

African Heritage Trunk Contents List

Please check off the artifacts as you unpack and again when you repack trunk.

Musical Instruments

☐☐ Animal Hide Drum. Played with hands; note the sound of a rattling from inside. That is the right rear hoof of the skin of antelope the drum covering was made of. Superstitions play a role in many African societies and when an animal is killed for food, sometimes a token is made to appease the animal's spirit to prevent the hunter from being haunted. In this case, the animal's swift legs are being recognized and the hunter is trying to be a good sport about besting it in its final race by giving it a voice through inclusion in a musical piece. This example came from the country of **Chad**.

☐☐ 4 Spinning Hand Rattles; 2 single round rattles (wood & animal hide painted like a giraffe & a zebra, 1) giraffe painted rattle that looks like a mallet). 1 Triple Rattle (wood, animal hide painted like giraffe/zebra/cheetah plus cowrie shells). Before the wild animal populations were so small, these hand rattles would have been made from the actual skin of the giraffe or zebra. Giraffe skin in particular was sought as it is over two inches thick when dried and makes an amazing acoustic sound. Roll the rattles between hands to get the best music out of them. Today, in **Kenya** where these rattles came from, they use the animal they eat instead of giraffe...goats!

☐☐ 2 Shakers, 1 double-headed tattan one, 1 with gourd shells on a stick, **Togo**.

☐☐ Recycled Iron Castanet, shaped like a shell w/a ring. Played by placing the ring on your thumb, the shell in your palm, and striking together in time with the music. (from **Algeria**)

☐☐ 2 Ethiopian Storyteller Drum. Storytellers in **Ethiopia**, where this drum is used, will sing stories of their history and point out specific events or individuals on these elaborately decorated drums. Many times the drums are quite large and square, and more than one drummer plays and tells the story. A single player square drum is included, along with a smaller cylinder version.

☐☐ 2 Double-Faced Wood Hand Shaker Rattle. These instruments would be played in musical performances with other shakers, and also in theatrical productions with the expression on either face (usually one is more serious and one is more comical) used to close & open scenes in stage plays. (From **Nigeria**)

☐☐ Balafon (xylophone) and 2 strikers Similar to a xylophone, these instruments are tuned to the Oriental scale throughout West Africa. The Occidental scale, devised by Pythagoras and perfected by Bach, has been the basis for musical composition in the Western World. However, it is not the only scale that is used when composing music. The Middle East, for example, has a vast number of scales that sound particular to the Western ear. (From **Liberia**)

☐☐ Wooden Shaker, rattan in a square shape. (From **Kenya**)

☐☐ Recycled Hand Shaker, made from an oil tin and ball bearings (From **South Africa**)

□□ 2 Camel Bells. These could be in either Music or Household, as they are really is used to by shepherds and nomadic travelers to keep track of their camels, but also by musicians in ceremonies and special holiday performances. These are both from **Egypt**; the wooden one is older from the time Martin and Osa were in Africa, but the metal one is the version used most often today.

□□ Fly Switch, a wooden handle with wildebeest hair. This item could be in either Music or Household, as it really is used to swat flies...often by musicians. From **Tanzania**.

□□ 3 Hand Rattles using recycled bottle tops; One with rounded rattan loops, 1 circular one and 1 that is slingshot shaped. Wooden one from **Kenya**, Rattan one from **DR of Congo**.

□□ Gernuk Hide Covered soda pop can rattle. From **Zambia**.

□□ 5 Thumb Pianos: **1) & 2)** Wooden versions from **Kenya**, **3)** Sardine can one from **South Africa**, **4)** Tomato Can one from **Senegal**, , **5)** Gourd one from **Burkina Faso**.

□□ 1 Wooden Clacker...twirl for sound. **Kenya**.

□□ 4 Gourd Shakers: **1) & 2)** Gourds with a netting of shells and beads, **Kenya**, **3)** 1 simple filled gourd **Togo**, and **5)** a gourd on a stick with cowrie shells and goat skin. **Mali**.

Household Artifacts & Masks

□□ Toys:

- 1) A Lesotho Boy's Toy Doll. The doll's woolen cape is a traditional garment used when a boy is sent hunting in the snow covered mountains and can be used as a sleeping bag if it becomes an overnight trip. Often time westerners forget that Africa has deserts, jungles and snow covered regions as well! **Lesotho** is an independent kingdom completely surrounded by the country of South Africa.
- 2) A Namji Girls Doll. This woven doll with bells inside is from the Namji peoples of **Cameroon**. The Namji are best known for their carved wooden dolls, often considered the most beautiful dolls in all of Africa. This version is a true toy for the Namji girls---to play with and dress up and hair braid---but the wooden ones are taken very seriously and must be carried by the girls everywhere they travel.
- 3) A Wire VW Beetle car. A traditional favorite homemade toy in Africa, an object made of wire is considered magical as while transparent, as the artist works it, it begins to take shape as the wire symbolizes its outline while bringing to life the elements normally kept hidden. This example came from **Tanzania**.
- 4) African Owari Game Board & Playing Beads (inside game board). Also called Mancala. One of the play pieces storage compartments is missing a top, but it can still be played. (From **Mali**)

□□ Headrest, a wooden sleeping support for head, looks like a small carved stool. Used to protect the owner's hair from being messed up during sleep. Hairstyles for both men and women are extremely elaborate and sometimes they can take up to 14 hours to be created and are meant to last for a week or longer. This headrest is from **Kenya**.

□□ *Trainer Mask & Masked Dancer Doll* shown in a similar Congolese headdress & body paint, ready to perform a masked dance. Both from **Democratic Republic of the Congo**.