

Tongue Drum Description: The tongue drum is an ancient instrument that has been part of African, Asian, and South American cultures for hundreds of years. Their main purpose was to communicate across long distances. The tongue drum probably evolved from the slit gong, which was a hollowed log with a slit cut into it. Slit gongs produce sound by vibrating the entire drum, while it is only necessary to strike the tongue to produce sound from a tongue drum. Perhaps tongue drums came along because of ease of playing.

Tongue drums are known by many different names including *xylodrums*, *slit drums*, *log drums*, *ozi boxes*, or *peponaztli*.

Most percussion instruments that are not headed drums are classified as idiophones. The tongue drum is classified as a "struck idiophone," one of four categories of idiophones. This classification includes most of the non-drum percussion instruments familiar in the west. It includes all idiophones which are made to vibrate by being hit, either with a stick or by hand.

Tongue drums consist of a top, usually flat, that has at least one tongue cut into it. Being limited only by the size of the top, there is no theoretical limit to the number of tongues you can have. However, 12 tongues is the usual limit, and anything over eight requires very careful planning and exceptional cutting ability. Here is a six-tongue "whale" drum from

