

The Museum of Amazing Musical Instruments - The Udu

This is the *udu* – a musical clay pot. How do you do, *udu*?

Udu pots originally came from Nigeria, Africa, but today they are made all over the world. The musical clay pot is popular in India, where it's called a *Ghatam*.

In Nigeria, *udu* pot drums are only made by women. In the *Igbo* language of Nigeria the word *Udu* means a vessel, but I think it's also like the sound the instrument makes – ooo doo!

This *udu* is made of clay and has tiny grains of iron embedded in the clay to help improve the sound of the drum. You play it by covering the holes in the side or the top. If you bounce your hand over the hole, you make the 'oooo', if you place your hand you make a 'doooo'. The sides and the neck of the drum sound great too!

Udu clay pots are a wonderful example of how something from the home becomes a musical instrument. Before they were made with a hole in the side, *udu* vessels would be placed under ground to store water or milk in order to keep the contents cool. They could be described as the world's oldest refrigerator!

The *udu* is a quieter drum that's nice to play on your own or with other softer sounding instruments. If you want to play on stage, you definitely need a microphone. Some players put water inside the drum, which changes the pitch.

Because this drum is fragile and very precious, it lives in a tough, hard case. Remember my saying? 'A one dollar head gets a one dollar helmet!'

Links

Amazing *Udu* solo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGV71OSX88Q>

African *Udu*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGwVEi8o8us>

Making *Udu* pots in Nigeria

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-8W0eNYMRw>

Indian *Ghatam* women's ensemble

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fa3h6AnY1CU>

Udu quiz

1. Which country does the udu come from?
2. Who makes udu pots, men or women?
3. What material is the udu made of?
4. Udu pots could also be described as the world's oldest.....?
5. Complete the phrase 'A one dollar head gets.....?'
6. If an udu was an African animal, what animal would it be?

Udu quiz answers

1. Which country does the udu come from? NIGERIA, AFRICA
2. Who makes udu pots, men or women? WOMEN
3. What material is the udu made of? CLAY
4. Udu pots could also be described as the world's oldest.....? REFRIGERATOR
5. Complete the phrase 'A one dollar head gets.....? A ONE DOLLAR HELMET
6. If an udu was an African animal, what animal would it be?

