

The background of the page is a vibrant, stylized illustration. On the left, three women are shown in profile, facing right, with different hairstyles: one with a bun, one with braids, and one with a large, rounded hairstyle. On the right, a woman is shown in profile, facing left, with long, thin braids and a headband. At the bottom, two women are shown from the chest up, wearing traditional beaded necklaces and headwraps. The background features large, glowing, circular patterns in shades of yellow, orange, and red, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

## More Hairstories

### YORÙBÁ

The Yorùbá are one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. Yorùbá culture has spread all over the world, from Nigeria to Brazil and beyond. Yorùbá women have very imaginative names for their hairstyles, such as *Patewo* (“clap your hands”), *Kolese* (“legless”), and *Kojusoko* (“face your husband”).

### MBALANTU

Mbalantu women in Angola and Namibia are famous for their long braided hair, which can grow all the way to their thighs. They coat their hair in a thick paste made from fat mixed with tree-bark powder from the omutyuula tree. This paste moisturizes and protects their hair so it doesn't break.

### MAASAI

Known as great hunters, the Maasai, with their distinctive red robes and stretched earlobes, are an East African people who live in Kenya and Tanzania.

The only Maasai allowed to grow their hair long are the *morán*—their young warriors. The morán spend hours grooming and styling one another's hair, coating the strands with ashes, clay, animal fats, and red ocher, and then spinning the hair into thin, long dreadlocks. But they are not allowed to touch a woman's head.

Maasai women wear their hair short throughout their lives. Both men and women shave their heads during rites of passage, such as marriage and circumcision, as a sign of new beginnings.

An illustration on the left side of the page depicts several Himba women. One woman in the upper left has long, thin braids. Below her, another woman is shown in profile with a single braid. In the foreground, two women are shown; one has a short, reddish-brown bob haircut and is wearing multiple necklaces, while the other is partially visible behind her. The background is a warm, yellowish-orange wash.

## HIMBA

The Himba women are nicknamed the Red Women of Namibia because of their long red locs and red-toned skin.

They create amazing hairstyles by mixing a red-colored paste, *otjize*, and coating their hair with it. *Otjize* is made from animal fat, butter, red ocher, and aromatic resins. The women also rub it onto their skin to protect it from the harsh elements. This is what gives their skin a red glow.

Single men wear their hair in a plait on the back of their head called an *ondatu*. Once they marry, they typically cover their hair for the rest of their lives, showing it only when they attend funerals.

## HAMAR

The Hamar women of Ethiopia have a special practice called *goscha*, where they roll their hair into tiny locs and coat each one with a red ocher and butter mix. This gives their hair a beautiful reddish-brown shine. Hamar men mold their hair into clay caps decorated with feathers, beads, and sometimes goat bones. Each feather, called *tuti*, is a symbol of courage. To keep these caps in perfect shape, Hamar men carry a small stool called a *borkoto*, which they use as a headrest when they sleep, to protect their hair from being flattened.

An illustration on the right side of the page shows Afar men. In the foreground, a man is bent over, using a comb to style the hair of another man who is sitting. The man being styled has a large, curly afro. In the background, another man with a similar afro looks on. The background is a warm, yellowish-orange wash.

## AFAR

The Afar people of Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea use butter in unique ways to keep their hair beautiful and protected under the hot sun. The Afar men are famous for two hairstyles coated with a mixture of cow fat and butter. The buttered Afro they call *asdago*, and the curled hairstyle, *dayta*. To create the ringlets of their *dayta* style, the men twist one another's butter-coated hair around sticks. The butter helps the curls stay in place all day.

An artistic illustration of two women. On the left, a woman is shown in profile, wearing a large, dark, cone-shaped hairstyle. She has a beaded necklace and a dark garment. On the right, two women are sitting on a patterned rug. One woman is braiding the hair of another woman who is wearing a red headscarf and a patterned dress. There are small bowls and a container on the rug. The background is a soft, textured wash of light colors.

## MANGBETU

Mangbetu women in the Democratic Republic of Congo are famous for their cone-shaped hairstyle. This style dates back centuries, when the Mangbetu people practiced *Lipombo*—head shaping. Mothers would wrap their babies' heads to make them longer. They thought this helped their brains grow bigger, making them smarter. This special cone-shaped look became a symbol of intelligence, beauty, and royalty.

## ZULU

Do you know the Zulu *isicholo* hat? It started as a special hairstyle. Zulu women in South Africa would grow their hair long and style it into a round shape, using red ocher and animal fat. Over time, this beautiful hairstyle developed into a hat, but it still kept the same circular shape.

When a Zulu woman got married, she would wear the *isicholo* to show that she was married and to give respect to her husband and his family. It was also thought to protect her from the sun and keep her safe from harm.

The Zulu people are also known for their Zulu knots—small, tight twists that are now called Bantu knots by many, but they first came from the Zulu.

## BAGGARA ARAB

A trademark of the Baggara Arab women in Chad is their extremely long hair. Their secret is *chébé* powder, which they make by mixing the special *chébé* plant, which grows high up in their rocky mountains, with water, oils, shea butter, cloves, fragrant herbs, and seeds from local cherries. The women comb the *chébé* powder through their hair, then plait it into big braids. This makes their hair grow long and strong. When the women gather together to braid one another's hair, they share secrets and stories that keep their traditions alive.

For further reading and a bibliography, please visit [sopemartins.com](http://sopemartins.com) and [simonandschuster.com/kids](http://simonandschuster.com/kids).