

CULTURE



African instruments | Image: Reterdeen

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By MICHAEL BAMIDELE

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A LOOK AT MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS FROM AFRICA

Music in [Africa](#) is historically ancient, rich and as diverse as the innumerable tribes and people that make up the continent. In Africa, music is not limited to entertainment, it plays a very important role in religion and culture. Songs and music are used in rituals and religious ceremonies, to pass down stories from generation to generation, as well as to sing and dance to.

African Musical instruments serve a variety of roles: some may be confined to religious or ceremonial occasions, others are used in a more secular fashion for entertainment. There may be restrictions to the age, gender or social status of the player. The instruments range in size and complexity from hand-held objects to large, elaborate devices constructed of many parts and, even today, they are mostly crafted from natural materials using age-old methods.

Below are some of the musical instruments in Africa:

Akoting

Found in Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea Bissau (all in West Africa), the akoting is believed to have given birth to the modern guitar. The [birthplace of the instrument is the village of Nianing, in Senegal](#). It has a gourd body, with two long melody strings.

Algaita

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Algaita | Image: Twitter

Used sometimes in jazz recordings, the algaita is a double reed wind instrument used in West Africa, mostly, by the Hausa/Kanuri people of Northern Nigeria. The body is covered in leather and, unlike the Iranian sorna, (double reed woodwind made of grass), the algaita has four finger-holes instead of seven.

Balafon

Played like the xylophone, the balafon is a percussion instrument and can be found in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mali, and Burkina Faso. It has been in recorded history since the 14th century and according to oral history (told by griots), the instrument originated from Mali.

Kora

This stringed instrument, made from the calabash and covered in skin, is so versatile it has been classified as a 'double-bridge-harp-lute.' It is usually strummed in accompaniment to storytelling, poetry recitation or singing, and has been in use for over 5000 years. It is extensively used in ASUU begins four-week warning strike nationwide versions of it across Africa, like the lute,

Ekwe

Also an idiophone, variants of these dru

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Ekwe | Image: Motherlandmusic

(ekwe), Congo (mukoku or lokole) and the Guinea (krin or kolokos). The 'drum' is made from hollowed-out tree trunks, with rectangular slits cut into the top, and it comes in various sizes, depending on the use it is meant for.

Marimba

The marimba is a set of wooden bars struck with mallets to produce notes. The keys are arranged similarly to a piano's. Developed in Zimbabwe, the instrument is known as the 'mother of song' and creator of musical instruments. It was introduced to Central America in 1680, and in 1821 it was declared the national instrument of Guatemala.

Mbira

Part of the idiophone family, although instruments originate from Africa and countries like kisanji, sanza, and the Caribbean marimba.

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the 16th century, variants of these instruments are also found in Siberia. The marimbullo variant is sometimes also used in hip-hop music.

Talking drum (Gangan)

The talking drum is an hourglass-shaped drum from West Africa, whose pitch can be regulated to mimic the tone and prosody of human speech. It has two drumheads connected by leather tension cords, which allow the player to change the pitch of the drum by squeezing the cords between their arm and body. A skilled player is able to play whole phrases. Most talking drums sound like a human humming depending on the way they are played.



Udu |

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Udu

Basically a clay water jug with an extra

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played by the Igbo women of southeastern Nigeria. When the player hits it with their palm or fingers, it produces a liquidy, water droplet sound.

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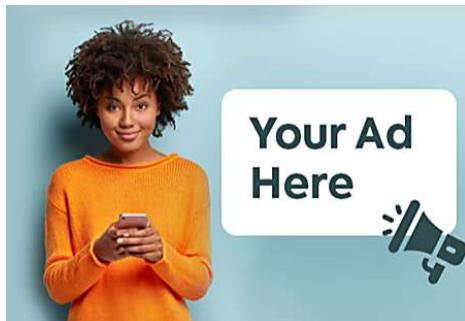
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