

Eritrea



Eritrea is a small country, with a population of 3.5 million people. 75% of the country live within rural areas. There are 9 languages spoken throughout the country however, only two of these are recognised as official languages (Tigrinya and Arabic). Children begin to learn English in the 2nd grade and their lessons are taught in English once they arrive at secondary school.

Family Life

Generally, people in Eritrea live together in nuclear families. Within the family, the men are responsible for the public decision making within the family, while the women are responsible for running the home and organising the domestic activities of the household. Parents arrange the marriages for their children. In the Tigre group, these marriage contracts usually contain a clause for divorce and it is not uncommon for men and women to have more than one marriage during their life. Despite this, the first marriage is expected to last 7—12 years.

Education

From an early age, both boys and girls are expected to take part in household activities. For example, in rural areas, boys learn to herd livestock and girls will work as domestic assistants to their mothers. Increasing number of children are now entering the formal education system. However, this can conflict with a child's household obligations and chores, which can lead them to miss school. There are few higher education institutes within Eritrea. The only university is located in the capital city, Asmara. Families who are better off and those with relatives living abroad try to send their children abroad to study and work, with the USA and Europe being popular choices. Children in rural areas usually go into farming.



Eritrean Holidays

The main Religious holidays from both Islam and Christianity are recognised. As Eritrea recognises both the Julian and the Gregorian Calendar, so celebrations from both are also recognised. Eritrea also observes a number of national holidays.



Holiday	When is it celebrated?
New Year	1st January
Leddet	7th January
Timket	Changes each year
International Women's Day	8th March
Good Friday	Changes each year
Easter	Changes each year
May Day	1st May
Liberation Day	24th May
Festival of Mariam Dearit	29th May
Martyr's Day	20th June
Mariam Debre Sina	28th June
Debre Bizen Abune Libanos	11th August
Keddus Yohannes	11th September
Meskel	27th September
Eid al-Fitr	Changes each year
Eid al-Adha	Changes each year
Muharram	Changes each year
Mawlid an-Nabi	Changes each year
Christmas	25th December



An Introduction to Eritrean Culture

Eritrea is a country in North Eastern Africa, which borders Sudan and Ethiopia. People fleeing the country and seeking asylum abroad are usually doing so as a result of a strict dictatorship regime and compulsory military service. In 2015, 27,000 Eritreans sought asylum in Europe.

Religion

Two religions are officially recognised in Eritrea. These are Orthodox Christianity and Islam, with the population being roughly equally divided between the two. There are also significant Catholic and Protestant minority groups which reside close to urban areas. As a result, the main holidays of each faith are recognised and celebrated.



Food and Diet

Eritrean food varies significantly depending on the region. In the rural areas, “Injera”, a type of pancake like bread. This is commonly eaten with a sauce known as “tsebhi”. This is a stew-like dish, which usually contains spiced beef, chicken, mutton, or vegetables. Seafood is also commonly featured. In urban areas, there is a strong Italian influence - pasta is also readily available, served in most restaurants.



For more information

Further information about Eritrea and about supporting young people seeking asylum in the UK can be found at the following sites:

www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk

Provides information and resources to help and support asylum seekers in Yorkshire.

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Provides information and resources to help and support asylum seekers, including young people under 18.

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Provides legal guidance for UASC and their support workers.

www.uaschealth.org

Provides information and resources to help understand the physical and mental health needs of UASC.