



## Making a gourd flute

The transverse flute is probably the easiest gourd instrument to make. Not everyone can play one, but that's not too hard either. Can you blow across a bottle to get a sound? (We used to say "Coke bottle", but now it might be a soy sauce bottle, a Christmas tree ball without its clasp, any glass bottle not too big at the top, or a dipper gourd--the globe with a couple inches of neck--cleaned out inside.) If you can't get a tone from a bottle, try doing an internet search for "beginning flute lessons." It only takes a few minutes to get the idea.

To make a C flute, cut a 13-14" piece of dipper-gourd neck. Use the section with the least taper, but it's ok to use the very top. Then you don't have to plug the end.

Clean out the inside so it's nice and smooth.

Plug one end if necessary. You can use a wine cork, piece of wood, the tip of the gourd you cut... Anything smooth to seal the end.

Cut the sound hole about an inch from the plug. The hole can be any size you can feel with your lip. Eight to twelve mm works well.

Slope the walls of the hole outward, so that the hole is bigger inside than on top of the gourd. It's really only necessary to slope the side you'll be blowing across, which is the right side when you hold the instrument plug-end-up.

Try blowing across the sound hole. If you don't yet know how to blow, use a straw to blow like this:



If it doesn't work, try cleaning all the inside of the gourd and hole. Check the slope of the hole; it should be consistent. You can make the hole less round--more rectangular--if that helps. If it still doesn't work, email me and let's see if I can spot the trouble.

When it makes good sound, go to the [tutorial on tuning woodwinds](#).