

# The Restorative & Healing Benefits of Sound

Wellness ceremonies and rituals that tap into the healing power of sound can be found in many cultures. Self-care and collective wellbeing can begin with an awareness of the sounds in our homes. What are we listening to? What sounds spark joy? What do we want to include in our daily soundtrack? How can we bring these sounds in our homes and in shared spaces that will promote wellness?

Here are three examples of sound-based healing practices.

1

In Zimbabwe, Shona peoples living near the country's capital, Harare, use an instrument called the mbira to contact their ancestors for guidance, healing, protection, and special requests. The mbira is a handheld wooden board with 24 thin metal keys that are plucked with one's fingers or thumbs. Many Zimbabweans use the mbira to tell ancestral stories, uplift their mood when they are having a bad day, and during all types of celebrations (weddings, government events, chief ceremonies, music festivals). A person who is skilled and chosen by the ancestors to play the mbira is called a gwenyambira. During a Mabira, an all-night healing ceremony the gwenyambira plays the mbira to help others contact a specific spirit. They also teach mbira to others.

2

In Australia, the Yolgnu (which means people) of North East Arnhem Land are deeply connected to the natural world and see themselves tied to its survival and continuity. They understand sound as being much more than just something we can hear; rather, it is a bridge to the spiritual world—a way to communicate to ancestors and gods and to connect past and present histories. In traditional ceremonies, the Yolgnu use a wind instrument called the yidaki (not to be confused with the didgeridoo which you might be more familiar with).

3

As far back as 2000 B.C.E. Himalayan bowls or singing bowls were used by Chinese emperors. These “ringing stones”, usually formed from jade, produced a beautiful ringing sound when struck and were used in rituals to aid in the emperors' spiritual focus, harmony, and inner peace. However, their spiritual use later began to disappear in the Himalayan region. The metallic bowls, now commonly referred to as Tibetan bowls, were previously known as dabaka or bata in Nepal and used there as janai bata, or rice bowl. There however is no evidence that traces the origin or use of Tibetan bowls to spiritual practices of Buddhist monks in Tibet. Today, these bowls are widely used by sound healers, music therapists, and yoga practitioners.

# Sacred Sounds From Around The World

1



2



3



## Learn More:

Yolgnu of Australia & the Yidaki

Search for "The Remarkable Yidaki" at <https://theconversation.com/>

Yidaki - <https://www.spiritgallery.com.au/yidaki-information>

Didgeridoo - <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/didjeridu>

<https://europepmc.org/article/med/16521780>

## Additional Facts:

- A special technique called "circular breathing" is used to play the didgeridoo, whereby a continuous drone is produced by the player's vibrating lips whilst quick snatches of air are inhaled through the nose.
- Called yidaki - originated from Yolgnu people in Northern Australia

## The Singing Bowls & Its Origins

Search for "The Tale of the Singing Bowl" at <https://kathmandupost.com/art-culture>

Reclaiming Singing Bowls - <https://www.nepalitimes.com/review/reclaiming-singing-bowls/>

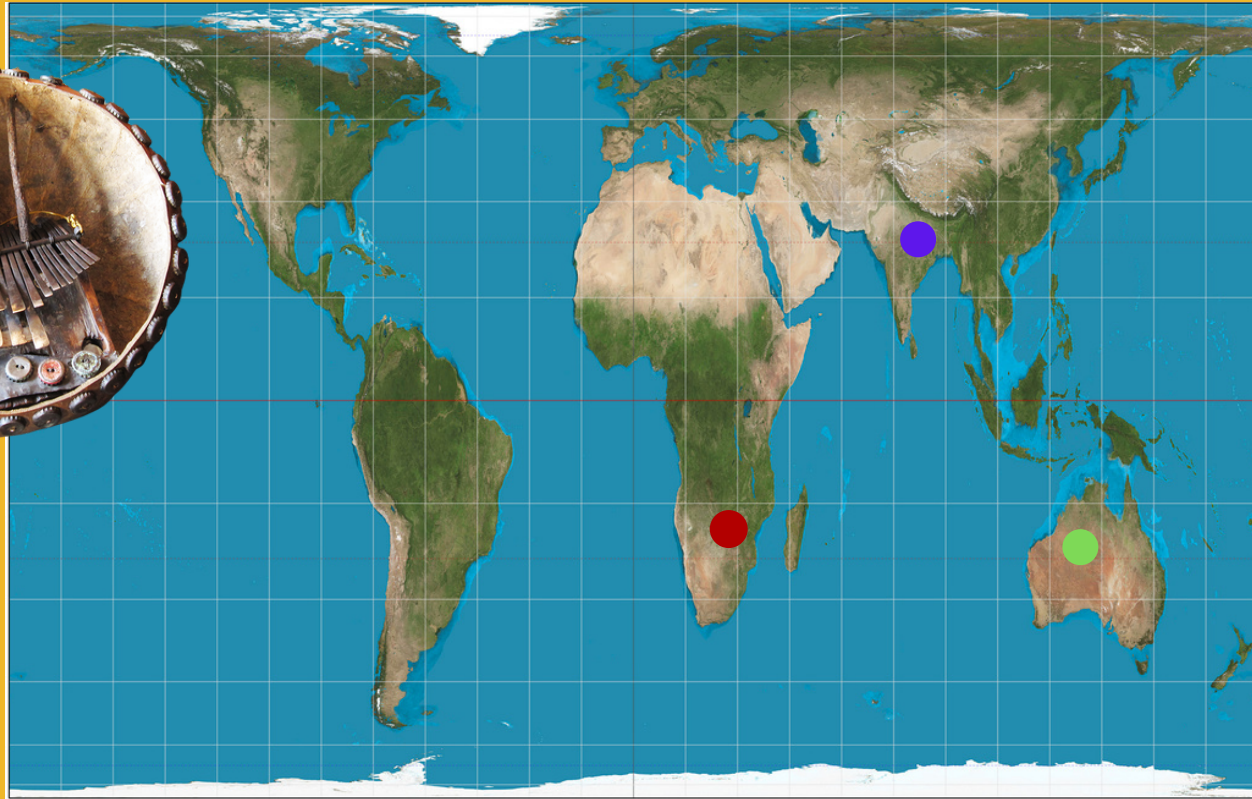
<https://singinghimalaya.com/history-and-uses/>

## The Mbira & the Shona

Search for "Mbira in Shona Culture" at <https://mbira.org/>

Google "Celebrating Mbira" to have an interactive experience with the instrument

<https://www.britannica.com/art/lamellaphone>





# Do It Again!

## Wind Chimes



### About Wind Chimes

Wind chimes have been a part of many cultures for over 5,000 years. Around 3,000 B.C.E.\* wind chimes were mainly used in Southeast Asia and Eastern Mediterranean for the protection of sacred temples and to help farmers gauge the weather and to warn of impending typhoons or tsunamis. Today, people use wind chimes for their artistic, musical, and healing qualities as they can help enhance our mind/body/spirit connection by bringing our awareness to the present. When we listen to wind chimes, our breathing slows down, our heart rate lowers, and our muscles relax. Using a wind chime during meditation is therefore a wonderful tool for letting go of stressful and distracting thoughts. This calming effect expands our conscious and unconscious awareness and can provide a sense of inner peace. Adding a wind chime in our homes can be pleasing to look at and hear.

### Making a Wind Chime

Most wind chimes are designed with strung metal tubes, of varying lengths suspended from a center bar or by string or wire. When the wind blows, the metal tubes collide against one another and often into an object in the center, called a clapper. These collisions produce vibrations that travel the length of the tubes, producing an array of sound waves depending upon the length of the tube and what material they're made from. Artists use natural materials, such as bone, wood, bamboo, or seashells to create a variety of sounds.

[( \*B.C.E. stands for Before the Common Era and is a secular or non-religious way to describe historical time frames.)]

### Learn More:

Wind chimes

<https://wonderopolis.org/wonder/how-do-wind-chimes-work>



# Do It Again!

## What you will need...

- a stick or tree branch (7-10 inches)
- scissors
- string or yarn
- small metal items (spoons, metal bottle caps, keys, bells, etc.)
- natural objects (shells, stones, tree branches, etc.)



## Wind Chimes



## Process

1

Before you begin, search around your home for metal and natural objects. Experiment with different types of objects to test out what types of sounds they create when they collide together.

2

Cut 5 to 10 pieces of string that are at least 12 inches in length. Tie the strings along the long stick spacing them approximately one or two inches apart —close enough that the objects will be able to collide with each other and make a sound. Next, attach chime objects onto the strings and fasten them with knots.

3

When you have finished creating your wind chime, hang it up near an open window to activate the sound.

