

# ONDO STATE POCKET FACTFINDER

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**It contains all you need to know about Ondo State**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Ondo is one of the six states that make up the South West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It has interstate boundaries with Ekiti and Kogi states to the north, Edo State to the east, Delta State to the southeast, Osun State to the northwest and Ogun State to the southwest. The Gulf of Guinea lies to its south and its capital is Akure.

## **ONDO: THE FACTS AND FIGURES**

Dubbed as the Sunshine State, Ondo, which was created on February 3, 1976, has a population of 3,441,024 persons (2006 census) distributed across 18 local councils within a land area of 14,788.723 Square Kilometres.

Located in the South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria, Ondo State is bounded in the North by Ekiti/Kogi states; in the East by Edo State; in the West by Oyo and Ogun states, and in the South by the Atlantic Ocean.

Ondo State is a multi-ethnic state with the majority being Yoruba while there are also the Ikale, Ilaje, Arogbo and Akpoi, who are of Ijaw extraction and inhabit the riverine areas of the state.

The state plays host to 880 public primary schools, and 190 public secondary schools and a number of tertiary institutions including the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State Polytechnic, Owo,

Federal College of Agriculture, Akure and Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo.

Arguably, Ondo is one of the most resource-endowed states of Nigeria. It is agriculturally rich with agriculture contributing about 75 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The main revenue yielding crops are cocoa, palm produce and timber. Ondo region is now the core of the Nigerian cocoa belt accounting for about 60 per cent of Nigeria's annual output.

Other tree crops include kola, rubber, coffee, oilpalm and exotics especially *Tectona grandis* and *Gmelina arborea*.

Arable crops like rice, cassava, maize, yam, pepper, beans, tomatoes and a host of other vegetables. are cultivated mostly in the northern part of the state.

The creeks and coastlands of the state are rich in prawns and lobsters and the state is said to have reserve for stock fish.

Ondo is also blessed with mineral resources such as petroleum, tar sand (bitumen), kaolin clay, iron ore, granite and quartz sands.

## **HISTORY**

Ondo State was originally part of the Western Region in the three-region structure of 1954 and was known as Ondo Province. In 1967, with the creation of twelve

federal states by General Yakubu Gowon's military government, Ondo became part of Western State. The military government of General Murtala Muhammed created nineteen states out of the existing twelve in 1976 and Western State was divided into Oyo, Ogun and Ondo states. In 1996, the military government of General Sani Abacha reduced the size of Ondo State by carving Ekiti State out of it.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS**

Ondo State consists of eighteen Local Government Areas. They are:

- Akoko North-East headquarters in Ikare
- Akoko North-West
- Akoko South-East
- Akoko South-West
- Akure North
- Akure South
- Ese Odo
- Idanre
- Ifedore
- Ilaje
- Ile Oluji/Okeigbo<sup>[2]</sup>
- Irele
- Odigbo
- Okitipupa
- Ondo East
- Ondo West
- Ose
- Owo

The largest town is Akure.

## **LIST OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN ONDO STATE**

- Elizade University Ilara-Mokin
- Federal University of Technology Akure
- Federal College Of Agriculture Akure
- Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko
- Ondo State University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa
- Achievers University, Owo
- Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo
- Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo
- Wesley University of Science and Technology, {WUSTO} Ondo
- National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration {NIEPA} Ondo

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

The Population Distribution of Ondo State<sup>[3]</sup>

<b>Local Government Area</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Akoko North-West	108,057	105,735	213,792
Akoko North-East	93,060	82,349	175,409
Akoko South-East	41,995	40,431	82,426
Akoko South-West	123,979	105,507	229,486
Ose	73,395	71,506	144,901
Owo	110,429	108,457	218,886

## The Population Distribution of Ondo State<sup>[3]</sup>

<b>Local Government Area</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Akure North	66,878	64,709	131,587
Akure South	175,495	177,716	353,211
Ifedore	92,014	84,313	176,327
Ile Oluji/Okeigbo	87,505	85,365	172,870
Ondo West	139,400	144,272	283,672
Ondo East	38,032	36,726	74,758
Idanre	66,996	62,028	129,024
Odigbo	114,814	115,537	230,351
Okitipupa	120,626	112,939	233,565
Irele	75,636	69,530	145,166
Ese Odo	78,100	76,878	154,978
Ilaje	154,852	135,763	290,615
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,761,263</b>	<b>1,679,761</b>	<b>3,441,024</b>

### MAIN CITIES AND TOWNS

Akure (capital city), Ikare, Ile-Oluji, Oka-Akoko, Okitipupa, Ondo, Ore and Owo

### LAND MASS, LOCATION AND POPULATION

Ondo State covers an area of 15,195.2 square kilometres and lies at latitude 7° 10' north and longitude 5° 05' east. It has a population of 3,460,877 (2006 census figures) and a population density of 218 people per square

kilometre. It accounts for 2.5% of Nigeria's total population.

## **ORIGINAL INHABITANTS AND SETTLERS**

The early settlers of Ondo State were the Yoruba people. According to legend, the Ondo people originally migrated from Epe, a small town seven miles from Ondo on the Oke-Igbo road. They stayed there for some time before moving to their present location.

## **ETHNIC GROUPS**

The main ethnic groups in Ondo State are the Yoruba and Ijaw people. Ten languages are spoken in the state, with Ijaw and Yoruba being the main ones.

## **RELIGION**

Ondo State people are mostly Christians, although a sizable number of Muslims can be found in Ikare and a few other parts of the state. There are also a number of traditional religion practitioners.



**Map of Ondo State**

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

There are eighteen local government areas (LGAs) in the state. Each has a chairman as its administrative head.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS**



- Akoko North-East
- Akoko North-West
- Akoko South-East
- Akoko South-West
- Akure North
- Akure South
- Ese Odo
- Idanre
- Ifedore
- Ilaje
- Ile Oluji/Okeigbo
- Irele
- Odigbo
- Okitipupa
- Ondo East
- Ondo West
- Ose
- Owo

## **GOVERNORS AND ADMINISTRATORS**

- Ita David Ikpeme (Governor - Military) March 1976 - July 1978
- Sunday Tuoyo (Governor - Military) July 1978 - October 1979
- Michael Adekunle Ajasin (Governor - Civilian (Unity Party of Nigeria)) October 1979 - December 1983
- Michael Bamidele Otiko (Governor - Military) January 1984 - September 1985
- Michael Okhai Akhigbe (Governor - Military) September 1985 - August 1986
- Ekundayo Opaleye (Governor - Military) August 1986 - December 1987
- Raji Alagbe Rasaki (Governor - Military) December 1987 - July 1988
- Bode George (Governor - Military) July 1988 - September 1990

- Sunday Abiodun Olukoya (Governor - Military) September 1990 - January 1992
- Bamidele Olumilua (Governor- Civilian (Social Democratic Party)) January 1992 - November 1993
- Mike Torey (Administrator - Military) December 1993 - September 1994
- Ahmed Usman (Administrator - Military) September 1994 - August 1996
- Anthony Ibe Onyearugbulem (Administrator - Military) August 1996 - August 1998
- Olusegun Agagu (Governor- Civilian (People's Democratic Party)) May 2003 - February 2009
- Olusegun Mimiko (Governor- Civilian (Labour Party)) February 2009 - Present

## **AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES, MINERALS AND INDUSTRIES**

Ondo State is predominantly tropical rainforest with some areas of forest savannah to its north. There are forest and mangrove swamps in the south of the state. Agriculture is very important, with a significant percentage of the state's labour force engaging in farming. Cocoa is the dominant cash crop grown in Ondo. Other crops cultivated for domestic consumption include yam, cassava and oil palm. The main minerals found in Ondo State include iron ore, granite, quartz, coal, tin, marble and petroleum. A number of agro-allied industries are located in the state. The people are also known for their bronze works and iron carvings.

## **Education**

Ondo State has a federal university (Federal University of Technology, Akure); two state universities (Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba-Akoko and Ondo State University of Science and Technology); and two private universities (Achievers University and Wesley University of Science and Technology). It is also home to the Rufus Giwa Polytechnic (in Owo) and the Adeyemi College of Education (in Ondo City).



**Idanre Hills**

## **TOURISM AND RECREATION**

### *Idanre Hills*

The historic Idanre Hills are located in the Idanre LGA which is divided into two: the new settlement (which is at the foot of the hills) and Oke-Idanre (the old settlements on the top of the hills). The steep-sided and dome-shaped hills are a unique sight and ideal for bird watching, picnics and hiking. The Idanre Hills were included on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List in 2007.

### *Cave of Ashes, Isarun*

Located in Isharun-Ile Owuro in the Ifedore LGA, the Cave of Ashes (also known as 'Iho Eleeru') is believed to have been home to ancestors of the people of Iloro who were known for their pottery-making. The cave was first brought to public attention in 1922 by Chief Obele, a hunter who stumbled upon it while out on an expedition. It became even more famous after the discovery of the oldest prehistoric West African skeleton (believed to date to 8000 BC) in it by Professor Charles Thurstan Shaw of the University of Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in 1968, along with fragments of pottery dated to 1000 BC. Parts of the skeleton are kept at the University of Ibadan and Owo Museum of Antiquities while a cast of the skull can be seen at the Natural History Museum in London.

## **MONUMENTS AND MUSEUMS**

### *National Museum, Owo*

The National Museum in Owo was established in 1968. The museum's collections are ethnographic and archaeological; many of the displayed items were found during digs which took place in the city in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It has a permanent exhibition on the Owo and Yoruba cultures.

### *National Museum, Akure*

The National Museum in Akure was established in 1987 and houses ethnographic collections.

### *Igbara Oke Petroglyphs*

The Igbara Oke Petroglyphs - a series of ancient pictorial etchings on a rock outcrop in the Ifedore LGA believed to be oracle symbols - were declared an ancient monument in 1963.

### *Olowo's Palace, Owo*

The palace of the Olowo of Owo (the capital of a city-state between 1400 and 1600) is one of the largest in Africa and features over a hundred courtyards for various ceremonial events. It was recently declared a national monument by the federal government.

## **PEOPLE AND PLACES**

*Mrs Folayegbe Akintunde-Ighodalo*

Mrs Folayegbe Akintunde-Ighodalo was the first Nigerian woman to become a Permanent Secretary.

## **FESTIVALS**

### *Olokun Festival*

The Olokun festival is an annual festival commemorated by the Ilaje people who live along the state's coastline. The people believe the Olokun deity is the goddess of the sea and fertility, as well as of prosperity. The worshippers of Olokun dress in white attire and coat their faces with white chalk (known as 'efun'). The festival features cultural dances and displays.

### *Egungun Festival*

The Egungun (or masquerade) festival is an important celebration amongst the Yoruba people, who believe that the masked figures represent the spirits of the dead who return annually to reunite with the living. The masquerades are elaborate and possess both human and animals features. The festival is celebrated across Ondo State with music and dance.

### *Igogo Festival*

This is an annual festival which takes place in Owo. It lasts a total of seventeen days and features a number of ceremonies, including the blessing and introduction of

new yams. The festival is in commemoration of the king's wife who turned into a tree while being pursued by the king's slave to return to the palace after her rival violated her taboos in her presence. During the period of celebration, drums are banned in Owo and metal gongs (*agogo*) are used instead; this is where "Igogo" was derived. The Olowo, who dresses in coral beaded gown during the period, plaits his hair like a woman. The aim of the festival is to encourage greater involvement of the youths of the community into their cultural norm.

### *Orosun Festival*

According to legends, Orosun was a woman and one of the wives of Olofin Aremitan. Olofin left Ile-Ife and stayed at Akoko land. There, he met Orosun - who was said to be very beautiful - and married her. When Olofin died, she remarried several times. Orosun heard of an assassination plan and fled from the land into the forest of Idanre hills. Her assassins pursued her to her hideout and killed her. The festival is celebrated for a week where the villagers relocate from the present Idanre town to their pre-existing homes in Old Oke-Idanre, where they stay for the duration of the festival.

## **MAJOR PLACES**

### **OWO**

**Owo** is a town in the Ondo state of Nigeria. Between the years 1400 and 1600 AD, it was the capital of a Yoruba city-state.

## **Etymology**

According to Owo historian Chief Ashara, the name *Owo* derives from the first ruler, or Olowo, named Ojugbelu. His pleasant manner earned him the name *Owo*, meaning respectful, and the name was passed on to his descendants and followers.

## **History**

In their oral tradition, Owo traces its origins to the ancient city of Ile-Ife, the cradle of Yoruba culture. Oral tradition also claims that the founders were the sons of the Yoruba deity Odudua, who was the first ruler of Ile-Ife. The early art-historical and archaeological records reinforce these strong affiliations with Ife culture. Owo was able to maintain virtual independence from the neighboring kingdom of Benin, but was on occasion required to give tribute. The transmission of courtly culture flowed in both directions between the Benin and the Owo kingdoms. The skill of Owo's ivory carvers was also appreciated at the court of Benin. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Benin's rulers increasingly utilized insignia made from ivory, and imported Owo's art objects and recruited its artisans for their own royal workshops. There were other notable artworks that can be evidently supported.

Owo came under British rule in 1893. After Nigeria declared independence in 1960, it was part of the Western Region until 1967 when it became part of the Western State. Owo and its indigenes played significant



roles in the politics of the first Republic, in Nigeria. In 1976, it became part of the newly created Ondo State.

### **Economy**

The present-day town is an agricultural center involved in the growing and trade of yams, cassava, maize, okra, peppers, cocoa, and cotton. There are however other meaningful commercial activities in the town including but not limited to, timber and sawmilling, Soya beans processing plant and blockmaking industries. The town is dotted with branches of some of the foremost banks like, First Bank Plc, Wema Bank Pplc, Skye Bank Plc, Enterprise Bank Ltd. (former Omega Bank Plc) etc. The city is now witnessing a dramatic change due to expansion of its road network, particularly dualization of the main road beginning from Emure junction up to Iyere exit. A new Ultra-modern market is now open in Owo.

### **Geography**

Owo is situated in southwestern Nigeria, at the southern edge of the Yoruba Hills, and at the intersection of roads from Akure, Kabba, Benin City, and Siluko. Owo is situated halfway between the towns of Ile Ife and Benin City.

### **Archaeology**

The Owo site was first excavated in 1969-1971 by Ekpo Eyo under the auspices of the Department of Antiquities

of the Government of Nigeria. Due to Owo's location between the two famous art centers of Ife and Benin, the site reflects both artistic traditions. Important discoveries include terracotta sculptures dating from the 15th century. The Owo Museum, founded in 1968, houses many of these artifacts.

## **Culture**

Owo has the largest palace in Africa which was declared a national monument by the federal government. The Olowo Palace had as many as 100 courtyards. Each courtyard had a specific function and was dedicated to a particular deity. The largest, said to have been twice the size of an American football field, was used for public assemblies and festivals. Some courtyards were paved with quartz pebbles or broken pottery. Pillars supporting the veranda roofs were carved with statues of the king mounted on a horse or shown with his senior wife. The present Olowo is King Folagbade Olateru Olagbegi III.

## **OKITIPUPA**

**Okitipupa** is a Local Government Area in Ondo State, Nigeria. Its headquarters are in the town of Okitipupa, with a university that commenced academy in year 2010/2011 section: Ondo State University of Science and Technology, Okitipupa (OSUSTECH).

It has always been known as Ode-Idepe. The name Okitipupa originated from the elevation of the town and the colour of the soil of the town which is red in colour

referred to in Yoruba language and its dialects as 'pupa'. Okiti-pupa is derived from Yoruba language Okiti(Hilly) and Pupa(Red) which was used by people travelling from other communities to trade in the Okitipupa central market. Today, inhabitants interchangeably use the names of Okitipupa and Idepe freely.

It is native to the Ikales, who are a sub-set of the larger Yoruba tribe. It has always been the central town for inhabitants of the Ondo South senatorial district of Ondo state comprising okitipupa, Irele, Ilaje, Ese-Odo, Odigbo and Ile-oluji/Oke-Igbo local governments due to the presence of several amenities. It was a district in the colonial days before Nigeria's independence in 1960. It has a university, a Specialist hospital, several private hospitals, a Magistrate court, a High court, a Police division, an Army Base, Commercial banks, a Telephone exchange, numerous primary and secondary schools.

The Ikale natives are predominantly farmers. The major cash crop being cultivated in the area are Oil-Palm, Rubber and Cassava. They also cultivate Yam, Beans, Okro, Pepper, Melon and Vegetables. Staple food includes but is not limited to Baked cassava popularly known as Pupuru, Yam, Rice, Yam Flour and Cassava Flakes(Garri) among others.

It has a market that has been a major shopping centre for traders from all of Yoruba land and beyond since the pre-colonial era due to the palm-oil sold there. A modern market was built by the administration of Chief Herbert

Kuewumi in 1979 when he was chairman of the Old Okitipupa Local government before the administration of Dr Olusegun Mimiko as Governor of Ondo state rebuilt the market in 2009. A larger percentage of the roads in the town were constructed by the administration of Dr. Olusegun Kokumo Agagu when he was Governor of Ondo state.

Major industries located in the town include the Okitipupa Oil Palm Plc and Oluwa Glass Factory(Both of listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange).Palm-Oil and Rubber plantations litter the landscape.

It has an area of 803 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 233,565 at the 2006 census.

The postal code of the area is 350.

## **ILAJE**

**Ilaje** is a Local Government Area in Ondo State, Nigeria. Its headquarters are in the town of Igbokoda. The Ilajes are a distinguished, distinct linguistic group of Yoruba peoples made up of four geo-political entities namely Ugbo, Mahin, Etikan and Aheri.

### **Origins**

The Ilajes were said to have left Ile Ife, their original ancestral home in the 10th century. They mainly occupy the Atlantic coastline of Ondo State of Nigeria while a large population of them settles on land in the hinterland.

The area they occupy today is Ondo State, an outlet to the sea.

## **Geography**

It has an area of 1,318 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 290,615 at the 2006 census. Ilajeland is bounded by the Ijebus to the west, the Ikale to the north, the Itsekiri to the east, the Apoi and Arogbo Ijaw to the north east, and the Atlantic ocean on the southern boundary. The Ilajes are one of the most dynamic and enterprising people in Nigeria. Their aquatic skill, coupled with their ability to adapt enabled them to conquer their harsh geographical environment and turn it to their advantage. Consequently, they were able to build large communities like Ugbonla, Aiyetoro, Zion PePe and Orioke. Aiyetoro for example in its hey-days had the highest per capital income in the whole of Africa and attracted visitors, tourists and researchers from all over the world.

Apart from petroleum found in the area, other mineral raw materials available in Ilajeland include glass sand, salt, tar sand, quartz and clay. Agricultural products include fish, poultry, piggery, maize, palm oil vegetables, timber, rafia, poultry okro, cocoyam, banana and cassava.

The natural environment of Ilajeland is particularly suitable for the development of large scale rice plantations and the salt industry.

The occupational activities of the Ilajes include fishing, canoe making, lumbering, net making, mat making, launch building, farming and trading.

Igbokoda, the Ilaje local government headquarters is fast becoming an international trade center as its popular market attracts traders not only from other part of Nigeria, but, also from other African countries especially Togo, Benin, Ghana, Cameroon and Gabon. Ilajeland is only about 75 kilometers from Lagos and its aquatic environment present the area as a suitable environment for tourism. It is hoped that the Ondo State government and the government of Nigeria will help develop it into a world class tourist attraction. In the past the entire area suffered serious neglect and marginalization in the hands of the government. However, it appears that the Ondo State government has come to realize the importance of Ilajeland not only because it is her only outlet to the sea but also because it is her economic power house. The state is now constructing a network of roads linking the area with the hinterland and has promised to provide basic social amenities including electricity and drinking water systems.

The highlight of the Ondo State's recent development efforts is the acquisition of about 200 hectares of land to be developed and built as a satellite town for the people displaced from their homes in towns and villages on the Atlantic coastline as a result of petroleum drilling and exploratory activities.

No doubt, there is a big future for the area especially with the Olokola Development project by Ondo and Ogun State Governments.

## **AKOKO NORTH-WEST**

**Akoko North-West** is a Local Government Area in Ondo State, Nigeria. Its headquarters is in the town of Okeagbe.

It has an area of 512 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 213,792 at the 2006 census.

The postal code of the area is 342.

Towns in the Local Government Area include: Ese, Okeagbe, Ikaram, Arigidi, Erusu, Ibaram, Iyani, Ase, Irun, Ogbagi, Ajowa, Afin, Oyin, Eriti, Igasi.

Traditionally, the towns and villages have monarchs who rule over local Municipalities. They are: The Elese of Ese, The Ajana of Afa-Okeagbe, the Oluyani of Iyani, Akala of Ikaram, Zaki of Arigidi, Osula of Erusu, Owa of Ogbagi, Olubaram of Ibaram, Oludotun of Ajowa, Olugedegede of Gedegede and Onirun of Irun, Alase of Ase, Oloje of Igasi-Akoko.

### **Notable people**

- Prince Adetokunbo Kayode (SAN), Former Minister of Defense, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

- Chief Rufus Foluso Giwa (born 24.April 1942-  
died 26. March 2003)
- Chief Joseph Sanusi, former CBN Governor
- Chief Sunday Ehindero, former IG
- Otunba Oladunni, former chairman of mobil ETC
- Justice Olasehinde Kumuyi (Ondo State Chief  
Judge)