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SOUTH AMERICA - TOURISM G12/A

Maté Bombilla

Maté is an infusion prepared by steeping dried leaves of the yerba maté plant (*Ilex paraguariensis*) in hot water.



Maté is served with a metal straw from a shared hollow calabash gourd (below, right). The straw is called a bombilla in Spanish and is traditionally made of silver.



To make the drink, leaves and twigs from the yerba maté are dried with a wood fire, imparting a smoky flavour. Then the leaves and sometimes the twigs are broken up to make a rough mixture (left).The gourd is then filled one-half to three-quarters of the way with these leaves. Additional herbs are sometimes added for either health or flavour. Many people choose to pour warm water into the gourd before adding the bombilla, while others insist that the bombilla is best inserted into the dry leaf mixture. Whatever the case, the drink is said to have a pungent taste - a cross between green tea and coffee, with hints of tobacco and oak yummee. It is sucked through the bombilla, the holes in the lower end stopping the leaves being taken into the mouth.



Maté is traditionally drunk in family gatherings or with friends. The gourd is passed from person to person, each drinker emptying it completely before passing it on. The server (known in Spanish as the cebador) refills the gourd with hot water and passes it to the next person who likewise drinks it all. The ritual proceeds around the circle until the maté becomes 'lavado'(washed out/flat). This may happen after the gourd has been filled about ten times or more, depending on the quality of the leaves used.

Maté is popular in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, southern Chile, Bolivia and Brazil. This bombilla is marked with the brand name 'Libertad' and a bust of Liberty wearing a Phrygian Cap (the 'Cap of Liberty'). This cap was a symbol of the French Revolution. Many American countries achieved independence from Spain by following the revolutionary example of France. A liberty cap features on several American flags and insignia - for example, the flag of Nicaragua and the seal of the USA.

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Llama from Bolivia



The llama (*Lama glama* - below right) is native to the South American Andes. It was domesticated by the Incas and other indigenous peoples and used as a beast of burden, for its wool and for meat. A full grown llama can stand 6 feet (1.6 metres) tall. Llama wool is very soft and is naturally lanolin (wool grease) free. As with camels, cashmere goats and others, a whole llama fleece consists of two coats - guard hair and soft inner down. Guard hair is thick and was used by the Incas to make rope, blanket, sacks and the outer clothing of ordinary people. The down is soft and was suitable for finer garments.





The Alpaca (*Vicugna pacos* - below left) looks like a smaller version of the llama. It is a member of the camel family and is also native to the Andes mountains. Like the llama, the alpaca was domesticated by the native people of this region, but unlike the llama it was never used as a beast of burden. Its value lay in its fine wool which was used to make blankets, sweaters, hats, gloves, scarves and ponchos.



In the nineteenth century the English textile merchant Sir Titus Salt developed a cloth made from alpaca wool and silk. It became very popular and was the foundation of Salt's great success. Queen Victoria wore dresses made of his 'Peruvian wool' and did much to promote the qualities of the fibre. His mill and Saltaire, the model village he built for his workers, is today a world heritage site.

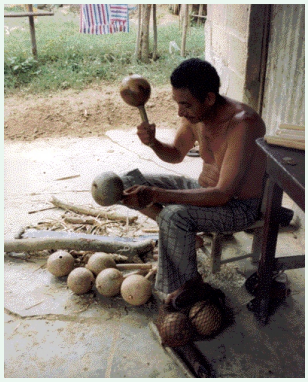
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Maracas from Colombia

Maracas are simple percussion instruments, usually played in pairs, consisting of a dried gourd shell filled with seeds or dried beans. They may also be made of leather, wood, or plastic. Often one maraca is pitched high and the other is pitched low as is the case with this pair.





The name *maraca* is thought to have come from the Tupi language of Brazil. In Trinidad they are known as shac-shacs. Because of the size of the shell the seeds inside must travel some distance before they hit the sides, so the player must anticipate the rhythm. Traditional maracas were not often brightly coloured, so this pair was probably made specifically for sale to tourists. The photograph on the left shows a craftsman from Colombia making maracas.

Colombia is the home of many different dance music styles, most famously cumbia and vallenato. Cumbia is a development of an early folk dance music called gaitero. This music is played on two flutes (gaitas) and maracas, both of indigenous origin, along with drums of African origin, from the descendants of the many African slaves who were transported to Colombia. The haunting melodies of the two gaitas are played in counterpoint to each other and are combined with the steady, hypnotic beats of the drums and the elaborate rhythms of the maraca (below). The gaita players hold their flute in one hand and a maraca in the other. They play the two instruments simultaneously.







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Paisaje Aplicado from Colombia



Paisaje aplicado means appliquéd landscape in Spanish. Appliqué is a needlework technique in which pieces of fabric, embroidery, or other materials are sewn onto a bottom piece of fabric to create designs.It is particularly suitable for work which is to be seen from a distance, as in wall hangings and banners.

This example was made in Santa Rosa, an impoverished quarrying town perched on the Andes overlooking the capital city of Bogota. Making such handicrafts is a way for many women to earn money while caring for large families.



This design has many of the characteristics of folk art throughout central and south America. Colours are primary and bright. Scale and perspective are distorted. The scenes are often filled with figures and diverse activity. Panels like this one can be hung on the wall (left), or incorporated into decorative pillows, bedspreads or clothing.

In Colombia, as in many south American countries, indigenous and rural people often wear brightly coloured clothing. One of the most famous groups to do this in Colombia are the Kuna, who are also found in Panama. They use appliqué techniques to create bright, abstract panels called *mola*, which are often incorporated into their blouses and skirts. Mola means shirt or clothing in their language. The mola originated with the tradition of Kuna women painting their bodies with geometrical designs, using available natural colours. After the coming of Europeans these designs were woven in cotton and sewn using cloth bought from the settlers. The picture on the right shows a Kuna woman with some of her handiwork.



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Sand Bottle from Brazil



Making souvenirs from sand dates back to at least the nineteenth century. In England, Queen Victoria was presented with glass containers of coloured sands from Alum Bay (left) on the Isle of Wight when she stayed at nearby Osborne House. For many years collecting your own coloured sand from Alum Bay was a popular tourist attraction. Today, visitors are kept away from the falling cliffs and have to pay to fill glass or plastic ornaments with coloured sand from trays in the visitors' centre.



In recent years the sand in DIY sand art kits is often artificially coloured and can be used in all sorts of shaped containers (right). This example from Brazil is skillfully made, using vertical bands of colour, as well as the easier horizontal bands. The palm trees evoke the tropical landscapes of Brazil rather than the grey skies of a rainy holiday on the Isle of Wight!



Seed Necklace from Brazil



Made for tourists, this seed necklace evokes the rainforest and the indigenous groups which inhabit it. However, they lack the bright colours which are widely favoured by many of the native people who live in Brazil.



Snake Toy from Chile



Wooden snake toys like this are popular around the world. A single piece of wood is cut into numerous sections. The sections are held together by a strip of cloth which is inserted along the length of the pieces. The effect is surprisingly lifelike - and scary!