



# The Balalaika



**Balalaika** is a family of instruments with origins in Russia. They are long necked, three-sided stringed instruments, similar to a guitar, but with different unique characteristics. They all have a triangular shape, are usually made from spruce or fir and have 3 strings (occasionally you will find a 6 string, but this is rare). Similar instruments found in other countries are the Mexican guitarra, the Italian mandolin and the American banjo.

The balalaika comes in the following six sizes, ranging from highest pitched to lowest (and smallest to largest!):

Piccolo balalaika (this one is rare)

Prima balalaika,

Sekunda balalaika,

Alto balalaika,

Bass balalaika and

Contrabass balalaika

You are most likely to see the prima balalaika played as a solo instrument.



Bass-balalaika and Russian folk dancer Valentina Kvasova