

Afuche/Cabasa

Country of Origin: Latin America and parts of Africa



Cabasas made of gourd were originally from Africa, and have many similarities to the West African shekere, another shaken percussion instrument. The original cabasa is called *agbe*, and the Cabaça is another variation used in Latin American dance. The metal version seen here was developed in the 1960s by Martin Cohen for his music company, Latin Percussion.



Country of Origin: India and Tibet

Damru

The damru (or darnaru) is a traditional instrument used in Hinduism, and is associated with the deity Shiva. It is also used in Tibetan Buddhism as an instrument in tantric practices. The damru is used by many traveling musicians because it is portable. They can be made of wood, metal, and even bone, and have a leather drum head.

How to Play:

1. Hold the handle (or middle of the drum) with one or both hands.
2. Twist your wrist to turn the damru quickly. This will make the two knotted ends hit the drum head, making fast, loud drum hits.



How to Play:

1. Hold the handle with one hand, and place your other hand on the beads.
2. Move your hand on the beads and push them across the metal to make a scraping sound.



Kuaiban

Country of Origin: China



Kuaiban (pronounced “kwai bahr”) is a type of shuochang, an oral storytelling performance most popular in northern China. The name of this storytelling comes from the name of these bamboo clappers, called kuaiban or kuai ban, which means “fast boards” or “bamboo talk.” These clappers are rattled during the storytelling to provide a beat. Bones have traditionally been used in Chinese musical instruments, but these modern kuaiban were developed by Li Runjie in the 1940s.

Güiro

Country of Origin: Latin America

The güiro (pronounced “gwee-doh”) is a percussion instrument that is typically used in Puerto Rican, Cuban, and other Latin American music. A similar instrument was created by the Aztecs, and another similar instrument was thought to have been brought to Latin America and the Caribbean through the slave trade. The güiro is made from a hollowed-out gourd, but many modern güiros are made from wood or fiberglass. It is usually played by a singer.



How to Play:

1. Take the scraper from the frog's mouth and scrape it across the notches on its back (from back to front). This will make a frog-like sound.
2. You can also simply tap the frog with the scraper to make a single hit, which will have a hollow sound to it.



How to Play:

1. Left hand, small clappers: Place index finger the top clapper, thumb under the stack, and remaining three fingers on top.
2. Right hand, large clappers: Keep the bow side clapper facing out, hold the other in your hand. Keep your hand close to the top so your fingers don't get hit!
3. Left: Push top three fingers to make the top clapper hit the stack. Shake the set to make all clappers hit each other.
4. Right: Move back clapper towards the front one to hit them together. Flip the front clapper up and then down for a harder, louder sound.
5. You can also hit both hands' clappers together for different sounds.

For some great examples of kuaiban playing, check out:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stPYB6punUo> and
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhkQMM7Mtyw>





Lyre

Country of Origin: Sumer (modern-day Southern Iraq)

The lyre is a string instrument typically used in Greek classical antiquity. It was originally played using a plectrum (pick), and the player could use their fingers to keep strings silent when not being played. European and Middle Eastern lyres were later played with a bow. Lyres have been common in Europe, Asia, and Africa.



Bodhrán

Country of Origin: Ireland

The bodhrán (pronounced "bow-rawn") is a frame drum with a goatskin head and a crossbar (sometimes two) on the opposite side. It is similar to the frame drums used in northern Africa, the Middle East, and those used by Indigenous peoples of North America. The first appearance of the word "bodhrán" was in the 17th century, and it has been suggested that the name means "skin tray," and may have been used to carry peat, or even for use in baking. It became popular in the 1960s, and is also used in Scotland, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island.

How to Play:

1. Make sure your lyre is tuned so that your notes sound correct.
2. Hold the lyre across your left arm. Your hand will come around the back and your fingers should reach around to the front.
3. The strings can be plucked with just the right hand, or your left can pluck from behind with the thumb and index finger, keeping your other three on the lyre to steady it. In this case, the lyre will rest on your leg.
4. Depending on how it is tuned, the chords and notes may vary. Try different combinations, as almost any notes on the lyre have a nice sound.



1. Hold the drum straight up on your left knee, with the head of the drum facing to the right. This is reversed if you are left-handed.
2. Place your hand under the cross bar and place your fingertips on the skin of the drum. Keep your fingers straight. This will dampen the sound of the drum a bit.
3. Hold the beater like a pencil in your right hand. You may want to hold it a bit higher than the ridge around the middle.
4. Bring the end of the beater that would be the "pencil lead" towards your chin. From here, bring the beater down and strike the middle of the drum. You should move the beater all the way out toward your right knee.
5. From that position, bring the beater back up and hit the drum again, and it should end up back by your chin.
6. This is a basic stroke to repeat. As you get closer to the edge of the drum, the pitch changes.

How to Play:

For a complete tutorial, check out <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y540acW6NQM>

Cajón

Country of Origin: Peru



The cajón (pronounced “kah-hone”) is a box-shaped percussion instrument used in Afro-Peruvian music, flamenco, jazz, and many other genres. The cajón is usually made of plywood, with a sound hole cut on the back, and is played by sitting on top of it, and being slapped by the hands/fingers, or brushes/mallets/sticks. Its use is common in the Phillippines, Spain, and some of the Americas.

The slapstick is a type of clapper, which is a percussion instrument that has two long, solid pieces that are clapped together to produce a sound. Clappers are found in many forms and by different names, including the Chinese guban or the Korean bak. The clapper used in Western symphony orchestra can be one of two types. The first, called a whip, has two boards with separate handles that are brought together to make a large slap or “whip” sound. The second, pictured here, is a slapstick, which has one handle and two boards, one of which can be pulled back to create the slapping noise.

First designed in the 14th century

Slapstick



How to Play:

1. Sit on the cajón as far back as you can, feet flat on the floor. The sound hole should be facing the back.
2. There should be enough room for your hands to hit the cajón in front of you. Keep your body as relaxed as possible.
3. For a deeper sound (bass), hit the middle areas of the cajón—but don't lean forward too much! For a higher tone, hit closer to the corners.
4. Tap the cajón in any sort of rhythm. You can change it up by using your fingers instead of your whole hand.



For some examples of the cajón being played, check out:: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VemEAXrfDo> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UM8eIlqf5GA>



1. Hold the handle of the slapstick with one hand.
2. Bring the slapstick up and then make a whip-like motion, thrusting it downward quickly. The top board will hit the bottom. **Be careful:** the slapstick is extremely loud!

How to Play:

Flexatone

Country of Origin: United States



The flexatone is a type of idiophone made up of a sheet of flexible metal attached to a wire frame, with a beater on each side. It is best known for its cartoonish sound, similar to that of the musical saw. It was patented in 1924 by the Playatone company of New York, and was first used in 1920s jazz as an effect. It is now sometimes used for orchestral music.

Rainstick

Country of Origin: undetermined, but possibly Mexico, regions of South America, and West Africa

Although their origins are somewhat unknown, it is believed that the rainstick was used by several different cultures in order to bring rain, which is likely why areas with dry climates are thought to be where these instruments come from. The rainstick is often made from a dried, hollow cactus. The needles are taken off, and then pressed into the cactus. Seeds or pebbles are then put inside, and the tube is closed at both ends. When the stick is tilted, the seeds or pebbles hit the thorns or needles inside, making a sound similar to falling rain.



How to Play:

1. Hold the handle of the flexatone.
When you shake it quickly, the beaters hit the metal sheet.
2. To change the tone, place your thumb on the metal sheet, and push it up and down to change the sound as you shake the flexatone.



For an example of the flexatone being played, check out:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACyXnZEJ-U8>



1. Hold the rainstick in the middle with one hand, or on both ends with both hands.
2. Slowly tilt the rainstick in one direction until it is upright to create the sound of rainfall.
3. The faster you tilt the rainstick, the louder and harder the "rain" will sound.

How to Play:

Singing Bowl

Country of Origin: China, India, Nepal



The modern singing bowl comes from the standing bell, which is a bell that sits so the rim is on top, instead of the usual bell. The bells are often played by simply striking them, but singing bowls can make sound by rotating a mallet around the top. Singing bowls are typically used for meditation, relaxation, and have become popular in yoga and music therapy. Often called Tibetan singing bowls, they have actually never been found to have been used in Tibet. They have become more of a modern phenomenon, starting in the early 1970s.



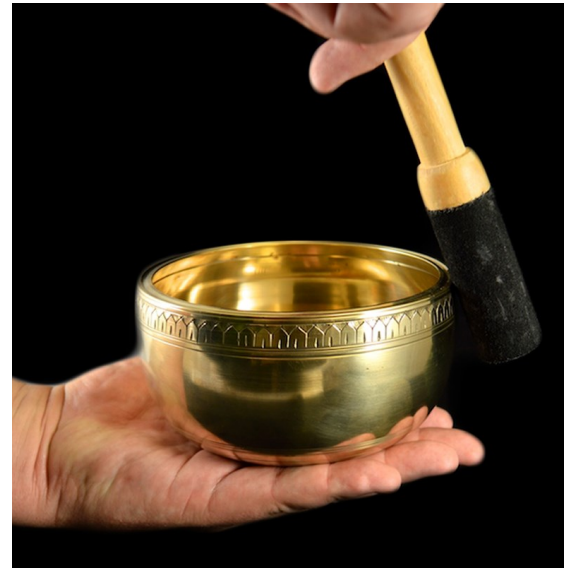
Maracas

Country of Origin: Undetermined, possibly
Puerto Rico, Venezuela, or Brazil

The maraca is a type of rattle often used in Caribbean and Latin music. They were used in religious chants and ceremonies by indigenous peoples in Latin America, and by the 19th and 20th centuries, they began to be incorporated into new rhythms in Latin America and the Caribbean. Maracas are made from a tree fruit, which is then filled with seeds or pebbles, and then a wooden stick is placed in the middle for a handle. Modern maracas can also be made of wood or leather.

How to Play:

1. Put the bowl flat in your palm. Keep your fingers spread out and don't curl them around the bowl, this will dampen the sound.
2. Hold the bowl at a bit of an angle, and place the mallet between your thumb and fingers, padded part facing down.
3. Begin to swirl the mallet around the bowl. Keep the pressure against the bowl, and an even pace.
4. The faster the mallet moves, the louder the bowl gets. Move the mallet away and towards the edge of the bowl to change the volume as well.



1. With the handle facing you, pick up a maraca in each hand, with your four fingers facing the ground, and your thumb straight across the handle (facing you). Keep your grip close to the head of the maraca.
2. Keep your maracas in front of you with your elbows starting at a 90-degree angle. You can shake them one at a time, or both together
3. Sound actually occurs when the maraca is stopped, so keep control when you shake the maracas so that you can keep the sound going.



Kalimba

Country of Origin: across Africa, including Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and North Africa



The kalimba is a western version of the African mbira (pronounced “uhm-beer-a”). The kalimba is made of a wooden board and metal tines, which are plucked by the thumbs when the instrument is held. Tines were originally made of bamboo, and appeared on the west coast of Africa 3000 years ago. Metal tines have been found from 1300 years ago. The instruments became popular with the Shona people of Zimbabwe, who gave the mbira its name. The kalimba came into western culture in the 1950s, after an ethnomusicologist named Hugh Tracy developed the version while living in Africa. “Kalimba” is Bantu for “little music.”

The wood birds instrument is a modern version of African pod rattles, one of many types of musical rattles used across Africa. This kind was made from hollowed seed pods, and could be shaken by hand, or even used on wrists and ankles to make sound during dancing. The pods can be somewhat breakable, so a wooden or fiberglass version may be made. The sound of the pods hitting together mimics that of a flock of birds, or even a waterfall.



Country of Origin: parts of Africa, including the Congo

Wood Birds

How to Play:

How to Play:

1. Hold the kalimba in both hands. Your thumbs should be on top and the rest of your fingers behind.
2. The notes go up by alternating left to right as the tines move outward. The middle note is C, then the left is D, the next right is E, and so on. You can play through the scale by alternating.
3. The best way to play is using your thumbnail to play the metal tines. You don't have to play very hard.
4. By moving your thumb over the sound hole, you can change the quality of a pitch when a tine is played.



For some great examples of kalimba playing, check out:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kd7KC3PaEaA> and
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tE1dqmcajEk>

1. The wood birds can be played in many different ways.
2. You can hang them and play them by running your hands over them. Try shaking them, bunching them up, hanging them with your hand and shaking, rustling them in your hands, anything goes!





Didgeridoo

Country of Origin: Australia

The didgeridoo is an instrument developed by Indigenous Australians of northern Australia, and may have been around for 1500 years. The didgeridoo was traditionally played for ceremonial dancing and singing, but would also be used to play for recreation. Even today, it is still used in ceremonies by Aboriginal peoples of northern Australia. Authentic didgeridoos are usually made from eucalyptus wood, and are taken from a part of the tree that has been hollowed by termites. The name “didgeridoo” is considered to be a Western invention, as the regional names for many Indigenous peoples in Australia are completely different from “didgeridoo.”

Egg shakers are used like most other rattle percussion instruments, and so are very similar to maracas. They can be made from a variety of materials, and may be filled with seeds or beads. They are similar to the ganzá, a Brazilian instrument of the same concept, but shaped like a cylinder instead.



Country of Origin: Latin America

Egg Shaker

How to Play:

1. Be sure to sit up straight, and hold the didgeridoo so that you are not tensed up.
2. Place your lips inside the mouthpiece and form a seal so that air doesn't escape.
3. To create the sound, you make a vibrating sound with your lips, otherwise known as "blowing raspberries." You don't have to blow too hard.
4. Keep your lips relaxed. If a trumpet-like sound comes out, try to blow the air without your mouth on the didgeridoo, then go back and try again.
5. Your drone may only last a few seconds, but practice will help you to learn to hold more air. Remember: stay relaxed!



For more information, check out::
<https://www.didgeridoodojo.com/beginner-didgeridoo-lessons/>

For some great didgeridoo playing, check out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9g592I-p-dc> and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nr8UZLm1VeE>



1. The shakers can be held with one in each hand, or two in one. You can use your whole hand to hold the shaker, or just your fingers, depending on how you like the sound.
2. Shake the egg shaker at different speeds or in different ways, and you can create a steady beat.

How to Play:

Ghantada

Country of Origin: India and Pakistan

The ghantada is a traditional set of bells made by the Lohar community from Kutch, which is originally from Sindh, and which is now in Pakistan. Some ghantada bells have a carved wooden pendulum creates a sound that can be calibrated to produce various tones. This set of bells is a type of idiophone, which is an instrument that creates sound by vibrating, which is done in this case by striking the instrument.

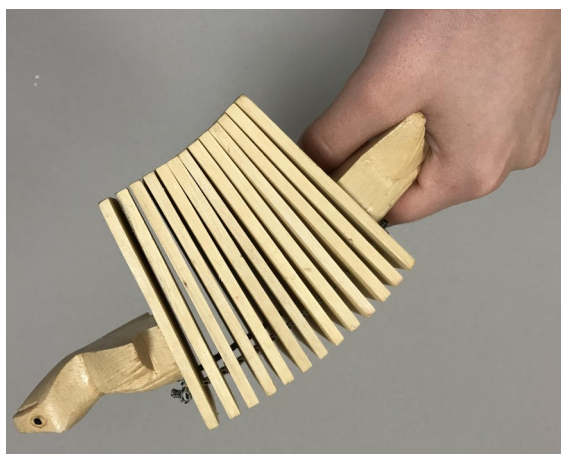
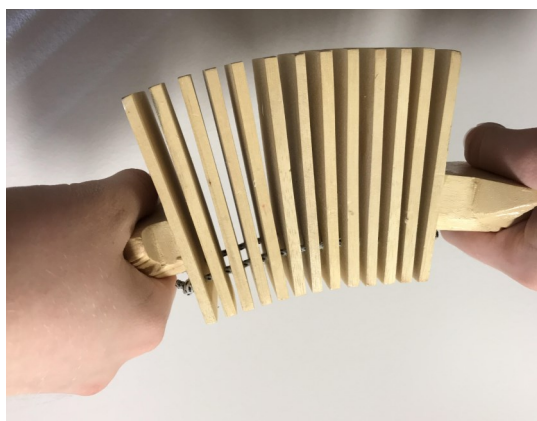


This instrument is a combination of several different percussive instruments, including the clapper, rattle, and shaker. This instrument is somewhat similar to castanets, which are used in such music as Roman, Portuguese, Swiss, and Spanish music. The handle castanet places the two shells of the castanet on either side of a handle, making them clack by only shaking them with one hand.

Clapper Clacker Shaker Rattle

How to Play:

1. Place the gphantada flat on a table.
The mallets can be placed in the holes on the small end when not in use.
2. The large bells have lower sounds.
The closer you hit to the edge of the bell, the more full (and loud!) your sound will be.
3. Both mallets can be used at one time.
Try to experiment with the sounds, speeds, and volumes that you strike the bells.

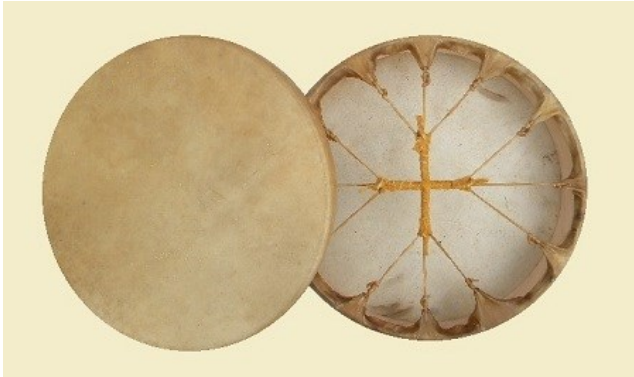


1. The clacker can be held in one hand by the tail of the animal and shaken back and forth to create the clacking sound.
2. The clacker can also be held with one hand on each handle. This will also press the pieces together, but may provide more control for how often and how loud the sound is produced.

How to Play:

Hoop Drum

Country of Origin: Canada and United States



Both drums and rattles were traditional instruments used by First Nations peoples. They serve many purposes, such as in ceremonies, music, and healing. The drums vary within different regions of North America, but their most common use today is for powwows, and they are often a single-person hand drum. Their construction varies with each region as well, but typically are made from wood with animal hide stretched overtop for the drum head.

Spoons

Country of Origin: United States, Greece, United Kingdom, Russia, Turkey, and Canada, especially in Québecois and Acadian music, as well as the Atlantic Provinces

Spoons have been used for music across many different cultures for centuries. Often made of wood, they are played by hitting the convex side of one spoon against another by hitting it on the hands and legs. Some spoons, like those used in Turkish folk music, are separate, but others, like those used in French Canadian and Atlantic folk music, are connected on one end.



How to Play:

1. Adjust the hand grip to fit your hand inside. You can also simply hold the grip from the outside.
2. The beater can be used to hit the drum at varying speeds and volumes.



For more information, check out::

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6bqcgzHI80>

For some great examples of the hoop drum being played, check out:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImjIY5xUveM> and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqBzdNpnyYY>

For some great examples of the spoons being played, check out:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cc7lnBPalcU> and
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyxjzmZu6UBc>

1. Hold the handle of the spoons in your dominant hand. You'll hold the spoons a few inches over one of your legs.
2. With your other hand waiting overtop of the spoons, hit the spoons on your leg, then bring them back up to hit your hand.
3. Continue these movements with varying speeds and rhythms. Don't be afraid to play on both legs, as well as the back of your hand.



How to Play: