

# Handicraft in Uganda



Craftsmanship in Uganda has a long tradition and you will encounter crafted goods on every corner. What here is often used as an article of daily use serves travellers in Uganda as popular souvenirs. Here you can find some explanations and background information to a few important products.

**Barkcloth:** Uganda is the country of origin of the so called barkcloth. This is a fabric which is obtained from the bark of the Mutuba-Fig tree (*Ficus natalensis*). After peeling the bark of the tree it gets repeatedly soaked in water. Then it gets worked on with different hammers made out of wood and gets dried, by which means finally a cloth is produced. With threads of sisal small parts get sewed together to bigger ones and those can be used for further production.

By the way, the trees are not getting damaged by harvesting their bark. Banana leaves will protect the trees against drying out and after about a year the next harvest can begin. Apart from making clothes there is a wide range of use for this fabric. How much you can do with barkcloth you can see on the websites [Barkcloth.de](http://Barkcloth.de) or [Losgelöst.com](http://Losgelöst.com) (Find the related links at the end of this page).

**Calabash (Gourd):** This is a product made out of hollowed and dried gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*), a pumpkin. They are foremost used to store water, but used as a base to make instruments as well. Further information about calabash and the starting plant, the gourd, you will find following the related links at the end of this page).

**Basketry:** Basketry has always been a widespread art in Uganda. Throughout your safari you will have a lot of opportunities to buy products of all kinds.

**Pottery:** A pottery souvenir from Uganda always comes good. In Uganda there are different clays in different colours: Red clay, yellow and white kaolinite and a green-bluish version. Pottery is used in Uganda for transport and storage for a wide range of goods.

**Wood:** There is an endless list of wooden products made in Uganda. Not only for use in everyday life, like chairs and cutlery, but also as objects of art like masks or music instruments.

**Weapons:** There is also a numerous arsenal of traditional weapons which will make a good souvenir: Spears, arrows and arch, shields and sticks were the original fighting and hunting weapons, which were used before the arrival of the first arabian traders.

**Music instruments:** Of all the instruments, the drums have to be pointed out. They are offered in all kind of colours and shapes. They are made almost always out of wood and skins. It is a rare skill to produce the exact note by means of the thickness and tension of the skin.

## Related inks

- Barkcloth: [The Website of Barkcloth.de](#)
  - Barkcloth: [The Website of Losgelöst.com](#)
  - [Onlineshop with barkcloth products](#)
  - Calabash/gourd: [Background informationen about Kalebasse](#)
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## Comment to Handicraft in Uganda

Comment from \_kglucksberg@hotmail.com on the Donnerstag, März 01, 2012; 07:06:23 h

What are the kinds of wood (name of trees) used to make the masks and wooden objects in Uganda? I bought some artifacts and the USDA wants to know what kind of wood used before they will allow it into country.

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