

MAR 2024

# With Love, from Edo

Koyo!! [Benin] Obokhian!! [Esan] Abee!! [Afemai] Hello [English]



## Easter 🙏 Ramadan Edition



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رمضان كريم  
*Ramadan*  
Kareem







We welcome you to this special Easter/Ramadan edition of the With Love From Edo digest. Just like you, we swelter in perspiration in our editorial chat room, with February being described as the hottest in the history of mankind. Who says that global warming is a myth? Definitely, it is not!



In Nigeria, particularly Edo State, we have always believed that the early rains are a blessing. The state government has announced its intentions to plant at least 2000 trees in 2024/2025 to curb the alarming rate of deforestation nationwide. Nigeria has the highest level of deforestation globally, experiencing an annual loss of 3.7% of its forests. Countries like the Ivory Coast also face significant challenges related to deforestation. Since the pre-industrial era, Ivory Coast has lost over 94% of its forest cover and has an annual deforestation rate of 2.8%.

The early rains have helped the biodiversity credentials of Edo State. As the reforestation initiative takes off, we will hopefully see more wildlife in the near future, as in the 1960s.

On April 8, 2024, the world will witness the rare event of an eclipse of the sun, which will be most noticeable in the United States. This is an event that takes place typically once every 18 months and should be fascinating. In Edo State, one of the myths is that when you see a rainbow, it means an elephant is giving birth. So, as you go into Good Friday and prepare to eat your Frejon, we get ready to end the 30 days of fasting after citing the moon in early April. We wish all our readers Kareem Ramadan and a happy Easter.

This edition of With Love From Edo is your perfect companion as the early rains pour.

With Love,

**Obehi**



## IN THIS ISSUE

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📍 Some Sites to Visit in Edo

📍 Exploring Spirituality in Edo

📍 Benin City is a Commercial Hub





HAPPY  
*Easter*







## GLOBAL TOURISM

- ☆ **Solar Eclipse to take place in the United States, Mexico, Canada and other parts of North America on April 8, 2024**
- ☆ Seychelles Planning to Lift Moratorium On Increasing Tourism Accomodation On La Digue
- ☆ Ukraine starts planning for post-war tourism: 'We welcome our guests if they don't come with guns'
- ☆ Saudi Arabia unveils 'Hospitality Investment Enablers' for tourism growth
- ☆ Macau's maritime tourism program to strengthen ties with casino operators, add new ferry company
- ☆ Museveni unveils plan to propel tourism sector
- ☆ Tanza: Egypt's first, largest integrated entertainment destination
- ☆ Egypt's Prime Minister Inaugurates International Health Tourism Conference In Administrative Capital
- ☆ UnionPay and the Tourism Organisation of Serbia sign MOU
- ☆ Thailand's employment rises in Q4 on increased tourism By Reuters
- ☆ Sri Lanka's tourism sector sees 122 per cent growth in Jan 2024 compared to last year, says minister
- ☆ Water Tourism: LAGFERRY Inaugurates Bariga Waterfront Jetty
- ☆ First edition of Tunisian Medical Tourism Fair next May 3-5



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# BENIN NATIONAL MUSEUM



The prestigious Benin City National Museum was established in 1973. The museum is renowned for its cultural and political relevance to the people of Benin kingdom.

As an institution rich in history and cultural significance, it houses an array of artifacts from the illustrious Benin Empire.

Tourists from all over are drawn to the unique terracotta and bronze figures, as well as the artistry of the cast iron pieces that are steeped in ancient traditions.

Interesting sights include the Oba Akenzua Gallery on the ground floor, which houses major artifacts such as the head of the revered Queen Idia and samples of shotguns used during the Ida war.

The first floor houses some of the original artworks and cultural objects of the old Benin kingdom, artifacts from within Benin City and its neighboring communities, as well as Delta State. The second floor has a slightly wider frame of collections. They include artifacts from cultures like the Urhobo, Esan, Etsako, Itsekiri, Isoko etc. The Unity Gallery on the third floor offers a glimpse of contemporary art pieces from renowned Nigerian artists and various historic relics from around the country.

The museum also houses a gift shop where visitors can purchase souvenirs ranging from batik fabrics to traditional drinking vessels and jewelry items, allowing you to take a piece of history home with you.

The Benin City National Museum is an important institution for the preservation of culture. It is strategically located within the community of people whose ancestors produced some of the great pieces of the old Benin kingdom.



**MUSEUM**



**OF**



**WEST**

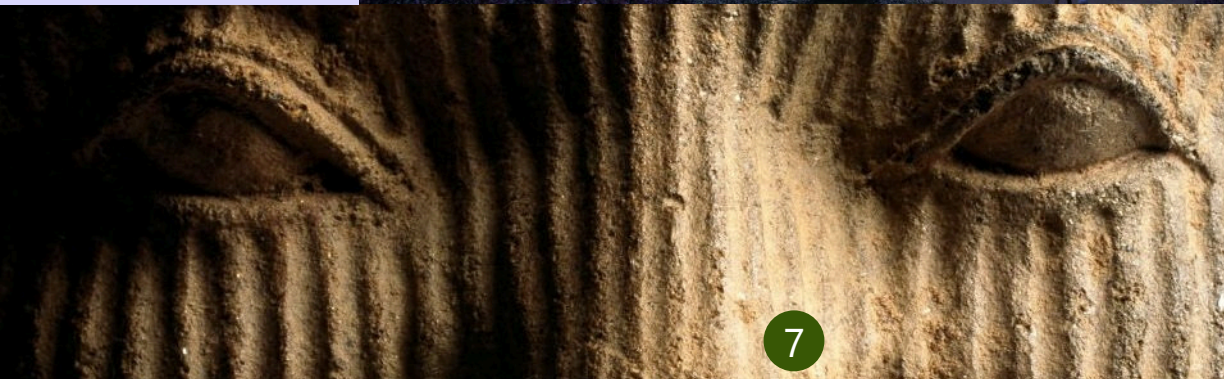


The MOWAA Campus, slated for completion by 2025, will serve as a hub of cultural innovation and heritage preservation. The campus will feature a boutique, hotels, artist residences, studio spaces, and the eagerly anticipated Rainforest Gallery, with the expected date of completion being sometime in 2025.

**AFRICAN**



**ARTS**



**MOWAA**



# REVIVING HISTORY

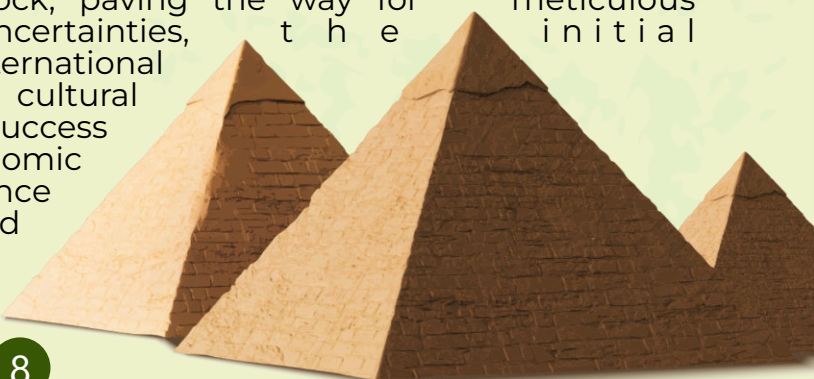


## Egypt's Ambitious Restoration of the Giza Pyramid

Egypt has embarked on a monumental endeavor to restore the Pyramid of Menkaure's outer granite shell in collaboration with Japanese archaeological experts. This ambitious project aims to recreate the grandeur of the Pyramid of Menkaure by reconstructing its outer shell with scattered blocks believed to have collapsed during an earthquake centuries ago. Described as "the project of the century" by Mostafa Waziri, secretary general of Egypt's Supreme Antiquities Council, the restoration holds significant cultural and economic implications. It is hoped that revitalizing this ancient wonder will bolster tourism revenues, a vital source of foreign currency for the country.

While some voices of dissent question the intervention's adherence to international principles and its allocation of resources amidst economic challenges, Mr. Waziri reassures skeptics that the project will utilize existing materials without imposing additional financial strain. In the face of skepticism, Mr. Waziri remains resolute, emphasizing the historical context of the pyramid's structure and the necessity of preserving Egypt's rich heritage.

The restoration project commences with a comprehensive scan conducted by Japanese experts to catalog each block, paving the way for meticulous restoration work. Despite economic uncertainties, the initial study is funded by Japan, signaling international collaboration in safeguarding Egypt's cultural treasures. As the project unfolds, its success intertwines with the nation's economic trajectory, reflecting the delicate balance between preserving the past and embracing the future.





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# Recent events



**Ladi:** It is said that one of the greatest attractions of tourism is the history of the destination country especially in sub-Saharan Africa such as Senegal, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Kenya. How can Africa leverage its rich history and culture to improve tourism?

**Obehi:** Coming back to Nigeria, Edo State, for example, our unique history is a source of competitive advantage to us. Edo State did not just begin as Edo State. We started as the Benin Kingdom. From the Benin Kingdom, we were part of the Midwestern region. Then from the Benin and Delta provinces, they formed Bendel State.

Out of Bendel State, they cut out Edo State. For example, did you know that our University of Benin was once referred to as MIT? Midwest Institute of Technology. Edo has evolved and our history is peculiar to us. It cannot be replicated by any other state.

In Edo State, we have the Benin Moat. It's been known as the largest man-made structure in West Africa. It was completed in the fourteenth century and was built as a defence fortification against invaders. It's also known as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Edo State Tourism Agency in collaboration with MOWAA (Museum of West African Art, Edo State) is charged with implementing the moat project.





# Some sites to visit in Edo State



**BENIN ROYAL PALACE**



**BENIN NATIONAL MUSEUM**



**OKOMU NATIONAL PARK**



**OSOSO TOURIST CENTRE**



**OGBEMUDIA STADIUM**



**EMOTAN STATUE**



**IGUN STREET**



**IDANRE HILLS**



# The Ancestors are Watching: Exploring Spirituality in Edo Culture

Human life is inherently intertwined with the spiritual experience, creating an inseparable connection. Spirituality can be understood as one's belief or sense of purpose and meaning. It can manifest in expressions of gratitude at the pinnacle of meaningful endeavors, acknowledging a higher power, commonly referred to as God, the source of all things. Moreover, spirituality proves to be a vital element in addressing emotional stress or physical illness. It fosters a sense of peace, hope, confidence, and a connection to a higher being. This connection empowers individuals, enabling them to fully understand living blissfully through a healthy mind, soul, and body.

Throughout history, fasting has been a crucial activity for enhancing spirituality. It involves a dedicated period of abstaining from luxuries like food, drink, and sexual relations to draw closer to God and, in some cases, empathize with the less fortunate. A crucial part of being highly attuned spiritually involves being at peace and love with everyone and the ability to accommodate diverse opinions, a trait particularly pronounced among the Edo people.

The Edo people believe in the spiritual substance called Osanobua (God). Osanobua serves as the foundation for establishing and reconciling the principle of unity amidst the diversity in the universe. The Edo people embrace a liberal religious perspective, acknowledging the existence of multiple paths to heaven despite recognizing only one creator. This inclusivity is reflected in the peaceful coexistence of various religions within the Edo community, where the people follow Christianity, Islam, or traditional worship practices.

Central to the Edo culture is also the veneration of the ancestors (Enikaro). These are kinsmen who, after living and passing away, become an intercessor between humans and Osanobua. Some Edo people believe that

elders, after death, become a higher existence that plays a watchful and intercessory role for their descendants, symbolizing justice and conflict resolution within the family and community. This is reflected in the Edo saying: "Enikaro Ghe Ima" (ancestors are watching).

In Edo spirituality, ancestors are central to addressing life's challenges. They are viewed as the closest link to divinity and intervene for various needs, such as a successful harvest, prosperous marriages, victory in battles, healing, good fortune, and safe childbirth. People turn to them for supplications, relying on their proximity to the Supreme Being, Osanobua, to navigate the appropriate channels for approaching Him on behalf of their descendants.

The spiritual journey of the Edo people is a harmonious symphony of faith, diversity, and unity. It reflects the understanding that despite the different paths taken, all roads lead to the same divine source. The interplay of Osanobua, ancestral guardians, and the community's collective faith weaves a fabric that binds generations together, creating a legacy of spiritual richness that stands as a testament to the enduring strength of the Edo people.

## *Wise Words*

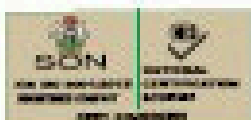
*"Ogbe no gbe, la a mase a a na"*  
One can only plan for  
aday that has come.



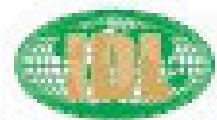


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## UNIVERSITY OF BENIN (UNIBEN)



## AMBROSE ALLI UNIVERSITY



# Benin City is a commercial hub

Edo State is known for its oil palm, cocoa, and rubber cash crops. The state is home to Nigeria's two largest oil palm producers—Okomu Oil Plc and Presco Plc. Edo is situated at the crossroads of several economically thriving states and emerges as more than just a geographic convergence. The state is a dynamic nucleus of trade and industry, pulsating with the energy of commerce and culture. The Niger River, a lifeline coursing along its eastern boundary, serves as both a symbol and a practical conduit, sustaining the flow of goods, ideas, and cultural exchange that define Edo's essence.

Here, amidst the convergence of four states, Edo becomes a beacon of opportunity, its landscape shaped by its heritage and the rich tapestry of resources surrounding it. The verdant fields of Anambra State, where cassava and rice flourish, and the bustling markets of Kogi State, brimming with cashews, groundnuts, melon, and mineral resources, which include coal, limestone, iron, and tin, are some of the wonders that bound Edo.

Edo State also emerges as the pivotal link in a chain of economic exchange. The Itakpe-Ajaokuta-Warri rail line passes through three states in Nigeria, it connects Delta, Edo, and Kogi states, linking the port city of Warri to the inland town of Itakpe. It passes through Edo communities, including Uromi, Igueben-Ekehen, Igbanke, Agbor Station, and Abraka.

To the southeast and south, the powerhouse of Delta State's oil and gas sector finds synergy with Edo's agricultural abundance. At the same time, westward, Ondo State's cocoa plantations and rubber groves feed into Edo's bustling trade networks. Meanwhile, the agricultural bounty of Niger State to the north finds its way to markets near and far, facilitated by Edo's strategic location. Edo State serves as a transit point between Ondo and Lagos and various other destinations.

Edo's role as a hub of trade and industry is undeniable in this vibrant tapestry of states. Its markets buzz with activity, pulsating with the rhythm of commerce. Beyond the tangible exchanges of goods and services, Edo State is a melting pot of cultures, ideas, and aspirations, where the diverse influences of its neighboring states converge and blend, shaping a dynamic and resilient community poised for growth and prosperity.





# EDO STATE ON TRACK

## Ujevwu to Itakpe Timetable

	Arrival time	Departure time
Agbor(Delta)-Igbanke	9:30am	9:35am
Igbanke-Ekehen	9:55am	9:58am
Ekehen-Uromi	10:20am	10:23am
Uromi-Agenebode	10:47am	10:52am
Agenebode-Itogbo (kogi)	11:20am	11:23am

## Itakpe to Ujevwu Timetable

	Arrival time	Departure time
Itogbo (kogi)-Agenebode	15:19pm	15:21pm
Agenebode-Uromi	15:44pm	15:47pm
Uromi-Ekehen	16:15pm	16:20pm
Ekehen-Igbanke	16:44pm	16:47pm
Igbanke-Agbor(Delta)	17:13pm	17:16pm

**BOOK YOUR TRIP NOW**







Ramadan  
★ Kareem





***What are we  
doing today?***



## ENTERTAINMENT

- 1 What are the 5 states in the same geopolitical zone as Edo state ?
- 2 What was the topic discussed by the ESTA MD at the Channels TV interview ?
- 3 In what year was the Benin National Museum open to the public ?

Answers are in the word puzzle

## WORD PUZZLE

FROM THIS EDITION

M	B	Y	H	I	P	E	C	N	S	K	O	K	H	R
U	N	A	V	P	S	R	R	E	E	R	W	W	E	V
E	A	Z	Y	I	V	O	O	W	R	V	E	T	D	S
S	Y	S	A	E	H	B	S	M	A	A	S	V	Y	E
U	Y	B	Q	U	L	Y	S	A	H	A	L	C	I	I
M	G	Z	B	N	V	S	W	R	E	M	T	O	Z	R
O	A	T	L	E	D	O	A	N	W	R	O	M	S	X
H	R	X	S	J	M	I	I	O	I	N	U	M	F	G
A	I	R	E	G	I	N	P	V	H	D	R	E	L	B
D	O	O	L	T	D	A	E	O	J	Z	I	R	I	T
W	F	A	R	U	U	R	B	H	P	V	S	C	G	P
K	Q	A	S	B	F	F	Q	O	R	X	M	I	H	Y
D	I	T	A	K	W	A	I	B	O	M	B	A	T	G
N	R	G	L	O	B	A	L	S	T	N	A	L	P	E
Y	R	A	M	A	D	A	N	U	P	M	T	T	G	T

BURUNDI  
CAPE VERDE  
IVORY COAST  
MAURITANIA  
TANZANIA  
DJIBOUTI

LESOTHO  
TOGO  
NAMIBIA  
ERITREA  
COMOROS  
ANGOLA

GABON  
THE GAMBIA  
BENIN  
MOZAMBIQUE  
NIGER

## EVENTS

### Ugbete

April

To appease the soil

### Ivbamen

April

Initiation ceremony

### Ukpako

April

Graduation into Manhood



## LINGO

Benin ▾
↔
English ▾

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**Belief**

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🔄

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