

Basic Detail Report



Spear

Date

20th Century

Primary Maker

Maasai

Medium

Leather, metal, and wood

Description

This is a spear made by the Maasai peoples from Tanzania sometime during the 20th century. The spear is one of the weapons most used by Maasai warriors. Spears are respected objects within the Maasai community. The proper technique for use is passed down to men through generations. When a boy turns 13, he can begin to carry a spear while he is herding cattle. Initiated male warriors carry spears on their person at all times. They are used for hunting as well as to protect oneself and the community. Spears are thrown at the object a warrior wishes to hit. The point of the spear is sharp at the top and the sides so that any portion of the tip that makes contact will inflict a blow. The back of the spear is not explicitly used for hunting, but it is usually sharp so that the spear can be stuck in the ground. The spear is also symbolic of a man’s economic, physical, and social status. Over time, a man acquires a range of various spears each representing a different stage of his life.

Dimensions

69 3/8 × 1 5/8 × 1 1/8 in. (176.2 × 4.1 × 2.9 cm)