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Nigerian Tourism & Cultural festivals

Agila Social and Economic Carnival :

Agila Carnival is a social and economic event in Agila Town set up to showcase Idoma cultural renaissance. According to the organizers of the Agila Carnival, it is aimed at reviving the interest of its cultural & economic values in a fast globalizing world of science and technology among the youth of the Idoma nation and its descendents. As a result of the thousands of people the carnival attracts from all walks of life, it serves as a boost to the economy of the Idoma land and that of the country at large.

Benué is a state in the mid-belt region of Nigeria with a population of over 4,253,641 according to the 2006 census. Idoma and Tiv are spoken predominantly. There are other ethnic groups, including Igede, Etulo and Abakwa, Jukun, Hausa, Akweya and Nyifon differences in cultural and social heritage tends to make them disagree in many things.

The carnival since its emergence has played a large role in the unity of the people from this area, and as a result, fostering the unity and tranquility of the people of Benué State.



History

Parade at the **2014 Agila Carnival.**

The parades and other events happen during the three official days of carnival. The carnival kicks off on 23rd morning and stretches to the afternoon of the same day with procession/Parade in otukpo followed by migration from otukpo to Apa between the afternoon and evening of the first day. Later in the evening of the same day is another segment known as burn fire and performances by music artists.

The carnival continues on 24 December with carnival displays in the morning followed by Masquerade display, and distribution of gifts to widows. Later in the evening in the same day is the performance by HERO's ambassadors (music & comedy).

The morning of 25 December which is the last day of the carnival is the migration of people from Apa to Otukpo. Proceed by the Face of Idoma beauty pageant.

Reference: <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Agila festival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agila_festival)>

- Argungu Fishing Festival

The **Argungu Fishing Festival** or **Argungu Dance Festival** is an annual four-day festival in the state of Kebbi, in the north-western part of Northern Nigeria. The region is made up of fertile river areas (matanfada, mala, gamji), with much irrigation and orchards (lambu in Hausa). The majority of fishermen are the followers of Islam and also predominantly farmers. Kanta museum is the main historical centre in Argungu for visitors across the globe. People from around the world travel to Argungu just to witness the occasion. The main purpose of the Argungu fishing festival is for fishing and unity.



History

The festival began in the year 1934, as a mark of the end of the centuries-old hostility between the Sokoto Caliphate and the Kebbi Kingdom.

In 2005, the winning fish weighed 75 kg, and needed four men to hoist it onto the scales. In 2006 the festival banned fishing due to safety concerns relating to the low water levels. The importance of the festival to the economy has led the government to conserve fish stock by prohibiting use of gill nets and cast nets.¹ The Zauro polder project, an irrigation scheme in the Rima River floodplain to the south of Argungu, has been criticized because the reservoir threatens to flood the traditional site of the festival.

Competition

On the final day of the festival, a competition is held in which thousands of men line up along the river and at the sound of a gunshot, all of them jump into the river and have an hour to catch the largest fish. The winner can take home as much as \$7,500 US dollars. Competitors are only allowed to use traditional fishing tools and many prefer to catch fish entirely by hand (a practice also popular elsewhere and known as "noodling") to demonstrate their prowess.

Reference: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argungu_festival>

Carniriv:

The **Carniriv** (English: Car-nee-rev) is an annual festival, held in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The Carnival starts few weeks before Christmas, and lasts for seven days. During this time several ceremonial events are held, most of which hold some cultural and or sacred significance.

The Port Harcourt Carnival bears a certain uniqueness as it combines two carnivals - a purely cultural carnival and a contemporary Caribbean style carnival- in one. It also features musical performances from both local and international artists. This gives it an edge over all other regional and continental carnivals, and presents with the principal advantage which must be consummately exploited.

The Government of Rivers State recognizes Carniriv as its biggest tourism export. With economic interests increasingly identifying tourism as a viable alternative to the fossil fuel

economy- especially in these parts- the state government has exhibited its commitment to developing this carnival into a regionally unrivalled and globally reckoned tourist attraction. Thus, it has always made available the necessary monetary backing needed for the event to hold every year, and has also worked hard through the Rivers State Tourism Development Agency and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to see that it is held.



History

By all means, Carniriv '88 is the direct ancestor of Carniriv: The Port Harcourt Carnival. From 1988, through to 2008, the idea of staging a carnival with statewide participation morphed in a number of forms- most notably in the form of Rivifest - until the emergence of the current carnival. Carniriv: The Port Harcourt Carnival was construed and staged in 2008; and with it came the poignant allure to build a sturdy and ultimately attractive carnival brand.

Orientation

Rivers State is known as the land of a thousand masquerades. With a fine variety of spoken tongues, numbering over 300, it is somewhat easy to discern the beauty in the diversity of its peoples. Very many civilizations, ancient and seemingly ageless as they are, quite simply draw attention to the richness and unspeakable eminence of the collective heritage of the Rivers people. Simply put, we are the microcosm of the macrocosm, a Nigeria (with all of its cultural and ethnic diversity) within Nigeria. This, to all intents and purposes, is at the core of the philosophy and guiding principle of Carniriv: The Port Harcourt Carnival.

Events

Garden City Freestyle Parade

The carnival here enters its final day, and the hype and excitement portend to a crescendo. Glamour, style and pageantry all fuse into one fine artistic blend in a contemporary modern cultural procession through the streets of Port Harcourt.

Traditionally, 6 bands participate in this procession; with 5 bands (namely: Jubilee, Liberation, Dynamic, Fusion and Treasure Bands) all wrapped-up in fervent competition.

International Heritage Parade

In true carnival style, contingents of the 23 LGAs engage a procession (on a pre-defined route) through the streets of Port Harcourt- showcasing enthralling dances and masquerade displays as they do so. All of these performances are embedded in colourful floats gilded with impressive icons. This year, the Heritage parade goes international with the inclusion of troupes from Malaysia and South Africa as honorary participants.

Kids Carnival

This Carnival is a strong reflection of the importance attached to children in Carniriv, and by extension Tourism Development, in Rivers State.

The Children's Carnival is designed as a mini-procession, commencing at the Elekahia playground and culminating in the Liberation Stadium (Elekahia) - where children will be treated

to a carnival full of fun, refreshment, leisure and unrestrained entertainment befitting of an ice-breaker event in anticipation of the Grand opening of Carnival 2012.

Reference: <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnival>>

Eyo festival :

The **Eyo Festival**, otherwise known as the **Adamu Orisha Play**, is a Yoruba festival unique to Lagos, Nigeria. In modern times, it is presented by the people of Lagos as a tourist event and due to its history, it is traditionally performed on Lagos Island.

The Eyo:

The word "Eyo" also refers to the costumed dancers, known as the *masquerades* that come out during the festival. The origins of this observance are found in the inner workings of the secret societies of Lagos. Back in those days, The Eyo festival is held to escort the soul of a departed Lagos King or Chief and to usher in a new king. It is widely believed that the play is one of the manifestations of the customary African revelry that serves as the forerunner of the modern carnival in Brazil. On Eyo Day, the main highway in the heart of the city (from the end of Carter Bridge to Tinubu Square) is closed to traffic, allowing for procession from Idumota to the Iga Idunganran palace. The white-clad Eyo masquerades represent the spirits of the dead, and are referred to in Yoruba as "agogoro Eyo" (literally: "tall Eyo").

The first procession in Lagos was on the 20th of February, 1854, to commemorate the life of the Oba Akintoye.

Here, the participants all pay homage to the reigning Oba of Lagos. The festival takes place whenever occasion and tradition demand, though it is usually held as part of the final burial rites of a highly regarded chief in the king's court.

Among the Yorubas, the indigenous religions have largely lost the greater majority of their traditional followers to Christianity and Islam. Be that as it may, the old festivals are still almost universally observed as tourist attractions which generate a lot of revenue for government and small businesses around the Lagos Island venue of the Eyo festival. It is during these occasions that their traditional monarchs and nobles exercise the most of their residual power.

Order of events

In his book *Nigerian Festivals*, travel writer and culture reporter Pelu Awofeso notes: A full week before the festival (always a Sunday), the 'senior' eyo group, the Adimu (identified by a black, broad-rimmed hat), goes public with a staff. When this happens, it means the event will take place on the following Saturday. Each of the four other 'important' groups — Laba (Red), Oniko (yellow), Ologede (Green) and Agere (Purple) — take their turns in that order from Monday to Thursday.

History

Historically, Iperu is the source, cradle and originator of Eyo in Nigeria and the world. There are 5 different branches/types of Iga Eyo in Iperu *Akesan*

Names of the families and Iga of Eyo each represents are:

1. Iga Pakerike which is symbolized by red cap of éyo
2. Iga Agbonmagbe, also symbolized by blue cap of éyo.
3. Iga éyo Odoru
4. Iga éyo Mogusen/Amororo
5. Iga éyo Fibigbuwa

The **major source** of éyo in Iperu is the Iga éyo Pakeriké and other 4 are the Iperu Royal houses.

History made us to understand that Eyó was brought to Lagos to entertain an in-law which has now become something more celebrated in Lagos today.

Akesan aagbé wa! Remo asuwon ooo!

Festival dates

2011

- November 26, commemorating Prince Yesufu Abiodun Oniru, a Lagos nobleman.

2017

- May 20, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Lagos state tagged Lagos@50.

Prohibited items

Here is a list of prohibited items at the festival:

- Okada motorcycle taxis
- Bicycles
- Sandals
- Suku - hairstyle that is popular among the Yorubas, one that has the hair converge at the middle, then shoot upward, before tipping downward.
- Smoking

The masquerades are known to beat people who use any of the prohibited items at sight with their staffs.

Reference <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eyo_festival>

FESTAC 77:

Festac '77, also known as the **Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture** (the first was in Dakar, 1966), was a major international festival held in Lagos, Nigeria, from 15 January 1977 to 12 February 1977. The month-long event celebrated African culture and showcased to the world African music, fine art, literature, drama, dance and religion. About 16,000 participants, representing 56 African nations and countries of the African Diaspora, performed at the event. Artists who performed at the festival included Stevie Wonder from United States, Gilberto Gil from Brazil, Bembeya Jazz National from Guinea, Mighty Sparrow from Grenada, Les Ballets Africains, South African Miriam Makeba, and Franco Luambo Makiadi. At the time it was held, it was the largest pan-African gathering to ever take place.

The emblem of the festival was the royal ivory mask of Benin. The hosting of the festival led to the establishment of the Nigerian National Council of Arts and Culture, Festac Village and the National Theatre, Iganmu, Lagos. Most of the events were held in four main venues: the National Theatre, National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos City Hall and Tafawa Balewa Square.

Background:

The inspiration for convening FESTAC can be traced to the development of ideas on Négritude and Pan-Africanism. In the 1940s, Aimé Césaire and Leopold Sedar Senghor, inspired by DuBois' Pan-Africanism and Alain Locke's concept of the New Negro, started a journal and publishing house in Paris called *Présence Africaine*; both men were also members of the Société Africaine du Culture. *Présence Africaine* and the Society of African Culture were facilitators of two congresses, one in 1956 and the other in 1959. The forums were convened with the intention of promoting black culture and civilisation. The first congress was the Conference of Black Writers in Paris and the second was a black writers forum in Rome. Attendees of the forums included writers of African and Afro-descendant heritage such as Alioune Diop, Cheikh Anta Diop, Léopold Senghor, and Jacques Rabemananjara, Richard Wright, Césaire, George Lamming, Horace Mann Bond, Jacques Alexis, John Davis, William Fontaine, Jean Price Mars, James Baldwin, Chester Himes, Mercer Cook and Frantz Fanon. Members of both forums were engaged with discussing ideas about the resurgence of African culture and the convocation of a festival of arts. In 1966, with leadership provided by Leopold Senghor and subsidies from outside, notably France, and UNESCO, the First World Festival of Black Arts was held in Dakar, Senegal, 1–24 April 1966. At the end of the first festival, Nigeria was invited to hold the second festival in 1970 so as to promote a continuation of black unity through cultural festivals. The host nation would be responsible for providing the necessary infrastructure and facilities for a successful staging of the festival. However, a Civil War and changes in government led to the postponing of the festival to 1977.

Preparation for the Festac took off in Lagos on 3 October 1972, when the International Festival Committee met for the first time and decided that the festival would be held in November 1974. The name of the festival was changed from "World Black Festival of Arts and Culture" to "Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture" so as to accommodate the realities of African unity. The date was further changed to November 1975. The organizers divided countries into 16 geographical zones, each zone having a committee made up of representatives of peoples of African descent; the chairman of each zone would become a member of the International Festival Committee. The committee acted as the administrative arm of the Festival. The desire to improve on the Dakar festival led to Nigeria's intention to create an extravagant show fuelled by new-found oil money. A new regime replaced the Gowon administration and the date for the festival was thus changed to 1977.

To generate publicity for the festival, the international committee advised the zones to encourage preliminary festivals. Some mini-festivals did take place, such as Carifesta hosted by Guyana, the Commonwealth Festival in London, Ghana's national exhibition of arts and crafts and Nigeria's Nafest. The festival committee also chose a 16th-century Benin ivory mask as the festival emblem, the mask was last worn by Ovonramwen, a Benin king dethroned in 1897 by the Consul General of the Niger Coast Protectorate, Ralph Moor.

Facilities

A housing estate known as Festac Village was constructed as accommodation for about 17,000 participants. However, the long-term objective of the village under the Federal Housing Programme was to relieve some of the housing pressure in Lagos. The housing estate was proposed for construction within two years, with more than 40 contractors working on different sites of the project. In total 5,088 dwelling units were built prior to the festival and an additional 5,687 were to be completed by the end of 1977. During the festival, the housing estate was the venue for performance rehearsals and interaction by participants as various troupes rehearsed their routines in the day and at night.

For hosting the performances and lectures, a state-of-the-art multipurpose theatre was built, to serve also as a lasting centre of African art and culture. The theatre's design was based on the Palace of Culture and Sports in Varna, Bulgaria, with the Bulgarian firm Technoexportstroy hired to build it. The new complex had two exhibition halls, a 5,000-capacity performance and event hall, a conference hall with 1,600 seats and two cinema halls. The theatre hosted dance, music, art exhibitions, cinema, drama and the colloquium.

Aims of the Festival

- To ensure the revival, resurgence, propagation and promotion of Black and African culture and black and African cultural values and civilization;
- To present black and African culture in its highest and widest conception;
- To bring to light the diverse contributions of black and African peoples to the universal currents of thought and arts;
- To promote black and African artists, performers and writers and facilitate their world acceptance and their access to world outlets;
- To promote better international and interracial understanding;
- To facilitate a periodic return to origin in Africa by black artists, writers and performers uprooted to other continents.

The Festival

The opening ceremony of the festival took place on 15 January 1977 inside the National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos. One of the highlights of the ceremony was a parade of participants representing 48 countries marching past visiting dignitaries, diplomats and the Nigerian Head of State, Olusegun Obasanjo. Some participants in the parade wore colourful ceremonial robes, some men were on 14-foot stilts, and Nigerian dancers carried flaming urns on their heads. To symbolize the freedom and unity of Black peoples 1,000 pigeons were released; a shango priest also set the festival bowl aflame.

The festival events usually began around 9 a.m. lasting till the midnight.

Colloquium

The colloquium was at the heart of the festival, and was held daily during first two weeks of activities. About 700 writers, artists and scholars participated in the lectures. The theme of the lectures borders on the lack of intellectual freedom and the ambivalence experienced by Third World countries that sometimes turn to their colonizers for expertise while attempting to establish an image of confidence and independence to themselves as well as the rest of the world. The declared purpose of the colloquium was to seek answers to the questions of how to revive and foster black and African artists and how to facilitate international acceptance and access to outlets.

Among the speakers at events were Clarival do Prado Valladares, Lazarus Ekwueme, Babs Fafunwa and Eileen Southern.

Durbar and regatta

The festival committee purchased a total of 2,003 (two thousand and three) 45-seater luxury buses and 91 (ninety-one) 26-seater buses for logistics reasons. One reason was the Durbar festival that was staged in Kaduna, a city that is more than 700 kilometers from Lagos. The event took place from 5 February to 8 February 1977. Originally, durbars in Nigeria were receptions held in honour of princes; beginning in 1911, four durbars had been held in Nigeria prior to 1977. However, the Festac durbar was a pageant that had emirs riding with their entourage of cavalry, camels, and entertainers as a sign of unity. The durbar was a display of horsemen and entertainers such as musicians playing horns, Kakakitrumpets, the tambari and drums, among the entourage were Fulani, Bori and Bida masqueraders. The Festac durbar appropriated from ancient Hausa, Songhay and Bornu customs such as Hawan Dawaki, also known as the mounting of horses, and a Bornu military ceremony called Tewur, which is a rally held by cavalry men before a major campaign. Another historic event appropriated was the annual meetings of Fulani emirs held at the instance of the Caliphs of Sokoto in Kaura Namoda to mobilise contingents for expeditions against hostile states.

The boat regatta was another event staged far from the common venues but, unlike the durbar, the regatta was staged in Lagos. The regatta was a three-day event performed at Queen's Drive foreshore in Ikoyi, Lagos. Participants were principally from Nigeria and the states represented were Edo, Cross River, Imo, Kwara, Ogun, Ondo and Lagos states. Each boat had an assemblage of musicians, acrobats or masquerades and dancers. More than 200 boats were involved in the event.

Visual and performing arts

Performing and visual art shows such as film, drama, music and dance were mostly staged during late afternoons and evenings at the National Theatre, however, some drama and music shows were also staged at Tafawa Balewa Square, with modern drama and music shows usually staged in the afternoons and traditional drama and music shows staged in the evenings. In total about 50 plays, 150 music and dance shows, 80 films, 40 art exhibitions and 200 poetry and dance sessions were staged. On the eve of the inaugural ceremonies the late Sori Kandia Kouyaté, a master Mande Griot, treated the heads of state and government to a stellar vocal and cora performance, reminiscent. The settings was reminiscent of Medieval Africa's imperial and royal courts. Other musicians who performed were Osibisa, Miriam Makeba, Bembeya Jazz, Les Amazones, Louis Moholo, Dudu Pukwana, Donald Byrd and Sun Ra. Apart from numerous concerts, a music meeting was held on 29 January 1977 under the leadership of composer Akin Euba. Also participating at the meeting were Mwesa Isaiah Mapoma, Kwabena Nketia and Mosunmola Omibiyi. Others present included instrumentalists, singers, public school teachers and graduate students of music. For more than two hours, the participants discussed matters of mutual concern and explored ways of improving musical activities among Africans, both on the continent and in the Diaspora.

Several art exhibitions took place at the National Theatre, at the Nigerian National Museum and around Tafawa Balewa Square. At the Square, each country represented at the festival was given a booth to exhibit their paintings, musical instruments, woven cloths, books and art objects. Some other notable exhibitions that took place were *Africa and the Origin of Man*, which was held at the National Theatre, and Ekpo Eyo's *2000 Years of Nigerian Art*, which included Nok terracottas, Benin court art, Igbo Ukwu, Ife and Tsoede bronzes and art objects. A contemporary Nigerian exhibit featuring works from Bruce Onobrakpeya, Ben Enwonwu, Yusuf Grillo, Uche Okeke and Kolade Oshinowo was also part of the event. A display of African architectural technology also took place at the National Theatre, the display included paintings, drawings, and models showing different architectural themes such as banco masonry structures, tensile structure and the Berber Courtyard of Matmata.

Aftermath

Following the successful completion of the festival, the artifacts of the 59 countries and communities were kept in trust by Nigeria, the host country. This prompted the establishment of the Center for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC), a federal parastatal with offices in Marina, Lagos and FCT, Abuja. Monuments of the festival are currently being preserved in a museum at the Center.

Reference <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/festac_77>

Gidi Cultural festival:

The **Gidi Culture Festival** is a music and arts festival that takes place in Lagos, Nigeria. It was created in response to a demand from the local youth culture for live, affordable, and accessible entertainment in Africa.

The Gidi Culture Festival provides a venue for live bands, DJs, and musical acts to perform. It also features outdoor activities, local vendors, and artisans. The main show features a line-up of African acts from countries including Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Congo, Kenya, and the United Kingdom. The goal of the festival is to encourage the development of African talent and promote artists both within the continent and into overseas markets.

History

The Gidi Culture Festival was established in 2014 by Eclipse Live Africa. Its self-stated goal is to provoke insightful thoughts and empower African youth. The festival has been noted for its novel ideas about giving back to the community. Its Beach Sweeps and Dreams Project is an exchange program that creates opportunities for young people to work in a variety of different creative industries.

Inaugural Event: 2014

The festival's full line-up included: Ice Prince, Phyno, Naeto C, Chidinma, Dammy Krane, Blink, Poe, Boj, Teezee, Ayo Jay, Emma Nyra, Patoranking, Lynxx, Jesse Jagz, Oritse Femi, Orezi, Reminisce, Efya, DJ Obi, DJ Caise, DJ Hazan, DJ Cuppy, DJ Kaywise, Falz, Pucado, Yung L, and Endia.

Reference <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/gidi_cultural_festival>

IGUE AND EWERE FESTIVALS

Igue and Ewere festivals which are perhaps the most colourful and crowd-pulling festivals in among the Benins are combination of various festivals. They are reminiscent of the past events in Benin history. Each of the events is connected with past Obas around whom Benin customs and traditions are woven. The Igue festival is celebrated annually by every reigning Oba and all Benin citizens at home and abroad to mark the end of the Bini year and to usher in a new one with renewed hope for peace and prosperity.

The ancient Igue festival is akin to the white man's New Year ceremony. Before the innovations introduced by Oba Akenzua II Igue was normally celebrated during the month of September to climax a series of ceremonies, including Ugiododua, Ikpoleki, Rhor, Ugioro, Ugi' gun or Isiokuo and Ihiekhu.

The festive nature and kindness of weather in December make that month the choice of all for such an important and felicitations occasion, hence the shifting of time to December.

During Igue, the Binis turn out in their best attire and the whole city is practically caught in a craze for felicitations. Men and women dance and sing in pious glorification of the gods that protected them throughout the outgoing year. The ostentatious display of the flamboyant Benin chiefs and the uniqueness of their traditional dress are something quite reminiscent of the power and glory that was Benin.

Cows, goats, fowls and other beasts are prodigiously slaughtered to propitiate the spirits of the departed Obas and the various gods of the people.

Before the European era, the number of human beings slaughtered during this period of the year approximated in quantitative terms to that of the lesser animals. In those days, most of the ceremonies were held at night, a situation which made the lives of the ordinary citizens most insecure.

The modern Igue festival is a combination of nine principal ceremonies namely: Otue-Ugierhoba, Ugierhoba, Iron, Orue-Iguoba, Igue-Inene, Emobo, Iguivbioba, Iguedohia and Ugiewere. Although Igue is said to be old as Benin itself, its limelight can be traced to Oba Ewuare (about 1440 A.D) as a great magician, physician, traveler and warrior, prince Ogun (later Oba Ewuare) encountered many difficulties before he was crowned. He was said to have slept on a python on a certain night when an overfed leopard bled upon him from a tree. He woke up and killed both the python and the leopard. This story he narrated to members of his paternal family (Ihogbe) when he was crowned and from then, all Binis joined him in celebrating Igue festival during which offerings are made to the god of good luck.

The Oba, the custodian of Benin customs and traditions, attaches great importance to the Igue celebrations. Nowadays, Igue provides the only occasion during which the Oba wears his full traditional regalia and dances with the royal scimitar (Eben) in the presence of his people who always look up to the ceremonies with great joy and excitement.

During the Iguoba, Ugierhoba and Ugiewere ceremonies, The Oba comes out with some of his wives, a practice bequeathed to him by his forefathers. This is also the only occasion during which the Oba's wives (Iloi) are seen by the public.

Otue .Ugierhoba: this is an occasion when all chief with individual group of dancers go to the palace to greet and pray for the Oba in preparation for the subsequent ceremony- Ugierhoba. At this time chiefs dress in their full ceremonial robes according to their ranks.

Ugierhoba: This is a colourful and special ceremony during which homage is paid to the spirit of

the departed Obas. During Ugierhoba, the ceremony shifts from the main place to Ugheroba, the ancestral hall. It features traditional dances during which the chiefs with their own scimitars dance before their overlord. A most colourful ceremony of the festival, Ugierhoba provides an opportunity for the chiefs to renew their allegiance to the Oba and to seek his favour anew. Loyal citizens are honoured with chieftaincy titles. There is an interesting aspect of the Ugierhoba ceremony which stranger hardly take notice of.

When any chief of the class of the Uzama- Nihiron (kingmakers) or the group of Eghavbonore (State Ministers) dances, he waves his left hand questioningly at the Oba while he holds his scimitar downward with the right hand. The Oba, who sit on the throne simultaneously wave back his right hand questioningly at the particular chief. This demonstration of great historical significance is reminiscent of an event which took place in Benin in or (about 1369 A.D) in which the then Iyase (Prime Minister) Emuze was said to have been killed on the order of Oba Ohen for eavesdropping senior chief in Benin demanded to know what had happened to the Iyase while the Oba in turn demanded from the chief, the whereabouts of their colleague thus denying the allegation that he had murdered the Iyase. Infuriated at this, the chiefs later stoned Oba Ohen to death with white chalk (Ohen mien orhue).

The demonstration being made with the left hand during Ugierhoba ceremony is a commemoration of that great event of (1369 A.D).

IRON: Another important ceremony performed during the festivals is Iron (pronounced ee-ron). It commemorates the battle fought against the restoration of monarchy in Benin by some elders led by Chief Ogiawen. They had opposed the installation of Prince Oranmiyan from Ife as a king to open the second period on Benin history (about 1170 A.D). He was opposed at the ovia ferry—seventeen miles on Benin Siluko road. The royalists were victorious.

In about (1255 A.D) when Oba Ewedo was to move his palace from Usama, the old site, to the present palace, he was opposed like his great- grand father Prince Oranmiyan. As Oba Ewedo landed at Isekherhe, Ogiemwen took up arms to prevent his entry into the city. He told the Oba to go back to Ife his father's native land. He was however defeated by the royal troop and the Oba took up residence on the site of present- day palace. Today, Iron features a mock battle between the Oba and the elders represented by the kingmakers (Uzama- Nihinron).

OTUE-IGUOBA: Chiefs of various grades also dance with individual group to greet the Oba and wish him well in the performance of the Igue festival.

IGUE- OBA: This is the occasion when sacrifices are made to the guardian spirit as symbolized in the Oba's head. The ceremony is performed by those who belong to the palace societies but suffice it to say that two chiefs Esekherhe and Ihama, as well as Ihogbe (Oba's relatives) play a major role.

Traditional dances from various organizations, groups and societies are invited to perform throughout the night before igue- Oba ceremony is performed a leopard used to be slaughtered during the ceremony but this is now a thing of the past. Nowadays, kola-nut and wine are also freely used. Prayer is said for the preservation of the Oba's life, for peace among his people and prosperity for all.

IGUE-INENE: Unlike Igue-Oba this is held at the Oba's harem and is celebrated exclusively by his wives. This ceremony is not open to member of the public and only members of the Oba's family (Ihogbe) and some important chiefs as well as members of various palace societies are allowed to watch this, Cows, goats and fowls are slaughtered during Igue-Inene ceremony which is held in the third day.

UGIE-EMOBO: This is performed the fourth day at a temporary hut in the palace main gate. It commemorates an event in Benin history which date back to (about 1504 A.D). On the death of Oba Ozolua at Uzen in Ishan, his two sons Osawe and Arhuanran (the giant of Udo) contested the throne. They were the second and third sons respectively, the eldest being Ogidogbo who had been refused by the Binis because he was cripple due to the fracture he sustained while pole-jumping over the pond of Agbodo as a demonstration of strength in a contest with his two brothers.

Osawe was later crowned Oba Esigie but his brother Arhuanran, would not give him peace. This led to a punitive expedition, the fiercest battle of which went by the name Okuo- Ukpoba (the battle of blood), to avoid being disgraced. Arhuanran drowned himself in lake (Odighi) at Udo before he did so; he deposited a chest-lace made of superior coral beads, which had aided him during his war, at the vicinity of the lake with a curse that any person who wore it must run amok.

This chest-lace of beads was taken as booty by Oba Esigie. No sooner he put it on than he began to behave strangely. He was quickly cured. It is that incident of strange behavior that is today celebrated in Ugie- Emobo.

During the ceremony, the Oba puts on his red ceremonial robe, holds an ivory bell while Chief Esekhurhe holds the shrine- stick called 'Ukhourhe' Chiefs Ihaza and Esogban dance round the hut while drummers from Ogbelaka supply the traditional music. The Oba and Chief Esekhurhe do the same before performing some rites in the hut. It is at this time that Chief Esogban calls on Edo, Uselu, Uzebu and all the gods (propitiated) to leave Benin City for Udo. This done, Chief Esogban goes home straight without looking back. The Oba accompanied by Chief Esekhurhe dances, into the palace while Ogbelaka group still supplies traditional music to end Emobo.

IGUE –IVBIOBA: This is an exclusive ceremony for the prince and princesses of Benin Royal family. Performed on the fourth day of Igue, it affords opportunity to members of the royal family to offer sacrifices to the gods of good luck. Other citizens do not participate in this ceremony- which is held in individual homes of those concerned.

UGIE- EWERE: The origin of Ewere festival has been traced to Oba Ewuare (1440 A.D). When Oba Ewuare was still prince Ogun and was haunted by the Binis, he fled to a bush on the way to Igogogin. He was nearly caught there, but for the stray movement of some leaves which indicated that Benin warriors were still around. These leaves, he later called (Ebe- Ewere) the leaves of good luck. After ascending the throne, Oba Ewuare married the three daughters of Ogieka, chief on the Benin- Ekewan road. First was Ubi, then Ewere and lastly it was Oyoyo, Ubi was stubborn and was disgracefully driven away from the harem maids who struck her with burning brands while shouting on her 'Ubi rie' (Ubi go)

Oba Ewuare was said to have sent to Chief Ogieka to send his second daughter. Ewere in place of Ubi. This was done but unlike Ubi Ewere carried good luck and the expression of loyalty and allegiance paid to the Oba in cash and kind, words and deed by the people marked a new era in Oba Ewuare's reign. Today, the name 'Ubi' is synonymous with evil spirits and bad things while 'Ewere is Synonymous with good luck.

Although beloved by all, Ewere was not happy in the Oba's harem because her sister Oyoyo was not with her. It was her deep feeling of sorrow expressed through weeping, the gnashing of teeth that led Oba Ewuare to send for Chief Ogieka's third daughter, Oyoyo. On the arrival of Oyoyo

Ewere became a happy woman. This was the origin of the song that is rendered at the festival till today; 'Ewere gh 'Oyoyo' meaning, 'Ewere look at Oyoyo'. The Oba later married both sisters and Oyoyo gave birth to a female under the care of Chief Ihama. This happy and prosperous marriage was celebrated annually throughout Oba Ewuare's reign and has since been personified in the leaves of good luck (Ebe _Ewere) which are exclusively used during Ewere festival.

Ugiewere by far the most popular of all heralds the dawn of a new year. As early as five o' clock in the morning on Ugiewere day, young men and women troop out of their homes to take part in the traditional fireworks (Ubirie) designed to drive away the evil spirit from the town before the New Year rolls in. These enthusiastic young celebrates go to the out skirts of the city to bring back special traditional 'Ewere leaves', believed to be the symbol of good luck and prosperity. The fortune leaves are subsequently given out as New Year gifts to all citizens who anoint their fore-heads with them. Children and adults are to be seen dancing along the streets visiting every home and distributing Ewere leaves.

Ewere leaves are presented to the Oba by Chief Ihama of Ihogbe and Chief Isekhure both of whom are his paternal relations from the ancestral home at Ife. A prayerful song 'Arhie were re ukpo ighi ghe ivbiore' meaning: 'we have brought the leaves of good luck: our youth will be preserved this year' then rents the air while the big drum, a status symbol in Benin, starts throbbing out the age- long sounds from the compound of every big chief who has the royal authority to posses it. Friends and well wishers are lavishly entertained in every home occupied by a traditional occasions in Benin which have survived the test of time. Visitors from overseas countries have been thrilled by the splendor and historical setting of the festival.

Reference : < http://www.edoworld.net/IGUE_AND_EWERE_FESTIVALS.html>

Imo Carnival is a festival in Nigeria, also tagged " Celebration of unity", was created as part of the vision of making Imo State in Nigeria. The carnival has been designed to be an annual event which begins on every 16th day of December and lasts till the 31st day of every December. It has boosted the cultural mosaic of the Nigerian people while entertaining millions of spectators/visitors within and outside the State, thereby boosting the tourism industry for all stakeholders. Buchi George is the initiator and the founder of Imo Carnival, also the executive director Imo carnival development commission.

History

The Imo Carnival will be held for the first time in 2011 under the name Imo Carnival, Which is aimed at celebrating the unity of all festivals in imo state has come to stay. The governor of Imo State, Owelle Anayo Rochas Okorocho, has a vision of unity and making his state the hub for tourism and hospitality in Nigerian and in Africa. The Carnival presents a perfect platform from brand visibility for consumer and market awareness. The carnival aimed to unite every Imo indigene all over the World and to include more aspects of local heritage and culture and at the same time strengthen the capacity of the locals to participate in an economically beneficial way",.

Imo Carnival:

The programme of the event at the carnival will be drafted by the committee in charge of tourism and cultural activities and new initiatives which will be set up by the executive director, Buchi George. The Festival also boasts of music performances, from both local and international artistes, the annual Ahianjoku festival, Ozuruimo festival, Mmanwu (masquerade), Fashion shows, traditional wrestling festivals, Okorochoa dance, and other traditional dances. Having all traditional rulers in attendance. Carnival villages will be set up across every local government in the state, to help carry everyone along.

Other activities lined up for the year according to the work plan, include beauty pageants: mister and miss tourism Imo, an essay writing competition *, which will involve students from both secondary schools and tertiary institutions, just to mention but a few.

- The essay competitions is aimed at resurrecting the reading culture amongst the youth of the State as well as inculcating the carnival culture.

References: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imo_Carnival>

Arondizuogu:

(Aro-ndizuogu) is a town inhabited by the Igbo subgroup, the Aro people in the Imo State of Nigeria. The Arondizuogu community is believed to have migrated from Arochukwu in the present Abia State to their present settlements in across three local governments in Imo state. These include Okigwe, Ideato North and Onuimo Local Governments, although there are others of Aro descent in other local governments in Imo State.

Geographical location

Arondizuogu is a group of sprawling communities with the largest area located in the land obtained from Umualaoma town (formerly Isiokpu). Some believe that this land was obtained by begging, trickery, guerrilla warfare and open massacre of people from Umualaoma. However, this is a matter of perspective.

Arondizuogu is in Imo State of Nigeria. Most of the wars were stopped by one powerful charismatic Patriarch of the host community (Isokpu) by the name Ezerioha Udensi of Obiokwara, Obinihu, Umualaoma(Isuokpu). Ezerioha has subsequently organised peaceful allocation or donation of land by different villages and towns close to Arondizuogu after discovering that Arondizuogu people could not go back to Aro Chukwu.

Arondizuogu communities are spread out into three local government areas: Ideato North, Okigwe and Onuimo according to the various indigenous villages where the lands were obtained through similar means.

History

Aron dizaugu was founded by the use of force by Mazi Izuogu Mgbokpo and his brothers (Iheme) in the mid-14th century. Izuogu Mgbokpo was a charismatic slave merchant who came from Arochukwu to Awka in search of slaves. He was usually harbored by a friend from Umualaoma where he slept when going in search of slaves and with his goods (slaves). Some of the slaves of Izuogu maintained the name even after they were freed from captivity. Izuogu Mgbokpo has three children and three brothers. The children were Uche (Ndi Uche whose mother was from Isiekenesii), Awa (Ndiawa) and Amazu (Ndiamazu). While the brothers were Imoko (Ndi-imoko), Njoku (Ndi-Njoku) and Akame (Ndi-akaeme). Others are aborigines such as Ogbuonyeoma, Amankwu, Ekwuru^[1] Iheme, himself, was his Chief Servant and he came from Isi-Akpu Nise, in Awka. Iheme and his master Izuogu used all the weapons at their disposal, including the slaves, juju, guns and other equipments for securing slaves which they sold to the European slave merchants, Aron dizaugu people refer to themselves as "Izuogu na Iheme".

Early in the 19th century, Mazi Okoli Idozuka was an immigrant from Isi-Akpu Nise to Aron dizaugu. As a great slave warrior, he expanded Aron dizaugu's boundaries. He later changed his name to Okoro Idozuka, an Aro equivalent of his former name. He was a wealthy ruthless and almost conscienceless slave trader like Izuogu Mgbokpo but was also a great leader. Nwankwo Okoro was the first son of Okoro Idozuka. At the age of 21 he joined his father in the slave trade. *[1] By collecting slaves and war-captives he was able to build a very large family. When the British came, they made him a Warrant Chief because they believed he could subdue anybody and collect the taxes they desperately needed from them. Until this day, Aron dizaugu is the biggest former Aro colony and a land of immigrants settling mainly on the rich land.

Historical sites

Some Places of Interest in Aron dizaugu include Mazi Mbonu Ojike Cottage (Village home of Nigeria's late "Boycott king"), Mazi Mbonu Ojike at Ndiakeme Uno; Uno Ogologo (a safe house built in 1887 for hiding children during the slave trade era); The Stone Palace (a storey building cast in stone erected by late Chief Green Mbadiwe, West Africa's first millionaire for his father, Umualaoma Nkwo Ochie (old Nkwo).

Mbadiwe Odum at Ndianiche Uno; Ngeze (legendary stream at Ndiakeme Uno); Ogbuti Ezumezu (exotic visitor's chamber of Ikeji music maestro Pericoma Okoye at Ndiogbuonyeoma Ofe Imo); LN Motel Plaza, Home Diamond Hotel (luxury hospitality rendezvous at Ndiawa); National High School, Aron dizaugu (pioneer model school built by community effort and commissioned in 1951 at Ndiakeme Uno); Iheme Memorial Secondary School (second model school built by community effort and commissioned 1951 at Ndianiche Uno); Palace of The People (legendary country home of grandiloquent Nigerian politician, Dr. K.O. Mbadiwe at Ndianiche Uno commissioned by late Prime minister, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa in 1965); Upiti (expansive rice fields at Akeme Ohiauchu); Obi Omenuko, homestead of Igwegbe Odum (Omenuko), the hero of Peter Nwana's book; Ngene Okwe (natural spring at Ndiawa). Obi Ezerioha in Obiokwara, Obinihu (Agbualla) Umualaoma where the agreement for

Ndi izuogu lives in many local government areas in Imo State. Although they have almost the same dialect with the group of Igbos in Anambra state, apart from Ndi Uche (descendants of

the first son of Izuogu) that still retain a slightly different language as they live at the border to protect other members of the clan. Their language is slightly affected by their neighbours. It is remarkable that Arondizuogu is the only community that inhabits three local government areas apart from Mbaise. The local Government they inhabit include Okigwe, Ideato North and Onuimo.

Arondizuogu is made up of 20 villages;

Izuogu Community and their locations

1. Awa – a) Ochie Uno b) Aro Umulolo

1.Uche – a) Ochie Uno b) Umuduru (near Aniche Uwakonye) c) Ikpatu (Ofe Imo) d) Aro Onu Imo

3.Njoku – a) Ochie Uno b) Aro Amuro c) Aro Okigwe d) Ikpa Akanu

4.Imoko – a) Ochie Uno

5.Amazu – a) Ochie Uno b) Ikpa Akaputa c) Ikpa Ocha d) Ndi Okoli Igbo e) Aro Amuro f) Ikpa Akwu

6.Ejezie – a) Ochie Uno

7.Adimoha – a) Ochie Uno

8.Anyake – a) Ochie Uno

9.Uwaonu – a) Aro Okigwe

10.Ucheagwu – a) Aro Umulolo

11.Ndubisi – a) Aro Umulolo

12. Ekwulu

Iheme Community and their locations

Izuogu Community and their locations
1.Aniche – a) Ochie Uno b) Obinetiti c) Uwakonye d) Ndi be Ezeana e) Ndi be Ogbuda, f) Ikpenyi g) Ogene

2.Onuoha – a) Ochie Uno b) Ofe Imo c) Aro Umulolo

3.Eze – a) Ochie Uno b) Aro Umulolo c) Aro Ofe Imo d) Umuedi

4.Okonkwo – a) Ochie Uno b) Ofe Imo

5.Ogbuonyeoma a) Ochie Uno b) Ndi be Uche c) Umudike d) Okwu Achara e) Umuedi f) Umu Orji

6. Akeme – a) Ochie Uno b) Ohia Uchu c) Ikpa Okoli d) Nduka e) Ugwaku

7. Ukwu – a) Ochie Uno b) Ofe Imo

8. Akunwanta – a) Ochie Uno b) Nkwo Fada c) Idozuka (Aro Umulolo)

Festivals

Arondizuogu day

Instituted in 1948, 'Arondizuogu Day' which is an annual end-of year convention of people of Arondizuogu descent resident in Nigeria and the Diaspora. It is a day set aside to celebrate achievements, review challenges, and generally keep the flag of patriotism flying in the community. For the culture – loving people of Arondizuogu, the day is a special annual homecoming which they celebrate with much aplomb comparable only to their popular Ikeji Festival which is touted to be “the greatest carnival of masks and masquerades in Africa”.

Ikeji

Ikeji cultural festival of Arondizuogu in Imo State is a popular festival that brings the Igbo speaking community around the world together. Its origin dates back to over five centuries and it is acclaimed as the biggest pan-Igbo cultural community festival with strong heritage, international recognition and is witnessed by thousands of people on a yearly basis. It is arguably the biggest cultural festival in Igboland. In contemporary times, each passing year has witnessed an increase in grandeur, display, dance, sophistication and an all inclusive participation of all Arondizuogu people and friends. The festival is marked with colourful display of different masquerades such as Ogionu, Mgbadike, Nwaaburuja and Ozoebune; prestigiously parading across the market square to the admiration of the public. The essence of the festival, which ranks among the best surviving traditional ceremonies of the Arondizuogu people, is to celebrate the harvest of the first yams. It serves to unify and foster ties among Aro people who are spread across the entire Igbo speaking states and part of Cross River state. It appeals to the entire Igbo speaking peoples both at home and in the Diaspora.

Ikeji is a four-day festival of propitiation, thanksgiving and feasting which is held annually in March or April. Reckoned with the Igbo calendar, these four days correspond to one Igbo week of four market days (Eke, Oye/Orie, Afo and Nkwo). Each of these days has a special significance and represents one of the several dimensions of Ikeji – a festival renowned for sumptuous feasting, fascinating masquerades, pulsating rhythms, and colourful performances. Traditional musical instruments used to accompany the masquerades are ekwe (wooden slit drum) of various sizes, ogene (metal gong), bells, maracas and oja (wooden flutes). The flutist is a very important element in the ikeji festival. He deftly communicates with the masquerades - weaving soulful melodies and blending esoteric messages into the intoxicating rhythm of the drums. Another interesting aspect of ikeji is the raconteur known as ima mbem - an imaginative tale delivered with a musical cadence that only the initiated can sometimes understand or comprehend. The importance of the flutist during Ikeji festival is very vital, for he communicates things hidden from the ordinary eyes to the masquerades, combined with soulful melodies, steps and gestures, “blending esoteric messages into the intoxicating rhythm of the drums” to the admiration of the crowd.

During Ikeji festival, ON THE LAST DAY, a ram is usually tied to a pole at a popular market square with a single thread. Somebody with the strongest protection from any juju of whatever type is expected to leisurely walk to the ram amidst heavy attempt with juju from other people to knock him down, maim him or kill him. Only the brave can participate in, while the NOT SO BRAVE will either abstain from or remain with the crowd as spectators. Only the brave can stand forward from the crowd, one after another and approach the tree with a view to untying the ram. However, each contender will be attacked by forces which are beyond the scope of this article to explain, with a view to stopping him reaching the ram. If overwhelmed, he will beat a retreat back to his starting point. Until eventually, the bravest among the masquerades participating in the competition for that year's festival, after overcoming all odds, will reach the ram and untie it and take it, to a thunderous applause by the spectators. This will be followed by visits to his house by fellow kinsmen with food and wine for elevating the status of his village. Each year this is used to commemorate the person in Arondizuogu and neighbouring towns with the strongest juju or voodoo power.

Arondizuogu Patriotic Union

Arondizuogu Patriotic Union (APU) is the umbrella organisation of all Arondizuogu communities in Nigeria and the Diaspora. Established in 1932 in Aba, APU is one of the earliest and most enduring organs of community development set up by an Igbo clan in colonial Nigeria. The youngmen of Arondizuogu who laid the foundation for APU left their homes for the first time in the 1920s and early 1930s to seek a better life in the emerging urban centres of colonial Nigeria. They found themselves in social, economic and political environments different from the life they knew at home. Refusing to be intimidated or alienated, they held on to that deep feeling of love for the community with which they grew up. They assembled at Aba on October 8, 1932, to aggregate ideas on how best to convey the concomitants of modern development with which they were surrounded in the city (such as wide roads, schools, hospitals, post offices, portable water, electricity, court rooms, etc.) to their village community.

References: <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arondizuogu>>

Ofala Festival:

The **Ofala Festival**, is an annual ceremony practiced by the indigenes of Onitsha, and of recent years by other neighboring Igbo communities such as Nnewi in Anambra State, SouthEastern Nigeria and Ukpo in Dunukofia Local Government Area. It serves as a rites of renewal of the king or Obi and it is similar to the Igue festival in Benin and the ***Ine , Osi or Ogbanigbe Festival*** in many mid-West Igbo communities of Nigeria. The term *ofala*, is derived from two Igbo words - *ofo* (English: authority) and *ala* (English: land). The festival is celebrated within two days mostly in October by the *Obi* (English: king).



History

According to some oral history sources, the Ofala Festival can be traced back to the 16th Century when Onitsha people emigrated from Benin to the Eastern banks of the River Niger presently known as the city of Onitsha and brought with them among other customs, the tradition of monarchy. The festival is akin to the *Igue Festival* celebrated annually by the Oba of Benin. Some historians also believe the festival is related to the New Yam Festival in Onitsha and devotion of the King to the safety of his people.

The festival marks the end of a period of retreat sometimes called Inye Ukwu na Nlo when the Obi remains incommunicado and undergoes spiritual purification for the good of the community. At the end of the weeklong retreat the Obi emerges during the Ofala to bless his subjects and say prayers for the community. Ofala is celebrated annually beginning from the coronation of the *Obi* to his death, the latter of which is called "the last Ofala".

Ceremony and purpose

The festival usually starts with a traditional twenty-one gun salute followed by an all night Ufie (royal gong) drumming, dancing and other cultural activities. In the afternoon, the Obi's cabinet of chiefs, guests from other communities, age groups, women and youth of the community usually throng the palace grounds or Ime Obi dressed in traditional attires befitting the festival occasion. The royal music or Egwu Ota is played during the entrance of the Ndichie or red cap chiefs who arrive after the gathering of the crowd and bringing along a few of their friends and family members their procession to the palace. The highlight of the festival is the emergence of the *Obi* in his royal regalia to the cheer of the crowd, a cannon shot announces the entrance of the Obi who is usually dressed in ceremonial robe and carries a bronze sword on his hand, he walks to the sides of the arena or a third of the arena acknowledging the cheers of the gathering. The Obi then retires and subsequently, the red cap chiefs pays homage to him according to seniority, thereafter both the Obi and the chiefs reappear after the firing of another cannon shot. During the second appearance the Obi dances in the arena, something that is rarely seen and his steps cover more distance than the first appearance. Then the visiting chiefs and guests pay homage to the Obi. The festival is also sometimes an occasion for the *Obi* to honour individuals with chieftaincy titles.

Arts

Music and visual arts have become a part of the festival. The 2015 edition held a visual arts exhibition called Oreze III, the event had a display by various artists and 20 busts depicting departed Onitsha kings.

References: < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ofala_Festival >

Ojude Oba festival:

Ojude Oba is a Yoruba festival held in Ijebu Ode, a town in Ogun State, Southwestern Nigeria. It is held annually the third day after Eid al-Kabir.^[1] The festival began over 100 years ago. Today, the festival is usually attended by over 250000 people across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria.^[2] The festival is often sponsored by the incumbent Awujale, the people of Ijebu-Ode, individuals and corporate organizations.^[3]

Adetoun Sote wrote a book on the Ojude Oba Festival of Ijebu ode in the western part of Nigeria. The first book to be written on this festival.

References:< References:< https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ojude_Oba_Festival>

Olojo festival:

The **Olojo Festival** is a festival in Ife, Osun State, in Nigeria.

The Olojo Festival is a culture festival in the calendar of the Ile-Ife, Osun State which is located in the Southwestern part of Nigeria. It is the celebration of the remembrance of “Ogun”, god of Iron, who is believed to be the first son of Oduduwa, progenitor of the Yoruba people. The festival is held annually in October.

Ritual

On this day, the Ooni (king of Ife) appears after several days of seclusion and denial communing with the ancestors and praying for his people. This is to make him pure and ensure the efficacy of his prayers. Before the Ooni emerges, women from his maternal and paternal families sweep the Palace, symbolically ridding the Palace of evil.

The Ooni later appears in public with the Are crown (King’s Crown), which is believed to be the original crown used by Oduduwa to lead a procession of traditional Chiefs and Priests to perform at the Shrine of Ogun. The next stage of the ceremony is to lead the crowd to Okemogun’s shrine. Here he performs duties including the renewal of oath, divination for the Ooni at the foot of Oketage hill by Araba (Chief Priest), as well as visiting places of historical importance.

At the shrine, the traditional Chiefs with the swords of office marked with chalk and cam wood, appear in ceremonial attire and dance to rhythms from Bembe, a traditional drum. The style of drum and singing for each Chief is different. Only the Ooni can dance to the drum called Osirigi.

Olojo has remained popular in Ile-Ife because of its myth and history. It connotes the day in the year specially blessed by Olodumare (the creator of the Universe). Olojo can also be literally translated as the "Owner for the day". Prayers are offered for peace and tranquility in Yoruba and Nigeria. All age groups participate. Its significance is the unification of the Yorubas.

Tradition holds that Ile-Ife is the cradle of the Yorubas, the city of survivors, spiritual seat of the Yorubas, and land of the ancients.

References: < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olojo_festival>

Oro Festival:

Oro Festival is an event celebrated by towns and settlements of Yoruba origin. It is an annual traditional festival that is of patriarchal nature, as it is only celebrated by male descendants who are paternal natives to the specific locations where the particular event is taking place. During the festival, females and non-natives stay indoors as oral history has it that Oro must not be seen by women and non-participating people. The ceremonies surrounding the celebration of Oro differs from town to town, and one is often called after the death of a monarch.

References: < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oro_festival>

Yam Festival:

Ogwa Ukwu festival :

