GUITAR.LEARNTOPLAY.IM

Four guitars

Official museum labels, with the measurements left unblended.

All four instruments are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Each date and measurement is quoted from the object record. They are not averaged with a 2007 essay's type average of "approximately 92 centimeters" for the five-course baroque guitar.

Instrument	Official label
Voboam, 1697	Attributed to Jean-Baptiste Voboam, French. Overall 38 1/8 × 9 15/16 × 4 in. (96.9 × 25.2 × 10.2 cm). Spruce, tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, ivory, ebony. Accession 1989.147. Cited in the Met essay "The Guitar" among decorative baroque examples.
Lacôte, ca. 1835	Pierre-René Lacôte, French. Official dimension: "Total Length: 924 mm." Spruce, rosewood, ebony. Accession 1992.1.1. That millimetre figure is left as the Met wrote it.
Martin, ca. 1838	Christian Frederick Martin, American. Height 36 13/16 in. (93.5 cm); width 11 11/16 in. (29.7 cm); depth 3 1/4 in. (8.3 cm). Wood, maple, spruce, abalone, ebony, metal, brass, ivory. Accession 1979.380a, b.
Fuentes, before 1858	Pedro Fuentes, Zaragoza, Spanish. Pine, maple, mahogany, walnut, ebony. Accession 1992.46a, b. A Met essay on the Spanish guitar cites it for five fan braces and a wooden mosaic that later became standard. The record's display biography, "active ca. 1860s," is not combined with the object date "before 1858." The record does not give an overall length, so none is invented here.

Why the numbers are not added up

96.9 cm is an overall length of one 1697 guitar. 924 mm is a "total length" of one guitar of about 1835. 93.5 cm is a height of one guitar of about 1838. "Approximately 92 centimeters" is an essay average for a type, not a measurement of these four. Different official pages, different instruments, different kinds of figure.

A short quiz

1. In which year does the Met date the Voboam guitar?
2. What official total length is given for the Lacôte?
3. Which of the four object records, as used on this sheet, does not give an overall length?

Answers. 1. 1697. 2. 924 mm. 3. The Fuentes, dated "before 1858."

Measurements and labels from Metropolitan Museum of Art object records 1989.147, 1992.1.1, 1979.380a, b and 1992.46a, b, and from the essays "The Guitar" (1 September 2007) and "The Spanish Guitar." Checked 17 November 2026. Photographs are not reproduced on this typographic sheet.