



Traditional Music from Different Cultures Around the World

KS2 MUSIC

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Ages 10-14 ⌚ 4 min read

What Is Traditional Music?

Traditional music is music that people have created and shared within their communities for many, many years — sometimes for **hundreds or even thousands of years**. It's music that gets passed down from parents to children, grandparents to grandchildren, like a precious gift that keeps on giving. Unlike pop music that's made in recording studios today, traditional music comes from the heart of a culture and tells the stories of the people who created it.

Every part of the world — from **Africa** to **Asia**, **Europe** to **South America** — has its own unique traditional music. These musical styles reflect the lives, beliefs, celebrations, and histories of the people who created them.

Think of it like a family recipe that's been passed down for generations. Just as your grandmother's special cake recipe tells a story about your family's history, traditional music tells the story of a whole culture.

Examples of Traditional Music Around the World

African music is famous for its incredible **drumming** and **rhythms**. Drums are used in celebrations, ceremonies, and storytelling. **Indian classical music** uses instruments like the **sitar** and **tabla** (a drum), and it can last for hours with musicians improvising and creating new melodies together. **Irish folk music** features fiddles and bodhráns (frame drums) and is often played at celebrations called **céilís**.

Japanese traditional music uses instruments like the **shamisen** (a stringed instrument) and **koto**, and was once played only for emperors and nobles.

Why Is Traditional Music Important?

Traditional music helps us understand how people lived and what they valued. It keeps history alive without needing to write it down in books. When you listen to traditional music, you're actually listening to the voice of a culture speaking across time.

Learning about traditional music from different cultures teaches us respect and appreciation for people different from ourselves. It shows us that **music is a universal language** — something every human culture has created to express joy, sadness, celebration, and meaning.

Today, musicians around the world are working hard to keep traditional music alive by learning the old songs and instruments, teaching them to young people, and sometimes mixing traditional music with modern styles to create something new and exciting.