

Groovy African Shekere

A shekere is a rattle-like musical instrument that is used during songs, ceremonies and storytelling in West African countries. A shekere is usually made from a dried gourd wrapped in beaded netting and filled with seeds. When the shekere is shaken, the beads and seeds strike the hard surface of the gourd, making a loud rattling sound.

To make our groovin' Shekere gather up the items listed below, and get shakin'!

Stuff you need:

- 1 empty plastic jug (a bleach or milk jug works well)
- a selection of wooden and/or plastic beads
- lanyard lacing (plastic)
- paints in groovy colors
- paintbrush
- dried beans, lentils, rice, or popcorn kernels

1. Thoroughly clean and dry your plastic jug.
2. Paint the jug with bright colors and fun designs. Let dry completely.
3. Put a heaping handful of dried beans, lentils, rice, or popcorn into the jug and secure the lid tightly.
4. Cut two pieces of plastic lanyard, one approximately 50 inches long and the other about 10 inches long.
5. String 6 to 8 beads onto the 10-inch piece and tie the ends together to form a ring. Trim excess lacing.
6. Double the larger piece of lanyard and wrap it around the jug right below the handle. Tie a very tight triple knot, cut off excess.
7. Next, we'll need to make 6 bead strands. Follow these directions for all six strands: Cut a 24 inch length of lanyard and tie a double knot about 4 inches from one end. Select six beads. String the first bead, pus it down to the knot, and make another double knot about a half inch from the bead. Follow this pattern for all six beads. Make all six bead strands.
8. Tie one bead strand on each side of the jug, anchoring it onto the doubled 50 inch lace. Turn the jug upside down and lie the beaded ring (that you made earlier) on the bottom of the jug. Tie the bottom of each beaded strand to the beaded ring to secure it to the jug.
9. Add the remaining bead strands the same way, spacing them evenly around the jug.
10. If you'd like, make extra bead strands in different lengths to tie and hang from the jug handle.



Now, shake, shake, shake your groove thing!

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