



## CHAPTER 1

# Unity and Growth

SCHOOL IS STARTING IN LESS THAN A WEEK. KOUASSI is looking forward to his second year of junior high. His sister, Amian, will be going into her first year at the *lycée*. *Lycée* means “high school” in French, the national language of Côte d’Ivoire, a nation in West Africa. Kouassi is especially excited today, because he and Amian are joining their mother on a short business trip. His mother owns a shop in Marcory, a suburb of Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire’s largest city. She sells arts and crafts, mainly to tourists. She does well, now that the war is over and the economy is growing. More tourists are visiting the beaches along the coast.

Kouassi’s family lives in Marcory. The city is lush with palm trees and tropical flowers, but it is loud and crowded, too. The family moved to Abidjan when Kouassi was young. He was born in Bouaké. It is also a large city, but nothing like Abidjan.

*Opposite: People from Côte d’Ivoire often wear bright, patterned clothing.*

## Côte d'Ivoire's Geographic Features

**Area:** 124,502 square miles (322,460 sq km)

**Average High Temperature:** In Yamoussoukro, 85°F (30°C) in February, 78°F (25.5°C) in August

**Average Low Temperature:** In Yamoussoukro, 77°F (25°C) in February, 73°F (23°C) in August

**Average Annual Precipitation:** Yamoussoukro, 44 inches (112 cm)

**Highest Elevation:** Mount Nimba, 5,748 feet (1,752 m) above sea level

**Lowest Elevation:** Sea level along the coast

**Longest River:** Bandama, about 500 miles (800 km)

**Length of Coastline:** 322 miles (518 km)

**Average Annual Ocean Temperature:** 82°F (28°C)



Ocean. To the west, Côte d'Ivoire shares a border with Liberia and Guinea, to the north, it borders Mali and Burkina Faso, and to the east, Ghana.

**Houses in Abidjan line the shore.**

### From Plains to Mountains

Côte d'Ivoire can be divided into three geographic zones. Plains cover the southern half of the country. The area is flat and wet. The plains include the coast, which is made up of white sand-covered beaches and a few reefs and rock outcroppings. There are no natural harbors. A steep underwater shelf is located offshore, but the ocean is shallow once it reaches the beach. Incoming waves are large and powerful, and in most areas, too hazardous for swimming.

Palm oil being poured into a barrel. Côte d'Ivoire is Africa's third-largest producer of the oil, which is used in cooking.



bamboo. Once the plants are logged, they are shipped to the ports of Abidjan and San-Pédro. There, workers manufacture plywood, flooring, and sawn wood for furniture making and building construction.

### Manufacturing

Côte d'Ivoire is steadily increasing its manufacturing output. The country has a large oil refinery near Abidjan. Some of the oil is processed for use locally while the rest is exported. Côte

## The Past Meets the Future

Many regions around Côte d'Ivoire are renowned for their beautiful fabrics. A specialty of the Senufo people is Korhogo cloth. The cotton is hand spun and handwoven. Weavers weave the cloth in narrow strips, paint them with wax and natural vegetable dyes, and then stitch the strips together. The cloth is prized by many people around the world. Exported Korhogo cloth can be sold for as much as \$100 per yard.

Modern technology is helping textile workers create their cloth more efficiently. Mechanical looms and sewing machines make the work faster. Some factories print traditional designs on cloth with ink, but others use traditional wax and dyes. In the world of high fashion, Ivoirian clothing designers are making a mark by designing contemporary clothing inspired by traditional African designs. One of the best known is Loza Maléombho, who creates her designs in a small workshop in a village outside of Abidjan. In 2016, she designed the elaborate African-inspired dress worn by Beyoncé during her Super Bowl halftime performance.

Korhogo cloth is typically colored with earth tones.



d'Ivoire produces machinery and a variety of construction materials, such as concrete, sheet metal, plywood, and ceramics. The cotton textile industry has a long tradition. Thousands of people continue to hand spin cotton into thread, hand dye