

Cyprian Ekwensi Center for Arts and Culture, Abuja Nigeria



Nigeria Through OLIVIA NNEKA OSUEKE'S Eyes

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Going into the country, I was excited to experience the feeling of togetherness in the villages and a richness in culture, things we don't often hear about when it comes to traveling to Nigeria. ”

I was given the task to write an adventure story, and sure enough, I managed to do just that the first time around. I had clear-cut, straightforward descriptions of everything I did and why I recommended them as sites to visit, but something was missing. I came away from the first draft with a certain dissatisfaction that I couldn't shake; it lacked the authenticity of how much it impacted me to finally be Home after so long. For the life of me, I wanted to construct the perfect article about my trip to Nigeria while shining light on the beauty of the country. Determined, I went back to the laptop and took another swing at it.

For those of us who don't have an extensive knowledge about the Nigerian way of life, it's easy to create an image about the country based on what others mention most about it. Unfortunately, because of this, Nigeria tends to get a bad rap for a number of reasons, even by native Nigerians themselves. My parents, both born and raised in the country, were extremely nervous about me going back Home alone. I'm more than sure they meant well, but their anxiousness encouraged a preconceived notion of ill will, and I certainly didn't want to go on my trip with that mindset. I wanted to experience Nigeria for myself and focus on the areas where the country excelled.

Even though I regard every trip I take as an adventure in some form or fashion, I certainly didn't set up my Nigeria visit as paradise getaway. Quite frankly, my main intentions were to relax with family, which is what I did for the most part, but in true Nneka Osueke fashion, I managed to squeeze in some exploration. Still adjusting to the time difference, I woke up at 2:30 am for three days straight waiting for daylight while rolling around in my bed with the flashlight on. As soon as I saw sunbeams illuminating the sky, I hopped up, collected a bucket of hot water for my bath, and drenched myself in coconut oil and mosquito spray. That first Sunday of my trip, I took my cousins up on an offer to see the Imo State Zoo, where there were vervet monkeys running around begging for my biscuits. Eventually, I gave into their cuteness and shared some. Needless to say, it was a pleasant surprise to find out that such a place existed near