



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Muslim Women in Hausa Culture

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- ❖ Islam arrived in the region known as Hausaland around the 16th century by trade. At this time, the Hausa had dominated the region for 900 years.¹
- ❖ By 2014, 99.9% of the 27,807,000 Hausa speakers worldwide were Muslim.
- ❖ The country with the largest number of ethnic Hausa was Nigeria, which was composed of 21% ethnic Hausa.¹
- ❖ The Hausa believe that their founding father, Abu Yazid or Bayajidda, came from Baghdad after a quarrel with his father. He and married a local queen and established the Hausa nation²
- ❖ The Hausa language is written in Arabic script. Many Christian West African peoples historically had higher female literacy rates. For example, Ghana, which had a very small percentage of Muslim Hausa, had an 83% literacy rate in 2010, while Nigeria had a 50%, as of 2010³
- ❖ Hausa girls' education was restricted to traditional and religious studies until the Nigerian military coup of 1976. After that, large amounts of oil money were devoted to female education and the legal age of marriage was moved from 12 to 18.⁶
- ❖ The seclusion of women is common among the wealthy Hausa nobility, but it is not observed among much of the common population. Nevertheless, wealthy Hausa women conduct business and wield economic influence. This was due to important role the Hausa have had in West African trade, and Islamic property laws that have allowed women to trade property and own caravans.⁴
- ❖ Hausa women worked in the fields, harvesting and processing millet, a food staple. Nigeria is the second largest producer of millet on earth, having produced 9,000,000 tons of millet in 2009.⁵
- ❖ Hausa women play a central role in Islamic practices in Nigeria, as a result of the fusion of Islam with traditional local religions.⁶

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1. http://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/12070/NI
 2. <http://www.everyculture.com/wc/Mauritania-to-Nigeria/Hausa.html>
 3. <http://kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com/2013/01/hausa-people-africas-largest-scattered.html>
 4. <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/82-summer-1984-women-changing-world>
 5. <http://www.factfish.com/statistic-country/nigeria/millet,+production+quantity>
 6. <http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol10num1/yakubu.pdf>

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