

EDANA

MAGAZINE

Sharing our
Liberian Smiles

EMERGING
MODELS :

**Places of Tourist
Attraction in Liberia**

**Lappa Lover
Journey of Discovery
and Identity**

The Beauty of Mama Liberia



Edana
Photography

The Beauty of Mama Liberia

Come to Liberia!

The culture of Liberia begins with a group of youngsters playing soccer and yelling in local English, 'Da penalty!' or a group of young girls playing a leg sport dubbed 'Na foot' yelling almost simultaneously, 'Da my time to play!' It stretches to a child holding a pot of water on his head walking from the creek and looking aimlessly at the stretch of shrubs along his path.

You take a walk in the neighborhood and the air is choked with aroma of hot palm butter hovering over the town and young baby mothers nursing their defiant babies, adding their crying voices to the chorus of market women yelling, selling, cooking and babysitting, all at once, on the shores of the wall street of Africa-the marketplace. Liberian culture is almost completely unique- no brand of Africans on the continent speaks with such distinctive pidgin like Liberians. The tiny West African nation is a mixture of 16 local tribes that settled from across the corners of the continent along with repatriated freed American slaves that settled in the 1800s. This is the melting pot of civilization, western life, Afro American culture, Afro Caribbean lifestyle and was once a home for almost every man of color. Liberia, meaning 'land of the free', is the place to go for every man wanting total freedom, from the scars of racism to the bondage of cultural cage, Liberia with its liberal tendencies accommodates every culture from every planet. With a small population of less than 5 million, it's a home to mangrove swamps, beautiful beaches, exotic landscapes and a very hospitable people. Its second largest city, Buchanan, named after former US President Thomas Buchanan is locally referred to as the 'home of the nation's hospitality' Liberia has been a home for

everyone from every corner of Africa, the Caribbean, America and Europe.

Liberian cuisine is one of the most exotic dishes across the continent, from her dense Torborgee from northern Lofa County, to pounded cassava known as Gehba (GB) from Nimba Country or pounded softer cassava known as dumboy from Grand Bassa and Rivecess Counties or red palm oil soup with rice and okra known as Kpelleh soup from Bong County. Jollofrice is a Monrovia based dish that has sustained an intense rivalry between Nigerians and Ghanaians. But, a festival with Liberian Jollofrice would put the rivalry to bed. The Liberian jollofrice is mixed with just everything from the market, pigfeet, chicken, spareribs, meat, mixed vegetables, and an aroma that seals the deal. Liberia is a mixture of Cosmopolitan and Provisional lifestyles with lappa- tying women with babies on their backs walking to a local market or to attend to farming chores or a woman dressed in a Gucci jeans and blazer, sun glasses, top hats hopping from an elevator. Next time you're lost on the continent and need a place to keep your sanity in check, drop in the bosom of the land of the free. Enjoy your stay and thank me later!

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Emerging Liberian Models



Faith Muahnjay Karnga



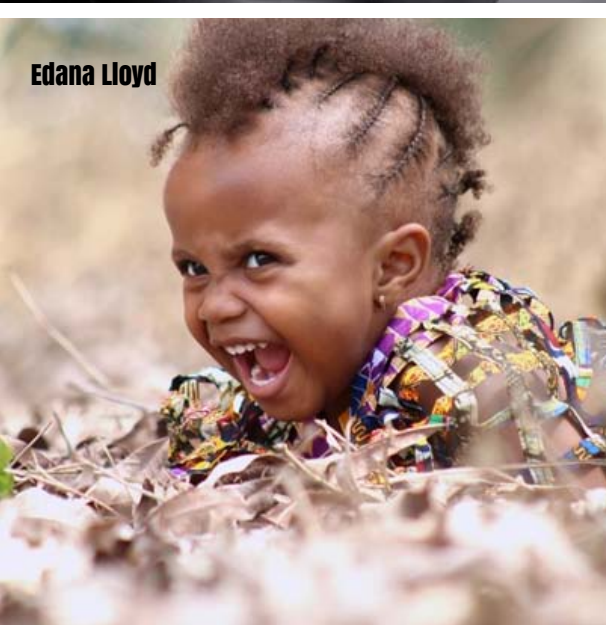
Danta Gondea



Miss Samwuel Talwadu



Elvire Bukini



Edana Lloyd



Sianeh Amanda Dogba-Yassa

Lappa Lover

Journey of Discovery and Identity



Growing up, it was always exciting to play dress up in my mother's clothing or make new outfits for my dolls. Fashion is a lot of things to me, an expression of temperament, mood, a statement, and part of my identity. Fashion is more than clothes, shoes and accessories. It is a literal diary of personal growth and exploration of identities. A rebranded "Lallapolian" or as we say, a proud "Ankara" Lover. This is part of my identity and often expressed in clothing or with head ties (head wraps).

As a Liberian, African lappa or its western coined name "Ankara" has always been in my life.

From the early years when you tagged along to Waterside market for ready to wear skirt suits, tie dyes pant suits, Leather bags and dyed leather sandals. I can still recall the bells, the hawking of walking clothing racks and pushing and shoving as we made our way to the stalls. Christmas was the most crowded - bells, radio blasting from wheelbarrows, always seem like each year you could figure out if the Christmas was going to be "dry" (meaning hard economic times) or not by number of people in waterside. Bigger crowd meant Christmas was good for all. However, by Teenage years, my first wave of rebellion against the lappa ensued. Watching music videos and TV series promoted the cool American look. From Tupac and bandanas, Aaliyah and sagging pants, to TLC and big shirts. I abandoned African prints for the cool look of jeans, jumpsuits, Timberlands, and hot pants to the horror of my father, and plaid shirts all in a desperate attempt to imitate Aaliyah and TLC. I'd follow my friends and we'd rummage through their older sisters' closets, pull out their jeans and shirts and head out to high school events confident

that we would not run into them. After High school, textiles stores in waterside were our favorites - cotton prints, linen and polyester as we desperately tried to get our tailors to make copies of styles, we saw in western fashion magazines. I moved to the US in 2002. I found my first few months strange. I'd get comments randomly about how "American" I dressed or how come I knew the latest Khia song. Don't judge me on Khia. I had thought I was hip and all caught to American pop culture yet it seems that folks still saw the arrival of Africans should have meant coming with spears and cheetah skin. Now for my mother, America was just a post mail away. So, every few months she'd make a couple of African suits and send along with spoons, beaded jewelry, and even toothpaste. So, I would wear them in my dorm room and take pictures and send them back to her. I also started wearing them to international student activities or at school occasions and get complimented on my "costumes". Felt a bit theatric and overdressed. However, I was a broke college student so I started wearing them at weddings outside of school events. Wearing my lappa suits at Liberian weddings felt comforting. I was home away from home. As the years went by, the style changed... instead of traditional lappa suits, my mother was now sending me dresses, hip and modern. A style evolution was taking place in Liberia as the tailors attempted modern versions of lappa styles. The resurgence of African prints continued in the diaspora - weddings, street styles and catwalks. By 2010, I had made my first trip back home and came back with a suitcase full of new African clothing. By the time I had Moved back home in 2013, I was wearing lappa styles consistently. I then made a conscious decision to wear more African Clothing. Wearing lappa has become a creative outlet. For me, this entails finding new ways to show off lappa in a modern style and or mixing prints with other Liberian materials such as country cloth and tie dyes; matching prints or mixing them. I try to justify the cost aspects of this "creativity" by focusing on how it supports small business. Leave it to me to find a way to make it rights. Yet, it makes sense. Since the interest in Lappa and wearing African styles increased, the local market has grown. Rom made to order to ready to wear, Monrovia streets are line up with new shops selling readymade clothing and or lappa prints. So, the way, I see it, I'm supporting the local economy. However, Lappa or "Ankara" has become not just a fixture in my closet but an expression of my identity. In 2017, at feminist convening, women activists and leaders recounted being discriminated against when they attended meetings. The "Lallapolians" they laughed when recalling some of the experiences of being treated as illiterate or a low-level staff of the organization they either managed or was representing simply because they were in lappa suits. So, they deliberately and consciously chose and continued to wear their lappa suits to events (national and international) as a challenge to the stereotypes and discrimination. So, it gave a whole new symbolic meaning to lappa suits. Hence, as a measure of resistance and reaffirmation of identity as Liberian, I've come full circle.

Interesting, Lappa or Ankara prints are not originally West Africa of we look at production and history. What we call Lappa or Ankara are actually "Dutch wax prints" or Holland wax. When Europeans discovered, what is now Indonesia they also discovered Java prints, Indonesian textiles that are handmade. European merchants then decided they could find a way to remake these prints cheaper and in mass production and sell them. They then created the wax design. However, story goes that when European brought these prints back, Indonesia rejected them. Unlike the Indonesia print, the colors bled through the print and it was hard to tell which side was the "rights side". But for West African women, they loved this. Stories differ in terms of how exactly West African got a hold of lappa. One version is that Soldiers who fought for the Dutch started bringing it back home as presents for their wives and families. Eventually, these prints became synonymous with African fashion that till today's European companies will receive backlash if seen appropriating African clothing. Many of these prints are still being printed in Holland and or UK. Asia has become a growing producer, flooding the market with inexpensive versions of original Dutch prints.

Head wraps in particular, are also deliberate in expressing my affirmation as a Liberian and African woman. I love a good head wrap. First, I used to wear it as a cover up for bad hair days. A wrap here, a few tucks here and a not and I was ready to go. Then it became cooler to wear them as they became trendy. Africa to the US, head ties are every wear. However, the more I learned about the origins, the more it makes perfect sense to why as a Liberian and African woman, head ties are symbolically important. Women have always worn head ties in Africa. From church to community events such as weddings and or funerals, all across West Africa, women wrapped their heads in print, lace or imported scarves. Head ties also could convey a woman's socio-economic status in some West African communities. Depending on the type of head tie, the color or the print being used, a woman position in society could be determined. An interesting tidbit of history around Lappa is how West African women slaves in the US continued to wear head ties (head wraps) in an affirmation of their identity. Practically, it helped with the heat but eventually, it supported a symbolic community for the women who had to slave plantations from any walks of life. For these women, a head tie affirmed their identity but also was a symbol of their survival and as a community of women, a small but intentional effort to hold their heads up, crowed in a small wrap and ready to meet each day's work but comforted by their stories of survival.

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sharing our Liberian smiles

"Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing."
Mother Teresa.

"People seldom notice old clothes if you wear a big smile." *Lee Mildon*



"A smile costs nothing but gives much. It enriches those who receive without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever." *Ndtv*



Next time don't forget to wear a big smile. You might not know how it will change someone's life.



"Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy."

Thich Nhat Hanh

Places of Tourist Attraction in Liberia



Robertsport

Robertsport, also known as Robert Port and Robert's Port, is a town in western Liberia, about 10 miles from Sierra Leone border. It is named after Joseph Jenkins Roberts, the first President of Liberia. The town lies on Cape Mount peninsula, and is separated from the mainland by Lake Piso. It serves as the capital of Grand Cape Mount County. The town is characterized by amazing beaches.

Blue Lake

A key attraction is Blue Lake, also known as Bomi Lake. Blue Lake is about 300 feet deep. It is suspended midway between the peaks of the surrounding mountains which, with the sun's reflection, give the lake its blue color. The waters spring from a huge pit dug by the Liberia Mining Company, an American-owned company that ceased operations in the country because of the presumed depletion of iron ore in the area.



Lake Piso

Lake Piso, also known as Lake Pisu and Fisherman's Lake, is a quadrilateral shape lake located in Grand Cape Mount County western Liberia near the town of Robert sport at an area of 103 km² (40 sq miles). It is the largest lake in Liberia. Its name originates from a local term meaning "pigeon's hole" – a reference to the flock of pigeon that once came to Lake Piso for water.



Kpatawee Waterfall

Kpatawee waterfall, most commonly known among locals as the heart of Bong County, is a tourist attraction located in Suakoko, Bong county Liberia. Kpatawee waterfall is a natural wonder not to be missed. The fall can be reached from a village in a tolerable time of 45 minutes. The village is positioned amongst high rises and deep valleys. Kpatawee waterfall is an amazing attraction and definitely worth visiting, go and experience the beautiful nature of Kpatawee.

