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What Instruments Are Used in Samba Music?

By Rose Broyles, eHow Contributor

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Originating from Brazil, Samba has grown to become a popular dance form associated with Rio de Janeiro's Carnival. It is filled with rhythm and voluptuous dance moves. While its history is centered around Rio de Janeiro, the genre evolved into a new form in the 1980s as artists in Salvador created a new style that was slower and more driving. Musicians use a variety of percussion instruments to make this rhythmic style of music.



Samba dancers on a stage

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Surdo

The Surdo is a double-headed drum played with a large padded baqueta (beater). Players muffle the sound with their hand for one beat, and then the second beat is accented. The Surdo provides a two-four rhythm. When more players are added, several surdos are used.

Pandeiro

The Pandeiro is the national instrument of Brazil. It is the equivalent of the tambourine; the frame drum is single-headed and pratinelas (jingles) are loosely arranged in pairs around the instrument's side. The Pandeiro produces a stream of semi-quavers (1/8 notes). Each are distinct and they are produced by the player's unique playing technique. It is good for samba in small groups.

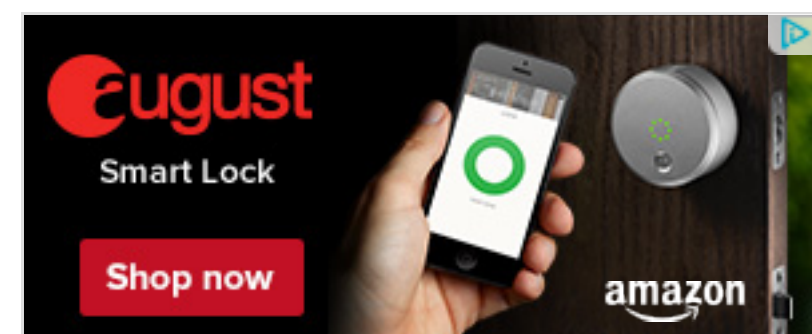
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The Cuica is another percussion instrument used in creating Samba. Pronounced 'qweeka', it makes an unusual sound that resembles a monkey laughing. You play the cuica by rubbing a stick inside the shell of the drum with a wet piece of paper or cloth. The Cuica musician presses on the drum's head simultaneously to change the pitch.

Ganzá & Chocalho

These are 'jingle' shakers that produce different sounds; they contribute to the samba swing.

Repinique

This small double-headed percussion instrument is tuned very high. It is played with one stick and the player's hand. You can also use two flexible plastic sticks. It leads the bateria, signaling breaks and cues.

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