

Nā Kani 'o Hawai'i (Hawaiian Instruments)

Learn about the Hawaiian instruments that accompany the hula. Notice how many of the instruments are made from natural materials and represent the sounds of nature.



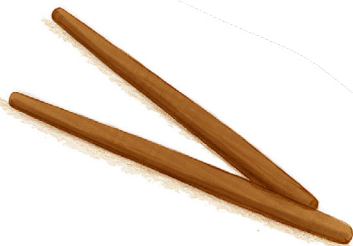
ipu: A hollow percussive gourd that is used to keep the beat in hula. The ipu played a larger role in Hawaiian society, not just as an instrument, but also for food and medicine. Hawaiians developed an entire ceremony to celebrate the planting of the gourd.



'ukulele: A small guitar-like string instrument that is used in modern hula. In the Hawaiian language, “ukulele” means “jumping flea,” perhaps like the movement of the player’s fingers plucking the strings.



'uli 'uli: A shaker made from a gourd that is filled with seeds or stones and has feathers sewn on top. It is played in pairs by shaking or striking the instruments against the body.



kāla 'au: Two wooden sticks that are struck together by the dancers in a hula.



'ili 'ili: Smooth river stones that are clicked together and represent the sound of the ocean.