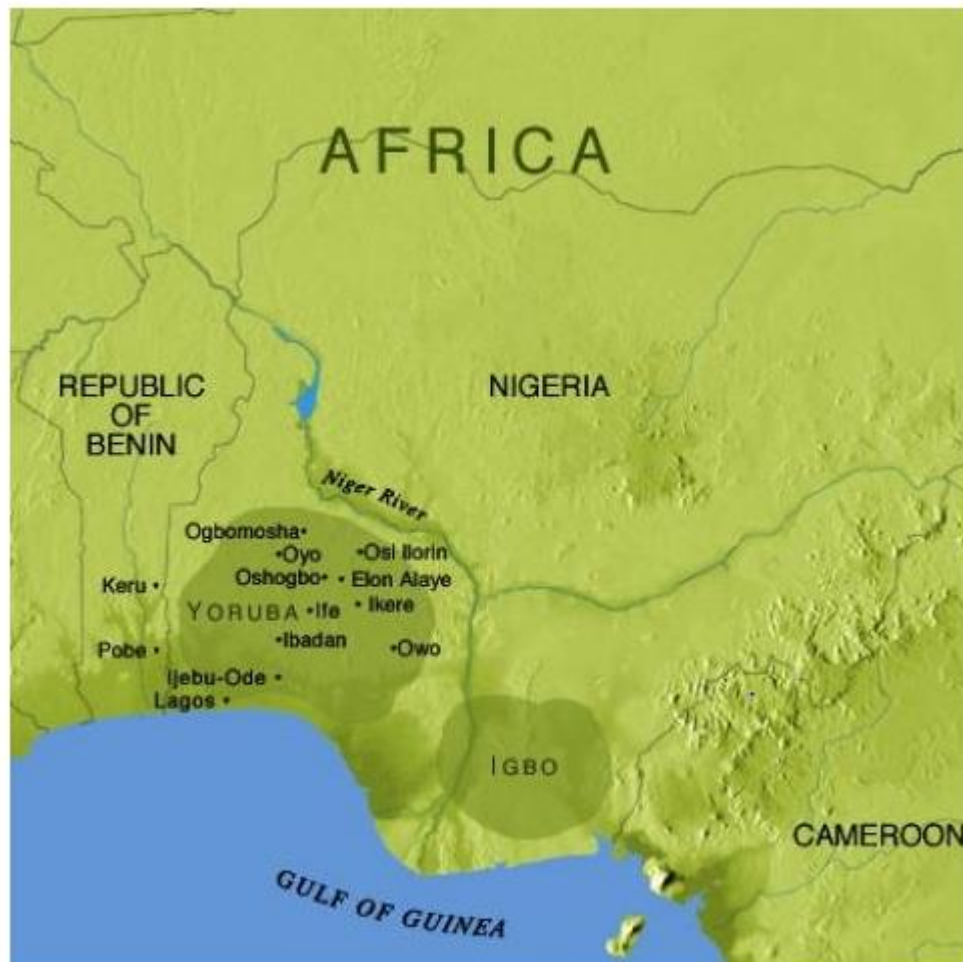


# African Religions

## **Introduction:**

Orisha is a religion of the Yoruba people of West Africa. This is a monotheistic religion. They believe in one supreme being who communicates with his followers through emissaries called Orishas. Participants sing until they fall into a trance and are possessed by the spirits. In Trinidad, the shango religion is believed to be derived from the Orisha. They share the same rituals and practices, except that their god is the god of thunder and lightning (shango). It also has a mixture of Catholicism with the Baptist faith.



*Map showing Yoruba*



*Yoruba people*

## **Revivalism**

They also believe in spirit possession. Their dress is distinctive. They wear robes of either white, blue and or red. Their heads are wrapped. Some even wear a pair of scissors in their hair. Men are often seen with a pencil behind their ears. They see themselves as messengers of God. They give this message in public places where they are sure to be heard. Many claim that they can 'read' a person. That means that they can look at a total stranger and tell what is happening in their life. Women play a leading role in this religion. They are known as 'mother'.

Their place of worship often has a basin or bottles of water at the altar. Some carry a flag or flags of red, blue to identify it as a sacred place. Music and dance are important to the ceremony. They do not sing traditional English or American hymns used in the traditional Christian churches. Someone 'tracks' the song, that is they say the words mostly from memory and the others sing after them. Their drums have a distinctive beat. Men and women dance and gyrate as they are 'possessed' by the spirit. Some even 'turn around in circles' or are spun by others. This is known as 'turn your roll'.

This religion is seen as a cult by Christian community. They do not mix with them. Some people are afraid of them because they believe that they are actually mixing with evil (demons).

## **Spiritual Baptists**

Practices: They believed in communicating with departed spirits and that they briefly inhabit the bodies of the faithful. The purpose of this is so that the ancestors could share their wisdom. Songs were often sung during rituals. Some did chanting.