

Maracas

A maraca is a rattle made from a single, hollow, gourd-shaped container filled with beans, seeds, pebbles, or similar small objects, attached to a handle, and shaken rhythmically as a percussion instrument. Originally adopted from Amerindians, maracas are played in pairs (one in each hand) in many Latin American musical styles, such as *salsa*, *bomba*, *cumbia*, *son cubano*, *rumba*, and *cha-cha-chá*.



Maracas (vessel rattles) | Cuba, 1940 | gourd, wood
Example of a Cuban pair of maracas from the mid-20th century as used in dance bands of the period.

Craft Kit Materials:

- Plastic ball
- Beads
- Wood stick
- Rubber bands

How to make a maraca:

1. Cut small slits on opposite ends of the plastic ball, just big enough to push beads through.
2. Fill the plastic ball with beads by pushing them through one of the holes.
3. Starting with the same hole the beads went in, push the stick through both holes in the plastic ball.
4. Wrap a rubber band tightly around the stick on the top and bottom of the ball to secure it in place.
5. Shake away!



For another take on maracas, watch [this video](#) on MIM's YouTube channel!