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Tribal Bowls from the Pacific Islands

The vast majority of Tribal wooden bowls from the Pacific Islands are not worth very much. There are however some notable exceptions. This article looks at Tribal wooden bowls from the Pacific that are collectible as pieces of tribal art.

I collect tribal wooden bowls and tribal art. If you have a tribal wooden bowl and would like to sell it or know how much it is worth please feel free to contact me and send me an image.

The Majority of collectible tribal wooden bowls either come from Polynesia or they have something special about them. Some are anthropomorphic while others shaped like animals.

Some have faces or forms incised in them while others just have a great form. To be collectible the bowls also need to be old and tribally used.

[Contact Me](#)



Tribal Bowls general information

To properly cover all the different forms of tribal wooden bowl I would need to write a book. Many different types of tribal bowl are not covered here. This article is an introduction to a whole group of oceanic art objects.

Not all tribal bowls were for food. For example, small dishes from the Huon Gulf were to stop blood touching the ground after circumcision. Fijian priest dishes used for scented oil. Many of the finest dishes from New Guinea were to hold pigments.

Some bowls like those made of turtleshell in micronesia were a form of currency

Tribal Bowls by Area



Sepik River Tribal bowls

Tribal wooden bowls from some areas of the Sepik are common but most of the really collectable examples are anthropomorphic.

The very best examples are small dishes made to use for holding pigments.

Other Food dishes tend to be less decorative and unless they have an exceptional form are worth very little.



Solomon Islands

Tribal wooden bowls from the Solomon Islands tend to be black, inlaid with shiny shell sections. These shell sections are made of Nautilus shell and stuck in place by mastic.

They come in a variety of shapes and designs but the most collectible look like birds or animals.





Marquesan Island Tribal Bowls

Tribal wooden Bowls from the Marquesan Islands are normally circular but have the underside incised with motifs.

The motifs sometimes include faces.

Small bowls from this area can also be made of Coconut.



Admiralty Island Tribal Bowl

The most collectible wooden bowls from the Admiralty Islands are huge feast dishes. They are up to a meter wide, with wonderful spiral handles. These dishes normally have four legs.

The Admiralty island also has smaller dishes shaped like birds and dogs.





Fijian Priest Dish

Dishes from the Fiji islands belonged to native Priests. They held a scented coconut oil and used in tribal ceremony and not for food. They come in a whole variety of styles but tend to be quite shallow and stand on short legs.







Maori Wooden Bowls

Most wooden Bowls made by the New Zealand Maori were for a European market. They are collectible in their own right and are profusely carved. There are a few pre-contact Maori bowls that were for feeding tattooed chiefs.

The Maori also made a [feather box](#) for storing jade valuables and feathers. These are in a separate article.



Maori feather Box



Kava Bowls

Kava bowls come in two sizes. The smaller kava bowls usually have four legs. The larger and more collectible bowls have numerous legs.

Kava bowls come from Tonga Samoa and Fiji.



Hawaiian Tribal Bow

Bowls from the Hawaiian Islands are superbly finished and normally made from Koa Wood. The most collectible examples are those with the most repairs to them.

These were often heirloom items handed from generation to generation



Wuvulu Island Dish

Dishes from the Wuvulu island in Micronesia have an almost Japanese Aesthetic. They are very finely made and have very thin side walls. The most collectable ones have a rounded bottom.

Huon Gulf Tribal bowls

Wooden bowls from the Huon Gulf in Papua New Guinea are common. Collectable examples have to be really old and superbly carved or of an unusual form



Karniet Island Dish

Dishes from Karniet have terminals pierced and carved in a distinctive style. They are valuable mainly because they are rare.

Tribal Bowls from Vanuatu

Tribal bowls from Vanuatu are rare and were for Grade initiation ceremonies. They come in a variety of styles but all the really old examples are collectable.





Micronesian tackle Box

These are often mistaken for a covered bowl. They were for the storage of precious lures and tackle while out fishing. Most do not have inlay but those that do are worth more.

Tribal Bowls

If you can't find the Tribal Wooden bowl you were looking for I have added some to the bottom of this article. There are many different variations and styles and this is just a taster.

If you want help identifying a tribal Bowl or know what it is worth feel free to send me an image by EMail

[Valuation](#)

[More images of Tribal Bowls](#)

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