and gum. Two out of the four trans-Saharan trade routes connected directly to northern Nigeria. From Tunis the third route passed through Ghadames, Ghat, and the country of Aïr, down to Agades and Hausa land. Parallel to this, to the east, was the fourth route from Tripoli to Murzuk in Fezzan, through Bilma and on the territories of Kanem and Borno in the Lake Chad region.   
The Atlantic slave trade, which began in the 15th Century, was the largest intercontinental migration in world history before the nineteenth century. For 300 years, more Africans than Europeans crossed the Atlantic each year. The evolution of western-controlled plantation slavery, the revolution in maritime technology, and the movement of Mediterranean plantation agriculture out into the Atlantic basin worked together in creating the Atlantic slave trade. The economic complex sometimes called the South Atlantic System, centered on the production of tropical staples in Brazil, the Caribbean, and southern North America. The Portuguese, the Spaniard, the Dutch, the French and the English were all involved in the slave trade.   
After the abolition of the Slave trade in Britain in 1807 and in south of Equator in 1834, there followed the growth of legitimate trade stimulated by the penetration of European merchant capital into Nigeria, essential to the development of capitalism. Export of cocoa, groundnuts, rubber, palm oil, etc. to the world market was a means by which the resources of natural economy of pre-colonial Nigeria hitherto slumbering in dormant inaction were released into the sphere of circulation and utilised for the further augmentation or expansion of capital – a worldwide process of “accumulation of capital”. The result of this was a shift from European settlement on the coast to European penetration into the hinterland. This was facilitated by the exploration of the River Niger and was followed by missionary activities, conquest and colonization.

The Nigerian Nation-State in Gestation: Conquests, Treaties and Amalgamations, 1861-1914

Chronologically, the conquest of Nigeria through military campaign was inaugurated by the annexation of Lagos in 1861. In 1878, Onitsha was sacked and Asaba bombarded. Similarly, by 1884, the National African Company had concluded about thirty seven treaties at the Niger territories including Atani, Onitsha, Abo, Osomala, Ndoni, Oko, Odekpe. Internal wars among the Yoruba, caused mainly by the decline of Oyo Empire and rivalry over the control of trade, gave the British the opportunities to gain political control further inside. In 1886, through efforts of British Prince of Peace Mission, led by Rev. Samuel Johnson, a treaty was signed to conclude the Ibadan/Ekiti Parapo War. With the exile of Jaja of Opobo in 1887 his territory became part of Niger Protectorate.  
In 1892, the United African Company fought Aguleri. On 18 January 1893, the Governor of Lagos Gilbert Thomas Carter signed, at Abeokuta, a “Treaty of Friendship and Commerce” with Oba Osokalu, the Alake of Egbaland. Again, on 3 February 1893, Carter concluded a similar treaty with Oba Adeyemi, the Alafin of Oyo. These treaties opened up the Yoruba country to European penetration. In 1894, Ebrohimi, the strong- hold of Nana of Itsekiri was bombarded and Nana exiled on the accusation of slave trade and interference with free market. In 1896, an expedition was sent against Brass and the community was sacked.  
The British discovery of the use of rubber for the production of pneumatic tyre made entry into Benin forest imperative. In a major expedition mounted against Benin in 1897, the city was sacked and its treasury looted. Shortly after the revocation of the Charter of the United African Company, and shortly after his appointment as a British High Commissioner to establish British control over Northern Nigeria, Lugard, at an impressive ceremony in Lokoja, 1st January 1900, hoisted the union Jack and declared the Sokoto Caliphate a British protectorate. Although this declaration was greeted with fierce battle, by 1906 most of the North had fallen to the British imperial forces. Resistance to alien rule gradually receded as one moved from coastal areas and the banks of major inland waterways to less easily accessible areas. Hence, new political arrangements were sought by those in control of affairs. The Salbourn Committee on amalgamation recommended in August 1898 that the British “Niger Territories” be ultimately Amalgamated. In May 1906, the Lagos Colony and Protectorate were amalgamated with the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria to form the new Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The second installment took place in 1914 when these territories (in the South) were administratively combined with the protectorate of Northern Nigeria, giving birth to the geo-political entity that was to be named “Nigeria” (in evocation of “River Niger” and the “Area” it flows through).

Heritage

The history of Nigeria show cases a rich Cultural heritage. The earliest of this heritage is the Nok culture, which flourished extensively in the western part of Jos Plateau in Northern part of Nigeria between 900 BC and AD 200. Nok Culture also extended as far as Katsina-Ala, Ankiring, Kagara, Taruga and Yelwa. It was characterized by distinctive ways of making terracotta figurines mostly head of human beings. Other Nok artefacts included round stone axes, iron axe blades, small stone arrow points and barbs, quantities of pottery, among others. Not far from the Nok Culture area was the Daima culture with its simple clay animal bronze figures which were by the 6th Century BC being made by a population of Neolithic herdsmen. At the settlement mound of Diama, in north-western Borno, south of Lake Chad, the people began to build circular huts of mud which had floors made of potsherd pavements. These fired clay figures included a humped cow, sheep or goats, wild animals and human beings.  
Terracotta sculptures have also been recovered from Ile-Ife. They included the naturalistic sculpture in brass and pottery which were being produced sometime between AD 1110 and 1450. The subject matter of their work of arts included human and animal figures. Ife sculptures were made of copper alloyed with zinc and with relatively high quality of lead. Few of the objects were made of copper. The Ife sculptures have been placed around the 12th and 14th Century AD.  
Benin royal art consisted of bronze objects cast by the lost- wax process such as statuettes, stylized heads, some of which served as supports for carved elephant tusks and bas-reliefs representing historical events. Besides, the art of casting bronze, terracotta modeling also existed. Ivory was also worked with outstanding virtuosity; among the varied objects produced were complete elephant tusks decorated either with basketry, weaving or matting. By and large, Benin had a large number of objects (over 2000) most of which strictly speaking should be referred to as brass objects. The few early Benin objects have been dated to about the 13th Century AD.  
Igbo-ukwu culture consisted of a large collection of objects and regalia of an important personality and objects from shrines. The manufacturing techniques fall into two categories Perdue or lost wax technique and smiting/chasing method. The Igbo-Ukwu culture which dated from 9th century AD contained both chased copper objects and elaborate castings of lead bronze. The earliest artistic casting from black Africa, these pieces consist of ritual vessels and other ceremonial objects with intricate surface decoration.

About Nigeria

Nigeria, commonly known as the giant of Africa with more than 150 million people is the most populous country in Africa. With one of the biggest democracies in the world and a presidential system of government, it has a dual economy, based on its rich natural resources, traditional agriculture and the trade sector. It not only shows high potential in human resources but also is endowed with rich natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals. The country aims to develop other productive sectors, boosted by the size of its population and economy, it is a regional powerhouse.

The country has a rich land of diverse cultural heritage, with more than 250 ethnic groups, a wide array of religions and sophisticated visual arts. The talent, creativity found in its festivals, music, sculptures, literature and films are well known all over the world.



PHYSICAL FEATURES AND NATURAL SETTING

Nigeria is located at the extreme inner corner of the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa and lies between latitudes 3°15’ to 13°30’ N and longitudes 2°59’ to 15°00’ E. On the south, it is bordered by Gulf of Guinea, on the west and north, it is bordered by the Republics of Benin and Niger respectively, and on the east, it adjoins the Cameroon Republic. Nigeria has a land area of 923, 768 km2 in which land comprises 910, 768 km2 and water accounts for 13, 000 km2. Its greatest length from North to South is 1, 046 km, and its maximum breadth from East to West is 1,127 km with a total boundary length of 4,900 km, of which 853 km is coastline. Comparatively, the area occupied by Nigeria is slightly more than twice the size of the state of California in the United States of America and almost twice that of France.

CLIMATE

**Rainfall**

Nigeria has a tropical climate with variable rainy and dry seasons, depending on location. It is hot and wet most of the year in the southeast but dry in the southwest and farther inland. A savanna climate, with marked wet and dry seasons, prevails in the north and west, while a steppe climate with little precipitation is found in the far north. In general, the length of the rainy season decreases from south to north. In the south, the rainy season lasts from March to November, whereas in the far north it lasts only from mid- May to September. A marked interruption in the rains occurs during August in the south, resulting in a short dry season often referred to as the “August break.” Precipitation is heavier in the south, especially in the southeast, which receives more than 120 inches (3,000 mm) of rain a year, compared with about 70 inches (1,800 mm) in the southwest. Rainfall decreases progressively away from the coast; the far north receives no more than 20 inches (500 mm) a year.

**Temperatures and Humidity**

Temperature and humidity remain relatively constant throughout the year in the south, while the seasons vary considerably in the north; during the northern dry season, the daily temperature range becomes great as well. On the coast, the mean monthly maxi- mum temperatures are steady throughout the year, remaining about 90 °F (32 °C) at Lagos and about 91 °F (33 °C) at Port Harcourt; the mean monthly minimum temperatures are approximately 72 °F (22 °C) for Lagos and 68 °F (20 °C) for Port Harcourt. In general, mean maximum temperatures are higher in the north, while mean minimum temperatures are lower. In the northeastern city of Maiduguri, for example, the mean monthly maximum temperature may exceed 100 °F (38 °C) during the hot months of April and May, while in the same season frosts may occur at night. The humidity generally is high in the north, but it falls during the harmattan (the hot, dry northeast trade wind), which blows for more than three months in the north but rarely for more than two weeks along the coast.

GEOLOGICAL FEATURES

The geology of Nigeria could be described as Pre-Cambrian, Cretaceous, Tertiary, Quaternary and Volcanic. The pre-Cambrian rocks are made up of igneous and metamorphic rocks and cover almost fifty percent of the country. They are crystalline in nature and consist of granite, gneiss and schist and they are commonly referred to as the Basement Complex. When weathered, the older granites give rise to smooth-domed hills known as inselbergs. The Cretaceous rocks are relatively younger rock types than the Pre-Cambrian rock types. They consist of various sandstones that are basically classified as older sedimentary rocks. Cuesta relief forms are characteristic of these rocks; and coal, lignite and limestone are important minerals found in these rocks. These rocks occupy the basins of Niger, Benue, Gongola and Cross Rivers. The younger sedimentary rocks are the rocks of the Tertiary Age consisting mainly of sandstone but with some clay and lime- stone. They are found in the Chad Basin and in the South with its widest extent in the Lower Niger. The alternating layers of clay and sand, especially in the Chad Basin are a noteworthy characteristic of these rocks. The Quaternary rocks are comparatively recent depositions found along the coast and river deltas of the country. They are made up of sandy and muddy deposits. Volcanic rocks which are of the Tertiary Age are not wide- spread in Nigeria. They are mainly found in the centre and north-east of the country. The main areas are the Biu and Jos Plateau and the Kerrikerri area of the Benue valley. The acid and basic rocks of these places give rise to peculiar volcanic features.

RELIEF

The relief of Nigeria consists of plains in the north and south interrupted by plateaux and hills in the centre of the country. The Sokoto Plains lie in the northwestern corner of the country, while the Borno Plains in the northeastern corner extend as far as the Lake Chad basin. The Lake Chad basin and the coastal areas, including the Niger River delta and the western parts of the Sokoto region in the far northwest, are underlain by soft, geologically young sedimentary rocks. Gently undulating plains, which become waterlogged during the rainy season, are found in these areas. The characteristic landforms of the plateaus are high plains with broad, shallow valleys dotted with numerous hills or isolated mountains, called inselbergs; the underlying rocks are crystalline, although sandstones appear in river areas. The Jos Plateau rises almost in the centre of the country; it consists of extensive lava surfaces dotted with numerous extinct volcanoes. Other eroded surfaces, such as the Udi-Nsukka escarpment rise abruptly above the plains at elevations of at least 300 m. The most mountainous area is along the southeastern border with Cameroon, where the Cameroon Highlands rise to the highest points in the country, Chappal Waddi (2,419 m) in the Gotel Mountains and Mount Dimlang (2,042 m) in the Shebshi Mountains.

DRAINAGE

The major drainage areas in Nigeria are the Niger-Benue basin, the Lake Chad basin, and the Gulf of Guinea basin. The Niger River, from which the country’s name was derived, and the Benue, its largest tributary, are the principal rivers. The Niger has many rapids and waterfalls. The Benue is not interrupted by either rapids or waterfalls and is navigable throughout its length, except during the dry season. Rivers draining the area north of the Niger-Benue trough include the Sokoto, the Kaduna, the Gongola, and the rivers draining into Lake Chad. The coastal areas are drained by short rivers that flow into the Gulf of Guinea. River basin development projects have created many large man-made lakes, including Lake Kainji on the Niger and Lake Bakolori on the Rima River. The Niger delta is a vast low lying region through which the waters of the Niger River drain into the Gulf of Guinea. Characteristic landforms in this region include oxbow lakes, river meander belts (see meander), and prominent levees. Large freshwater swamps give way to brackish mangrove thickets near the seacoast.

SOIL

Nigerian soils are usually of a poorer quality than those in other regions of the world and the major soil zones conform to geographic location. Loose sandy soils consisting of wind- borne deposits and riverine sands are found in the northern regions, although, in areas where there is a marked dry season, a dense surface layer of laterite develops, making these soils difficult to cultivate. The soils in the northern states of Kano and Sokoto, however, are not subject to leaching and are therefore easily farmed. South of Kano the mixed soils contain locally derived granite and loess (wind-borne deposits). The middle two- thirds of the country, the savanna regions, contain reddish, laterite soils; they are some- what less fertile than those of the north because they are not subject to as much seasonal drying, nor do they receive the greater rainfall that occurs in the more southerly regions. The forest soils represent the third zone. There the vegetation provides humus and protects it from erosion by heavy rainfall. Although these soils can readily be leached and lose their fertility, they are the most productive agriculturally. Hydromorphic and organic soils, confined largely to areas underlain by sedimentary rocks along the coast and river floodplains, are the youngest soil types.

FLORA AND FAUNA

**Flora**

In Nigeria, vegetation closely follows the pattern of rainfall. The main vegetation patterns run in broad east-west belts, parallel to the Equator. Forests and grasslands are the major vegetation types. Forests are found to the south where rain- fall is high and also along river courses in the north – called gallery forests. Three major types of forests are recognizable. The mangrove swamp forest is found within the Niger Delta and in the Cross River Delta. The mangrove forests of Nigeria are the most extensive forests of this type in the world. The environment of this forest is brackish while the most common tree is the red mangrove which grows to a height of about 20 m. Immediately after mangrove swamp forest the ground rises slightly and is clothed with freshwater swamp forest. Moisture-loving plants and various palms, yielding piassava fibre and materials for thatching flourish here. A short way inland, the freshwater swamp forest gives way to dense tropical rainforests. Economically valuable, the oil palm grows wild and is usually preserved when forest is cleared for cultivation. In the more densely populated parts of the southeast, the original forest vegetation has been replaced by open palm bush. In the southwest large areas of forest have been replaced by cacao and rubber plantations.  
Towards the north, as rainfall decreases and dry season lengthens, the rain forests pass gradually into tropical grassland known as savannas. Tropical grassland occupies the area north of the forest belt and extends over almost three fifths of the country. The characteristic vegetation of the savannas consists of grassland with scattered trees of no great height either growing singly or in groups and sometimes occurring as woodlands. The area is studded with baobab, tamarind, and locust bean trees. Like its forest counter- part, the savanna could be broadly divided into three from south to north: Guinea, Sudan and Sahel.  
The Guinea Savanna has the greatest amount of rainfall among the savanna types and a shorter dry period. Consequently, it has more trees than other types. The grass here is rather coarse. It occupies half of the country coinciding roughly with the middle belt. It can be referred to as a transitional climate and vegetation between the north and the south because it stands as a zone of mixed culture in which food crops of the south are cultivated side by side with those of the far north. In Sudan Savanna annual rainfall averages about 560- 1020 mm. Most trees in the Sudan Savanna have small leaves to prevent excessive transpiration, though there are few broad leaved ones. As one proceeds northward through the zone it give way to trees and thorns.  
The Sahel Savanna occurs in the extreme north-east of Nigeria, and it has at least eight dry months. This zone is characterized with light foliage and thorns. Grasses are short, discontinuous, wiry and tussock. They are much used by cattle and sheep. There is no real gallery or fringing forests but only riparian woodland of certain acacias. Semi-desert conditions exist in the Lake Chad region, where various species of acacia and the doum species of palm are common. In the far northern areas the nearly total disappearance of plant life has facilitated a gradual southward advance of the Sahara.

**Fauna**

Camels, antelopes, hyenas, lions, baboons, and giraffes once inhabited the entire savanna region, and red river hogs, forest elephants, and chimpanzees lived in the rainforest belt. Animals found in both forest and savanna included leopards, golden cats, monkeys, gorillas, and wild pigs. Today these animals can be found only in such protected places as the Yankari National Park in Bauchi State, Gashaka Gumti National Park in Taraba State, Kainji Lake National Park in Niger State (see Kainji Lake), and Cross River National Park in Cross River State. Rodents such as squirrels, porcupines, and cane rats constitute the largest family of mammals. The northern savanna abounds in guinea fowl. Other common birds include quail, vultures, kites, bustards, and gray parrots. The rivers contain crocodiles, hippopotamuses, and a great variety of fishes.