

“ BENIN HORIZON : a journey of culture and opportunities”



Benin, a World of Wonders

The Benin Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka



RÉPUBLIQUE
DU BÉNIN



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Publisher

Benin Tourism – The Beninese Agency for Tourism Development

Photo Credits

Agence Béninoise pour le Développement du Tourisme (Benin Tourism), Presidency of the Republic of Benin, Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, Agence de Développement des Arts et de la Culture, Agence de Développement de Sèmè City, Société d'Investissement et de Promotion de l'Industrie, Agence de Promotion des Investissements et des Exportations, Société de la Logistique Évènementielle, Afrikafun, Vutheara Kham, Agence Les Conteurs, Vodun Days, Women's Pavilion de la Fondation Cartier, Lubin Christophe.



Foreword



Dear Visitors,

At Expo 2025 Osaka, the Benin Pavilion invites you on a unique journey an immersive exploration into a country where history engages with the future, where traditional knowledge is constantly being reimagined, and where every encounter opens new perspectives.

Designed as a fully immersive experience, the Pavilion reveals a dynamic and forward-moving Benin, rich in heritage, creative energy, and global opportunities. Each space tells a story, each installation sparks discovery from vibrant living arts to contemporary innovation, from cultural legacies to economic ambition.

Under the theme “Benin Horizons: A Journey of Culture and Opportunity,” the Pavilion embodies the nation’s diversity and its drive toward the future. It serves as a bridge between generations and as a platform for exchange where Beninese ingenuity and craftsmanship shine in full light.

Whether you are a curious traveler, a culture enthusiast, or in search of new opportunities, let yourself be carried away by this experience at the crossroads of authenticity and innovation. More than a discovery—it is an invitation to explore Benin, a World of Wonder.

**Yanniss ADEBIAYE, Commissioner General
of the Benin Pavilion at
Expo 2025 Osaka**

COMMISSION GENERAL

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WELCOME INSIDE THE BENIN PAVILION

Imagine a land where vibrant traditions and breathtaking landscapes blend harmoniously with the dynamism of innovation and modernity. Welcome to Benin an invitation to discover authentic Africa in all its splendour.

As a true cultural bridge, the Benin Pavilion embraces the theme “Designing Future Society for Our Lives” through the lens of “Connecting Lives,” echoing Benin’s role as a land of dialogue, diversity, and tolerance. Guided by a vision of harmonious coexistence, it shines a light on a nation where tradition and modernity meet, where innovation builds bridges, and where every culture finds its resonance.

Conceived as a captivating experience, the Benin Horizons Pavilion offers a journey through time and opportunity. Its bold architecture merges heritage with forward-thinking design, inviting visitors to explore the richness of a nation in transformation.

This immersive journey will unfold across three key thematic areas:

- Tourism, Art, and Culture – A celebration of Benin’s heritage and creative spirit
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
A showcase of technological and economic progress
- Economic Diplomacy – A dedicated platform for dialogue with investors and international decision-makers

More than just a pavilion, it is a gateway to a connected Benin rooted in history and boldly looking to the future.







FACTS ABOUT

BENIN

Benin in brief



114 763 km²
Surface area



14.1 millions
Population



6.7 %
Growth rate



Porto-Novo
Capital



Français
Official language



FCFA
Currency



21 H (excluding correspondence)
Duration of flight Japan - Benin





Benin, a World of Wonders



Located in the heart of West Africa, Benin is a vibrant nation of over 14 million inhabitants. A true crossroads of civilizations, the country captivates with its uniqueness and openness to modernity, offering visitors a immersion into an exceptional cultural and natural heritage.

Ranked among the “Top 10 Countries to Visit in 2024” by Lonely Planet and listed as one of the “25 Best Places to Travel in 2025” by the prestigious American magazine AFAR, Benin inspires with its remarkable history and the richness of its tourism assets.



lonely planet





From the majestic Royal Palaces of Abomey to the golden beaches of Ouidah, the stilt village of Ganvié to the wildlife safaris of Pendjari National Park, the country reveals a stunning diversity of landscapes and heritage sites found nowhere else in Africa.

Here, ancestral traditions harmoniously meet innovation, inviting travellers to experience an authentic and immersive journey. Discover a land where history, nature, and culture combine to offer a thousand unforgettable moments.

Welcome to Benin, A World of Splendor.





BENIN: A CULTURAL GEM IN FULL BLOOM

In February 2022, Benin reached a historic milestone with the landmark exhibition “Art of Benin, Past and Present: From Restitution to Revelation.” This double exhibition, spread across more than 2,000 m², showcased the 26 royal treasures returned by France, revealing to the world the extraordinary wealth of Benin’s historical heritage.

At the same time, its contemporary component highlighted the vibrancy and innovation of Benin’s burgeoning artistic scene, bringing together 34 artists and over one hundred works across various media painting, sculpture, photography, digital art, performance, and more.



Following the overwhelming success of this unprecedented event, the contemporary exhibition has since traveled the world. After captivating audiences at the Mohammed VI Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rabat, the Clément Foundation in Martinique, and most recently, the historic Conciergerie in Paris, Benin made a powerful debut at the iconic Venice Biennale in 2024.

These initiatives are part of an ambitious cultural policy that supports the emergence of several major museums set to open soon confirming Benin’s place at the heart of the global cultural stage.





Discover Benin's Future Museums

As part of this exceptional cultural momentum, Benin will soon inaugurate a new generation of internationally renowned museums, offering visitors transformative and lasting experiences:

The Museum of the Kings and Amazons of Danxomè (MURAD)

Step into the captivating world of the legendary Kings of Danxomè and the famed Amazons warrior women whose legacy resonates far beyond Africa. This museum offers an immersive journey into the rich and complex history of a powerful kingdom.

The International Museum of Memory and Slavery (MIME)

A deeply moving and powerful space that invites reflection on the painful history of the transatlantic slave trade while honoring the memory and resilience of its descendants. An essential, enlightening, and profoundly human experience.

The International Museum of Vodun (MIV)

Explore Vodun like never before through a captivating and innovative experience that blends ancestral traditions with cutting edge interactivity. This museum unveils the spiritual, cultural, and artistic wealth of one of the world's most unique intangible heritages.

The Museum of Contemporary Art of Cotonou (MACC)

Located in the heart of Cotonou's Cultural and District, this museum celebrates excellence in both African and global contemporary art. As a vibrant hub of creativity, it aims to establish Benin as a new epicenter for contemporary artistic expression in Africa and beyond.

These visionary cultural institutions reflect Benin's unwavering ambition to position itself as a premier cultural destination a land of exchange, emotion, and discovery.

A LAND OF RECONNECTION FOR AFRO-DESCENDANTS



Benin and Afro-descendants: A living reflection of “Connecting lives”

Benin opens its arms wide to Afro-descendants. On this land imbued with memory and history, one can rediscover the deep roots that bind them to their origins. It is a symbolic return to where it all began an invitation to embrace a living and authentic culture and to reconnect with the foundations of a shared legacy. This journey offers a powerful opportunity for self-discovery, for embracing the heritage passed down by ancestors, and for building bridges back to one’s identity.

A deep and enduring shared heritage

Across Afro-descendant communities around the world, countless cultural expressions reflect a lasting bond with the Motherland Benin. From spiritual beliefs to culinary traditions, from music and dance to community rituals and artistic practices, so much ties us together. Benin is the wellspring of this vibrant cultural identity. Every facet of daily life bears the imprint of a common legacy, one that has transcended time and generations.

A Historic law restoring a sense of belonging

On September 2, 2024, Benin took a momentous step by enacting a historic law granting the right to acquire Beninese nationality to Afro-descendants.

This landmark legislation recognizes the right of individuals with Sub-Saharan African ancestry deported during the transatlantic slave trade to reclaim their belonging. It is a powerful gesture of reconciliation, recognition, and reconnection.

Benin, a land of belonging and future for the afro-descendant community

In Benin, Afro-descendants are home. Across every corner of the country, they are welcomed with warmth, respect, and a deep sense of fraternity. Here, connections are forged naturally within a community rich in values, knowledge, and solidarity. This is not simply a visit it is a heartfelt reconnection with a vital part of oneself, rooted in a land of hospitality.





Sèmè City is a flagship government initiative that combines education, entrepreneurship, and research to develop highly qualified and competitive talent ready for the evolving job market. Its dual ambition is to retain talent locally and foster the growth of a dynamic ecosystem that drives innovation made in Africa.

A concrete impact

Today, Sèmè City has already trained:

- Over 1,500 students and learners in cutting-edge fields such as digital technology, design, artificial intelligence, and data science.
- Over 1,800 entrepreneurs, particularly in high-potential sectors like screen industries, fashion, and the green economy.
- 250 researchers through X-TechLab, the first platform in Sub-Saharan Africa dedicated to X-ray techniques.

Sèmè City collaborates with a strong network of academic and institutional partners, including the World Bank, the European Union, Epitech, L'École de Design Nantes Atlantique, Sorbonne University, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, Gobelins Paris, Institut Français de la Mode, and the Centrale Graduate Schools Group.



A large-scale ambition

Sèmè City is developing a 336-hectare campus in Ouidah, designed as an eco-city capable of welcoming up to 30,000 learners, featuring:

- Academic infrastructure equipped with technical labs and flexible learning spaces;
- Student housing and sports facilities built to international standards;
- Sustainable mobility solutions, efficient water management systems, and bioclimatic buildings.

Rooted in a philosophy of openness and international collaboration, Sèmè City positions Benin as a global player in the knowledge economy.





BENIN

A LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

With a dynamic economy, a strategic vision for industrialization, and a business-friendly environment, Benin is positioning itself as a key destination for global investors and entrepreneurs.

Thanks to sustained growth and bold reforms, the country is emerging as a hub for innovation and industrial transformation in West Africa.

A growing economy with solid macroeconomic performance

Benin boasts strong economic fundamentals, supported by structural reforms and sound fiscal governance. This macroeconomic stability attracts major investments and accelerates the country's industrialization.

o Dynamic economic growth :

With GDP growth reaching 6.7% in 2024, Benin continues to demonstrate robust and resilient expansion, ranking among the top-performing economies in the region.

o Strong sovereign credit ratings : Benin is internationally recognized for its prudent public finance management, reflected in its strong sovereign credit ratings and stable outlooks:

Bloomfield
Investment
Corporation

A+

Moody's

B1

Fitch Ratings

B1+

S&P

BB-

o **Attractive tax environment:**

The country offers a stable and incentivizing tax framework, fostering private investment and the competitiveness of companies operating in its territory.

o **A regional trade hub:**

With modernized infrastructure and an ideal geostrategic position, Benin serves as a key gateway to regional markets.

Privileged access to regional and international markets

Benin plays a central role in Africa's regional markets and benefits from membership in several influential economic organizations, providing access to a vast network of commercial opportunities.

o **Access to over 300 million consumers:**

As a member of **ECOWAS** (Economic Community of West African States) and **UEMOA** (West African Economic and Monetary Union), Benin benefits from an integrated market that promotes trade and the free movement of goods and services.

o **A favorable business climate :**

With a steady improvement in international rankings on the ease of doing business, Benin is strengthening its appeal to foreign investors.

GDIZ: Industrialization at the heart of national development

The **Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone (GDIZ)**, located **45 km from Cotonou**, stands as one of Benin's flagship projects, symbolizing the structural transformation of its economy.

o **A zone dedicated to local value addition :**

Spanning **1,640 hectares**, GDIZ focuses on processing the country's agricultural resources, including cotton, cashew nuts, soybeans, pineapples, and shea.

o **A magnet for international investment :**

With over **\$1.4 billion** in projected investments during its first phase, **GDIZ** offers a unique opportunity for industrial players and global investors looking to establish a long-term presence in Africa.

o **A driver of employment :**

GDIZ is expected to create over 300,000 direct jobs by 2030, promoting social inclusion and nurturing a new generation of Beninese entrepreneurs.





Sugarloaf pineapple and cashew nuts: High-potential flagship sectors

Benin stands out for the exceptional quality of its agricultural products, driven by an ambitious vision of local value creation and strategic exports. Among its flagship value chains, sugarloaf pineapple from the Allada plateau and cashew nuts occupy a central place. Their growing recognition in international markets reflects a mastery of sustainable and high-quality agricultural practices.

Sugarloaf pineapple: A remarkable fruit conquering global taste buds

Grown in the fertile soils of the Allada plateau in southern Benin, sugarloaf pineapple is a rare variety prized worldwide for its unique taste. Characterized by its white flesh, juiciness, and incomparable sweetness, it stands out for its low acidity and melting texture. Unlike other varieties, it retains its flavor even when green, offering a sweet and refreshing experience at every stage of ripeness.





In 2023, sugarloaf pineapple became the first Beninese agricultural product to receive a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) from the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI). This recognition enhances its traceability, uniqueness, and prestige on the international stage.

Beyond its delightful taste, the fruit is a treasure trove of health benefits: rich in vitamin C, natural antioxidants, and bromelain an enzyme known for its digestive and anti-inflammatory properties it appeals to wellness-conscious consumers. Grown sustainably, without chemical inputs and with a low carbon footprint, it aligns with current global trends toward responsible and ethical consumption.

A strategic export partnership with China, signed during the China International Import Expo in Shanghai, now connects Beninese producers with major Asian distribution platforms.

Thanks to its culinary versatility fresh juice, gourmet dried fruit, pastries, herbal infusions, or natural confections Beninese pineapple fits perfectly with the refined expectations of Japanese consumers.





Cashew nut : A flagship product at the heart of a transforming industry

Benin is the third-largest producer of raw cashew nuts in West Africa and is implementing a bold strategy for local processing to increase the added value of this key sector. The country aims to produce **300,000 tons** of raw cashew by **2026**, with a local processing rate exceeding **50%**.

At the forefront of this transformation is the Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone (GDIZ), located **45 km from Cotonou**. Spanning **1,640 hectares**, GDIZ hosts a dedicated **37-hectare** zone for cashew nut processing, equipped with cutting-edge facilities for shelling, drying, packaging, and the production of value-added items such as cashew milk, butter, powder, and cosmetics derived from Cashew Nut Shell Liquid (CNSL). Beninese cashew nuts, known for their rich flavor, natural crunch, and high content of magnesium, plant-based proteins, zinc, and unsaturated fats, are recognized as a premium superfood.

They cater to the growing demand for healthy, functional, and high-end products. Thanks to processing standards aligned with European, American, and Asian norms, they are already making their mark on demanding international markets.

By enhancing the entire value chain locally, Benin offers a compelling model of sustainable agro-industrial development, short supply chains, and social impact through employment generation and full traceability.

Benin: A Country Open to Global Trade

With strong political stability, sustained economic growth, and bold structural reforms, Benin offers an attractive environment for agricultural and agro-industrial investment. As a member of the **West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU)** and the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**, it provides access to a regional market of over **300 million** consumers.

Benin’s strategy is to elevate its agricultural products through modern infrastructure, optimized logistics, targeted tax incentives, and robust governance.

Products like sugarloaf pineapple and cashew nuts embody this new economic identity one of a quality-driven producer, processor, and exporter.

At Osaka 2025, the Benin Pavilion presents these two emblematic goods as ambassadors of its agricultural excellence and as gateways for deeper, mutually beneficial economic cooperation with Asia.



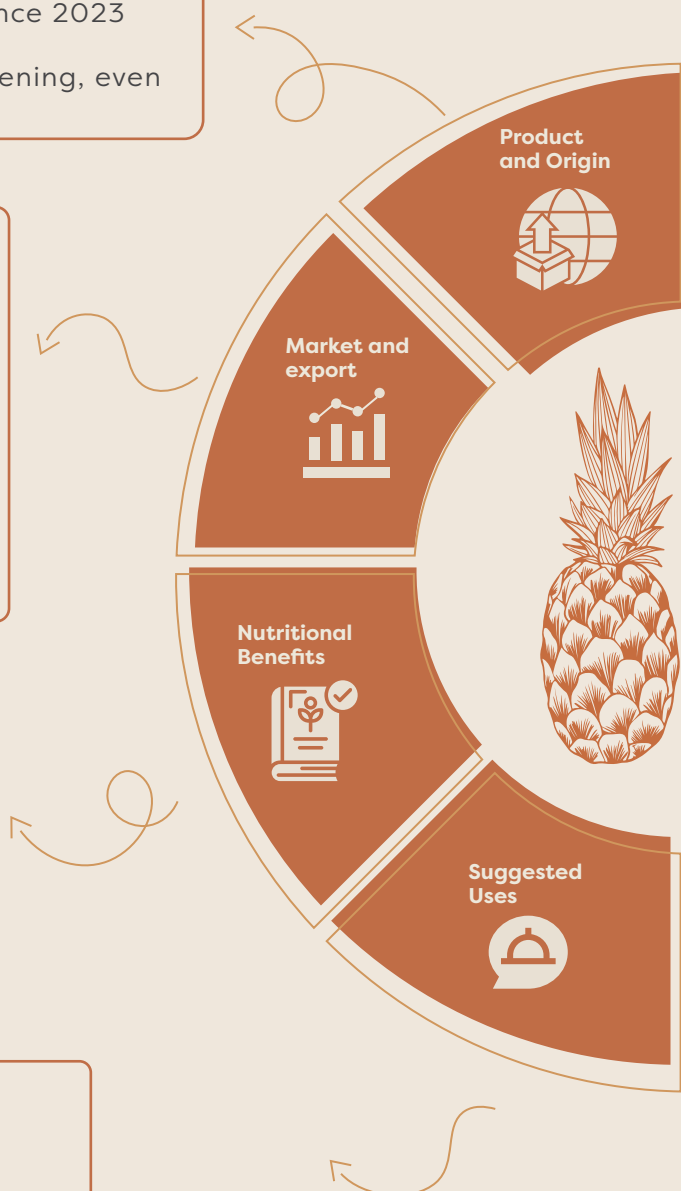
Product Sheet – Sugarloaf Pineapple from Benin

- Premium variety cultivated on the Allada Plateau (southern Benin)
- Known for its natural sweetness, low acidity, and juicy white flesh
- Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) since 2023
- Available year-round thanks to uniform ripening, even when green

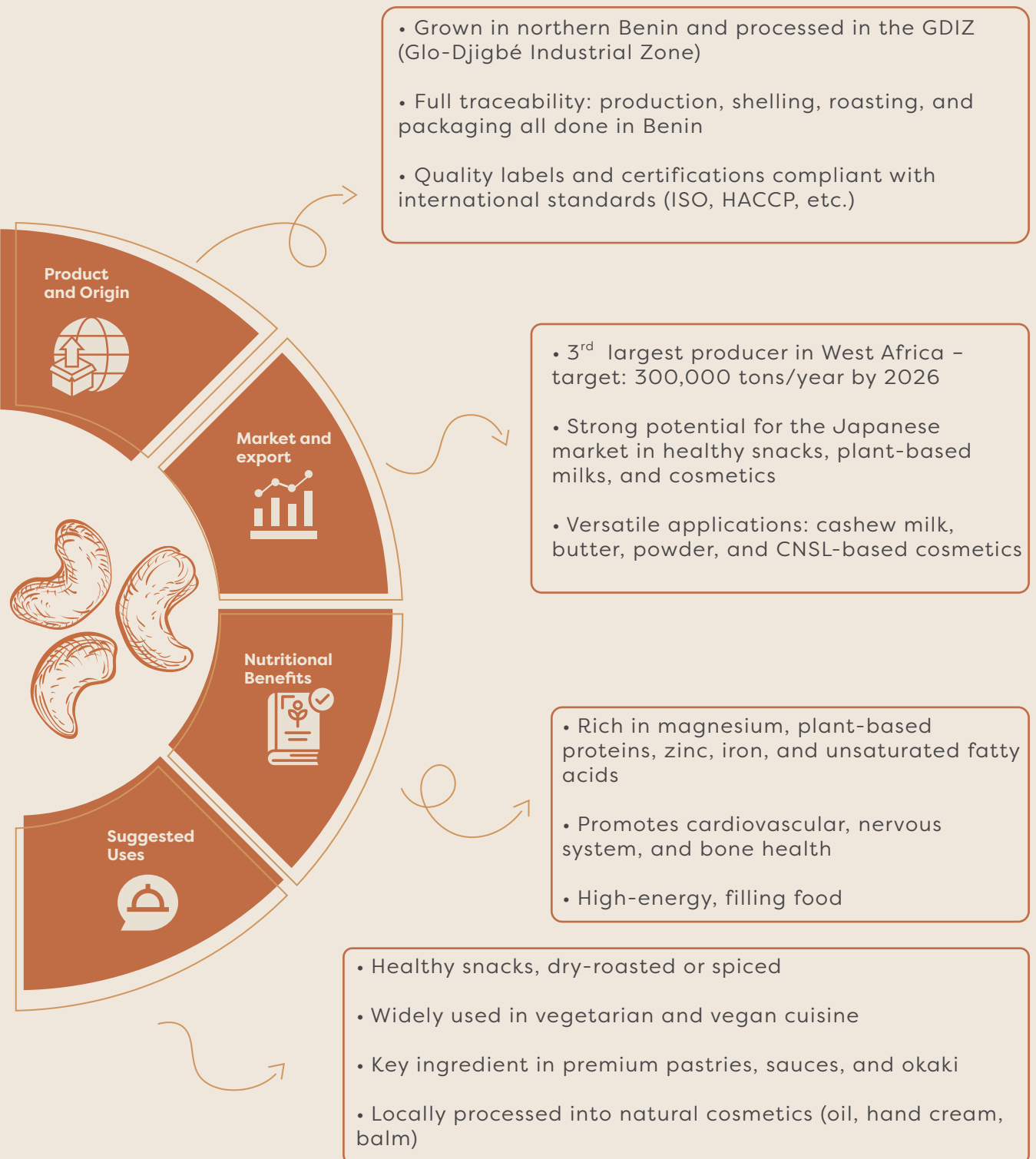
- Already present in EU and Middle Eastern markets
- Strategic export agreement signed with China in 2023
- New target: premium Japanese market (juices, desserts, confectionery, dried fruit)
- Positioned as a high-end, natural, and fully traceable product

- Rich in bromelain (a digestive & anti-inflammatory enzyme)
- Natural source of vitamin C, antioxidants, and dietary fiber
- Low in calories, highly refreshing, and beneficial for digestion

- Fresh juice / artisan smoothies
- Light pastries (tarts, pineapple mochi)
- Gourmet dried fruit or pineapple chips
- Can be enjoyed raw, even when green, with no acidity



Product Sheet – Beninese Cashew Nuts



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PAVILION







Benin National Day – August 29, 2025

Benin's National Day, celebrated on August 29, 2025, will mark the pinnacle of the country's participation in Expo 2025 Osaka. This exceptional moment, dedicated to diplomacy, culture, and economic opportunities, will unfold from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. with a remarkable program.

Following an official ceremony bringing together high-ranking Beninese and Japanese authorities, a symbolic protocol visit to the Benin and Japan pavilions will highlight the strength of bilateral cooperation. On the cultural side, an unprecedented artistic dialogue will bring together the Beninese group Les Pépit'Arts and Japanese artist Chudo Saito, offering an exclusive performance.





Two inspiring keynote conferences will punctuate the event:

- “Treasures of Benin”, inviting guests to discover the country’s iconic heritage sites, major cultural events, and innovative artistic journeys.
- “Invest in Benin”, showcasing the country’s favorable business environment, with a spotlight on flagship products such as the “Sugarloaf” pineapple and locally processed cashew nuts emblematic exports recognized on international markets.

In resonance with this program, the Benin Pavilion will also feature an original work by Franco-Beninese ceramic artist King Houndekpinkou. Trained in Japan, where he explored the great traditions of ancestral pottery, and deeply rooted in Benin’s spiritual heritage, King has developed a unique artistic language.

His sculptural totems shaped from blended clays, colored glazes, and precious materials embody a symbolic bridge between Benin and Japan. Through his bold aesthetic, he gives form to the Expo’s theme, “Designing Future Society for Our Lives”, and more specifically to “Connecting Lives”. His participation in Osaka 2025 stands as a testament to Benin’s capacity to make contemporary creation both rooted and universal shine on the global stage.



A festive parade will close this day of celebration, showcasing the cultural richness and diversity of Benin, before a prestigious gala evening at the Grand Prince Hotel Osaka Bay guesthouse (by invitation only).



Women's Pavilion – July 4, 2025

As one of only three African countries selected to exhibit at the prestigious Cartier Foundation's Women's Pavilion, Benin enjoys major international recognition for its commitment to celebrating the creativity and essential role of women in contemporary society.

This event, titled “The Legacy of the Amazons Strength and Resilience of Beninese Women”, will showcase the talent and artistic diversity of Beninese women. Two stylized effigies of the legendary Dahomey Amazons, created by artist Michèle Wêni YERIMA, will stand as powerful symbols of female courage and determination.

In addition, eight contemporary Beninese female visual artists will present original works blending painting, photography, sculpture, and textile art, revealing the depth and richness of their creative expression:

- Éliane Aïso
- Michèle Wêni YERIMA
- Drusille Fagnibo
- Bénie Quenum
- Élise Tokoudagba
- Sonia DJEDATIN
- Princesse Keirath
- Sophie Négrier



A conference and discussion, led by a renowned Beninese speaker, will enrich the exhibition by addressing key themes such as gender, female creativity, and sustainable development.

This exceptional collaboration with the Cartier Foundation offers Benin a prestigious international platform and boldly affirms the central role of Beninese women in shaping an inclusive, bold, and inspiring future.





Cultural Event: Guèlèdè and Kabuki – August 21, 2025

On August 21, 2025, Benin will present a unique cultural event at the Expo 2025 National Hall, highlighting the Guèlèdè, an oral and ritual heritage inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

This exceptional cultural showcase reflects Benin's strong desire to initiate an original artistic dialogue with Kabuki, the iconic Japanese popular theater also recognized by UNESCO for its intangible cultural value.

A spectacular procession of dancers wearing traditional Guèlèdè masks and costumes will immerse visitors in a festive and symbolic atmosphere.

An exhibition of emblematic masks will highlight the artisanal beauty and profound symbolic meaning of this ancestral Beninese tradition.

An illustrated conference will offer deeper insights into the cultural, social, and spiritual significance of Guèlèdè, celebrating the rich intercultural connections between Benin and Japan.

This unique artistic encounter underscores Benin's commitment to promoting its living heritage and forging unprecedented bridges between cultures around the world.





Virtual Exhibition: A global, borderless experience

To democratize access to Expo 2025 Osaka, the Benin Pavilion, in partnership with the event's organizing association, is offering a fully immersive digital experience accessible worldwide.

This virtual exhibition, powered by cutting-edge technology, enables visitors to explore the Pavilion through a faithful 3D recreation of Yumeshima Island and the Beninese Pavilion.

Through intuitive navigation and customizable avatars, visitors can explore 2D and 3D interactive exhibits, attend live or recorded events, and engage with others through text and voice chat features.

Fully integrated into Benin's forward-looking innovation strategy, this digital initiative reinforces the country's image as a modern, dynamic, and future-oriented nation seamlessly blending ancestral traditions with technological advancement.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Pavilion Location

The Benin Pavilion is ideally located within the official site of Expo 2025 Osaka, on Yumeshima Island a strategic hub for international events and innovation. This prime location ensures excellent visibility and high foot traffic, offering optimal exposure for Benin to both official delegations and the general public.



Dates and opening hours

- Exhibition Duration:
April 13 – October 13, 2025
- Opening Hours:
10:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Extended Hours :
Certain cultural events may benefit from extended evening access.

Accessibility

Yumeshima Island is easily accessible thanks to an efficient public transport network:

Osaka Metro – Chūō Line: Yumeshima Station, specially designed to serve the Expo site.

Shuttle Services and Public Transport: Bus and ferry services will connect the island with major districts of Osaka.

Accessibility for persons with reduced mobility (PRM): The entire site is fully equipped to accommodate visitors with reduced mobility, ensuring an inclusive and seamless experience.

Ticketing

Visitors may purchase tickets through:

- The official Expo 2025 Osaka website:
(<https://www.expo2025.or.jp/en/>)
- Partner platforms and travel agencies
- On-site ticket booths for last-minute attendees

Online ticket purchases are highly recommended, especially during peak attendance days and for special events hosted by the Benin Pavilion.





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For more information ➤



#explorebenin