



## An African Christmas : Making My Own Masquerade - BOOK

It's Christmas time, and Afam has decided to create and dance his own masquerade, just like the big celebratory Mmo (masquerades) which he sees performed at festivals.

Each time he starts collecting things to make his costume, family preparations for Christmas - haircuts, visiting the tailor, a church service, a trip to their village - get in the way.

But in the end, Afam performs the most beautiful masquerade ever!

Christmas is celebrated throughout the African continent by Christian communities large and small. In some communities even non-Christians join in on holiday festivities.

There are 1 billion people living on the continent of Africa in 53 countries and approximately 350 million are Christians. This makes Christmas a largely celebrated holiday and festive time in countries throughout the continent. Whether it's Egypt in the North, Senegal in the West, The Democratic Republic of the Congo in the South or Kenya in the East, the Christmas holiday does not go unnoticed in this historic land.

The holiday season generally starts about two weeks before Christmas and continues until the New Year. It is a public holiday in most countries with colleges, schools, public and private institutions closing during this time. Like in other countries, prior to schools closing for the holiday, Christmas carol programs and events are popular and taken very seriously by students.

In Africa, many people travel long distances to their home villages to be with family, friends and extended family. Christmas trees are mostly common in cities and will be found decked out with lights, bells, stars, snow scenes, tinsel and other ornaments. Santa and his reindeer are popular in some places and growing in popularity in others. Parents purchase new clothing for children, who wear and show them off on Christmas day, and gifts and cards are exchanged among family and friends.