

Gourd Drum



This is a common drum in West Africa. They can be made of any size gourd, and oftentimes, several gourds connected together.

Materials

Bottleneck Gourd, dried and clean

Hack saw or electric jigsaw

Sandpaper or palm sander

Embroidery hoop

Plumber's Goop (strong glue)

Wood stain

Spray polyurethane

Non-stretching cord

Natural skin drumhead

1. Find the roundest part of the gourd in the fatter section. Mark a circle around the outside of the gourd as a guide for cutting and cut with a hacksaw or your jigsaw. Be careful as the gourd walls can be of varied thicknesses as you cut around the outside.
2. Empty out the seeds and dried pulp. Fill the gourd with water and let it soak for a few hours, the rest of the pulp will soften and scrape out easily.
3. Cut off the end of the small part. Use sand paper or the palm sander to sand the edges of the top and bottom til they are smooth.
4. Spray the inside of the gourd with polyurethane or some kind of protectant to increase the life of the drum. Use wood stain or shoe polish to protect the outside of the drum.

You may choose to paint or decorate the outside of the gourd, do that now. Remember the head will overlap the top edge and the ropes will cover the top half of the gourd. Spray the outside of the gourd with polyurethane or use some kind of clear protectant.

5. Cut open a wooden embroidery hoop and trim until it is the exact size to fit snugly into the inside rim of the top of the gourd. Use Plumber's goop to glue it securely in place, let dry.



6. You've probably discovered that your gourd opening was not as perfectly round as you had hoped. It probably was not as flat as you'd hoped as well. The embroidery hoop is to reinforce the opening so the drum head will not crush it. However, it will also serve as a guide to help you sand the gourd as perfectly flat as possible. Make the hoop and the edge of the gourd level with each other.
7. See instructions for roping a drumhead.
8. Let the head dry thoroughly and decorate it with ink and brush. Stencils can look nice if you are reluctant to draw freehand.