

# IROKO

Theatre Company

## IYE AJA (Umbilical Cord) Project



*Yam Festival*

*Source: Igbo Community Association in the Midlands*

This festival is important to Igbo people residing in London, the UK and throughout the world. Yam is traditionally more or less part of the staple diet of these people. The Yam Festival is usually held in the beginning of August at the end of the rainy season. The Yam Festival is named after the most common food in many African countries. Amongst the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria, the celebration is a very culturally based occasion, tying individual Igbo communities together. The evening prior to the day of the festival, all old yams (from the previous year's crop) are consumed or discarded. The next day, only dishes of yam are served, as the festival is symbolic of the abundance of the produce. People offer yams to gods and ancestors first before distributing them to the villagers. This is their way of giving thanks to the spirits for providing good health that enabled them to have a 'bumper' harvest. Organised by United Igbo and Friends West Midlands, the Iwa-ji (New Yam Festival) annual event, draws people from all over the United Kingdom, bringing communities together in celebration of an important calendar event for Igbo people all over the world.

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