

Chad



A CULTURAL PROFILE



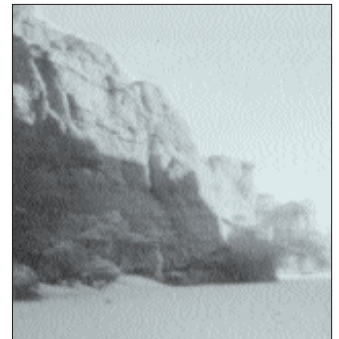


Chad



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In preparing this profile, AMNI has made every effort to use reliable sources of information and to reconcile the views of different groups within the country.

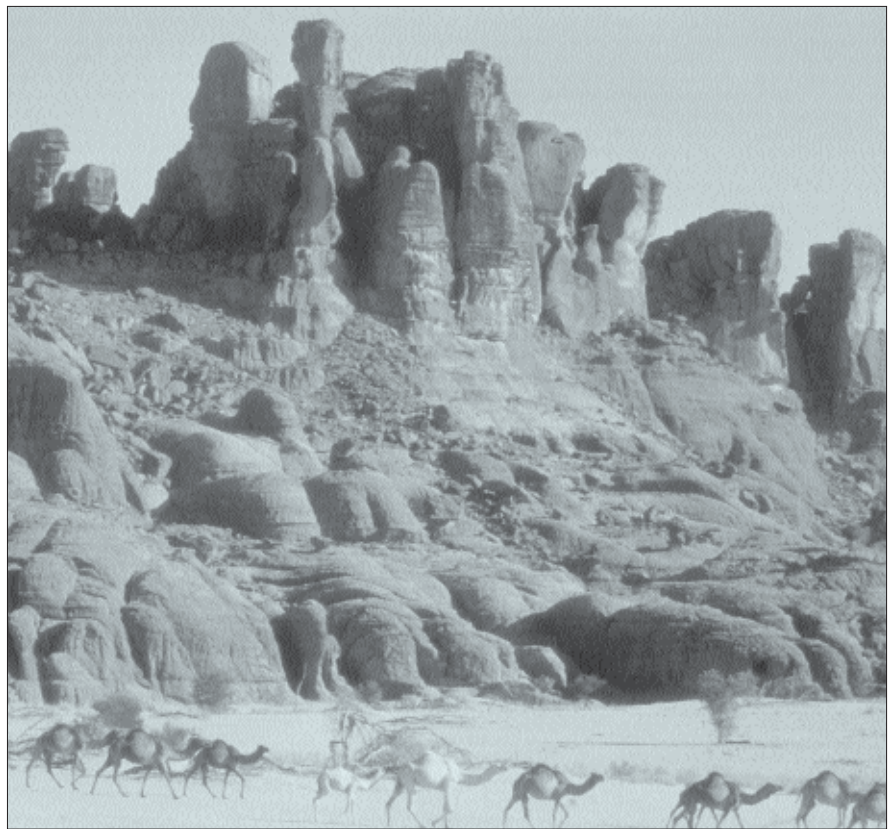
This cultural profile is designed primarily for volunteers working in organized HOST Programs, which match newcomers with volunteers who offer friendship, orientation to the community and an opportunity to practise English or French, if needed.

CHAD TO CANADA

Did you know?

Chad is named after Lake Chad, which is the fourth largest lake in Africa and the seventh largest in the world. It is an extremely shallow lake that has no outlet to the sea and its shoreline changes every year as parts of it dry up.

Every year thousands of people from all over the world come to Canada to begin a new life. They arrive with many different skills and with the hope of contributing to their new society. This cultural profile was written to help Canadians welcome newcomers from Chad to Canada. It will tell you about Chadian culture and what life is like in Chad. This information will be useful if you are hosting a Chadian family as part of the HOST program, learning about Chad in school or working with Chadian colleagues who have recently arrived in Canada.



Like all recent immigrants, Chadians may find aspects of their new home unfamiliar. They will have questions about health care, employment, housing, school and even shopping. You can help by answering their

questions. Not only will your help make their adjustment to life in Canada easier, you will also discover that you can learn a great deal from your new friends.

Because Chad is a former French colony and many of its citizens speak French, most immigrants from Chad who come to Canada live in Quebec. There is also a small Chadian community in Ontario.

The people of Chad include more than a hundred distinct ethnic groups, each with its own language and customs. Although this booklet gives a general picture of life in Chad, it cannot describe every cultural group in Chad and does not cover all facets of life in the country. The customs described may not apply in equal measure to all newcomers from Chad.

<i>Official Name:</i>	<i>Republic of Chad</i>
<i>Capital City:</i>	<i>N'Djamena</i>
<i>Type of Government:</i>	<i>Republic</i>
<i>Population:</i>	<i>8 million</i>
<i>Area:</i>	<i>1.2 million sq. km</i>
<i>Major Ethnic Groups:</i>	<i>Gorane, Arab, Sara</i>
<i>Official Languages:</i>	<i>French, Arabic</i>
<i>Religions:</i>	<i>Islam, Christianity, indigenous beliefs</i>
<i>Unit of Currency:</i>	<i>Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc</i>
<i>National Flag:</i>	<i>Three vertical stripes of blue, yellow and red</i>
<i>Date of Independence:</i>	<i>August 11, 1960</i>

LANDSCAPE AND CLIMATE

Did you know?

The lungfish, *Protopterus annectens*, lives in Lake Chad's floodplains. It is able to survive buried in dried-up mud throughout the dry season, because it can breathe air through its lungs.

Chad is a landlocked country, roughly the size of Quebec, in the centre of Africa. It spans the divide between two great geographic areas, Saharan and Sub-Saharan Africa. To the north lies Libya, to the east Sudan, to the southeast the Central African Republic, to the southwest Cameroon and Nigeria, and to the west Niger.



Chad has three major geographic zones: the Saharan zone in the north, the Sahel region in the central part of the country and the Soudanian zone in the south. The Saharan zone is a desert area, with the Tibesti mountains in the northwest. The Sahel region is a semi-arid region of savannah land to the south of the Sahara desert. In the east the land rises to a plateau and Lake Chad lies to the west. The Soudanian zone is a region of wooded lowlands crossed by rivers. This is the agricultural centre of the country and the region in which most Chadians live.

Did you know?

At the summit of the Tibesti mountain system stands the dormant volcano Emi Koussi, 3,414 metres above sea level. It is not only the highest point in Chad, but the highest point in the entire Sahara desert.

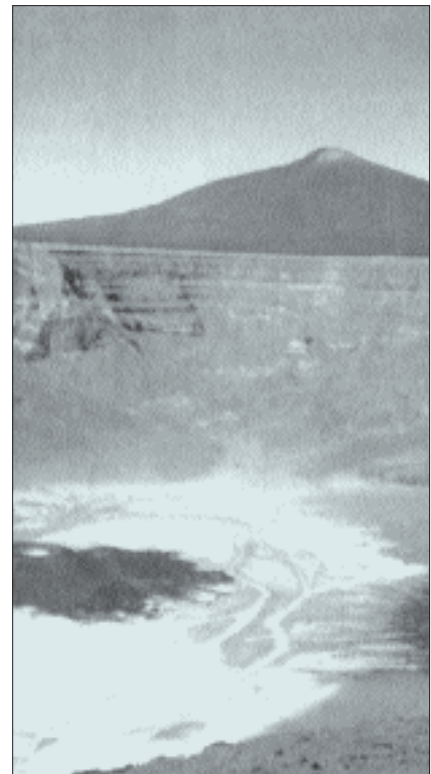
Each geographical zone has a distinct climate. In the north, it is generally hot and dry, while in the Sahel region, it is mostly dry, with a rainy season from June to early September. The southern zone is tropical, with a rainy season from April to October.

Chad's two major rivers, the Chari and Logone, flow into Lake Chad. At N'Djamena, the capital city, the Logone river empties into the Chari, south of Lake Chad. The fertile floodplains of these rivers are often covered with water during the rainy season.

The National Park of Zakouma is situated in the southeast. It is



flooded for four months of the year. Though once devastated by civil war and ivory poachers, the park has been rehabilitated since 1989 with funding from the European Union. It is home to buffalo, elephants, giraffes, antelopes, ostriches and other birds.



A LOOK AT THE PAST

The earliest known inhabitants of Chad were the Sao people, who built walled cities in the area southeast of Lake Chad in about 500 B.C. Beginning in 800 A.D., people from north Africa migrated into the area.

The Kanem empire was established in the northern part of present-day Chad by a federation of nomadic peoples in about 1000 A.D. Its ruler was known as the Mai and was considered divine. During the 10th century, the Islamic religion spread throughout the empire. In the 13th century, the kingdom established a capital at Njimi, northeast of Lake Chad. The capital was moved to Bornu, on the western edge of Lake Chad, at the end of the 14th century. The Kanem-Bornu empire, as it became known, reached the height of its power and influence during the reign of Mai Idris Aluma, at the end of the 16th century.

The principality of Baguirmi was formed in an area to the southwest of the Kanem-Bornu empire in the 16th century. It became powerful

Did you know?

Chad australopithecine is a type of early hominid identified from the remains of a single body found in 1960 at Koro Toro in southeast Chad. The remains were found close by the teeth of an extinct elephant and are thought to be 200,000 to 500,000 years old.



in the 17th century and tried unsuccessfully to expand into the territory of Kanem-Bornu. At the same time, northeast of Baguirmi, an Arabic-speaking sultanate, Ouaddai, was established. In the early 19th century it began to expand under the leadership of Sultan Mohammed Sharif, taking over Baguirmi and attacking Kanem-Bornu.

When the European colonial powers sought to colonize Africa in the 19th century, Chad was one of the last regions to be conquered. The French invaded from Congo, to the south, where they were well established. They encountered an army led by Rabah Fadlallah, a former slave who had become a powerful military leader and had subjugated Baguirmi and Kanem-Bornu. In 1900, Rabah's forces were defeated by a Franco-Baguirmi alliance in the battle of Kousseri (in present-day Cameroon).

During the early 20th century, the French colonized the south of Chad

and, in 1920, sent the French Foreign Legion to conquer the northern territories. They forced the inhabitants to grow cotton. Because most of the arable land was used to grow cotton, the people suffered food shortages. Many people died from famines and the harsh conditions of forced labour.

Forced labour was abolished in 1946 and Chadians were declared French citizens. Chadians elected a Territorial Assembly and sent delegates to the French National Assembly. Universal suffrage was introduced in 1956. In 1960, Chad became an independent country, but Francois Tombalbaye, Chad's first leader after independence, was unable to unite the country's various groups. In 1975 he was killed in a military coup d'état. For many years, the country was torn by a civil war in which many thousands of Chadians died, until a military leader called Idriss Déby seized power in 1990. In 1996, Déby won a widely contested presidential election and became constitutional president of Chad.

FAMILY LIFE

Did you know?

Scarification, the ritual application of scars on the faces of tribal members, is practised by many groups in Chad. Lines and other symbols are made on the faces of young men to mark them permanently as members of a particular tribe. Such markings are perceived as visually pleasing.

There are about a hundred distinct ethnic groups in Chad. Within these groups are ethnic subgroups, each with its own language and customs. Family lifestyles may differ greatly between these groups, although some practices are widespread.

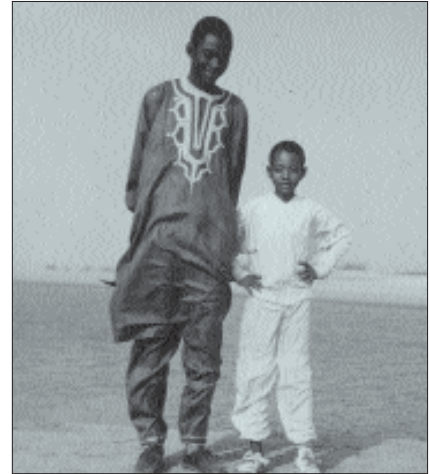
The Gorane tribes live in the Sahara desert in northern Chad. Gorane families are small, consisting of parents, children and sometimes one or two other relatives. The clan is the most important unit of Gorane life. Each clan controls certain resources, such as palm groves or oases; members of other clans may not use these resources without permission.

A semi-nomadic Arab culture prevails in the Sahel region. Arabs make up one-third of the population. Their basic social unit is the *kishimbet*, a group related through the male line. The *kishimbet* is headed by an elder, known as the *shaykh*. Members of a *kishimbet* live near each other and follow the same routes during migration. Sometimes neighbouring *kishimbets* meet to discuss matters of mutual interest. Marriage between cousins is encouraged.

The people of southern Chad are known collectively as the Sara, but this term is used to describe a diverse group of tribes, each with its own language, history and customs. The basic social unit or clan of the Sara people is known variously as the *qir ka*, *qin ka* or *qel ka*, depending on the region.

The members of each clan are the descendants of a common male ancestor.

The Sara have important initiation rites to mark the passage from childhood to adulthood, especially for boys. The best-known ritual is the *Yondo*, which takes place when a boy is 8 to 10 years old. He must pass an extended period in the bush in the company of elders



and his fellow initiates, learning tribal secrets. Women are generally not allowed to witness *Yondo*. Circumcision may be performed during the rite.

Women tend to marry when they are in their late teens. In some groups, it is considered acceptable for a man to have more than one wife. In most Muslim families, the groom's family pays a bride-price to the bride's family before the wedding, while in other groups, it is more common for the woman to bring a dowry to the marriage. The dowry may consist of money, household goods or cattle. In some northern tribes, marriage is traditionally accompanied by a ceremony that mimics the stealing of the bride from her family, who respond by ritual mourning.



Did you know?

Families consider children to be insurance for their future and esteem those who have large families. When people die without having had children, they are said to have "died twice."

THE WORLD OF WORK

Did you know?

In villages throughout the country, markets are held on the same day each week and are important events for villagers and often the focus of the week's activity.



Although Chad's economy is based largely on agriculture, only about 2% of the total land area of Chad is considered arable. About 10% is forested and more than one-third can be used to pasture livestock. In the arid northerly regions, people tend small plots irrigated by wells and springs. The southern region, with its rivers, floodplains and rainy season, is the most productive part of the country.

Since the arrival of the French, cotton has dominated the agriculture of Chad; it is still the most important agricultural export. Chad is the second largest producer of cotton in Africa, after Egypt. Sorghum and millet are the primary food crops. Other crops include corn, rice, wheat, tobacco, cassava, peanuts, legumes and

vegetables. Many families grow subsistence crops as well as cash crops. The country also exports animal hides and livestock.

Did you know?

Chad is the world's second largest supplier of gum arabic, after Sudan. Gum arabic comes from certain species of the acacia tree and is an ingredient in foods, soft drinks, pharmaceuticals and glues.

There are three main types of land ownership in Chad. The first is collective ownership by villages. Lands belong to an entire village and are under the management of the village chief. The second is private ownership. Small plots

cultivated in dry river beds or oases may be owned by an individual or a family. The third is government ownership. Large plantations, watered by irrigation projects, are usually state owned. Along the southeastern shore of Lake Chad, polders (fields created by building dykes beside lakes and rivers) have been made to grow wheat and corn.

In the northern Saharan region, Gorane life centres on herding livestock, the major source of income. In oases, the Gorane cultivate dates, garden vegetables, legumes and some grains. In a few places, the Gorane also mine salt and natron (a salt-like substance used for medicinal purposes and for livestock).

There are some small industries in Chad. Chadians refine sugar and manufacture beer, cotton textiles and cottonseed oil. Chad's economic future may be affected by the exploitation of its oil deposits. The Doba oil field project in southern Chad has raised hopes for the country's economy, but has drawn opposition because of its perceived ecological and social impact.



SPORTS AND RECREATION



Soccer is the most popular sport in Chad. Chadians avidly follow their national team's performance against other African nations and in World Cup games. Children play soccer whenever they get the chance. Many Chadian soccer players have played for French teams. Nambatingue Tokomon, known as "Toko," played for renowned French soccer clubs, including Paris St. Germain, in the 1970s and 1980s. Abdoulay Karateka also played for Paris St. Germain. Ndoram Japhet played for Nantes and Monaco in the 1990s.

Basketball is widely played in the cities. Many Chadians have excelled as runners and high jumpers. Idriss Mahamat Ouya, a

Chadian athlete, made his mark internationally as a high jumper. Today a large sports stadium in N'Djamena is named after him. Boxing and martial arts are increasingly popular in the cities. Some Chadians living near Lake Chad and the rivers Logone and Chari enjoy spending their spare time fishing.

Chadians throughout the country enjoy freestyle wrestling. Matches often take place when two groups meet to water their cattle. Participants from the two groups pair off according to age. Combatants traditionally dress in animal hides and cover themselves in dust before attempting to pin each other down. Among the Sara Kaba tribe of southern Chad, this type of wrestling is known as *mbilé*.

Children in Chad often build their own toys or play with everyday objects. They like to push wheels and tires around, often using

Did you know?

Young girls of the Teda people of the Sahara play with dolls made of mud or wood. The dolls do not have facial features; instead, little beads are placed in a geometric pattern on the face of the doll. The dresses and ornaments on the dolls resemble those of adult women.

sticks. Hide-and-seek is popular, and village boys sometimes carry slingshots, which they use to hunt small birds, such as guinea fowl. Girls play *tap tap*, a game much like hopscotch. Many people enjoy playing checkers or a board game played with seeds or small stones known as *sidjé* in Arabic or *agra* in Gorane.

Chadians enjoy visiting each other's families. These visits are occasions for drinking tea. In the north, green tea from Libya is popular, while in the south, red tea from Cameroon is common.



LOOKING AT HEALTH CARE



Did you know?

Drought can cause malnutrition and widespread famine in Chad. In 1984, the drought was so severe that Lake Chad completely dried up.

The people of Chad have always used traditional medicine to treat themselves and their livestock. European and American missionaries introduced Western-style medicine in the early 20th century. The French also established a rudimentary



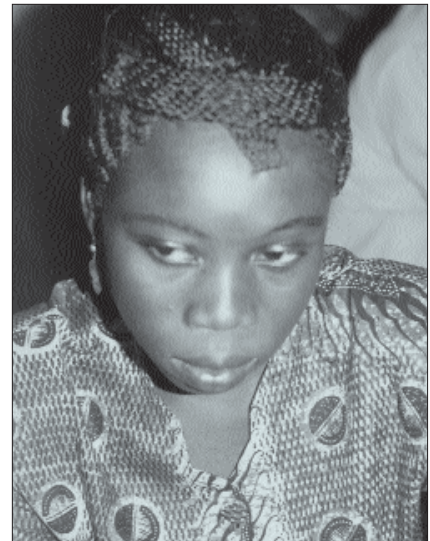
health care system during their occupation of the country.

Since independence in the 1960s, the government has tried to extend the health care system. With foreign aid, new medical facilities have been built and many health care professionals have been trained. At first, health services were available to all citizens for free. In recent years, a system of payment for treatment and medicine has been introduced. This has resulted in a higher standard of health care, but it means that the very poor no longer have access to medical services.

Most hospitals are located in cities. Facilities in rural areas are limited. There are only about 1.5 doctors per 100,000 people. There are few specialists. People in the Sahel and Saharan regions and in some areas of the south have to travel long distances to receive medical treatment.

Chad has a high infant mortality rate: about 92 deaths per 1,000 live births. Nevertheless, the population of Chad is growing at a rate of 2.65% per year. It is estimated that one-half of the population of the capital, N'Djamena, is under 16 years of age.

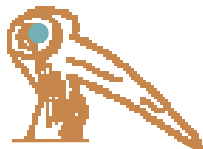
Infectious and parasitic diseases pose a challenge to Chad's health system. Tuberculosis is common and AIDS is on the increase. Outbreaks of cholera and meningitis have occurred,



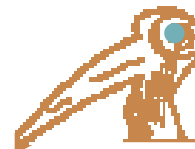
especially in the capital and in the highly populated southern regions. Cases of bilharzia (caused by a water-borne flatworm that enters the bloodstream through the skin) and river blindness (caused by black-fly bites) are frequent. The guinea worm, a type of parasite, can cause great suffering. Malaria is a constant problem. Across the country, various international non-governmental organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the Carter Foundation, are working to reduce these problems.

Did you know?

Many herbal remedies developed hundreds of years ago are still in use today. For example, an infusion made by boiling the leaves of the neem tree is inhaled by people suffering from malaria.



COMMUNICATING WITH CHADIANS



The official languages of Chad are French and Arabic, but not all Chadians speak these languages. Many people in the south do not speak Arabic, and in the north, many people do not speak French. Among the 200 ethnic groups and subgroups in Chad, there are more than 100 different languages.

French is most common in the cities, towns and larger villages; it is the working language of government and business. Arabic is more widely spoken in the north of the country. There are many Arabic dialects in Chad, including several that are similar to Libyan Arabic and others that resemble the Arabic spoken in Sudan. Arabic is not only the language of Islam's holy book, the *Qur'an*, but the language of commerce, spoken by traders in marketplaces. Chadian Arabic has become a common language for communicating among certain ethnic groups.

Greetings are of great importance in Chad. They may be long and elaborate and require a ritualized response. The type of greeting

English	Sara Kaba	Chadian Arabic
Yes	Ayo	Aye, Aiwa
No	Aan-an	La
Good morning	Ndourouwo!	Sabah al kheir
How are you?	Ye nere?	Kef halak?
I am fine	Ye boulo	Afia!
Thank you	An Gain	Shokran

depends on the age of the person addressed or the time of day. In

Did you know?
La Voix du Paysan (The Peasant's Voice), which began operating in 1997, is a private radio station owned by the Catholic Church. Located in Doba, it broadcasts locally produced programming, including news coverage and political commentary in French and indigenous languages, over a 220-kilometre range.

some cultures in the south, it is considered impolite to look directly into the eyes of older people or people with authority. Some groups feel that watching people while they eat is disrespectful.

In many places, it is customary to offer a gift to guests when they arrive. In the north, this could be tea, dried okra powder or natron. The right hand is used to shake hands, to eat and to give and receive gifts. The left hand is believed to be the "unclean" hand and is not used for these activities.

Did you know?
Of the four major language families in Africa, three are represented in Chad: the Nilo-Saharan, the Afro-Asiatic and the Congo-Kordofanian. Only the Khoisan languages of southern Africa are not represented.



EATING THE CHADIAN WAY

The Chadian staple food is millet, a grain that can be eaten in a variety of ways. It may be used to make a paste that is formed into balls and dipped into sauces. This is popular both in the north, where it is called *aiysh* in Chadian Arabic, and in the south, where it is known as *biya*. Millet is also made into pancakes that are fried in oil. Sorghum, another type of grain, is also an important staple. Rice is grown in some areas, but corn and wheat are scarce. Beef, chicken and mutton are available in most parts of the country, particularly in the north, where livestock herding is common. Muslims do not eat pork, but pork is popular in N'Djamena and in southern Chad.



Fish abound in Chad's lakes and rivers. The most common fish is the Nile perch, called *capitaine* in Chad. Other fish include eel, tilapia and carp. *Balbout* (a mud-dwelling catfish) is caught at the beginning of the rainy season. Fish may be dried, salted or smoked before they are sold. *Salanga* (small dried or salted fish) and *banda* (larger smoked fish) are popular among Chadians and are exported to Cameroon and Nigeria.

Okra is very popular in Chad and is used as the base of a sauce called gumbo. The leaves of the cassava plant are another common vegetable. Many fruits grow in the south, such as mangoes, guavas and bananas. In the arid north, dates and raisins, which grow in oases, are used in many dishes.

Peanuts are a popular snack and are eaten raw or roasted. Other snacks include corn (roasted or boiled) and *fangasou* (fried doughnuts made of millet or wheat flour). *Fangasou* are also popular

for breakfast. In some places, skewered roasted meats in a hot, spicy sauce are sold on the streets, accompanied by French bread. *Carcaje* is a sweet drink made from hibiscus leaves. It is often sold in markets in small plastic bags.

The evening meal is the most important meal of the day. It is served on a large plate set in the middle of a mat. People gather around the plate and seat themselves on the ground. Generally, men and women eat separately.

Dried Fish Gumbo

1 large onion, chopped
4 large tomatoes
2 tbsp oil
500 ml water
500 g dried salted fish
Salt and pepper or cayenne to taste
1 package dried okra powder

In a medium-sized saucepan, sauté the onions and tomatoes in the oil. Add the water and the dried fish, cut into small pieces, and add salt, pepper or cayenne to taste. Let boil for 10 minutes, then add the dried okra. Boil for another 20 minutes and simmer for another 15 minutes. Serve hot, accompanied by rice or millet.

Did you know?

For religious reasons, Muslims do not drink alcohol. In the south, however, people enjoy beer brewed from millet. It is called **billi-billi** when it is made from red millet and **coshate** when it is made from white millet. Spirits made from distilled millet alcohol are known as **arki**. Gala beer is also manufactured in Chad.

LEARNING IN CHAD

The earliest schools in Chad were Qur'anic schools. They are still common throughout the Saharan and Sahel region. They teach Arabic and the words of the *Qur'an*. The country's first Qur'anic secondary school was the École Mohammed Illech, which was founded in 1918 and followed an Egyptian educational model.

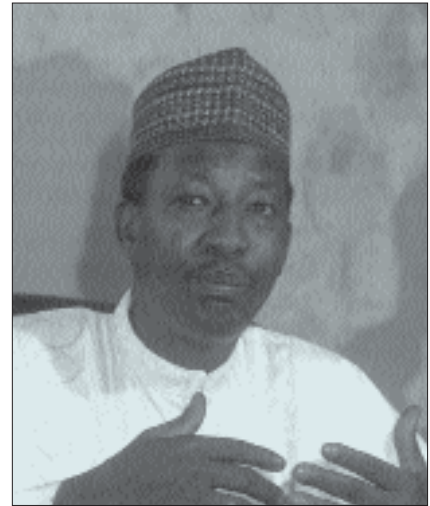
The first Western-style primary schools were founded by Protestant and Catholic missionaries in the 1920s in southern Chad. The language of instruction was French, at the request of the colonial authorities. The only classes taught in local languages were religion classes. In 1925, the French colonial powers imposed a standard curriculum on all primary schools in Chad. Before 1942, there were no secondary schools other than the Qur'anic schools. A few Chadians

attended secondary school in the Republic of Congo.

When independence was declared in 1960, the government announced its goal of universal primary education. The curriculum was changed to reflect Chadian, rather than French, culture. Today, about one-half of school-age children attend school.

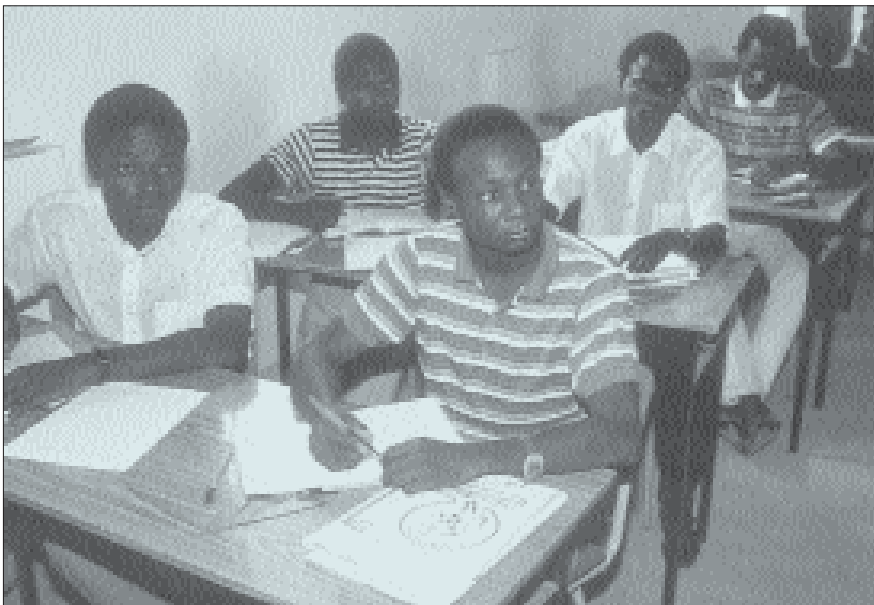
Children begin their schooling at age six (in the north, they may begin when they are eight). Primary education lasts for six years, at the end of which students receive a certificate. The curriculum includes writing, reading, spelling, grammar, math, history, geography, science and drawing. The school year runs from October to June.

After primary school, students may attend a *collège* or a *lycée*. The *collège* offers a four-year vocational course, and the *lycée* offers a seven-year program leading to university. Vocational



students who complete the four-year *collège* program may take an examination to transfer to a *lycée* to complete their education. At the end of seven years, *lycée* students take a baccalaureate exam known as a bac, which determines their eligibility for university.

The Université du Tchad opened in 1971. Industrial education is offered at several technical institutes in Sarh, Moundou and N'Djamena. The École Normale Supérieure in N'Djamena offers degree programs in Arabic, English, geography, history, literature and sciences.



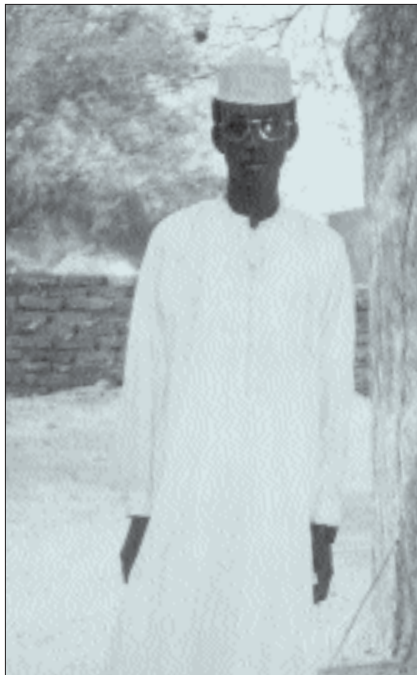
Did you know?

Educational opportunities for girls have traditionally been more limited than those for boys. Although about equal numbers of girls and boys are enrolled in primary school, the number of girls enrolled in secondary school is very low, partly because of early marriage.

SPIRITUALITY

Three religious traditions coexist in Chad. About one-half of the population is Muslim. Most Muslims live in the north and central regions of the country. Muslim tribes in Chad include the Arab, Fulbe, Kotoko, Hausa, Kanembou, Baguirmi, Boulala, Zaghawa, Hadjerai and Maba. In the south, some people follow indigenous African religions, while others are Christian, either Catholic or Protestant. The non-Muslim people of Chad are mostly inhabitants of southern Chad and include the Sara, Ngambaye, Mbaye, Goulaye, Moudang, Moussei and Massa people.

Chadian Muslims have combined many pre-Islamic beliefs with Islam. Like many Islamic countries, Chadian Muslims often do not speak Qur'anic Arabic. Nevertheless, most people



observe the five main practices of the Islamic faith, known as the Five Pillars of Islam. *Shahada* is the profession of faith. Every day, Muslims recite the words "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His prophet." *Salah* is the requirement to pray five times a day: at dawn, midday, mid-afternoon, sunset and evening. *Zakat* is the giving of alms to the poor. *Saum* is the requirement to fast from dawn to dusk every day during the holy month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. *Hajj* is the pilgrimage to Mecca, which must be performed at least once in a lifetime, if possible.

Chad has three Roman Catholic dioceses, with an archbishop at N'Djamena. Most of Chad's Roman Catholics live close to the border with Cameroon. They make up about 5% of the population. Protestants live in the south. Although many Protestant missionaries left Chad during the

Did you know?

N'Djamena's Great Mosque was built in the late 1970s and is a dominant feature of the city. N'Djamena also has a cathedral built by the French, as well as ancient Sao ruins.

civil war in the 1970s, a few Protestant mission groups, such as the Baptists, remain.

Traditional African religions also flourish in the south. These religions honour a powerful creator god. However, people do not worship this god directly, but pray to their ancestors to intercede on their behalf. Leaders are sometimes associated with divine power and are responsible for good relations with the supernatural forces. For example, among the Moundang people in the area around Léré, the *gong lere* (leader) is responsible for communicating with the sky spirits.



HOLIDAYS



Both Christian and Muslim holidays are celebrated in Chad, in addition to some national holidays. Chadian Independence Day is celebrated on August 11 with speeches, military parades and flag-raising ceremonies. Most shops, businesses and offices are closed for the day. Another important national holiday commemorates the proclamation of Chad as a republic on November 28, 1958. Every year, the country also marks the day that the present government ascended to power; however, the date of this holiday changes with each change of government. International Women's Day is celebrated with parades and special events.

Did you know?

May 25 is African Liberation Day, which commemorates the founding in 1963 of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This is a national holiday in Chad and in many other African nations, and is often celebrated with sports contests and dances.

January 1

April 13

May 1

May 25

August 11

November 1

November 28

December 25

New Year's Day

National Day

Labour Day

Africa (Freedom) Day

Independence Day

All Saints' Day

Republic Day

Christmas Day

Christmas, New Year's Day, All Saints' Day and Easter Monday are the main Christian holidays. The date of Muslim holidays is not fixed and changes each year. One of the holiest Muslim celebrations takes place at the end of the month of Ramadan. During Ramadan, Muslims are required to fast during daylight hours. When Ramadan ends, Muslims celebrate with feasting during *Eid al-Fitr*. Another important Muslim holiday is *Eid al-Adha*, sometimes known in Chad as *Tabaski*. It commemorates the

willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son to God. *Eid al-Maulud* celebrates the birth of the prophet Mohammed.

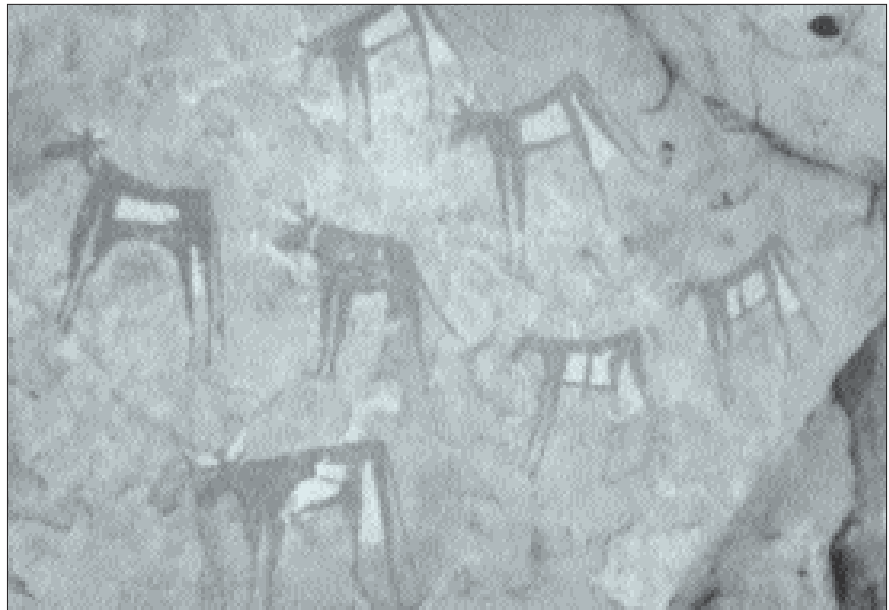
Local festivities vary depending on the region and culture. In the south, during the months of October and November, people celebrate after the harvest is taken in and the rainy season comes to an end. Many tribes mark the end of the period of *Yondo* or other initiation rites by singing, dancing and drinking millet beer.



ARTS AND LITERATURE

Chadian handicrafts include carpets, woven mats, fabric, jewellery, wool rugs, beads, leather products and wood carvings. Calabashes (a type of gourd) are shaped and engraved to serve many household purposes and to make musical instruments. The village of Gaoui, a short distance from N'Djamena, is known for its fine pottery. Generally, each village has its own distinctive shapes for water jars and pottery.

Chadians enjoy listening to music. In the Sahel region, groups such as African Melody and International Challal have popularized music that combines traditional and electric instruments. Tibesti, another well-known group, plays *sai*, a type of music that draws on folkloric rhythms from the south of the country. Ahmed Pecos plays Sudanese-inspired guitar music.



Did you know?

Mahamat Saleh's feature film **Bye Bye Africa**, a Franco-Chadian co-production about a Chadian who returns to the country, has been shown at international festivals, including the 2000 Toronto International Film Festival.

Clément Masdongar is a leading Chadian musician and singer who performs in France.

Traditional Chadian instruments include trumpets made from goat horns, the *kinde* (a variety of bow harp), the *kakaki* (a tin horn that can be up to three metres long) and the *hu hu* (a stringed instrument that uses calabashes as loudspeakers). The Sara people of the south use whistles, balaphones (an instrument similar to a xylophone), a harp-like instrument and large *kodjo* drums. Kanembu music combines the sounds of a flute-like instrument and drums, while Baguirmian

music features zithers and drums. Baguirmians also have a distinctive dance in which dancers wield large grain-pounding pestles and pretend to use them on another dancer.

Chad has produced several important writers. The tales of Joseph Brahim Seid, including *Au Tchad sous les étoiles* (1962) and the autobiographical *Un enfant du Tchad* (1967) are Chadian classics. Baba Moustapha, who died in 1982 at the age of 30, left several notable works, one of which, *Le Commandant Chaka* (published posthumously in 1983), denounces military dictatorships. Poetry is a popular form of expression in the north.

Live theatre in Chad is often satirical and performers poke fun at people in the news. The Cheikh Anta Diop theatre group is popular and performer Haikal Zakaria, who plays the character "Commandant Al Kanto," is often featured on television.



IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE

AZEVEDO, Mario, and Emmanuel U. NNADOZIE. *Chad: A Nation in Search of its Future*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1998.

An in-depth look at Chad's political history.

DECALO, Samuel. *Historical Dictionary of Chad*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1997.

A comprehensive work on the history of Chad, which includes cultural information.

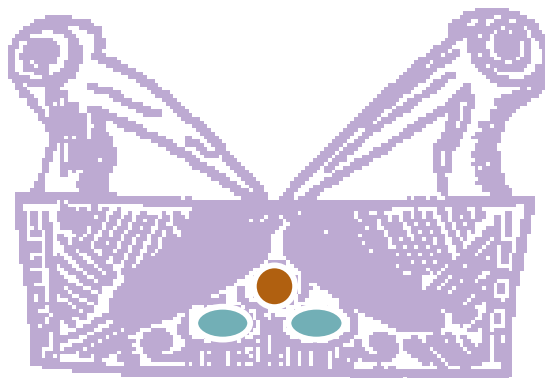
NEWTON, Alex. *Central Africa: A Travel Survival Kit*. Melbourne: Lonely Planet Press, 1994.

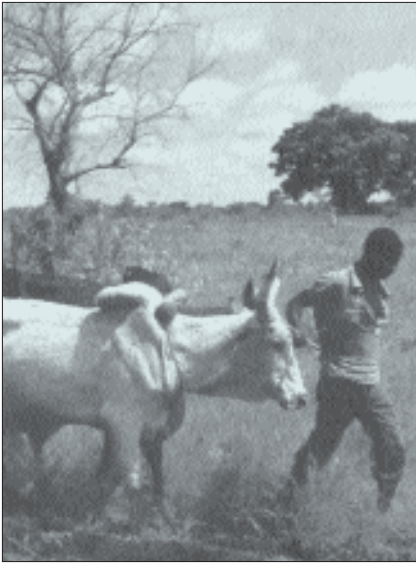
A travel guide that contains information on the history and culture of Chad.

Web Sites:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/africa/chad>

http://www.bethany.com/profiles/c_code/chad.html





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