Modern African Countries
A Simplified Guide with Historical Information

Nancy J. Jacobs, Brown University

Do you commonly confuse Liberia and Libya, even in the daytime? When called upon to discuss Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, do you hem and haw? Are you guilty of gaffes regarding Malawi and Mali, Mauritania and Mauritius? Does mention of Gabon and Gambia prompt apologies on your part? If so, a "Modern African Countries: A Simplified Guide with Historical Information" is for you! In fact, if you are enrolled in an African history course, it will not just save you from cartographic embarrassment, it may just save your grade!

The following list of contemporary territories gives names as of 2012, dates of independence, names changed since independence, a selective list of colonial names, and colonial rulers since the late nineteenth century. It does not list names of all territories that were amalgamated in the early decades of colonial rule. Colonies that were part of the federations of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa are marked (FWA) or (FEA). A slash under "Date of Independence" denotes that the process of independence from European empires was not accomplished in a single watershed event. A slash in other columns denotes successive names or rulers, while an ampersand conveys that separate colonies of different rulers were amalgamated around the time of independence.

Current Name	Indepen-dence	Other Names since Independence	Former Colonial Name	Colonial Rulers
1. Morocco, including Western Sahara	1956		Spanish Sahara was Western Sahara only	France & Spain
2. Algeria	1962			France
3. Tunisia	1956			France
4. Libya	1951			Italy
5. Egypt	1922/1952			Great Britain
6. Cape Verde	1975			Portugal
7. Senegal	1960		(FWA)	France
8. Mauritania	1960		(FWA)	France
9. Mali	1960		French Soudan (FWA)	France
10. Niger	1960		(FWA)	France
11. Chad	1960		(FEA)	France
12. Sudan	1956			Great Britain & Egypt
13. Gambia	1965			Great Britain
14. Guinea Bissau	1973		Portuguese Guinea	Portugal
15. Guinea	1958		French Guinea (FWA)	France
16. Sierra Leone	1961			Great Britain
17. Liberia	1847			
18. Côte d'Ivoire	1960		Sometimes "Ivory Coast", but "Côte d'Ivoire" is preferred (FWA)	France
19. Burkina Faso	1960	Upper Volta	Upper Volta (FWA)	France

20. Ghana	1957		Gold Coast & British Togoland	Great Britain & Germany (British Togoland)
21. Togo	1960		Togoland/French Togoland	Germany/France
22. Benin	1960		Dahomey (FWA)	France
23. Nigeria	1960			Great Britain
24. Cameroon	1960			Germany/France & Germany/Great Britain
25. Central African Republic	1960	Central African Empire	Ubangi-Shari (FEA)	France
26. South Sudan	2011		Sudan	Great Britain & Egypt
27. Ethiopia		Abyssinia		Occupied by Italy, 1936–41
28. Eritrea	1993			Italy/Ethiopia
29. Djibouti	1977		French Somaliland	France
30. Somalia	1960		British Somaliland & Italian Somaliland	Great Britain & Italy
31. São Tomé and Príncipe	1975			Portugal
32. Equatorial Guinea	1968		Spanish Guinea	Spain
33. Gabon	1960		(FEA)	France
34. Congo Brazzaville, Republic of the	1960		Middle Congo, French Congo (FEA)	France
35. Congo Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the	1960	Zaire	Congo Free State, Belgian Congo	Belgium
36. Uganda	1962		Buganda	Great Britain
37. Kenya	1964			Great Britain
38. Rwanda	1962		Ruanda-Urundi	Germany/Belgium
39. Burundi	1962		Ruanda-Urundi	Germany/Belgium
40. Tanzania	1961/1963		German East Africa/ Tanganyika & Zanzibar	Germany/Great Britain
41. Comoros	1975			France
42. Seychelles	1976			France
43. Angola	1975			Portugal
44. Zambia	1964		Northern Rhodesia	Great Britain
45. Zimbabwe	1964/1990		Southern Rhodesia/Rhodesia	Great Britain
46. Mozambique	1975	Portuguese East Africa		Portugal
47. Malawi	1964		Nyasaland	Great Britain
48. Namibia	1990		South West Africa	Germany/South Africa
49. Botswana	1966		Bechuanaland Protectorate	Great Britain
50. South Africa	1910/1994			Great Britain
51. Lesotho	1966		Basotholand	Great Britain
52. Swaziland	1968			Great Britain
53. Madagascar	1960			France
54. Réunion			Bourbon	France (remains overseas *department* of France)
54. Mauritius	1968			Great Britain

1	Morocco	9	Mali	16	Sierra Leone
2	Algeria	10	Niger	17	Liberia
3	Tunisia	11	Chad	18	Côte d'Ivoire
4	Libya	12	Sudan	19	Burkina Faso
5	Egypt	13	Gambia	20	Ghana
6	Cape Verde	14	Guinea Bissau	21	Togo
7	Senegal	15	Guinea	22	Benin
8	Mauritania			23	Nigeria
				24	Cameroon
				25	Central African Republic

26 South Sudan
27 Ethiopia
28 Eritrea
29 Djibouti
30 Somalia
31 São Tomé and Principe
32 Equatorial Guinea
33 Gabon
34 Republic of the Congo
35 Democratic Republic of the Congo
36 Uganda
37 Kenya
38 Rwanda
39 Burundi
40 Tanzania

41 Comoros
42 Seychelles
43 Angola
44 Zambia
45 Zimbabwe
46 Mozambique
47 Malawi

48 Namibia
49 Botswana
50 South Africa
51 Lesotho
52 Swaziland
53 Madagascar
54 Réunion (France)
55 Mauritius