Part of the "History of National Flags" Series from Flagmakers

FLAG OF BENIN - A BRIEF HISTORY

Where In The World

Trivia

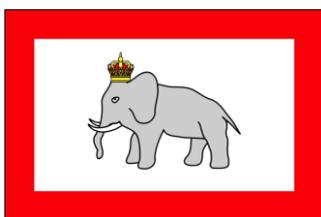| |
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| The current flag was originally adopted in 1959 as the Flag of the Republic of Dahomey. |

Technical Specification

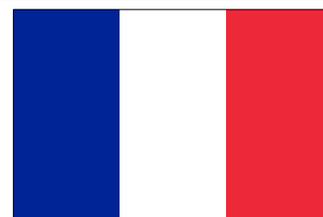|	
Adopted:	1st August 1990
Proportion:	2:3
Design:	A red and yellow horizontal bicolour with a green vertical band on the left hand side
Colours:	PMS – **Red:** 199, **Green:** 348, **Yellow:** 137

Brief History

Benin was called Dahomey from 1600 to 1900 and should not be confused with the Benin Empire that is now modern day Nigeria. Even though each king of Dahomey had his own flag the most well known flag of this time was that of King Ghezo, who ruled from 1818 to 1858. It was a white field with red border that featured a crowned elephant at its centre.

At the end of the 19th century the French colonized Dahomey and in 1904 the name was changed to French Dahomey, the land finally becoming part of French West Africa. It was under the French blue-white-red vertical tricolour.
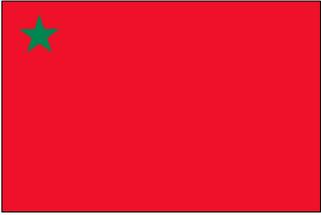
The Flag of King Ghezo **(1818 – 1858)**	**The Flag of French Dahomey** **(1904 – 1958)**

December 11th 1958 autonomy from France was granted and in 1959 a new flag for the Republic of Dahomey was designed that is the same as the one currently used. The flag features a red and yellow horizontal bicolour with a green vertical band on the left hand side. The new flag finally flown and full independence given in 1960.

A coup d'état in 1972 lead to a new Marxist-Leninist government and in 1975 the People's republic of Benin was established. A new flag that featured a green field with red five-pointed socialist star in the top left hand corner was adopted.

**The Flag of the Republic of Dahomey
(1958 – 1975)**

**The Flag of the People' Republic of Benin
(1975 – 1990)**

1975 also saw the formation and rise of the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin that was the sole legal party until the party broke up in 1990 with the fall of the Soviet Union. This collapse also saw a multi-party system instated and the country renamed as the Republic of Benin with the flag of the Republic of Dahomey reinstated.

There are many political, cultural and regional meaning to the flag of the Republic of Benin. The yellow is said to reflect the northern savannas, the green for the palm groves and the red for the blood shed for Dahomey. All the colours together represent the Pan-Africanist movement, the African Democratic Rally.

**The Flag of the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin
(1975 – 1990)**

**The Flag of the Republic of Benin
(1990 to Present Day)**

The Coat of Arms of Benin

The Coat of Arms of Benin was first introduced in 1964 and reintroduced again in 1990. It features a coat of arms that is split into four parts with a castle in the top left hand side representing history, the bottom left a palm tree, top right the Star of Benin and a ship in the lower right hand side to represent the arrival of Europeans.

At either side of the shield are leopards that are the national animal of Benin. Above the shield are two horns filled with sand and corn and below is the motto "FELLOWSHIP, JUSTICE, WORK."

The Emblem of the People's Republic of Benin

The Emblem of the People's Republic of Benin replaced the Coat of arms in 1975. It features green circle symbolising nature inside of which is the red five-pointed star of socialism and a cogwheel representing industry. It is surrounded by corncobs to represent agriculture and features a ribbon with the French initials of the country.