

# Unusual Musical Instruments 13 Players

## Guidance Notes for Teachers

*A selection of interesting instruments from around the world which when played together can be quite entertaining!  
Take a break from the serious side of music and let your class explore these funny sounds.*



### Contents:

1. Boing Stick x 1
2. Maraca x 1
3. Egg Shaker x 2
4. Thunderer x 1
5. Painted Man Knocker x 1
6. Bamboo Guiro x 1
7. Bamboo Rainstick x 1
8. Shekere x 1
9. Bamboo Y Shaker x 1
10. Mini Croaking Frog Guiro x 1
11. Hand Drum x 1
12. Castanet Rattle x 1

*Please note contents and designs may vary.*



The instruments in the Unusual Musical Pack shown in the pictures on the left can be used in KS1 and KS2 classrooms.

- Create cross-curricular links and cover elements of the Music, Geography, Literacy and Art and Design curriculum.
- Explore a range of different percussion instruments and where in the world they come from.
- Introduce the resources during whole class teaching and provide time for hands-on exploration in small groups.
- Group and sort the instruments according to material and how they are played.
- Add the instruments to tabletop areas and promote independent investigation.



#### Activity 1 – Instrument Mystery Activity

- Introduce the instruments without naming or identifying them.
- Give the pupils time to work together to guess what the instruments are called and how they can be played.
- Encourage the pupils to identify what materials the instruments are made of.

#### Activity 2 – Hands-on Instrument Exploration

- Identify and name each of the instruments.
- Talk about the material of the instrument and how to play them.
- Give time for small groups to handle each instrument.

#### Activity 3 – Instrument Investigation

- Talk about pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre and texture.
- Encourage the pupils to look at elements of the instrument that can be adapted.
- Encourage the pupils to discuss their preferences.

#### Activity 4 – Music and Literacy Challenge

- Encourage the children to create silly stories and use the instruments to add sound effects.
- Create an opportunity for this to be performed to an audience.
- Ask the children to list words to describe the sound made by each instrument. They could be nonsense words!

#### Activity 5 – Geography Investigation

- Use a world map to name and locate Indonesia, where many of these instruments are made.
- Research Indonesia. Think about the flag, culture, food, history and landmarks.
- Create a fact file using the information gathered.

#### Activity 6 – Art and Design

- Re-name the instruments with silly names!
- Provide materials for the pupils to name and design their own 'silly' instrument.
- Use these handmade instruments to repeat Activities 2, 3 and 4.

#### Discussion Points – Topics

##### ➤ Coconut Maraca from Indonesia

This handcrafted Fair Trade shaker, has been made with a polished coconut shell full of beads and mounted onto a turned wooden handle. Indonesia is the biggest exporter of coconuts in the world, so shells of coconuts are readily available. The maraca is a good example of how Indonesians make something worthwhile out of something that would otherwise be a waste product. Coconut shell is used because of its durability and strength.

##### ➤ Mini Shekere from Ghana

This uniquely sounding Fair Trade shekere is handmade and is made from a hollowed-out gourd with dozens of Job's tear beads. Every shekere is unique as the size of the gourd varies from season to season.

*Explore further* – What is a gourd? What are Job's tear beads?



➤ Thunderer from Bali, Indonesia

*Also known as – thunder shaker, thunder tube, thunder drum*

This hand crafted, Fair Trade thunderer is decorated with beautiful and colourful dot painting. The thunderer is played by holding the tube section and allowing the metal spring to dangle freely, the instrument is then gently shaken from side to side. This creates a fantastically realistic thunder sound. The more vigorously the instrument is shaken, the more of a booming thunderclap the player can produce. DO NOT pull the spring!

Explore further - watch videos of different sized thunderers being played.

➤ Boing stick from Bali, Indonesia

*Also known as – bungkaka, bamboo buzzer*

This Fair Trade, handmade boing stick is made from a single length of decorated bamboo and it produces a fantastic "boing" sound when tapped against a hand or surface. The instrument generates a sound from the slit between the two tongues when the instrument is struck and the sound can be altered by covering and uncovering the hole found on the bottom half of the instrument. As well as being an entertaining instrument, some people also believe it can be used to drive out evil spirits.

➤ Frog Guiro from Thailand

Share the Frog Guiro Origin and Process notes included with this guidance.

➤ Instrument Videos

Use online resources to show videos of the instruments being played.

➤ Fair Trade

Fair Trade is a worldwide movement that aims to help producers in less economically developed countries, whether they be handicraft producers or farmers. The term Fair Trade means that producers receive a fair price for the goods they produce.

Each instrument included in this pack can be a way to teach and learn about the principles of Fair Trade. Teaching the principles of Fair Trade provides learning opportunities in many areas of learning, including PSED/PSHE, Understanding the World and Geography. The instruments have been sourced by Siesta, who have been a member of [BAFTS](#) (the British Association for Fair Trade Shops and Suppliers) for over 25 years and are also a BAFTS recognised Fair Trade importer.

Most of the suppliers of the instruments in this pack are small family businesses employing only a few people; Siesta try to keep them in continuous work enabling their businesses to grow. Nearly everything in this pack is handmade with materials being sustainably sourced, and traditional skills being kept alive.

Explore further – What are the 10 Principles of Fair Trade? How does Fair Trade help producers? Research the many organisations around the world, including Fairtrade Foundation, the British Association for Fair Trade Shops and Suppliers (BAFTS) and World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO).

## Frog Guiro

### Origin and Process Notes

*A Fair Trade frog guiro, handmade in Northern Thailand from acacia wood. Run the stick along the ridges on its back from rear to front to make a deep croaking sounds or hit it on the head to make a 'pock' sound.*

*Read more about the frog's journey from start to finish!*

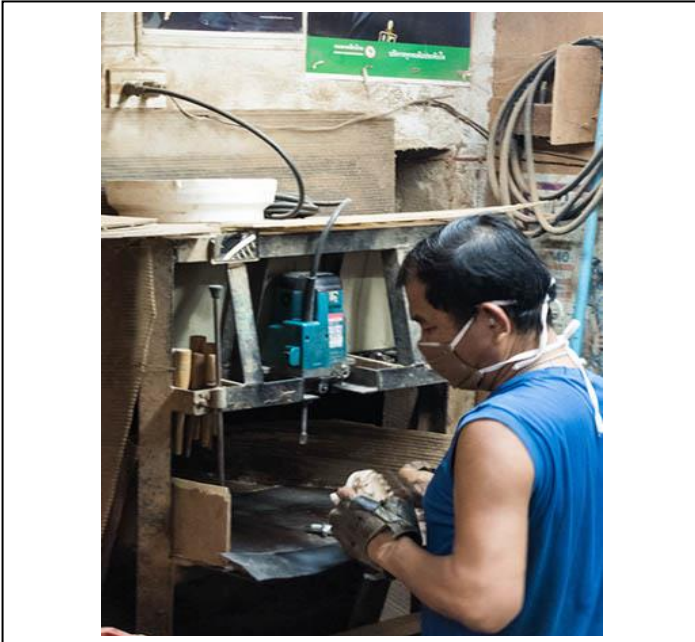


These frog guiros are produced in the mountainous countryside outside the city of Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand. As woodcarving is no longer a big enough source of income to do exclusively, many of the woodcarvers also farm Longan fruit, a small, sweet and juicy lychee-like fruit. With many producers working from their homes, traditional carving tools can be spotted amongst their everyday items.



These frog guiros are made from acacia wood, used because of its sustainability as a fast-growing tree. One particular business has grown from strength to strength over the years and the owner has now built a large factory right next to his house and is now able to employ a large staff of carvers and painters – a perfect example of the Fair Trade way of working.





Firstly, the rough shape of each frog is carved out by hand before being carefully sanded down. The sawdust waste is then transported to be used as a base for growing mushrooms at a nearby farm! Next a drill is used to shape the central hole in the frog. Each frog is drilled and then given a quick tap on the head to see if it makes the desired 'thock' sound. If it is not quite right, it gets another go under the drill. If it passes the test, then they are given a final sand down inside and are taken to the large drying kiln.



The kiln is almost entirely fired by leftover chunks of wood from the manufacturing of the frogs and has been installed with a top of the range alarm system in case the fire gets too hot. Once the frogs have all been fully dried, they are ready to be stained and painted. The painters use a mixture of techniques depending on the desired finish. Some use a paint gun to spray them whilst others require more detailed hand painting with brushes. After painting the frogs are given a final quality control check and are then packaged up for sending out.

*Can you spot the giant frog in this photo?*

