



About Malawi CUSTOMS & TRADITION

Customs, traditions, and religion in the tribes that inhabit Malawi run deep into African history. Many ancient practices have been brought into the present and are mixed with the influence that came with explorer David Livingstone and his efforts to end slavery.

The **Chewa**, are located primarily in the Central Region. They are descendants of the Bantu people, arriving in this area from the Congo in the mid-1500's. Their desire was to get away from wars and famines, and live peaceful in their villages. They brought strong traditions, including the practices of the Gule Wamkulu, a secret society recognized by their masked dress and dance.



The **Angoni**, originally arrived as a warrior tribe, the descendants of the once powerful Zulu Nation of Southern Africa. Today they are peaceful and are scattered in villages throughout the nation.

The **Yao** tribes along Lake Malawi and the south, reflect a history of the establishment of trade and commerce along the lakeshore, and the delta lands near the Shire River.

Northern Malawi is home to the **Tumbuka**. They share the Bantu background and are usually well educated and prosperous. In their traditional practice it is believed the witch doctor can heal illness through a dance called Vimbuza.

The **Tonga** Tribe is centered in the north near the lake. They are primarily a fishing and farming culture. During their long history the people practiced a religion that worshipped dead ancestors.



About Malawi RELIGION



Religion is widely accepted in Malawi with over 75% of the people embracing some form of Christianity. This influence is reflected in business, commerce, government, and in the daily life of the village.

With the arrival of David Livingstone, the European explorer and missionary came western religions, primarily the Church of Scotland. It is now the largest in the nation. It was followed by the Roman Catholic Church, then several other Protestant groups.



The non-denominational Churches of Christ have a major influence, especially in rural areas, with as many as 2,000 to 3,000 congregations. Early church plantings took place with small groups meeting every 20 kilometers through the countryside. This is still evident today in the large number of small churches near each other.

While the Chewa embraced Christianity, the Yao brought the Muslim faith through their association with nations in the Middle East. Today Muslims constitute about 20% of the population. The Indian community brought the Hindu faith, and the recent entrance of Asian peoples many have added Asian religions.

Despite diverse backgrounds, the peace-loving people of Malawi live together in harmony.



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