

SPICE CAP MARACAS

Explore sound and rhythm with familiar items



Curriculum topics

- Instruments
- Music
- Rhythm
- Sound

Subjects

- Art
- Physical Science

Grade range: K – 2

Who we are: Resource Area for Teaching (RAFT) helps transform the learning experience by inspiring joy through hands-on learning.

This simple and engaging project is an investigation of sound, an exercise in creativity, and an appreciation of music all in one! Create a well-known musical instrument and investigate the effect of different materials and rhythmic patterns on the sounds heard from the instrument.



Share Your feedback!
<http://bit.ly/RAFTkitsurvey>

Materials

Materials in the kit may vary but generally, this kit contains the following:

- Spice Bottles w/ caps (2)
- Pony beads, regular (20)
- Paper clips, small (20)

WARNING: CHOKING HAZARD
Activity uses small parts. Not for children under 3 yrs.

To Do and Notice

- 1** Enclose 5 pony beads or 5 paper clips in one spice bottle. Screw on the cap (secure but not too tight).
- 2** Put 10 pony beads and 10 paper clips in the other spice bottle and screw on the cap.
- 3** Hold one maraca and shake in a specific pattern, causing a rhythm. For example, try shaking the maraca in a 1, 2, 1, 2 pattern. Listen carefully to the sound of the maraca when shaking it. What is happening to the beads and paper clips inside?
- 4** Hold and shake the other maraca in the same pattern as with the previous maraca. What differences, if any, are there between the sounds of the two maracas?
- 5** Hold both maracas, one in each hand, and try more complex rhythms and patterns by changing between right shake and left shake. Example: L, L, R, R, L, L. Get creative and try many patterns!
- 6** Unscrew the maraca caps and change the amounts of paper clips and beads in each maraca. Screw the caps back on the maracas. Investigate the sounds of each maraca as in step 3, noting any differences in sounds. Shake the maracas in different patterns and note observations.
- 7** Optional: Play the spice cap maracas along with a favorite song or create a new song.
- 8** **Share** your Spice Cap Maraca exploration with RAFT! Submit photos/video via email at education@raft.net or on social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)).

Consider combining the Spice Cap Maracas with other instruments.



Core Content Skills:

Science & Engineering (NGSS)

Developing and Using Models, Planning and Conducting Investigations, Analyzing and Interpreting Data, Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions, Information Technologies and Instrumentation, Wave Properties, Cause and Effect, Rhythmic Patterns and Musical Ideas

Social Emotional Learning

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Responsible decision-making

The Content Behind the Activity

Sound is caused by vibrations that travel in compression waves through the air (the medium) and into the ear. When they hit the eardrum, the sound is sent to the brain's auditory cortex where it is analyzed and interpreted.

Generally, music is explored with our voices and with simple instruments that focus on rhythm and usually make just 1 or 2 notes. Some examples of these instruments include maracas, castanets, triangles, drums. Rhythm is the heartbeat of music. Maracas were traditionally made with hollowed and dried gourds. Today they are often made with plastic, metal, and/or wood. Maracas are played all around the world but are especially prevalent in Mexico and many South America countries.

Regular, steady beats are most common in popular music today, but many common dance forms from around the world have more complex rhythms, all of which can be played with maracas. Here are a few examples of these rhythms:

- **Waltz, Foxtrot, and Greek Syrto:** Slow, Quick, Quick, Slow, Quick, Quick
- **Rumba and Polka:** Quick, Quick, Slow, Quick, Quick, Slow
- **Swing:** Slow, Slow, Quick, Quick, Slow, Slow, Quick, Quick



Maracas come in a variety of sizes and colors!

Reuse

This kit uses 100% reusable materials designed for other uses. To continue making a positive impact in reducing waste, reuse these materials in other projects. Additionally, any unused materials can be collected and delivered back to RAFT.

Feedback

Please comment on this kit by taking this short survey: <http://bit.ly/RAFTkitsurvey>. Let us know of any material concerns (missing, broken, or poorly fitting parts) as well as any suggestions for improvement.

Visit <https://raft.net> to view related activities!

Glove A Phone
I've Got Rhythm
Match the Sounds
Tongue Depressor Harmonicas

Resources

- Playing maracas, mini lesson video - <https://bit.ly/3CrIRp7>
- How are musical instruments made? - <https://bit.ly/3kPYzEC>