

IBO CULTURE (/)

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The Feast of the New Yam

An occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the earth goddess and the source of all fertility. On the last night before the festival, yams of the old year were all disposed of by those who still had them. The new year must begin with tasty, fresh yams and not the shriveled and fibrous crop of the previous year. Yam foo-foo and vegetable soup was the chief food in the celebration. (Chapter 5)



Bride Price Ritual

This is a ritual in which the groom's family pays the bride's family in turn for the bride's hand in marriage. The groom's family presents a bundle of sticks to the bride's family. This represents the bags of cowries that will be paid to the bride's family. They exchange the bundle of sticks in order to decide the price that will be paid. The groom's family must pay for the bride because she provides the husband with children and a well cared for home. (Chapter 8)



Isa-Ifa Ceremony

The Isa-Ifa ceremony is the final marriage ritual that will determine whether or not the bride has been faithful to her groom during their courtship. This ceremony would bring together the women of the family to determine the faithfulness of the bride. The bride holds a hen in her hand and the women circle around her. They ask her various questions relating to her faithfulness and purity. The bride swears her answers on the staff of her father. When finished, the father of the bride slits the throat of the hen and lets the blood drip onto the staff.



Egwugwu Ceremony

The egwugwu ceremony is held when a dispute takes place between members of the community. The community gathers in the village and waits for the gong to sound. When the gong sounds, the nine masked spirits, the egwugwu, enter from the egwugwu house. Each of the nine egwugwu represent a village of the clan. The leader, Evil Forest, leads the trial in order to resolve the conflict and understand both sides. Then, the nine egwugwu return to the egwugwu hut to determine the verdict. (Chapter 10)



Funerals

Funerals are a time of celebration for the Ibo people. Joy is brought to the funeral with drums, guns and cannons, and extravagant decorations. Often, an ancestral spirit, egwugwu, will appear from the underworld just before the person is buried. The funeral is viewed as a time of closure and celebration for the long life lived. (Chapter 13)



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