

The Real Japa Talk

Bonus 2 - What Nobody Tells You



Culture



Isolation



Reality

A Japa Without Wahala Companion



Bonus 2

THE REAL JAPA TALK - WHAT NOBODY TELLS YOU



Every chapter in the main guide prepares you for the process of getting out. This bonus prepares you for what almost nobody posts about: what it actually feels like once you're there.

The Four Stages Nobody Warns You About

Psychologist Kalervo Oberg's culture shock model, developed in the 1960s and still the standard reference point in cross-cultural psychology, describes four predictable stages most long-term relocators pass through.

- The Honeymoon Phase - the first weeks or months, everything is novel and exciting.
- The Frustration Phase - the novelty wears off, accumulated small frictions compound. This is normal, not a sign of failure.
- The Adjustment Phase - you build real competence; daily friction decreases.
- The Adaptation Phase - you function comfortably in both worlds without either feeling like a performance.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO KNOW

This cycle is not linear, and it does not fully end. Many people cycle back through frustration during major life events, even years after reaching adaptation.

Cold, Darkness, and Your Mood

If your route takes you to Canada, the UK, or Germany, you will experience a winter darker and colder than anything Nigeria prepares you for. Seasonal Affective Disorder is a real, clinically recognized mood pattern linked to reduced light exposure - common enough that it has its own name, not a personal failing. Many universities and workplaces have support resources for exactly this.

Work Culture Will Surprise You More Than You Expect

- Directness is often not rudeness - a German colleague's blunt feedback follows their own cultural norm, not hostility.
- Small talk carries more social weight than it seems, especially in the UK and Canada.
- Hierarchy flattens, but not evenly - disagreeing with a manager is more normalized than in most Nigerian offices, but comfort levels vary by company.

Isolation and Community



If you scored low on Category 4 (Adaptability & Mental Resilience) in Chapter 1, this is precisely the risk that category exists to flag. Isolation abroad isn't primarily about being physically alone - plenty of people abroad are surrounded by colleagues and still feel profoundly isolated.

Practical steps that consistently help:

- Seek out Nigerian and broader African community groups early, not after months of struggling alone.
- Keep a consistent communication rhythm with home.
- Treat the first 3-6 months as a deliberate relationship-building period.

Dating and Racism, Named Honestly

Dating norms shift meaningfully across these countries - more casual and secular than typical Nigerian courtship norms. And racism and microaggressions happen, in every country covered in this guide, in forms ranging from overt to subtle. It is not universal, it is not constant, and it does not mean you made the wrong decision - most workplaces and universities have equity offices for exactly this.

BRIDGE

Knowing what's coming doesn't remove the difficulty - it removes the confusion that makes the difficulty feel like proof you failed. Bonus 3 covers the practical side of staying settled: the compliance rules that keep your status secure.