

# Indian Percussion Instrument Pack (MES1152)

*Learn about the music of India with this set of beautiful Indian instruments. Explore and investigate the different sounds and learn about the instruments and their importance. This pack is ideal for creating cross-curricular links.*



## Contents: -

1. Bhangra Dhol
2. Dholak
3. Mini Hand Taal
4. Manjira Chimes
5. Wooden Monk Bell
6. Beaded Cabasa
7. Disc Block Knocker
8. Clapper
9. Pair of Ankle Bells
10. Pair of Indian Wood Claves

*Please note contents and designs may vary*

*This resource can be used to:*

- Explore a range of different percussion instruments from India.
- Create cross-curricular links and cover elements of the Geography, RE, History and Art and Design curriculum.
- Introduce the resources during whole class teaching and provide time for hands-on exploration in small groups.



# All About the Instruments

## 1. Bhangra Dhol

This small, brightly painted version of the dhol is traditionally used all across South Asia at weddings and other festivals and is also a major component of modern bhangra music. It is a double ended drum comprising of a mango wood shell and metal rings for adjusting the tension on the skins. The bhangra dhol is played with two sticks. The thinner, straight stick plays the higher pitched end of the drum and is known as a 'tihli.' The thicker, bent stick plays the bass end of the drum and is known as a 'dagga'.

## 2. Dholak

This simple and colourful double headed Indian drum is made from a mango wood shell, with skins that can be tightened or slackened by adjusting the metal rings on the ropes. The dholak is usually played with only the bare hands and it is played slung over the shoulder standing up, in the lap or under the knee on the floor. Although it originated in India, the versatile dholak is now used in a huge number of global musical styles.

## 3. Mini Hand Taal

The taal is a traditional Indian percussion instrument consisting of a pair of small hand cymbals that produce a high-pitched sound when they clap together.

## 4. Manjira Chimes

These manjira chimes are a traditional percussion instrument of India. These simple chimes are often used in folk and devotional music, particularly in Gujarati and Marathi traditions. The chimes are hit together to create a high pitched, tinkling sound, used as an accompaniment to a larger ensemble.

## 5. Wooden Monk Bell

Used in Buddhist ceremonies to maintain rhythm during chanting and the reciting of texts. The bell produces a clear resonant clave sound when cupped in the hand.

## 6. Beaded Cabasa

Inspired by traditional African instruments, the beaded cabasa is a percussion instrument made from a hollow gourd with a net of beads. The player holds the netted gourd in the cupped non-dominant hand and twists the handle back and forth to create a bright, crisp sound.

## 7. Disc Block Klocker

Typically carved from solid wood the Indian disc block klocker produces a rich, hollow 'tock' sound when tapped with the wooden beater. The sound is similar to a clave. It is played by holding the disc in the non-dominant hand, with the thumb and index finger over the side holes that are used to store the striker when not being played.

## 8. Clapper

Made from mango wood. This instrument consists of a long handle with two smaller pieces of wood attached by elasticated cord. The clapper makes a mottled clave sound when shaken.

## 9. Pair of Ankle Bells

Ankle bells are worn just above the ankle and allow the audience to fully appreciate the rhythmic aspects and complex footwork of the dance. They are worn by dancers and performers in many Asian countries. An individual bell is called a ghungroo and one dancer may have as many as 200 bells on each ankle! They are widely used in competitive bhangra as well as classical Indian traditions and dances.

## 10. Pair of Indian Wood Claves

This pair of light mango wood claves are handmade. Claves are an important percussion instrument and are often used to play a repeating rhythmic pattern known as a 'clave.' To get the best sound from the claves, one stick is held in one hand supported between the thumb and the fingertips with the palm cupped. This turns the hand into a resonating chamber and increases the volume when struck with the other stick.

# Ideas and suggestions

Here are some examples of ways you could use them.

## Mystery Instrument

Introduce the instruments without naming or identifying them.  
Give the pupils time to work together to guess what the instruments are called and how they can be played.  
Encourage the pupils to identify what materials the instruments are made of.

## Hands-on Instrument Exploration

Identify and name each of the instruments.  
Talk about the material of the instrument and how to play them. Use online videos to show the instruments being played.  
Give time for small groups to handle each instrument.

## Instrument Investigation

Encourage the pupils to look at elements of the instrument that can be adapted.  
  
Talk about pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre and texture. Encourage the pupils to discuss their preferences.

## Music Challenge

Plan and rehearse a piece of music using the instruments.  
Perform the pieces as part of the musical element of the Holi festival celebration.  
Encourage pupils to dance – consider looking at Bhangra movements and traditional folk dances.

## Geography Investigation

Use a world map to name and locate India, where these instruments originate from.  
Research India. Think about the flag, culture, food, history and significant festivals, such as Diwali and Holi.  
Use online resources to show videos of the celebrations and to show the instruments being used.  
Create a fact file using the information gathered.

## Art and Design

Design and make clay diya lamps.  
Find a suitable outside space and use chalks to create Rangoli patterns on the floor.  
Design a bright and colourful dhol drum.  
Recreate the music and dance of the Holi festival and take powder paints outside and recreate the tradition of throwing coloured powder!