



## Flute Stopper

### Date

early to mid 20th Century

### Primary Maker

Chambri

### Medium

Wood, shell and fiber

### Description

Flutes are important instruments in many locations throughout Papua New Guinea. This includes the Chambri Lakes area, from which this flute stopper comes. Flute stoppers are created to be inserted into the hole on the top end of a flute. Such flutes are played from a hole on the flute's side. Creating a seal is necessary as when flutes are played, it is said that they are sharing the voices of spirits and ancestors. Without the seal created by the stopper, the sacred knowledge and power of the flautist could escape. Flute stoppers are commonly carved in the forms of animals, birds or humans. Many times,

they are created in the likeness of ancestors or totemic symbols of specific groups. The elongated beak seen in this piece is a typical stylistic component of the carvings of this area and, more broadly, of the Middle Sepik River area. Other flute stoppers from the area commonly have eyes inlaid with shell and exaggerated or elongated features. They are almost always decorated with hair, feathers and/or shells.

### Dimensions

11 3/4 × 1 3/8 × 3 1/4 in. (29.8 × 3.5 × 8.3 cm)