

NIGERIA CUSTOMS

Greetings:

In Nigeria, greetings are highly valued among the different ethnic groups. Neglecting to greet another or rushing through a greeting is a sign of disrespect. Therefore, people are courteous and cheerful when exchanging greetings.

Because of the diversity of customs, cultures, and dialects in Nigeria, English greetings are widely used throughout the country. Nigerians use *Hello* but perhaps not as often as *Good morning*, *Good afternoon*, and *Good evening*.

After the initial greeting, people usually inquire about each other's well-being, work, or family. The appropriate response is usually *Fine*, but one listens to this response before proceeding with the conversation.

Personal space between members of the same sex is limited, and Nigerians may stand or sit very close when conversing.

Gestures:

Because Nigeria is a multicultural nation, gestures differ from one ethnic group to another. Pushing the palm of the hand forward with the fingers spread is vulgar and should be avoided.

Hausa do not point the sole of the foot or shoe at another person.

Most people pass objects with the right hand or both hands but usually not the left hand alone.

Yoruba often wink at their children if they want them to leave the room when guests are visiting. People beckon by waving all fingers together with the palm facing down.

Holidays:

National holidays include New Year's Day, Labor Day (1 May), Democracy Day (29 May), and National Day (1 Oct.). In addition, Christian and Muslim holy days are celebrated by the entire country.

Muslim holidays are determined according to the lunar calendar, which is shorter than the Western (Gregorian) year by about 11 days. These holidays include *Maulid an-Nabi* (the prophet Muhammad's birthday), *Idul Fitr* (a three-day feast at the end of the month of *Ramadan*), and *Idul Adha* (the Feast of the Sacrifice).

Christian holidays include Easter (Friday–Monday), Christmas, and Boxing Day (26 Dec.). Boxing Day is a day for visiting. It comes from a British tradition of giving small boxed gifts to service workers the day after Christmas.