



Culture and Customs of Rwanda (Cultures and Customs of the World)

By Julius O. Adekunle

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Rwanda has been in the news for the genocide of 1994 and its aftermath. This volume exposes Western readers to the fuller picture of Rwanda. Early European travelers attested to Rwanda's beauty, describing it variously as the Switzerland of Africa and the Pearl of Africa. Rwanda has also been referred to as the Land of a Thousand Hills and the Land of Gorillas. The spectacular volcanoes, mountains, and natural resources are significant assets. The nation been dominated by two colonial powers, the Germans and Belgians. In spite of these political upheavals and acts of ethnic violence, Rwanda remains a country with rich culture and customs.

Readers will learn that living together in harmony has been part of the Rwandan society, with its few ethnic groups, and traditional values supported a culture of peace. The traditionally pastoral and agricultural society is overviewed. The chapter on religion includes discussion of polytheism to Christianity. Other chapters cover the strong family and women's roles, the arts and oral cultures, celebrations, food, and dress.

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Review

"This volume offers high school and adult readers a well-balanced picture of Rwanda....Included in this volume are chapters focusing on the strong family and roles of women, the arts and oral cultures, celebrations, foods, and clothing. A series forward, a chronology, a glossary, a bibliography, and an index round out this title." - **MultiCultural Review**

"Bridewealth, a kind of reverse dowry, serves not only to solemnize and stabilize a marriage but to unite families and clans. Newspaper sales were once low because Rwandans preferred to read in groups. Adekunle gives readers thousands of fascinating facts without glossing over the tragedies of the recent past. He focuses on the daily lives of the average Rwandans, those who prepare meals, work farms and desk jobs, and take their children to school. He gives a basic history, then describes Rwandan religious beliefs and world view, literature and media, art and architecture, cuisine and traditional dress, gender roles, marriage, family life, social customs, music and dance. He also provides the Rwandan National Anthem and its English translation, a glossary, and a well-chosen bibliography." - **Reference & Research Book News**

About the Author

JULIUS O. ADEKUNLE is Associate Professor of History and Anthropology at Monmouth University where he teaches various courses on Africa.

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