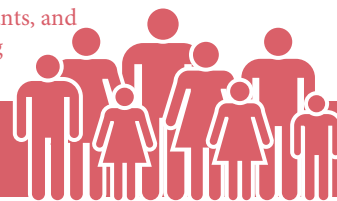




Cameroon

The Republic of Cameroon is located in Central and West Africa between Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria. Cameroon is slightly larger than California, and is sometimes described as "Africa in miniature" because it contains all major climates and vegetation of the African continent: mountains, deserts, rain forests, savanna grasslands, and the ocean coastland. Home to seven national parks – the most famous has lions, giraffes, elephants, and antelopes. In 1960, Cameroon gained its independence becoming the second of France's colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa to do so.



Family Life

In Cameroon, extended families including parents, children, grandparents, and cousins live together. However, recently, most young couples with enough financial means prefer to live alone with their children. Meals are eaten together as a family or separately depending on each family's schedules. While people will take individual time for themselves, adults are usually involved in all aspects of home life.

Both parents can be professionals, but most of the time the husband is more financially responsible in the household. Both parents have equal authority in the household and for their children, however traditionally the father is the head of the family and often times he will make decisions alone. Teenagers are disciplined in different ways by their natural parents when they break a household rule. For example, some parents will reduce teenager's monthly pocket allowance, assign extra homework, or have a discussion about the issue and rule breaking with the teenager.

Teen Life: Since most families are large, it is rare to find a child with his or her own room and children typically share a bed. Siblings will share some items like clothes, jewelry, or magazines. Respect, especially for the elders, is part of Cameroonian culture. Teenagers may interact freely with all family members but they still respect the elders. Teenagers in Cameroon are not very independent and are mostly dependent on their parents.

Responsibilities: Teenagers in Cameroon are expected to take responsibility for their personal hygiene and academic life, and to also participate in the care of the younger children. In Cameroon, families with high incomes give weekly or monthly pocket allowance to their children. Others try to earn money by doing small jobs during the weekends and holidays. Teenagers typically must budget for buying clothes, magazines, and other small personal items.

In Cameroon, most wealthy households have housekeepers and nannies. In poorer families, the children do most of the household chores. In Cameroon, the mother mostly cooks for everyone and sometimes girls will help. Males rarely participate in the cooking. Families with high incomes provide a weekly or monthly pocket allowance to their children. Some teenagers try to earn money by doing small jobs during the weekends and holidays. Teenagers typically must budget their earnings or allowances to buy clothes, magazines, and other small personal items.

Parental Involvement: The internet is not available everywhere in Cameroon and very few families have internet at home. Students are not accustomed to controlled access or parental monitoring of internet access. In Cameroon, parents are typically not in contact with their children's schools; rather, they wait for children's report cards which arrive at the end of each term.

Pets: In Cameroon, most people have dogs to guard the house and the cat is meant for catching mice. They are not treated like family members and are not typically let inside.



Personal Interactions

Mixed Gender Socializing: In Cameroon, youth socialize in groups with their peers. At school, teens make friends with the opposite sex. However, typically, parents don't like to see their children have friends of the opposite sex.

Friendships: Cameroonian teenagers make their friends through common activities and interests. They also make friends with other children of the neighborhood. Cameroonian teenagers think of peers with whom they are casually associated as friends. A teenager may have as many friends as possible. Teenagers in Cameroon sometimes share money with close friends by buying food and eating together.

Communication Styles: In traditional Cameroonian families, there is a gap, or personal space, between the adults and the teenagers. Children cannot freely discuss sensitive topics such as sex. The cultural communication norms for showing negative emotions include: frowning, maintaining silence, dragging ones feet on the floor, crying and shouting. Directly communicating negative emotions is not common and is typically shown through body language.

Eye Contact: In Cameroon, teenagers are not supposed to make eye contact with adults, especially when the adult is angry, as this may be considered a sign of disrespect and rebellion. Youth make eye contact with peers though not all the time with teachers or other elderly persons.

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School



Classes: In Cameroon, students are evaluated mainly on sequential written exams; class participation may count in some instances. All students in a single grade study the same subjects. Students remain in one classroom and teachers rotate between classrooms. Boys and girls study in the same classroom and are not seated separately. Students cannot choose their own classes as they are assigned based on exam results and grades from the previous year.

School Relationships: Cameroonian teenagers have both a friendly and formal relationship with their teachers and can call them by sir/madam. However, it is preferred that students have a formal relationship with the teachers.

Extracurricular Activities: There are few clubs in Cameroonian schools. Extracurricular activities are limited and few clubs exist at school. During the school year there is a week set aside for students to show their talents and abilities in all fields, called "Youth Week." Most parents are not actively involved in their student's extracurricular activities since they don't consider it to be important. However, some encourage their children in activities like music, drawing, and soccer.

School Rules and Attire: The use of cell phones in class is forbidden. All schools, public and private, have a uniform for students. School by-laws are always very strict with regards to bullying and sexual harassment.

Returning from Exchange: Students do/do not repeat the year after their return.

Food and Culture



Religion: Religion is a family event for some, but for others it is an individual event. In Cameroon, Ramadan is observed by fasting, prayers, and abstinence from sex and alcohol. There is fasting that occurs during other Muslim holidays as well.

Holidays: In Cameroon, there are public holidays as well as academic holidays. The two major public holidays are on the 11th of February and 20th of May. The 11th of February is a day set aside for youth, and the 20th of May is the reunification day when southern and eastern Cameroon became united. The academic holidays, wherein students are excused from school, include Christmas, Easter, and summer break.

Guest Culture

Guests are always offered food or drink. It is very rude and not accepted for a guest to refuse food. It is better to have a taste than to completely refuse the food.

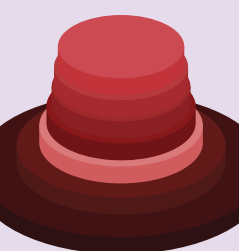
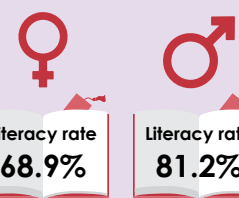
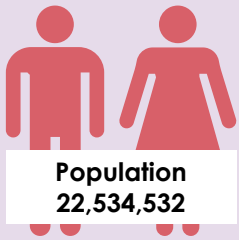
Lunch and Diets: Eating together as a family, especially during dinner as is common in the U.S., is rare in most homes in Cameroon. Everyone eats anytime, anywhere, alone or with the family if they are at home. Dinner is generally around 8pm. In Cameroon, portions are mostly large when cooked at home, and at home, it is ok to keep the food as leftovers. In regards to restaurants, servings are relatively large but it is considered weird to request the restaurant for a to-go box. Teenagers in Cameroon typically go to school with money given to them from their parents to buy lunch.

Personal Hygiene



Most of the time, Cameroonian teens bathe twice a day, once in the morning and again in the evening before going to bed. Cameroonian teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them with towels hung up and hygiene products put away. Teenagers usually use one towel to dry their body and face.

In Cameroon, it is common to see people wearing the same clothes two days in a row and they believe that too much washing ruins the clothes. Typically clothes are washed by hand, and most students have never used a washer or dryer. Cameroonian teenagers change their school uniforms upon entering the house.



Cameroon
Highlanders 31%
Equatorial Bantu 19%
Kirdi 11%
Fulani 10%
Northwestern Bantu 8%
Eastern Nigritic 7%
Other African 13%

