

What you will need

Unfortunately, making the shamisen will take more than gluing together some popsicle sticks (but if you can make one that way, my hat's off to you). You are gonna need some tools and materials. Here are all the tools you will need.

Measuring Tools:

Straightedge
Combination square
Contour gauge
Bevel gauge
Chalk
Ruler

Bonding tools:

Propane blowtorch
Silver Solder and brazing rods
Superglue
Wood or hide glue

Cutting Tools:

Saws — regular and keyhole
Chisels — 1/8" -to- 1"
Handplane
Files — coarse, fine, rounded, circular
Microfiles — rounded, circular
Hammer
Sandpaper/Abrasives — 220G-2000G
Drill (power or hand)
Drill bits — #60, 5/64, 7/32, 1/4, 3/8, 1/2
Taps — 0-80, M.25

"What kind of wood should I use?"

The ideal wood should be able to sink in water. If you can't find hardwood that sinks, just go for the densest and heaviest kind you can find.

The best wood shamisen makers use is *Kouki* which is imported from India. It's pretty much impossible for somebody *without* connections to get. However, African Padauk looks fairly similar and is much more widely available. Granted, it's not as hard as *Kouki*, but whaddayagonnado?

Specific lengths and materials required

An extra centimeter (or so) has been given to some of the wood measurements so you will have a little buffer room.

Sao – 3-Piece

Wood — 69.4cm long* x 8.89cm wide x 5cm thick.

*Measure the width of your keyhole saw. Quadruple that number and add it to the length.

For example: If your saw blade is 1.25cm wide, quadruple the number to make it 5cm. Add it to the length (69.4cm), making the length 74.4cm.

Sao – 1 Piece

Wood — 66.4cm long x 8.89cm wide x 5cm thick.

Nakago

Wood — 27.3cm long x 37mm wide x 26mm thick

Rindo

Brass sheet metal
Brass washer — 19mm diameter
Brass piece* — 38mm diameter, 3mm+ thick

Dou

8/4 Wood (2) — 22cm long x 10cm wide
8/4 Wood (2) — 21cm long x 10cm wide

* Part of a doorknob, for example