



## GREAT KINGS & QUEENS OF AFRICA

# QUEEN AMINA



Queen Amina grew up in western Africa within the Hausa Kingdoms which were a grouping of west African states that were located between Lake Chad to the west and the Niger River to the east near modern-day Nigeria. The African ethnic group which populated these kingdoms and the area in general from around 700 AD are known as the Hausa people. The Hausa Kingdoms included the cities of Kano, Katsina, Zazzau, Gobir, Rano, Daura and Biram and were founded in 1000 AD. The Zazzau Kingdom was the nation from which Queen Amina descended and she was the daughter of Queen Bakwa Turunku who was the founder of the city of Zaria and constructed the royal palace of Zaria. Queen Amina and her nation were Muslims who engaged in trade with the other six Hausa Kingdoms. Amina became queen and ruler of the kingdom in the year 1576 AD. Queen Amina was a renowned warrior queen and military strategist who also designed the re-enforced protective walls which Queen Amina had surrounding the central city of Zaria. These defensive fortifications became known in the region as 'Ganuwar Amina' or 'Amina's Walls'. Queen Amina's standing army numbered over 20,000 soldiers who she used to consolidate her

power in the region and ensure that her merchants had safe passage when travelling in the region. The Kano Chronicle is a written west African historical document which details the history of the Hausa people. Queen Amina is mentioned in the Kano Chronicle where it states the following:

**“EVERY STATE PAID HER TRIBUTE. THE KING OF NUPE SENT HER 40 MALE SERVANTS AND 10,000 KOLA NUTS. IN HER TIME ALL THE PRODUCTS OF THE WEST CAME TO HAUSALAND”.**

Queen Amina enlarged the territory of Zaria and is also credited with upgrading the armour of the Zaria military with chain mail and iron helmets. She was successful in subduing the whole area between Zazzau and the Benue and Niger rivers and encompassing nearby west African states. The expansion of Amina's kingdom made it the trading center for all of southern Hausaland, spanning the traditional east-to-west trans-Saharan axis and guaranteeing the kingdom's prosperity. Queen Amina became a legendary military leader in western African and eventually ruled for a total of 34 years.