



# AFRICA FASHION

Presented here are the national flags of Africa's fifty-four countries. The colors of each flag represent its country's collective values. Pan-African colors, such as green, yellow, red, and black are featured in the national flags of numerous African countries. The colors green, yellow, and red reflect the hues of the Ethiopian flag—as Ethiopia, the only African nation to have remained independent from colonial rule, symbolized resistance. Political activist and Black nationalist Marcus Garvey introduced the color scheme red, black, and green in 1920, which became the unifying symbol of Pan-Africanism.

*Design and narrative courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum.*



## ALGERIA

Algeria's flag, adopted in 1962, includes references to Islam, the country's dominant religion, such as the star and crescent and use of the color green.



## ANGOLA

Angola's flag symbolizes the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, with black representing African unity and red signifying the blood of those who fought for independence.



## BENIN

Replacing the French tricolor flag in 1959, Benin's flag features the colors of the Pan-African movement and the African Democratic Rally, a decolonial party based in French West Africa.



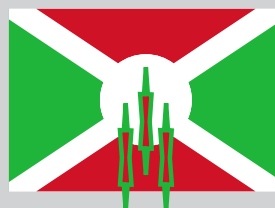
## BOTSWANA

Botswana's flag does not use Pan-African colors or colors associated with the leading political party. Instead, blue represents rain, and the black and white bands symbolize harmony and cooperation.



## BURKINA FASO

Similar to other postcolonial nations, Burkina Faso's flag features Pan-African colors. The central yellow star represents the light of decolonization.



## BURUNDI

The centrally placed stars on Burundi's flag represent the nation's motto of "unity, work, and progress," as well as the country's three major ethnic groups: Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa.



### CAPE VERDE

This island nation's flag depicts a chain of islands as a circle of ten stars set against a blue backdrop of ocean and sky.



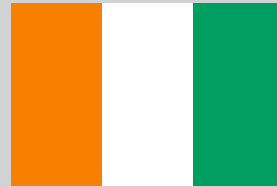
### REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Bearing Pan-African colors, this flag was first adopted when the French Congo gained independence. Green represents the country's forests, while yellow represents its wealth.



### CAMEROON

The green, red, and yellow bands on Cameroon's flag symbolize, respectively, the forests of the south, national unity, and the savannas of the north.



### CÔTE D'IVOIRE

This flag features equal bands of orange, white, and green, representing the country's savannas, the Sassandra, Bandama, and Komoé rivers, and the lush landscapes of the south.



### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The four horizontal bands of blue, white, green, and yellow are unified by a vertical red stripe, which represents both the nation's colonial past and its commitment to Pan-Africanism.



### DJIBOUTI

Djibouti's flag features the colors blue and green to represent the Indigenous Afar and Somali peoples and is based on the flag used by the Liberation Front of the Coast of the Somali, active in the 1960s and 1970s.



### CHAD

Created while the country was an autonomous member of the French Community in 1959, Chad's flag combines the tricolor flag of France with the colors of the Pan-African movement.



### EGYPT

Red symbolizes bloodshed in the war against colonization, while white represents purity. Together, black and white stand for overcoming darkness. The Eagle of Saladin, named after the first Sultan of Egypt, has signified Egyptian strength since the flag was adopted in 1984.



### COMOROS

The crescent moon, stars, and color green on this flag evoke the symbolism of Islam. The distinct islands that make up the nation are represented by four stars and four horizontal stripes.



### EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Equatorial Guinea's coat of arms establishes its historical link with Portugal and features a silk-cotton tree known as "God's tree."



### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The color blue represents peace, and the diagonal red stripe signifies the blood shed by the country's martyrs in the fight for independence. Yellow symbolizes wealth, and the star represents the country's future.



### ERITREA

When Eritrea was internationally recognized as an independent nation in 1993, it incorporated elements of previous flags, including a wreath surrounding an olive branch, which was featured on the nation's first adopted flag in 1952.



### ESWATINI

This flag is based on the one given to the Swazi military by King Sobhuza II in 1941 and designed by three princesses. Red represents past battles, while blue and yellow symbolize peace and mineral resources. The black and white shield symbolizes protection.



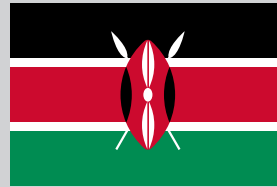
### GUINEA-BISSAU

Taking inspiration from Ghana's flag design, Guinea-Bissau's flag features the colors of the Pan-African movement and a black star, a symbol of anticolonial resistance.



### ETHIOPIA

Green, yellow, and red symbolize Ethiopia's resistance to colonial occupation, which inspired many African nations. The star represents the country's bright future and equality among Ethiopians.



### KENYA

The color black stands for the people, red symbolizes Kenya's fight for independence, and green reflects its landscape. A Maasai shield with two crossed spears signifies the nation's defense of its sovereignty and values.



### GABON

Yellow represents the equator that passes through the country, as well as the minerals found in the region. Green and blue symbolize the nation's forests and the Atlantic coast, respectively.



### LESOTHO

Lesotho's flag features the colors blue, white, and green, representing the sky, peace, and prosperity. A black *mokorotlo*, a traditional Basotho straw hat, signifies peace between the nation and South Africa.



### GAMBIA

The flag's tricolor design refers to Gambia's regional features: red for the savanna, blue for the Gambia River, and green for the agricultural lands.



### LIBERIA

The eleven stripes represent the signatories of the Liberian Declaration of Independence. Red and white symbolize courage and moral excellence, while blue stands for Africa. The star signifies the freedom gained by emancipated and freeborn Black Americans.



### GHANA

Designed by renowned Ghanaian artist Theodosia Okoh, Ghana's flag features Pan-African colors and a black star, symbolizing African unity against colonialism.



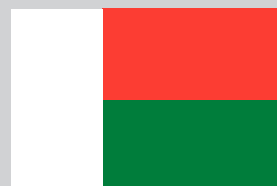
### LIBYA

Red represents the bloodshed in Libya's struggle for freedom, while the white crescent moon and star against a black background symbolize hope during the dark days of oppression. Green represents wealth and prosperity.



### GUINEA

Guinea's flag evokes the bloodshed during the fight for independence and the country's mineral wealth and lush vegetation with the colors red, yellow, and green, respectively.



### MADAGASCAR

Red and white symbolize the Merina Kingdom, a precolonial state that opposed French colonization, while green represents the coastal populations who fought for independence.



### MALAWI

Thirty-one sun rays symbolize Malawi's position as the thirty-first African country to gain independence. Black signifies the Indigenous people of the continent, red stands for the struggle for independence, and green represents nature.



### NAMIBIA

Red represents the Namibian people and their heroism. White refers to peace and unity, and green symbolizes the country's vegetation and agricultural resources.



### MALI

For its independence, Mali adopted the colors of the Pan-African movement: green for its fertile land, yellow for its mineral wealth, and red for the bloodshed during the fight for independence.



### NIGER

Orange represents the Sahara Desert, white symbolizes the purity of the Niger River, and green stands for the fertile regions of the south.



### MAURITANIA

Mauritania's flag unites the colors of the Pan-African movement with a star and crescent to reflect its commitment to African liberation and Islam.



### NIGERIA

Nigeria's flag was designed by college student Michael Taiwo Akinkunmi in 1959. The green bands represent agricultural wealth, and the white band symbolizes peace and unity.



### MAURITIUS

The color red reflects the national struggle for independence, while blue and green reflect the country's position in the Indian Ocean and its lush landscape.



### RWANDA

The color blue signifies peace, while yellow represents the nation's economic development and mineral abundance and green stands for prosperity. An emblem of the sun symbolizes unity and enlightenment.



### MOROCCO

Red symbolizes power, courage, and bravery, while the green pentagram is known as the "Seal of Solomon" and represents the five pillars of Islam.



### SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

Using the colors of the Pan-African movement, the flag features a red triangle symbolizing equality and the independence movement. The two stars represent the two islands that make up the country.



### MOZAMBIQUE

The red triangle represents the country's struggle for independence, and the star overlaid with an open book, hoe, and Kalashnikov rifle signifies Mozambique's commitment to education, agriculture, and its defense of freedom.



### SENEGAL

Adopted upon independence, Senegal's flag uses the colors of the Pan-African movement. The green star holds religious significance for the faith and spiritual traditions found throughout the country.



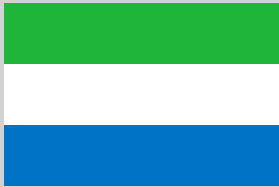
### SEYCHELLES

The national flag of Seychelles consists of five colored rays of blue, yellow, red, white, and green, representing the sea, the sun, determination, harmony, and fertile land.



### TANZANIA

In April 1964, the nations of Tanganyika and Zanzibar united to form Tanzania. The amalgamated flag's diagonal black stripe represents the people of Tanzania.



### SIERRA LEONE

Upon independence, Sierra Leone adopted a tricolor flag with the colors green, white, and blue, symbolizing the nation's natural resources, unity, and the Atlantic Ocean and Port of Freetown.



### TOGO

The five horizontal bands represent the country's administrative regions, while the white star against a red background symbolizes unity created by the nation's martyrs during the fight for independence.



### SOMALIA

The blue background honors the United Nations, which helped the nation achieve independence. The white "Star of Unity" represents the five regions occupied by the Somali people.



### TUNISIA

The color white in Tunisia's flag symbolizes peace, while the circle represents the nation's radiance and the crescent and star signify the unity of all Muslims.



### SOUTH AFRICA

Adopted in 1994, the South African flag features six colors, associated with the country's diversity, with the green Y-shape reflecting the nation's unity.



### UGANDA

The six horizontal stripes consist of black to represent the Ugandan people, yellow for the sun, and red for brotherhood. The crested crane's raised leg symbolizes the nation's progress.



### SOUTH SUDAN

Black represents the people of South Sudan, while red symbolizes the bloodshed during the fight for independence, and green, its natural wealth. Blue celebrates the Nile as the source of life, and yellow signifies unity, hope, and determination.



### ZAMBIA

The African fish eagle in flight above a block of three vertical colored bands represents the Zambian people's ability to rise above national problems.



### SUDAN

Red symbolizes the martyrs of the independence movement, and black represents the people and land of Sudan ("black" in Arabic). White stands for peace, and green signifies Nilotic agriculture, prosperity, and Islam.



### ZIMBABWE

The white triangle in Zimbabwe's flag represents peace. The colors yellow and red symbolize the country's mineral wealth and the bloodshed during the fight for independence. The Great Zimbabwe Bird signifies the nation's long history and its bond with nature.