

## Enjoying Your First Few Days in Lagos, Nigeria

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### The clichés – and the reality



#### **1. It's dangerous getting to and from the airport.**

With the new six-lane expressway almost complete any past bottleneck points will no longer exist. Airport arrival and departure areas are well laid out, the pathway to the multi-storey carpark is lit. The easiest options: either book a taxi via Uber or arrange a pick-up through your hotel.

#### **2. There's nothing to do in Lagos other than sit in hotels**

Lagos boasts a huge range of very good restaurants, e.g. Japanese, Chinese, Lebanese, Thai, Italian, steak houses. Our recommendation: Shiro on Water Corporation Rd., VI. Then there are cafes and water-front bars, night clubs, etc.. And at the weekend you can hire a boat to take you out to one of the beaches. Or alternatively sign up for a round of golf on one of the courses.

#### **3. The city is culturally dead**

The city is renowned for its vibrant photography and art scene. There are numerous galleries (try Red Door Gallery on Bishop Oluwole St., VI). And the city thrives on live music at the numerous clubs – or The Shrine (Macron's favourite local hangout), home to the Kuti brothers and the birthplace of Afrobeat.

#### **4. There is no regular Internet access**

To have uninterrupted Internet access in Lagos you will need to buy a data package from one of the service providers. To that end you need a local mobile phone (ask your business partner to arrange one for you or ask the hotel business centre). Use it as your own hotspot and you will find that high-speed coverage is possible just about everywhere.

#### **5. There are no hotels suitable for international business travellers**

The Hiltons, Sheratons, Radissons, Proteas and InterContinental of this world all have hotels downtown as well as hotels close to the airport. The latter are good for meetings, and also mean you can get to the domestic airport easily if you are traveling in-country. Alternatively, there are hotels on the waterfront at Five Cowrie Creek on both the Ikoyi and Victoria Island sides (the Radisson Blu Anchorage is great, lovely terrace waterside bar and superb breakfast buffets).



### **6. Cash and payments**

The cashless society is far advanced in Lagos: There are ATMs at most corners, and most shops and restaurants have e-POS systems. Most ATMs accept the usual credit cards.

### **7. It is hard to get around in Lagos without having one's own car and chauffeur.**

You do not need a personal driver. Nowadays moving in Lagos is easy courtesy of Uber or one of the two local rivals: Taxify and Oga Taxi. However, it is important to schedule meetings to move anticyclically to the rush-hour traffic, as otherwise you may spend many hours in gridlock – rush hour is 8-10 a.m. and 4.30 – 6 p.m.

### **8. There is a strong risk of getting mugged or robbed downtown.**

This is certainly the case in one or two of the outlying districts of the mega-city, districts that Lagosians themselves will tend to avoid at night. However ex-pats and Lagosians will tell you where these no-go areas are, and they are unlikely to be on your itinerary anyway.

### **9. Doing business in Lagos is not worthwhile. Corruption and red tape will prevent me making a profit**

In many business centres of the world business people have to be aware of corruption and red tape. This is just as true for Sao Paulo as well as it is for Moscow or Beijing. In general, Lagos presents a speed track and a slower track. If you refuse to take the speed track, this does not mean that your business will not be realised, but that it will be realised at a slower pace.

In Lagos, German business people will find a large number of experienced lawyers and business consultants who know all the local dos and don'ts very well. Refer to these people if you are not sure to adopt the right behaviour. In Lagos, you will also find the German AHK (Chamber of Commerce), and the Nigerian-German Business Association.

### **10. There are few business opportunities in Lagos for German companies**

Lagos is one of the most important business capitals in the world. It is not only the economic centre of Nigeria, a country of 190 million people and GDP of USD 376 billion. It is also the epicentre of the West African economy.

More than 50 German companies are active in Nigeria. Many of them are based in Lagos. Some German entrepreneurs have even successfully launched their own businesses in Nigeria. At present about 500 Germans live in Nigeria, most of them in Lagos.

The needs of Nigerians are very large, from renewable energy to consumer products. The French dairy group Danone has in the space of only a few years emerged as one of the most important dairy producers in Nigeria.

It is true that Nigeria is a difficult market. But once you have successfully established your business there, you will get access to the most important and the most promising market in Africa.