



Bowl (Tanoa)

Date
late 19th to early 20th Century

Primary Maker
Samoan

Medium
Wood and plant fiber

Description

This wooden bowl, the vernacular name for which is tanoa, comes from Samoa and was used for mixing Kava (yaqona), a drink that has mild intoxicating or sedative properties and is made from the root of a pepper tree. Wooden bowls are commonly used throughout Polynesia for food preparation and consumption. Before the use of tanoa become widespread, the yaqona was made in ceramic bowls or in a plantain leaf placed in a hole in the ground. Bowls that are rather simple like this one were used by most anyone, but more elaborate examples, particularly with more finely carved legs, were specifically used by priests. The rope attached to one end is used to suspend the bowl on the wall for storage. Sometimes a shell is attached to the cord as well.

Dimensions

5 3/4 × 16 5/8 × 16 3/4 in. (14.6 × 42.2 × 42.5 cm)