

MAKE YOUR OWN

Latin-American GUIRO

WHAT IS A GUIRO?

Although different versions of this type of instrument are found all over the world, the guiro or güiro (Spanish pronunciation: 'gwiro) is most often associated with Latin American music and cultures. Guiros made of bone can be seen in drawings from the ancient civilizations of Mexico. Guiros made from dried gourds are crafted and played throughout South America, Central America and on Caribbean islands such as Puerto Rico and Cuba. Modern guiros can be made of wood, plastic or metal, as well.



Make It!

To make an easy version of a Latin-American guiro, you'll need a recycled water bottle with ridges and a simple scraper. If you like, add materials inside the clear bottle for decoration to make this crafty project even more fun!

Materials

- » Any recycled water bottles with ridges
- » Any one of these items as a rasp:
 - an unsharpened pencil, chopsticks, metal whisk or plastic hair pick
- » A small amount of yarn or string
- » A small amount of tape or electrical tape
- » Materials For Filling Guiro (*optional*)
 - Beans, beads, rice, pebbles, sand, birdseed or any similar "fillings" that will create a rattling sound
- » Glitter or confetti for decoration



Putting It All Together

1. Remove the wrapper from your clean, dry water bottle.
2. Decide whether or not you'll be filling your guiro.
3. If you fill your guiro with material such as beans, rice, pebbles or birdseed, you can play it as a shaker or rattle as well.
4. If you want the guiro to look festive, you can add glitter or confetti before you seal it up.
5. If you've filled your recycled guiro, make sure to tape it shut so the contents stay inside and the project remains child-safe for kids of all ages.
6. Choose your rasp and use the string to tie it to your guiro near the bottle cap. This will keep the scraper near the instrument at all times.



To Play A Guiro You Need A Rasp!

A guiro is a percussion instrument with ridges. To play it, you scrape another object – such as a stick, a whisk or a rasp - over the ridges. If you watch a percussionist play a guiro, you will be amazed at the many different rhythm patterns that can be created from this one basic instrument.

Time To Play!

It's so easy to play a guiro.

Here are some basic techniques and tips.

- » Take your scraper and scrape downward.
- » Take your scraper and scrape upward.
- » Play a song while scraping downward (while you sing or play along with a favorite recorded song).

Play a Song While Scraping Upward

(while you sing or play along with a favorite recorded song)

- » Scrape back and forth.
- » Play a song while scraping back and forth.
- » Try a different rhythm pattern. For instance:
Scrape down, up, (then)
down, down, up (and repeat that pattern)
- » Create a new pattern and see if your friends, classmates or parents can play it as well.
- » Put on a cd of Latin American music and create guiro patterns that fit the music you are hearing.
- » Try making several guiros with several different types of scrapers and see which ones you like best.



A guiro and a dried snake gourd used in making these instruments is pictured here.



Several variations of guiros are pictures above.