Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

ZIMBABWE G22

Zimbabwe is a country just north of South Africa. It was once a British colony, known as Southern Rhodesia, before gaining independence in 1965.



The objects in this box show traditional Zimbabwean pots, used for food preparation and serving. These objects are also used in many other African countries.



Zimbabweans grow crops such as squash, corn, yams, pumpkins and papaya. In cities, such as the capital Harare, supermarkets sell prepared food like in Britain.

Mortar

This is half of a pestle and mortar. You might have used a mortar at school or at home when cooking. This one is huge! Zimbabweans call it a *duri* and use it to grind grain, like millet, which they prepare for cooking. Children in Zimbabwe sing a song called *dudu m'duri*, which means 'pounding the mortar'. They use the song's beat to get a rhythm for crushing the grain in the pestle and mortar.





This *duri* has been carved from one piece of wood. Look closely and you can see marks on the outside. This is where the wood has been chipped away to shape the mortar. Inside the bottom of the *duri* are signs of the pestle and mortar squashing and scraping. Does it feel like this area has is a different texture from the rest of the *duri*?



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Small pot



This is called a *hadyana*. It is made from clay and used to prepare and serve a relish. You can see the clay has been fired because it has blackened scorch marks on the outside. The contrasting colours become a decoration for the *hadyana*.



One of the main Zimbabwean dishes is called *sadza*. This is made from cornmeal and water. They are mixed together to make a very thick, porridge-like food. Pieces are scooped up and made into a ball, which is dipped in the relish to give it flavour.

The relish is a bit like a vegetable stew, although richer families might add beef or chicken. It is served in a pot so that everyone eats together, sharing the *sadza* and the relish. Visitors will always leave a little bit of food on their plate. This is seen as a polite sign that they have been well fed and enjoyed the meal.

Large pot



This pot is called a *pfuko* and could have many uses such as carrying water. Homemade beer is often produced and left in the *pfuko* to ferment. Then it is drunk at parties.

The neck on the top of the pot has been shaped so it is easier to pour and drink from. The opening is small so that it can be covered when it is being left to ferment. It is the fermentation process that produces the alcohol in beer.



This pot has been made through a method called coiling. The clay is made into a long snake-like shape. It is then coiled round and round. An example is on the left. As the layers of the pot build up, one side is smoothed down so that it doesn't collapse. After the coiling is finished it is put in an oven to bake.