



## Senegalese Djembe

Though stringed instruments, bells, flutes and xylophones are all used in traditional African music there are no two instruments more important than the basic African hand drum and the human voice. Drums are almost always accompanied by singers who often keep time with rattles, shakers, wood sticks and bells or by simply clapping their hands or stamping their feet. Traditionally music and song was part of community life in Africa which punctuated milestone events of the community as well as the life of the individual from the cradle to the grave.

The most culturally distinct drum to Africa is the Djembe ("jem-bay") drum which originated over 200 years ago in Guinea, West Africa. It is often referred to as the healing drum and is considered to have magical powers which can transport you into other worlds when played by master drummers. The drum beat is heard every day in Africa. Drums are used in healing ceremonies, naming ceremonies, in rites of passage and warrior rituals as well as on social occasions like weddings, or harvest parties or to celebrate the rain after a drought.

The Djembe is a single skin African drum that resembles a chalice in shape. Some people have likened its appearance to a mushroom. It is designed to be played with the hand. This small one comes from Senegal.

A key point about the Djembe is that the base, as well as the "cup" is hollow. This produces additional resonance and helps give the drum its distinctive sound and variety of percussive sounds. The drum is traditionally carved from one piece of wood and covered with goats skin. Djembe's come in a variety of sizes. Very often a large and small Djembe are played side by side, the small Djembe acting as an accompaniment. Dunun drum bells are also often played as well.

