

Iraqi Folk Instruments

A traditional Iraqi ensemble includes three string instruments, one wind instrument, and one percussion instrument.



Oud: A pear-shaped instrument with 11 strings. Its name means “thin strips of wood,” which is what its body is made of.



Violin: A four-stringed instrument played with a bow. It’s the same instrument you find in an orchestra, but it’s played and tuned differently.



Ney: An ancient flute made out of cane. It is one of the oldest instruments still in use, and the only wind instrument used in traditional Arabic music.



Riqq: A small hand drum with cymbals around it. It’s a lot like a tambourine.



Qanun: An Arabic harp that is more than 1,000 years old!