



Eddie Kadi: Your New Favourite Comic
Bio 2023

"People look at me and they say 'he's always smiling,'" says Eddie Kadi. "That's what I want to be known for. It's almost like therapy; I want to feel like a child on stage. I always tap into the child in me."

Eddie Kadi has grown to become one of the UK's most prominent comedians. As a media personality, his accolades are as extensive as they are staggering, and the stuff of dreams in the entertainment world; hosting with the likes of Wizkid, Burna Boy, and other global superstars, touring across the US with Lauryn Hill and Nas, plus a landmark booking in 2010, where Kadi headlined the O2 Arena – the first Black British comedian to do so.

Since his early days hustling the comedy circuit fresh out of university, Kadi is proof of the magic that's made when hard work meets creative spark. With decades of experience working in media, now he's become a mainstay of primetime television. In 2023 Kadi received prestigious nominations from the Royal Television Society for Best Breakthrough Award thanks to his work on Sorry, I Didn't Know, and the Edinburgh TV Awards for Breakthrough Presenter, both awarding bodies recognising his talent and ability to resonate across audiences. It's a seasoned work ethic and penchant for dreaming big that have taken him to creative ventures once only dreamed of – proof that it takes 20 years to become an overnight success.

The definition of multi-hyphenate, working across comedy, hosting, presenting and more, Kadi is a media personality committed to showcasing his unique slice of culture: his experiences in Britain and birth country of Democratic Republic of Congo, and taking those stories to the world and beyond. People have long gravitated towards his unique brand of humour that references his heritage, cultural observations and experiences of life. "Early on when I used to do stand up I didn't think I was doing it, I was just telling stories about my culture," says Kadi of his craft. "But a lot of people from that culture could relate, and those who weren't found it revealing."

What connected both audiences was laughter; with comedy as observational as it is humorous, Kadi expertly transcends cultural barriers, showcasing the different facets of his personhood in the process. "I tell the British story in a unique way," he says. "We live in a cosmopolitan society; different cultures chip in and make this place even spicier. As a Congolese and African, we contribute to the overall culture. By telling my stories, I make people laugh but I educate as well."

Kadi was born in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, the oldest of four siblings. He'd been well attuned to entertainment in the house; music and performance had been a large part of his childhood and a favourite of his extended family – there were few places the young Kadi could venture where music wouldn't be heard. "Congo is known for its music, that's one of the riches we have apart from everything else," he says. "That's played a very big part in my work; me being a guy who loved dancing from early, I incorporate that into my performance."

Moving to Fulham, West London at age 8, the last thing he'd ever expected for himself was to end up in media. TV had fascinated him; he'd spend hours soaking up weekend shows during Sundays in the house, holding a penchant for *Last of The Summer Wine*, *Heartbeat*, and other times taking in black classics like *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, *The Real McCoy* and *Desmond's*. The presence of comedians on television was formative for him, and he always found himself gravitating towards presenters: Bruce Forsyth, Ronnie Corbett, Victoria Wood and Richard Blackwood among others. "Half of the people I watched I didn't know were stand-up comedians, I just thought they were funny people," he says. "In my mind, I was gonna be a teacher or travel the world. But I think I was being subconsciously prepared and trained for comedy, in that I was fascinated by it."

Comedy would come to him by chance during university. A spokesperson as part of his institution's African Caribbean society, he'd been urged to stand in as a host when the society had been unable to book a presenter for a talent showcase, mainly due to his humorous nature and knack for public speaking. His apt quips on cultural background instantly resonated with crowds, and he'd soon picked up for university hosting slots around the country performing as part of a unit called *Black Grape*. It was only when a friend suggested he perform as part of a stand-up gig that he'd begin to make the full transition into comedy.

It didn't take long for it to become a real career option; in 2006, he was nominated for Best Newcomer at the Black Comedy Awards, much in thanks to his role as a purveyor changing the face of Africa within comedy at the time. "Back then people weren't looking at Africa in the way they're looking at it now, it was still 'uncool.' But me dancing on stage like a Congolese would dance, telling my fufu jokes and my African stories unapologetically – it was the coolest thing in the world. I started realising that this is unique; I can really play with this."

He'd hustle the comedy circuit alongside his peers in the early years. Since then, Kadi's career has diverged into a multitude of passions; hosting, presenting, film, and of course, comedy. As a comedian, he has toured across the UK and internationally and sold out the likes of *Hackney Empire*. As a presenter and media personality, Kadi has hosted some of the most prestigious events, ceremonies and award shows in the world; the likes of the 2012 Olympics basketball games, the *MOBOS*, the *BET Awards* red carpet show as well as being main stage host for *Afro Nation Festival*, one of the biggest international events dedicated to African music genres worldwide. His TV appearances include programs across the BBC, Sky, ESPN, CBBC, ITV, *The National*

Comedy Awards (Channel 4) and appearing as a Team Captain on ITV's Sorry I Didn't Know.

He is a celebrated figure in the music world, presenting at the BRITS ceremony in 2023, and famously appointed as host of BBC Radio 1's Afrobeats Chart Show, a landmark development in the organisation's programming. A champion of African music and various genres, he has toured as a host with the likes of Wizkid, Lauryn Hill and Nas, Burna Boy, Sarkodie, Pheelz, Maleek Berry and other acts.

Other activities for 2023 include moving further into television, starring as a contestant in the new upcoming primetime series of Strictly Come Dancing, producing a documentary with Channel 4 illuminating happenings in and around Africa and further episodes of Kadi's podcast Wheel Talk co-hosted with Babatunde Aléshé, discussing family, culture, everyday topics and other facets of their lives and businesses. As varied as his career has been, the one thing that unites his passions is his motivation: a love for making people smile. "Laughter is the best medicine, and I'm your local pharmacist," he says. It's an attitude that has taken him across the world, and to global heights already. But for Kadi, there's no ceiling on where he will take things in future. "I don't limit it to a dream," he says. "I've always looked at this gift of mine in this way: your gift is not for you. It's for sharing with the world."