

About Ibadan

Contributed by Ibadan Descendants Union USA
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Education

The British also developed the academic infrastructure of the city. The first university to be set up in Nigeria was the University of Ibadan (established as a college of the University of London when it was founded in 1948, and was later converted into an autonomous university in 1962). It has the distinction of being one of the premier educational institutions in Africa. The Polytechnic Ibadan was the first technical institute and is considered to be the best in Nigeria. There are also numerous primary schools and secondary schools located in the city. Other noteworthy institutions in the city include the University College Hospital; the first teaching hospital in Nigeria, Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria and the internationally acclaimed International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA). Ibadan and its environs before the dissolution of the Western Region, Nigeria was the home of the most sophisticated and liberal scientific and cultural community on the continent of Africa; as personified by the immortalized Ibadan School.

In 1853, the first Europeans to settle in Ibadan, Reverend Hinderer and his wife, started Ibadan's first Western schools. They built churches and schools and the first two-storey building in Ibadan, which can still be found today at Kudeti. The first pupils to attend an elementary school in Ibadan were two children, Yejide (female) and Akinyele (male) -- the two children of an Ibadan high chief.

Parks & Gardens

Nestled inside (IITA) is the best golf course in Nigeria, and the grounds of the Ibadan Polo Club is not far away from the city center. The city also has a zoological garden located inside the University of Ibadan, and a botanical garden located at Agodi.

Transportation

Ibadan has an airport and is served by the Ibadan Railway Station on the main railway line from Lagos to Kano. As with so many things in post-oil-boom Nigeria, many rural (and urban) roads have not received adequate maintenance. Poorly-maintained roads are particularly problematic in the rainy season. What are called interstate highways in the U.S., are called carriageways in Nigeria. There are not many miles of divided highways in Ibadan. The primary routes go from Ibadan to Lagos and Ibadan to Benin City. Adding to the weather and terrain, roads typically have few or no speed limit signs or warning signs to alert the motorist of curves, hills, intersections or problems with the road itself such as large potholes or eroded road beds. Law enforcement is minimal except for sporadic roadblocks of armed policemen who check for registrations and other "irregularities". As with Ibadan city traffic, the klaxon is the most used tool on the car. One honk lets the car ahead of you know you want to pass; another honk is given after passing to let them know you appreciated their attention while you were passing. Klaxons are also honked to show irritation and to warn other drivers and/or pedestrians that may be in a direct line of contact. Driving without honking the horn is considered discourteous and dangerous. In-town transportation comes in a variety of forms. Modes of transportation include, taxis, taxi-vans commonly called "danfos," private cars that are hired out by the day with a driver, personal family cars, scooters, and by foot. All fares are negotiable depending upon the number in the party and the distance to be traveled. Fares are also dependent on whether the passengers are Nigerian or foreigners. The average taxi is a small car, which seats four people and the driver. A danfo is a van, meanwhile, which seats seven people and the driver. This does not mean that more people will not be accommodated; often both taxis and danfos carry as many passengers as can squeeze into the vehicle. Danfos have an additional staff member. He is the "conductor" who arranges fare agreements and keeps track of delivery points. He is often to be seen holding onto the frame of the van while hanging out the door in order to locate potential fares.

Monuments & Landmarks

There is a museum in the building of the Institute of African Studies, which exhibits several remarkable pre-historic bronze carvings and statues. The city has several well stocked libraries, and is home to the first television station in Africa. There are a few hotels with Hotspot (Wi-Fi) access, a few decent restaurants and a couple of radio stations. Dugbe Market is the nerve center of Ibadan's transport and trading network. The haphazard layout of the city's roads and streets contribute largely to the disorderly traffic and make it very difficult to locate and reach destinations. The best method to move about the city is to use reference points and notable landmarks.

The Bower Memorial Tower to the east on Oke Aàre (Aare's Hill) ("Aare" in Yoruba means commander-in-chief or generalissimo), which can be seen from practically any point in the city; it also provides an excellent view of the whole city from the top. Another prominent landmark, Cocoa House, was the first skyscraper in Africa. It is one of the few skyscrapers in the city and is at the hub of Ibadan's commercial center. Other attractions include Mapo Hall -- the colonial style city hall -- perched on top of a hill, "Oke Mapo," Mapo Hill ("oke" is hill in Yoruba), the Trans-Wonderland amusement park, the cultural centre Mokola and Liberty Stadium, Ibadan, the first stadium in Africa. The first citadel of

higher learning, University of Ibadan (formerly the University College of Ibadan), and the first teaching hospital in Nigeria, University College Hospital, UCH, were both built in this ancient but, highly important city. Ibadan is also home to the legendary Shooting Stars FC -- a professional Football Club.