

Basic Detail Report



Sago Ladle

Date

19th Century

Medium

Wood

Description

Large ladles, such as this example from Tami Island, were used during funeral feasts as part of the sago preparation process. The ladles were typically handled by two people who would mix the food up and down in a ritualized manner that would create a sort of dance. Ladles were originally made with seed or shell attachments on the handles, but it is now quite rare to find a completely intact example. Feasts are the premiere social gatherings in New Guinea. These village-wide or multi-village events can mark the end of a battle, the passing of an elder, or the celebration of a marriage. The day of the feast the host provides as many pigs as he can afford to ensure his social status for years to come. The pigs are ritually killed and then roasted in a rock pit for hours. Eventually they are served along with other Oceanic staples like taro and sago. As the gathered crowd awaits the food, elaborate dances are performed to further demonstrate the organizer's wealth and power.

Dimensions

24 × 3 7/8 × 2 1/8 in. (61 × 9.8 × 5.4 cm)