

# Maraca

A **maraca** (<sup>ⓘ</sup> pronunciation ), sometimes called **rumba shaker**, **chac-chac**<sup>[1]</sup> and various other names, is a rattle which appears in many genres of Caribbean and Latin music. It is shaken by a handle and usually played as part of a pair.

Maracas (Mbaracás),<sup>[2]</sup> also known as tamaracas, were rattles of divination, an oracle of the Brazilian Tupinamba Indians, found also with other Indian tribes (Garifuna, Guarani) and on the Orinoco and in Florida. Rattles made from gourds (Lagenaria) are being shaken by the natural grip, while the round calabash (Crescentia) fruits are fitted to a handle.<sup>[3]</sup> Human hair is sometimes fastened on the top, and a slit is cut in it to represent a mouth, through which their shamans (payes) made it utter its responses. A few pebbles are inserted to make it rattle and it is crowned with the red feathers of the Goaraz. Every man had his maraca. It was used at their dances and to heal the sick.<sup>[4]</sup> Andean curanderos (healers) use maracas in their healing rites.<sup>[5]</sup>

Modern maraca balls are also made of leather, wood or plastic.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Images



Robert Plant playing two pairs of maracas



Guarani shaman holding cross and maraca

## References

- Mendes, John (1976). *Cote ce Cote la: Trinidad and Tobago Dictionary*. Arima, Trinidad: Syncreators. p. 135.
- Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (1876), "Mbaracá", *Vocabulario y tesoro de la lengua Guarani (ó mas bien Tupi)* (<https://archive.org/details/gramaticaydiccio02ruiz>), 2, Frick, p. 212b
- Julian H. Steward, ed. (1948), *Handbook of South American Indians*, 3, U.S. Government Printing Office, pp. 43, 129, 238
- Robert Southey (1810), *History of Brazil* (<https://archive.org/details/historyofbrazil01sout>), 1, Longman & Hurst, pp. 187–188, 635

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### Percussion instrument

<b>Classification</b>	Percussion
<b>Hornbostel</b>	112.1
<b>–Sachs</b>	(Shaken
<b>classification</b>	idiophones or rattles)

### Related instruments

Shekere

### Musicians

Machito, Monguito

### Builders

LP Percussion

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MENU

The sound of maracas

5. Federico Kauffmann Doig (2005), "SOUTH AMERICAN INDIANS: INDIANS OF THE ANDES IN THE PRE-INCA PERIOD", in Lindsay Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion*, **13** (2nd ed.), Gale, pp. 8599–8605, ISBN 0-02-865982-1
  6. Blades, James (1992). *Percussion instruments and their history* (Rev. ed.). Westport, Conn.: Bold Strummer. ISBN 0-933224-61-3.
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