

Definitions starting with A: African Words

It is now clear that a great deal more African culture survived in the New World than had been believed until very recently. Along with their customs, the Bahamians' African ancestors brought words for their customs, such as [ASUE](#) for a system of saving money, or [WORRY](#) for a certain game, or [GOOMBAY](#) for a kind of drum. Some of these words became a part of general English, such as banjo ([BANJA](#)), [YAM](#) ([NYAM](#)) or [OKRA](#) . Others remained part of the regional English of the Bahamas, usually not understood by people from other places. African loan words in this second category include the names of various foods such as [ACARA](#), [AGIDI](#), [FUFU](#), and [MOI-MOI](#). Others are everyday words such as [JOOK](#), [BENNY](#) or [YINNA](#), or exclamations like [BLOO-JOOM!](#) Some folktale characters retained their African names, such as [BOOKY](#), [IANANSI](#), [BAMAKANSA](#), [U-SANGE-WILEY](#), and the monster [YEHO](#). Some African personal names have been preserved, such as [CUFFEY](#), [CUSHIE](#) and [QUAKOO](#). Until the end of the last century, Bahamians still referred to ethnic groups in Africa such as the [MUNDINGO](#), [ANGOLA](#), [IBO](#), [EGBA](#), and [YORUBA](#), and even today many Bahamians know the terms [CONGO](#) and [NANGO](#). Many other African words survive in disguise, such as [POOR JOE](#), [CUSS-CUSS](#) and SHAKERS; these seem to be English words, but are actually African words which have been altered by folk etymology. Other African words or phrases have been translated word for word into English, such as [SEED](#) meaning 'tight curl of hair' or the expression [GIVE ME FIVE](#). Finally, the range of meaning of some African words has affected the range of meaning of their English equivalents in the Bahamas, such as [RED](#) and [YALLER](#) used in reference to colors that British and American speakers would call orange, pink, brown, or tan.

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