

# RAINSTICKS



Rainsticks are ceremonial percussion instruments traditionally made from a dried cactus branch with hundreds of cactus spines hammered into the tube. It is capped at both ends and tiny lava pebbles cascade gently through the tube, sounding much like rain.

Historically, the Diaguita Indians of Northern Chile, Aztec tribesmen, Native Americans and Africans used rattles and sticks to invoke the rain spirits. No cultural research shows when actual rainsticks were documented. Most of the commercial rainsticks are made by the Diaguita tribe who live in one of the driest places in the world.

## YOU WILL NEED:

A paper towel tube or other long cardboard tube instead of a cactus tube

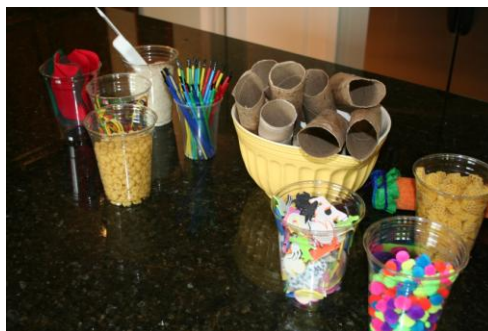
Aluminum foil or strips of cardboard 6 inches long 1 inch wide (to fold back and forth) instead of cactus spines

Small dried beans, peas, lentils, popcorn, dry rice, or tiny pasta.

Brown paper (from a grocery bag) recycled file folders or construction paper

Glue, scissors, markers, paint or Crayons

Natural materials for designs: Small shells and rocks, twigs, dried plants, feathers (feathers are available in craft stores...feathers you find outside may carry diseases)



Learn about the **history of rain sticks** and the beliefs behind what they can do ... produced by The Discovery Channel, The **History Channel** and The Learning Channel.  
[www.com/How\\_to\\_Play\\_the\\_Rain\\_Stick\\_\\_Creative\\_Ideas\\_for\\_Playing\\_the\\_Rainstick](http://www.com/How_to_Play_the_Rain_Stick__Creative_Ideas_for_Playing_the_Rainstick)

## DIRECTIONS

Make two double circles, one for each end of the tube.

Trace the end of the tube onto a piece of brown paper, file folder (or construction paper). Draw a bigger circle about 4 inches around that circle and then draw lines between the two circles. (you can trace a cereal bowl)

Cut several slits from the outer edge of the larger circle in to the smaller circle. Put one over the end of the tube, and fold the sides down

Put glue on the flaps and glue the cap onto one end of your tube.

Cut a piece of aluminum foil that is about one and half times the length of your tube and about 6 inches wide. Roll and twist a long piece of aluminum foil into a spiral snake. Place the foil snake inside your tube.

OR: Cut cardboard strips are narrower than the tube (about 1 inch wide should work). Fold them back and forth like a fan. Put the strips into the tube. The first one should fall to the bottom of the tube. Keep adding strips until they reach the top of the tube.

Pour in 1/4 cup of rice and 2 tbsp of seeds (dried peas or beans, popcorn, or lentils) into the tube. The tube should only be about 1/10 full. Hold your hand over the open end of the tube and gently turn your rainstick over to see how it sounds. You can experiment to see how different amounts and different types of seeds and beans change the sound.

Glue the second paper circle to the open end of the tube

Decorate the tube using natural materials to make ethnic designs from the culture of your choice. You can decorate directly on the cardboard roll or by covering it with brown paper or construction paper, and then making your designs. Use a pencil to sketch your design before you paint or glue. Learn about the symbols of the culture. Choose symbols that are appropriate to the various indigenous cultures.

Environmental designs with all the wonders of nature work well with native or contemporary art. Use your imagination to create!



NATIVE AMERICAN



CONTEMPORARY



AZTEC

To decorate with yarn wrapped around the tube see:  
[www.craftymusicteachers.com/otherinstruments/rainstick.html](http://www.craftymusicteachers.com/otherinstruments/rainstick.html)

