

# Drum Making



The drum making process is long and takes patience along with hard work. It is a special gift to anyone who is able to make a drum. It is said that a person puts themselves into the drum and that their mind, body and spirit must be cleansed before making a drum. This will allow good energy from the maker to enter the drum so that the drum will produce good songs.

The process begins with choosing what you want to make a drum out of and what style of drum you want. It also depends upon what materials you have on hand to make a drum.

Drums are made from wooden hoops or rounds and animal hides. The rounds of the drum can be made by bending wood into the shape or by using an actual tree and its natural circular shape to make the drum rounds. The most popular animal hides that are used are buffalo, deer, elk and horse.

The beginning stages of making a drum involves soaking the hides for at least 24 hours. This will allow a person to stretch the hides out and scrape all the hair off of them. Scrapers are made from bone or metal.

Once the hair is removed from the hide, the hide must be cut and shaped and dried. It is then resoaked and stretched to the size of the drum that is wanted. The hides are bound together by strips of leather also cut from the hide.

Once the drum is made it is traditional to let it set for four days to dry and the "birthing" process of the drum begins. The birthing of the drum is treated like the birth of a child. It is a sacred and very powerful. It is a special moment when the first song is sung on a new drum and ceremonies usually occur.

The drum making process is often accompanied by stories and legends that illuminate the significance of the drum's central place in ceremonial life. These stories and legends also teach the importance of the drum and its special gifts that it can bring to whoever the drum keeper is. Throughout the whole drum making process ceremonies are performed to keep the person making the drum and the drum itself pure of negative energies.