

FOLK MUSICAL INSTRUMENT HISTORY

40,000 BCE

Bone Flutes

The earliest known melodic instruments, crafted from bird bone and mammoth ivory in Paleolithic Europe.

3,000 BCE

Lyres & Harps

Stringed instruments emerge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, forming the basis for regional folk strings.

11th Century

The Lute

Introduced to Europe via Al-Andalus, evolving from the Arabic Oud into various regional folk variations.

16th Century

The Fiddle

Early violins are adopted by rural populations, becoming the lead instrument for folk dances across the West.

1820s

The Accordion

Invented in Berlin, it quickly spreads through trade routes to become a staple of maritime and Eastern folk music.

19th Century

The Banjo

Evolved from West African gourds brought to the Americas, becoming central to Appalachian and Bluegrass traditions.