Make an Oud

The oud (or ud) is one of the most popular instruments in Middle Eastern music. Its name derives from the Arabic word for 'wood', and this refers to the strips of wood used to make its rounded body. It mostly resembles a lute, though its neck is much shorter and typically has eleven or thirteen strings, most of which are in close pairs. Recently the oud has gained popularity in contemporary Israeli society.

What you will need:

- An oval or circular shaped container with a rounded back, something like a disposable burrito bowl is ideal.
- Six elastic bands
- Sheet of cardstock
- Paint stirrer
- Markers and stickers for decoration.
- Glue or tape
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What to do:

- Position rubber bands around the length of the bowl. A traditional oud would have as many as thirteen strings, we found six worked well.
- Cut a piece of cardstock the same width as your paint stirrer but about two inches longer.
- Glue the cardstock strip to the paint stirrer, fold the top of the strip over at ninety degrees to the stirrer, to create your ouds neck. You could also add up to thirteen pegs to the top of the neck.
- Decorate the neck and body of the oud with markers and stickers.
- Use glue dots or tape to attach the paint stirrer to the end of the container.

Bonus challenge: Try writing your own song using your oud, you may want to create a plectrum using a piece of popsicle stick to make it a little easier to play.