

The background features abstract, flowing waves of color. At the top, a thick, vibrant red wave curves across the frame. Below it, a thinner, more ethereal yellow wave flows. At the bottom, another thick red wave curves upwards, overlapping with a yellow wave that flows from the right side towards the center. The overall effect is dynamic and organic, with a color palette of red, orange, and yellow against a white background.

# AGAVE INSTRUMENTS

Guitars, banjos and other ethnic, ancient and modern strummed/plucked instruments made from the wood of Agave stalks by Robert Grieve Black. Palamos, Girona 2019.  
These instruments are not for sale.



## SKATE SLIDE GUITAR

Shaped like a skateboard it sits nicely in the lap. The two strings are tuned with violin keys. The soundboard is from the sides of a fruit box from Santiago in Spain. The slide is a piece of Arundo river cane.

# PHILIPPINE KUDLUNG

Two strings with wooden frets. Traditional instrument of the Manobo people (and others) in the Philippines.





## TRAVEL GUITAR

Full length but light and plays well. I haven't put frets, just marked the fret positions. Challenging for a beginner but great for bending and sliding.

## RABECA (OR VIOLA) DE BURITI

This is one of my favourites. It is normally made from the Buriti palm tree stem in inner Brazil. Invented in 1940 by the people of Mambuco in the state of Tocantins. Three tubes glued together with slits to create a sound chamber. Looks scrappy but super-light and it plays nicely. I put just 3 strings. This one, of course, is not Buriti but Agave.



## BYZANTINE LUTE

Feast your eyes! I'm fairly certain this is the only replica of this instrument that exists in the world. An instrument of the Byzantine era. Three strings, one-piece body of Agave and recycled fruit-box soundboard.



# GREEK BAGLAMAS

Made in Spain, not in Greece. Here in Palamos in Catalonia. Four strings, Agave body and fruit-box soundboard.



## AZERBAIJAN MEETS RUSSIA

On the left a square ended Ud with three double courses of strings. On the right a tricky looking balalaika with three single strings. Both sound good with fast picking of the strings.



# TONKORI AND SAPEH

Five-string Tonkori (Japanese) and four-string Sapeh (Borneo). Both made with a one-piece Agave base and fruit-box top. Pegs were made by hand from local wood.



# GUMRI

There are many variations of this instrument across Africa, each with a different name and some minor variation in style. This is a reasonable replica of a Nigerian Gumri. It's an instrument that dates back many years.



## SMALL UZBEK RUBAB

Another instrument that comes in various guises. This is a small two-string replica.



# APPALACHIAN DULCIMER

A favourite folk instrument played on the lap. You can't see in the photo but I strung it the wrong way. The highest string should be on the left, the opposite of most other string instruments. I'll change it when I'm finished all my youtubes of the instruments. I think there are about 150 instruments in total.



# PANDURI

A Georgian instrument usually played by a man to accompany love songs or comic songs.



## TWO STRING DUTAR

A flimsy little fellow, kid's size, but it plays sweetly. An instrument of Uzbekistan.



# THREE UKES

Left: Ukulele Hawaii 4 strings

Middle: Ukurere Raratonga 4 strings

Right: Ukulele Haiti 2 strings



## THE LONG AND THE SHORT

Tallest on the right: Xalam (Senegal) 3 strings

Middle is a Guembri (Morocco) 2 string

Shortest on the left: A wee shorty Ngomi (West Africa) 2 string.

The Ngomi and Xalam use a very old African method of tuning. The end of each string is attached to the neck with a thong that slides up to tighten the strings.



# KABOS GUITAR

Another quirky instrument, this one from Madagascar. It has a strange combination of diatonic and chromatic. So I have left it without frets to play as you please. This instrument is usually homemade with recycled materials so it has no real standard shape or size.



# ASIAN DUTAR AZERBAIJAN TAR

The 2 string Dutar is on the right.

The 4 string Tar is on the left.



## A BOWL MANDOLIN

Four string, lovely sound. The lateral fibres of the Agave bring out the best. The tuning keys were hand made.



# DIDDLEY BOWS

Two Diddley Bows. A very basic strum-along instrument with it's origins in the southern states of USA. Anything to reverbate the sound and any old piece of wire to twang and make music.



# UZBEK DOMBRA, TURKISH CURA

For the Dombra I just kept the striking colours of the fruit box.  
The Cura is the smallest of the Saz range of instruments.



# EKTARA

This version of the Ektara originates from Bangladesh. The player strums the string and squeezes the neck to bend the note lower. The base part is usually a gourd. I have used a small bucket made of Agave. The squeezable neck is also Agave. The string is a piece of wire.



## CHINESE MOON GUITAR (YEUQIN)

A bright chirpy little instrument. This one has one double course of strings and frets of wood.



## MANDOLE OR MANDO-BASS

Very nearly a copy of the Algerian Mandole. Nice bass sound with two double courses of strings. The body and neck are made from a big Agave stalk and the soundboard is of 3mm recycled plywood.

The strings are two 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> guitar strings.



## TWO-STRING AKONTING

Reflections of Senegal these two strings give a fine earthy sound. The body and neck are Agave wood, pegs of pine, strings of nylon fishing line and soundboard is from a recycled fruit box.



# BANJO!!!

Not quite a full banjo but it looks good and sounds good. Has 4 guitar strings.



# STRUMMING STICKS

These are so easy to make and are great for strum-along singing. The smaller coloured one is a single piece of agave topped with recycled box wood. With three strings it can offer open tuned chords. The longer one was split Agave and has back and front of the plywood from old boxes.



## MEXICAN JARANA (TRAPEZOID)

A Mexican jarana is a guitar with neck and body formed from one piece of wood. The natural curve of the wood has meant the strings are a bit out of line but it plays like a guitar and the plywood soundboard allows for slapping or drumming with the fingers.

PS. Just a mention. None of these instruments are for sale.





# MY AGAVE INSTRUMENTS

In Youtube you'll also find my "Forty Fiddles", "Apache Fiddles", "World's Longest Didgeridoo", "Drums and Percussion" "Harps" "Blown Instruments"