

## The Museum of Amazing Musical Instruments - The Berimbau

The *berimbau* is a musical bow from Brazil. Some bows shoot arrows, but this bow shoots musical notes! It produces a unique sound that's both rhythmic and hypnotic.

You'll never find a *berimbau* that's been made in a factory - all the parts of this instrument either grow naturally, or are recycled. The big bow is made from the wood of the *beriba* tree and is strung with wire that comes out of a car tyre. The gourd slides over one end - in Brazil this part is called the *cabaça*.

The *berimbau* produces three tones - a low note, a high note and a buzz tone. You move the berimbau to and from your tummy to make a *wah wah* sound that brings the instrument to life.

Berimbau rhythms are called *toques*. You will usually find a *berimbau* played for a martial art called *capoeira*, which is a sport that is very popular in Brazil. The rhythms of the berimbau tell the capoeira players how to play, and everyone sings along.

You hit the *berimbau* with a stick called a *baqueta*, which is held with a *caxixi* in your right hand. Your left hand holds the instrument by balancing it on your little finger, which takes a little while to get used to. Your left hand also holds the *dobrão*, which is shaped like an old Portuguese coin.

The *berimbau* travelled to Brazil from Africa in the days of slavery. The African slaves were kept in terrible conditions and weren't allowed to dance or have any sort of fun, so practicing *capoeira* and playing the *berimbau* had to be done in secret. Nowadays *capoeira* is popular all over the world - it's a great way to keep fit and play music at the same time.

### Pronunciation guide

Berimbau: beh-rim-bow

Capoeira: caa-po-wayra

Toques: toks

Cabaça: kabassa

Caxixi : caa-shi-shi

Dobrão: dobraow (as in a cat's meow)

### Links

Berimbau solo

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQcP\\_eCsQ1Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQcP_eCsQ1Q)

Capoeira in Brazil - fast style called 'Regional'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HOD8Valli0>

Capoeira in Brazil - slower style called 'Angola'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X80T7pQxDhk>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Li2saACv\\_UY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Li2saACv_UY)

## BERIMBAU QUIZ

1. The Berimbau is a musical .....
2. The Berimbau comes from .....
3. The wire on a berimbau comes out of a .....
4. Capoeira is a .....
5. Mat the Hat holds a stick and what else in his right hand? .....
6. What is a dobrao? .....
7. The first people to play capoeira in Brazil were .....

## BERIMBAU QUIZ ANSWERS

1. The Berimbau is a musical .....? BOW
2. The Berimbau comes from .....? BRAZIL
3. The wire on a berimbau comes out of a .....? CAR TYRE
4. Capoeira is a .....? MARTIAL ART
5. Mat the Hat holds a stick and what else in his right hand? ..... CAXIXI
6. What is a dobrao? ..... AN OLD PORTUGUESE COIN
7. The first people to play capoeira in Brazil were .....? AFRICAN SLAVES