



Baritone Ukulele for Beginners



Preface

Baritone ukulele. What should we make of it? In my years as a ukulele player, I have seen ukulele players who loudly criticize the instrument, some that love the instrument, a widening of choices on the marketplace (including new styles of baritones, like the Flight Maia), and people who once criticized the instrument adopting it (or its tuning in other scales).

In other words, the baritone ukulele has had mixed acceptance in the ukulele world.

While I never had any particular feelings against the baritone, as I started making ukulele resources, I never considered making them for baritone ukulele. That changed when I visited Petey Mack's MUFGM ukulele jam in Memphis, where Pete occasionally play baritone (not always), and creates resources for both baritone and GCEA ukulele. Pete's ecumenicalism towards the baritone—not forced or even spoken about—convinced me to start making resources for baritone ukulele.

On my play along videos ([YouTube.com/ukeyplayalongs](https://www.youtube.com/ukeyplayalongs)), I realized that I couldn't put GCEA and DGBE resources on the same videos, but I started making play along videos for baritone in addition to the GCEA resources I was already making. On top of that, as I started writing chord melodies, I made a point to also create them for baritone tuning as well. Today I not only make DGBE resources, but am adding DGBE resources to my older older GCEA content.

Some observations about the baritone.

- 1) Linear tuning is the “standard” versus reentrant tuning on GCEA
- 2) My GCEA videos are watched significantly more than DGBE (at least 2:1, sometimes 10:1)
- 3) Some schools transition from GCEA ukulele to DGBE ukulele to guitar
- 4) There are fewer choices for baritone players in terms of actual available models (especially “high end”)
- 5) Some baritones were (and continue to be) shipped in GCEA tuning
- 6) There are significantly fewer DGBE resources than GCEA resources
- 7) There are significantly less left handed options for baritone players
- 8) There are options like Pepe Romero Baby Baritone Strings to convert tenors (or even concertos) into baby baritones. This is beneficial for people who find the “stretch” of the baritone uncomfortable.
- 9) The most exciting recent developments in the ukulele industry have been in the baritone ukulele scale (again, such as the Flight Maia, a steel string baritone)

Baritone is a different tuning with a different sound. If you want to play one, do so! My hope is that book (and the connected lesson) will help you to do so. The videos linked in this book are all new for 2025.

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ukestuff.info

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New to the Ukulele, or “Just” New to Baritone?

As we discuss baritone ukulele, we have to determine what you need as a learner. Some players come to baritone without any previous experience with the ukulele. Some players come to the baritone with a great deal of experience on ukulele, but not on baritone. Former guitar players may find themselves in both categories.

In other words, if you already play ukulele, as long as you can adjust to the longer fretboard (or use Baby Baritone Strings), you can play just like you did on your GCEA ukulele, but you'll be in a different key and with different tuning (linear vs. reentrant).

New players will want to:

- Learn the history of the ukulele
- Know the options that exist for instruments and accessories
- Know to hold the instrument
- Know how to tune the instrument
- Know how to strum the instrument
- Know to play basic chords (G, C, D7, Em, D, and F chords)
- Know to interpret tablature
- Have access to a Baritone chord chart
- Know where to find DGBE resources

“Just” new to the baritone will want to:

- Learn the history of the baritone ukulele
- Know the options that exist for instruments and accessories
- Know how to tune the instrument (being aware of linear tuning to DGBE)
- Make connections between GCEA and DGBE chords (e.g. C & G, respectively)
- Learn tips to transition thinking from GCEA chords to DGBE chords
- Have access to a Baritone chord chart
- Know where to find DGBE resources

History of the Ukulele

The ukulele is a fretted string instrument with four strings and is a part of the lute family. In Hawaiian, it is spelled 'ukulele and is pronounced "oo-koo-ley-ley." Ukuleles are made out of a number of combinations of plastic, laminate wood, and solid wood, and generally are available in four main sizes: soprano, concert, tenor, and baritone.

In the late 1800s, Hawaii brought in foreign workers to work in the sugar fields, and several cabinet makers from the Autonomous Region of Madeira came to take advantage of the opportunity. Manuel Nunes, Jose do Espirito Santo, and Augusto Dias are credited as the first ukulele makers, arriving in Hawaii in 1879 on the ship Ravenscrag. The ukulele is a combination of two instruments from Madiera: the tuning of the rajão and its body from the cavaquinho/machete/braguinha. The oldest known ukulele was made by Jose do Espirito Santo in 1879. Hawaii's King David Kalākaua loved the instrument, and as a result, it became very popular and a permanent part of Hawaiian culture.

The ukulele came to the attention of the mainland United States due to a exhibit about Hawaii at the 1915 Pan American Exposition. People heard and saw the ukulele, and wanted to play it. As a result, many ukuleles were sold, and sheet music was commonly sold in music stores with ukulele chords, much like sheet music is usually sold with guitar chords today.

The second wave of popularity of the ukulele began in the 1950s as a result of the Arthur Godfrey Show. Arthur Godfrey played the Baritone ukulele, but also advertised a plastic ukulele made by Maccaferri—and over nine million of them were sold!

The third wave of popularity of the ukulele started between 2006 and 2010, thanks in part to the many books by Jim Beloff, viral videos made by ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro, and IZ's cover of "Over the Rainbow." The ukulele has become an instrument used around the world, and people love the affordability, portability, and approachability of the instrument. The ukulele is an amazing instrument that allows people to play and sing their music, whatever kind of music that is!

History of the Baritone Ukulele:

Two people are credited with the invention of the baritone ukulele: media star Arthur Godfrey and luthier Herk Favilla (co-founder of the Favilla Brothers in 1890) . **Godfrey** asked a banjo player, Eddie Connors to design a larger ukulele that used the same tuning as the top four strings of a guitar. Connors designed a cutaway baritone that Godfrey used throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and the Vega Company (Boston, MA) started building baritone ukuleles from that general design. **Favilla** claims that he wanted to design an instrument to make it easier to learn guitar, and landed on the baritone design because he wanted to avoid similarities with the tenor guitar (which uses guitar strings if not guitar tuning) and the Favilla company had made ukuleles for years. Favilla family members claim the first models were made in the 1940s, and that Godfrey's initial baritone ukulele was made by Favilla. Favilla did produce a baritone ukulele method in 1950. Martin did not introduce a baritone until 1960, likely around the same time as Kamaka.

What About Left Handed Players?

To the Left Handed Players in the World:

I see you, and I acknowledge your challenges. My Dad is left-handed, too.

The music world is right hand dominant. Unless there is a massive physical disability (e.g. limb difference), most instruments are right hand dominant, if not outright (no pun intended) right handed. Yes, there are two handed instruments, such as percussion instruments (including piano). And yes, some wind instruments require two hands, including the recorder, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and saxophone—but even on these instruments, the positions of the right and left hand are indicated by the position of pads and holes.

When it comes to ukulele and left handed playing there are two schools of thought.

School of Thought #1 says:

Most ukuleles are right-handed. Therefore, if you want to play ukulele, you should make chord shapes with your left and and strum with your right hand. This is the only way to do this.

School of Thought #2 says:

Yes, most ukuleles are strung 'right handed.' However, you have left hand dominance, so you have three options.

First, you can learn right handed. This is the course of action with the least resistance, and it means that you can play any right handed ukulele from any store without modification, and all ukulele resources will appear correctly for how you play.

Second, you can have the strings reordered backwards. You would strum with your left hand and play chords with your right hand. Remember that nearly all ukulele resources are right handed, and many ukulele features such as cutouts and electronics are placed on ukuleles for right handed players.

Finally, you can take a right handed ukulele and play it left-handed, with the left hand strumming and the right hand playing chords. If you do this, you can play nearly any ukulele, and ukulele resources will appear correctly. Keep in mind that cutouts and electronics will be on the wrong side of the ukulele, and your strumming will sound "backwards."

I support the second school of thought, but it may be a minority opinion. If you are left handed, you are welcome to use any of the three options was you follow this method, but resources will not be modified for left handed players (at least at this time)

Baritone Ukuleles - Options and Accessories

Here are my rules for buying any ukulele.

- 1) Don't buy the cheapest ukulele.
- 2) Don't buy the most expensive ukulele.
- 3) Buy a ukulele that is set up well.
- 4) Buy an instrument that is appealing to you, so you will be encouraged to practice.

There are quite a few baritone ukuleles on the market, some at entry level pricing. The most important factors for your first instrument are that it is set-up correctly (we'll come back to this in a moment) and that you like it.

A set-up involves three things. First, it makes sure that the action...the string height...is set low enough to allow for easier playing without being so low as to create buzzing. Second, it involves making sure that the frets are level, to avoid buzzing. Finally, it makes sure that there are no sharp fret ends sticking out of the ukulele that will hurt you.

There are dealers who set-up every ukulele they sell, such as The Uke Republic (GA), The Ukulele Site (HI), Elderly Music (MI), and Aloha City (IL), and the Southern Ukulele Store (UK). Not all of these companies sell beginner ukuleles. Mim's Ukes (VA) does not sell Baritone Ukuleles.

Be careful with your purchase—some Amazon companies sell baritones that are tuned GCEA and not DGBE, meaning that you would have to install DGBE strings before using the ukulele.

What are some excellent baritones? This is only a partial list of trusted manufacturers (in stock as of June 2025)

Flight
Kala
Kamaka
Kanile'a
Kiwaya
Klōs
Makaio (Aloha City)
Mainland (Mainland Ukes)
Ohana
'Oli (The Ukulele Site & Aloha City)
Pono
Snail

Some accessories:

- Clip-On Tuner
- String Winder with Clipper
- Extra Strings
- Music Nomad Octopus Tool
- Music Nomad F-One Fretboard Oil
- String Action Ruler
- Gig bag (if your ukulele did not ship with one)
- Strap & Strap Buttons
- Capo?

Key Parts of the Ukulele

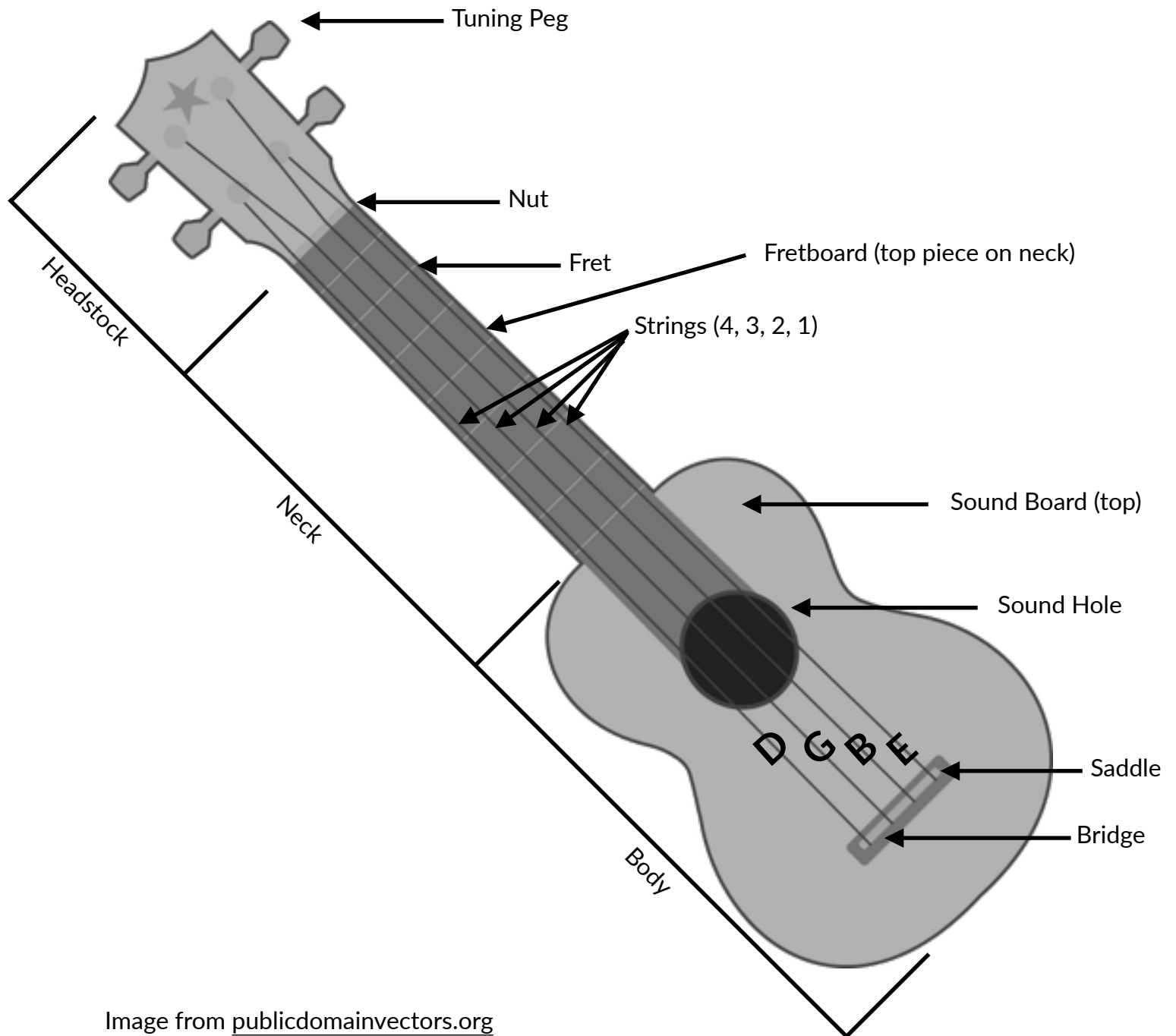


Image from publicdomainvectors.org
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Tuning a Baritone Ukulele

While there are a number of tunings that can be used on the ukulele, we are going to use linear G6 tuning, where the strings are tuned DGBE. It gets a little confusing, but we call strings by numbers instead of pitch (because the pitch changes when you press down on the string), and in the numbering, the first string is lowest to the floor. Most people generally tune in reverse order (4, 3, 2, 1 or DGBE).

Most baritone ukuleles are in what is called “linear tuning,” where the D is the lowest string, and E is the highest string. If you look closely, you will also notice that the lower the note, the thicker the string. There are options when it comes to strings: some of my baritone ukuleles have all fluorocarbon strings from Living Waters, and others have metal wound D and G strings. There is still a fluorocarbon “core” to these strings, but they are wrapped with wire. If you have metal strings of any kind, you will want to wipe your strings every time you are done playing, because they will oxidize, sometimes rather quickly (Aquila has a new stainless wrap that is not supposed to allow this). You may want to look at a product like Music Nomad’s String Fuel to clean those strings from time to time.

There are also new steel string baritone ukuleles on the market, from Flight. These are tuned the same, but sound like an acoustic guitar (if you removed two strings).

As you tune the ukulele, the two most important things are to know are to a) know which way to turn to make the pitch go up or down, and b) to turn the knob for the correct string (we’ve all turned the wrong one). If you turn a string too far, it may break. Strings can be replaced, but many people are too intimidated to replace their own strings (don’t be...there are many lessons on YouTube), and often do not have extra strings on hand. So...just make sure you are turning the correct tuning peg for the correct string, and have some extra strings on hand!

Also...new strings will stretch for a long time, so you need to tune, play, tune, play, etc. Some ukuleles come with imitation strings and will not hold their tuning (especially true with “bargain” ukuleles). If this happens, you will want to replace your strings. If you have played a ukulele for over a week and it isn’t holding pitch—it isn’t the tuners—it’s the strings, and you will want to get new ones.

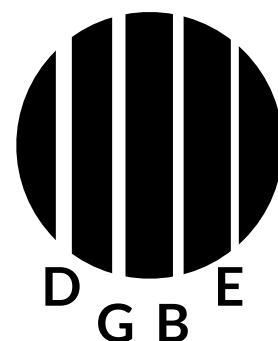
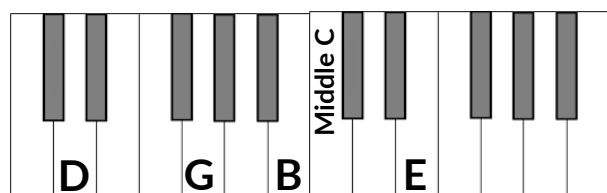
There are three popular ways to tune a ukulele (if you don’t have perfect pitch):

- 1) Match the Pitch (Piano, pitch pipe, tone generator)
- 2) Microphone Based Tuner
- 3) Vibration Based Tuner

Tuning a Baritone Ukulele (continued)

In the first method, you hear the required pitch, and then turn the knob of each string until it matches or comes close to the pitch. This is what you will need to do the first time you tune a new ukulele.

On the piano, the pitches are:

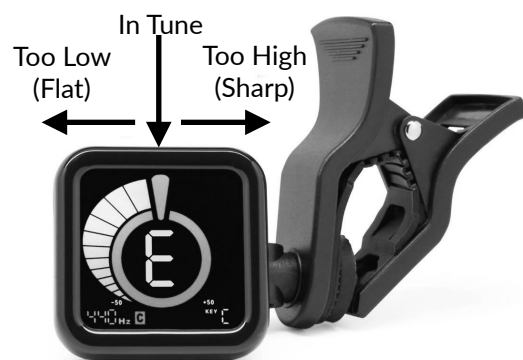


In the second method, you use a tuner with a microphone to make sure that each string is at the correct pitch. The most common microphone method is to use a phone app to tune your ukulele. This can be a challenge in a noisy environment, but if the phone can hear the ukulele, it can help you tune correctly. Many apps also include the ability to play the correct pitches, so that you can “generally” match the pitch (first method) before fine-tuning. There are many tuning apps, just a couple are listed below. I also like the ukulele tuner on UkeBuddy.com.

In the final method, the tuner measures vibrations (the very basis of sound) through the headstock of your instrument with a clip-on tuner or through the pickup on an internal tuner. These tuners tend to be highly accurate because they are sensing the direct vibration of the strings rather than listening for a pitch. Many clip-on tuners can be used with many instruments, and as a result, have a special setting for guitar (usually indicated with a G), although you can also tune with the chromatic setting (usually indicated with a C). These tuners all require a power source, usually a battery—although some are USB rechargeable, so make sure that you turn off your tuner as soon as you are done using it.

With a clip on tuner or phone app, you want to hit the “center” of each note. If the indicator is to the left of the note letter name, the pitch of the string is too low (flat) and must be made higher (tighter) to hit the right note. If the indicator is to the right of the note letter name, the pitch of the string is too high (sharp), and must be made lower (loosen) to hit the right note. In general, it is usually best to tune a string up (approach from being too low), but do what you need to do to be in tune.

Once you have tuned, quickly tune again, just to verify tuning.



Holding the Ukulele

Believe it or not, how you hold the ukulele greatly impacts your ability to play the ukulele.

1. Hold the ukulele next to your body
2. Hold the bottom of the ukulele in a snug grip with your right arm
3. The sound hole should face away from you, pointing away from your body
4. The neck should be at the 10 o'clock position, and held in your left hand
5. If you turn the ukulele to look at your fingers, turn it back before you start to strum (learn to put your fingers down without looking at the top of the fretboard)
6. Try to avoid wrapping your thumb over the top of the neck, as this will impact your ability to move freely to other chords
7. Use your fingertips when making these chord shapes
8. Your wrist should generally stay in line with your arm while making chord shapes
9. Don't press too hard; press just hard enough to get a clear sound on a fretted string
10. Your fingers will hurt when learning to play—take breaks often!
11. You can use a strap with a ukulele, and there are different kinds of straps. Some beginner ukulele packs include strap buttons and a strap. A strap gives you peace of mind while you play as you won't drop your ukulele, and it frees your left hand to move up and down the fretboard. For these lessons, a strap isn't essential, but as you move to barre chords in the future, or if you want to play standing up, a strap can be a great accessory to own



Cleaned up image from Wikimedia
(Public Domain Image)

Strumming Basics

While you can play individual notes on the ukulele (as well as harmony and rhythm at the same time), we are focusing on the skills of playing the first chords in the context of songs, as a way to accompany singing.

From its start, the ukulele has been used to accompany singers by providing harmonic and rhythm support through strumming.

The basic process of strumming is this: your right hand moves up and down—without stopping—to create a pattern under a melody that someone sings or plays. What makes strumming sound different is how fast you strum, and whether you hit the strings as you move up and down.

1. Traditionally, the index finger is used, especially as a beginner. You extend your index finger, and point towards yourself and then point at the floor
2. You can use your thumb or multiple fingers—but try to master the index finger first
3. The action is in the wrist, rather than in the arm, like shaking water off your hand
4. You strum where the body of the ukulele meets the neck of the ukulele, not over the sound hole
5. Think about strumming through the strings, rather than touching the tops of the strings
6. You can use a pick, but picks are not traditionally used with ukulele. If you use a pick, it should be a leather or felt pick rather than a plastic pick. Plastic picks are used by guitarists. Guitars which have a thicker top and often a pick guard.
7. Strumming patterns are SUGGESTIONS, not requirements, unless you are playing along with a group that has decided on a specific pattern to use.
8. ALWAYS strum with the beat.
9. If you make a mistake, stop, and join back in as soon as possible. Don't give up!
10. Don't forget to keep the right hand moving up and down. Don't freeze your hand.
11. And again, there is NO RIGHT ANSWER when it comes to strumming patterns, but there are certainly patterns that sound better with others. This is supposed to be fun, so learn how to strum, but don't cause yourself undue stress about playing a perfect pattern.

Some Common Strumming Patterns

Can you see how these are all variations of the same pattern?

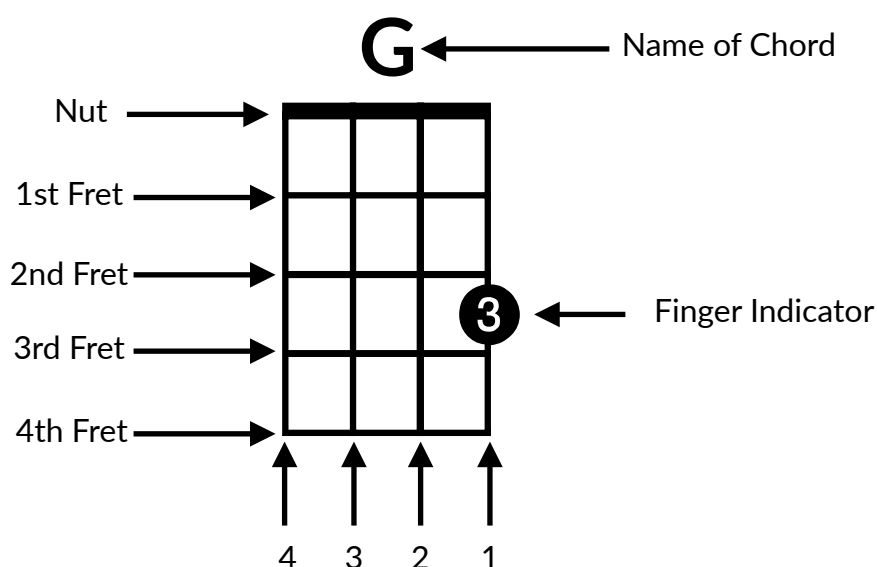


Reading Chord Diagrams

As it comes to ukulele, there are three types of “notation” that are used (sometimes in combination with each other):

- Chord diagrams
- Tablature
- Traditional music notation

In these lessons, we will focus on chord diagrams, although I also include traditional notation on the songs for people that already read music. Chord diagrams show where to put your fingers to play a chord (provided that your ukulele is in tune). Some chord diagrams even indicate what finger to use. To understand a chord diagram, imagine that you are holding your ukulele in front of you, with the strings facing toward you.



**For these chords,
play all 4 strings!**



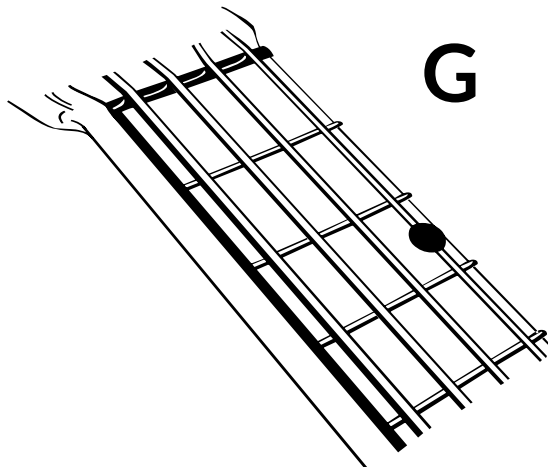
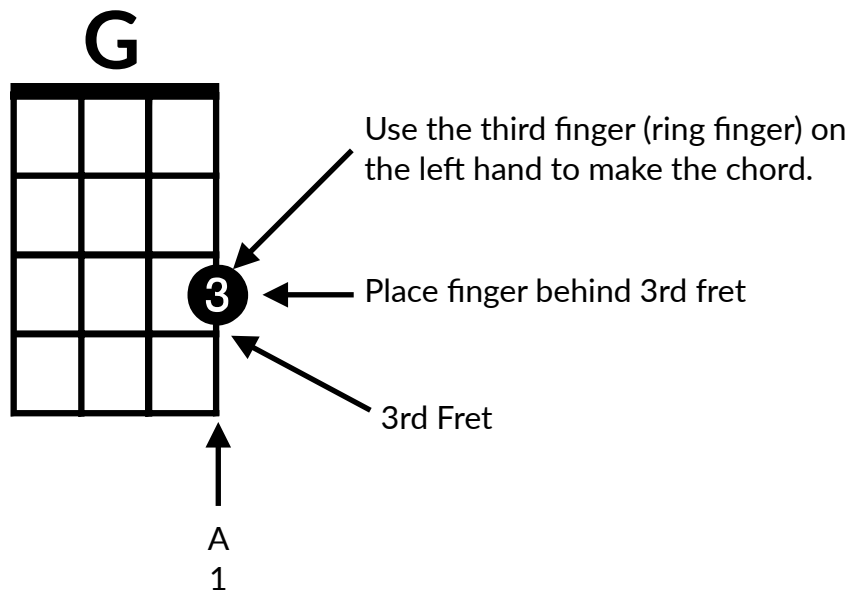
The G Chord

If you have been following along in this method, you have done a lot of work—important work—to allow you to reach this point and start playing. So here is the G Chord.

On GCEA ukulele, the G chord is made with one finger, and is a great sounding chord because it uses a majority of open strings.

We recommend using the 3rd finger on the 1st string to make the G chord—for now. Think about the caterpillar warm-up. If you assign a finger to each fret, starting with the 1st fret, naturally the 3rd finger should play the fretted note.

- Use your fingertip to play the chord
- Get a clear sound on the 1st string!
- Practice with an arch in your hand (make a mouse hole)
- Make sure the thumb isn't sticking over the opposite side of the fretboard
- Make sure your finger is behind the fret and not ON the fret



Frère Jacques

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

G

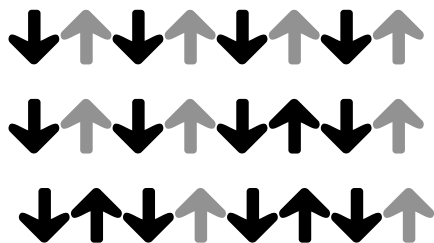


Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques, dormez-vous? dormez-vous?
Are you sleep-ing, are you sleep-ing, Brother John, Brother John?



Sonnez les matines, sonnez les matines. Ding, ding, dong; ding, ding, dong.
Morning bells are ring-ing, morning bells are ring-ing.

Strumming Suggestions:



Frère Jacques

Traditional French Folk Song

Key of G

G

Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques

Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous?

Sonnez les matines, Sonnez les matines

Ding, ding, dong; ding, ding, dong

Are you sleeping, are you sleeping

Brother John, Brother John?

Morning bells are ringing, morning bells are ringing

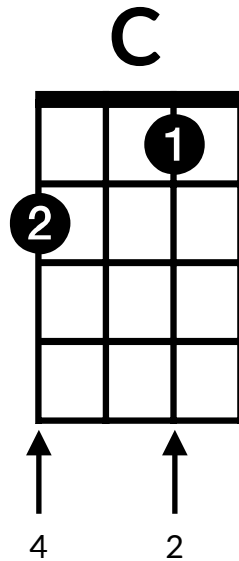
Ding, ding, dong; ding, ding, dong

Link to video: https://youtu.be/Xc0QgSbB8_U

The C Chord

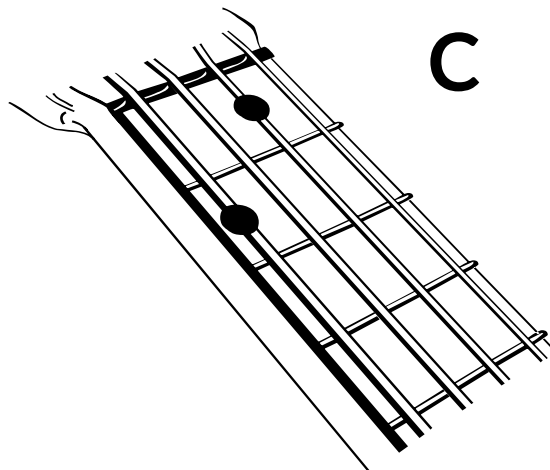
The second chord you will learn is the C chord. C is a two-finger chord, and is a chord that is frequently used on baritone ukulele. Remember to use your fingertips and to create an arch in your fingers that a mouse could sneak through. If you hear “dead” notes, make sure you are behind the fret (not on it), that you are playing with your fingertips, and that you have an arch in your hand as you make the chords.

- Use your fingertips to play the chord
- Get a clear sound on the fretted strings
- Practice with an arch in your hand (make a mouse hole)
- Make sure the thumb isn't sticking over the opposite side of the fretboard
- Make sure your fingers are behind the fret and not ON the fret



Quick Check!

How are you holding your ukulele?



Mary Had a Little Lamb

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

C G C

Ma - ry had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb.

G C

Ma - ry had a lit - tle lamb whose fleece was white as snow.

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Key of C

C

G

C

Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb

G

C

Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as snow

Strumming Suggestions:



Link to video: <https://youtu.be/PwfrHUHPkS0>

Down in the Valley

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

C

G

C

G

C

C

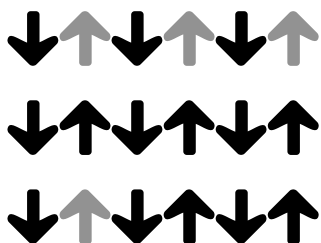
Down in the valley, valley so low.

Hang your head over, hear the wind blow.

Hear the wind blow, dear, hear the wind blow.

Hang your head over, hear the wind blow.

The Pattern
is in 3!



Link to video: <https://youtu.be/6Ar3hRnhPEU>

Down in the Valley

Key of C

C **G**
Down in the valley, valley so low

C
Hang your head over, hear the wind blow

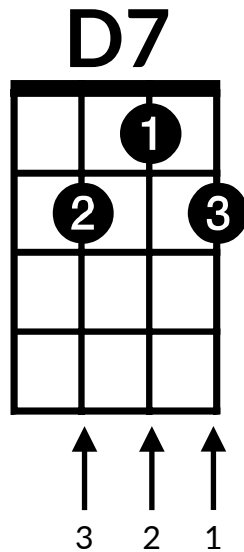
G
Hear the wind blow, dear, hear the wind blow

C
Hang your head over, hear the wind blow

The D7 Chord

The next chord to learn is the D7 Chord, which uses 3 fingers. The D7 is a special chord, as it is harmonically unstable. Ultimately, the D7 wants to collapse to the G chord (If you play D7 to G, you'll hear it).

- Use your fingertips to play the chord
- Get a clear sound on the fretted strings!
- Practice with an arch in your hand (make a mouse hole)
- Make sure the thumb isn't sticking over the opposite side of the fretboard
- Make sure your fingers are behind the fret and not ON the fret

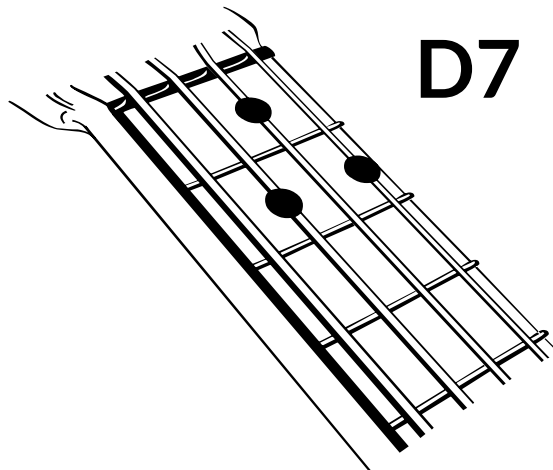


Quick Check!

How are you holding your ukulele?

Are you playing on your fingertips?

Do you have space underneath your fretting fingers?



The Itsy Bitsy Spider

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

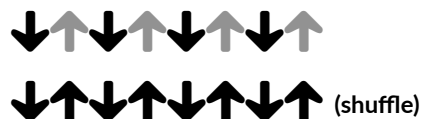
The it - sy bit - sy spi - der climbed up the wa - ter spout.

Down came the rain and washed the spi - der out.

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain. And the

it - sy bit - sy spi - der climbed up the spout a - gain.

Strumming Suggestions:



Link to video: <https://youtu.be/2P4Jv6bFgEo>

The Itsy Bitsy Spider

Traditional Folk Song

Key of G

G **D7** **G**
The itsy bitsy spider climbed up the water spout

D7 **G**
Down came the rain and washed the spider out

D7 **G**
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain

D7 **G**
And the itsy bitsy spider climbed up the spout again

Yankee Doodle

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

G

Yan - kee Doo - dle went to town, a - ri - ding on a po - ny.

G **C** **D7** **G**

Stuck a fea - ther in his hat and called it ma - ca - ro - ni.

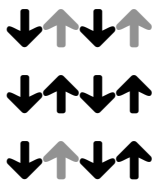
C **G**

Yan - kee Doo - dle, keep it up. Yan - kee Doo - dle dan - dy.

C **G** **D7** **G**

Mind the mu - sic and the step and with the girls be han - dy!

Strumming Suggestions:



Link to video: https://youtu.be/PP6Hz_1KB8k

Yankee Doodle

American Folk Song

Key of G

G

Yankee Doodle went to town

D7

A-riding on a pony

G

C

Stuck a feather in his hat

D7

G

And called it macaroni

C

Yankee Doodle keep it up

G

Yankee Doodle dandy

C

Mind the music and the step

G

D7

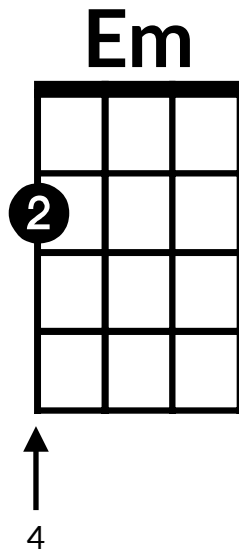
G

And with the girls be handy

The Em Chord

The Em (E minor) is the first minor chord that we are going to learn in this method. Minor chords sound “sad” to us, but they have a very important function in major and minor keys, as they add interest and harmonic movement to a song. With the addition of the Em chord, you unlock hundreds of new songs that are not in public domain—songs that you know and love. The Em is a one-finger chord, and you form the chord by reaching over with the second finger to the fourth string.

- Use your fingertip to play the chord
- Get a clear sound on the fretted strings!
- Practice with an arch in your hand (make a mouse hole)
- Make sure the thumb isn't sticking over the opposite side of the fretboard
- Make sure your finger is behind the fret and not ON the fret

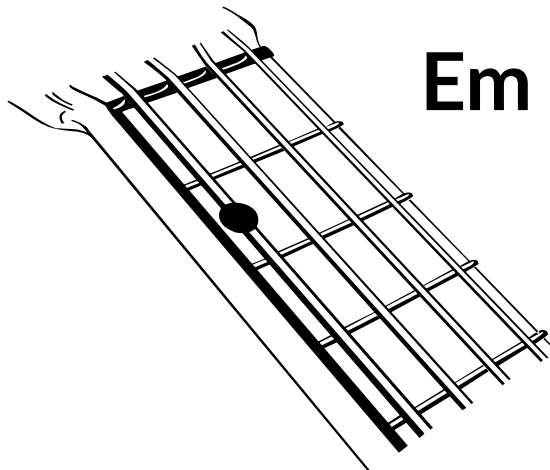


Quick Check!

How are you holding your ukulele?

Are you playing on your fingertips?

Do you have space underneath your fretting fingers?



Michael, Row the Boat Ashore

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

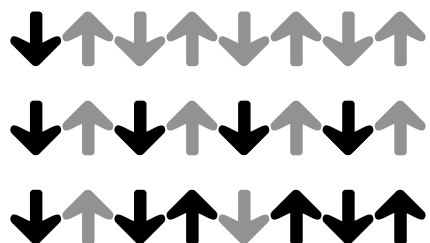
G
 Mi - chael, row the boat a - shore, hal - le - lu - jah. Mi - chael,

C **G**

Em **D7*** **D7** **G**
 row the boat a - shore, hal - le - lu - jah.

*In the future, an Am chord will work better here.

Strumming Suggestions:



Michael, Row the Boat Ashore

Spiritual

Key of G

G

C G

Michael, row the boat ashore, hallelu jah

Em

D7*

D7 G

Michael, row the boat ashore, hallelu jah

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/milClvYUCKw>

Streets of Laredo

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

As I walked out in the streets of La - re - do, as

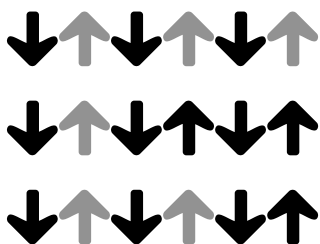
I walked out in La - re - do one day, I

spied a poor cow - boy dressed up in white li - nen, dressed

up in white li - nen, as cold as the clay.

* In the future, Am will work better here

Strumming Suggestions:



The pattern
is in 3!

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/F4dBvfSTkGY>

Streets of Laredo

Traditional Cowboy Song

Key of G

G D7 G D7

As I walked out in the streets of Laredo

G D7 G D7

As I walked out in Laredo one day

G D7 G D7

I spied a poor cowboy dressed up in white linen

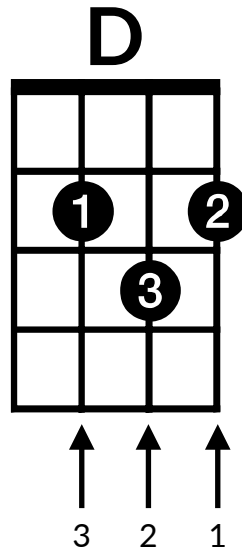
Em C* D7 G

Dressed up in white linen as cold as the clay

The D Chord

The D chord is different than the D7; the D7 has an extra note in the chord, making it unstable and causing it to resolve—usually to G. The D chord itself functions differently in music, and when used in the key of G, doesn't feel as unstable, and doesn't provide the sense of "finality" or what we call a "cadence" in music. In other words, there are times to use D and times to use D7. If you don't know which to use, such as a time that you are figuring out a song without sheet music, trust your ears.

- Use your fingertips to play the chord
- Get a clear sound on the fretted strings!
- Practice with an arch in your hand (make a mouse hole)
- Make sure the thumb isn't sticking over the opposite side of the fretboard
- Make sure your fingers are behind the fret and not ON the fret

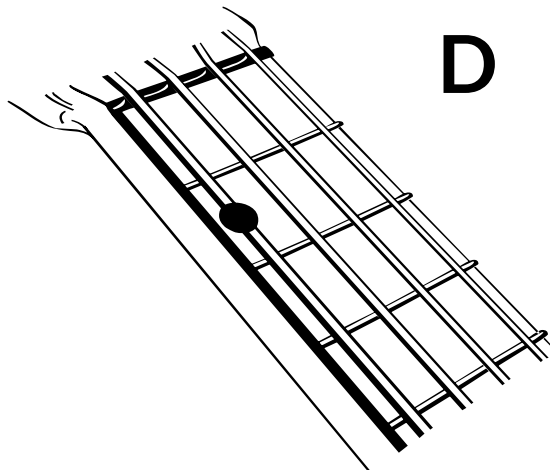


Quick Check!

How are you holding your ukulele?

Are you playing on your fingertips?

Do you have space underneath your fretting fingers?



Happy Birthday

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

G D G

C G D7 G

Hap - py birth - day to you! Hap - py birth - day to you! Hap - py birth - day, dear ____ Hap - py birth - day to you!

Strumming Suggestions:



Happy Birthday

Key of G

G

D

Happy birthday to you

G

Happy birthday to you

C

Happy birthday, dear _____

G

D7

G

Happy birthday to you

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/LKuHvguTv6o>

What Shall We Do With a Drunken Sailor?

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

What shall we do with a drunken sailor, what shall we do with a drunken sailor, what shall we do with a drunken sailor ear-lye in the mor-ning?

Way, hey, and up she ri-ses, way, hey, and up she ri-ses.

Way, hey, and up she ri-ses, ear-lye in the mor-ning?

What Shall We Do With a Drunken Sailor

Traditional Sea Shanty

Key of Em

Em

What shall we do with a drunken sailor?

D

What shall we do with a drunken sailor?

Em

What shall we do with a drunken sailor

D **Em**

Earlye in the morning?

Em

Way, hey, and up she rises

D

Way, hey, and up she rises

Em

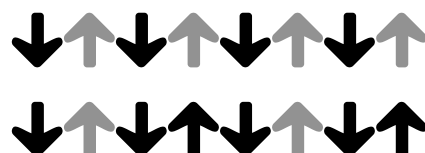
Way, hey, and up she rises

D

Em

Earlye in the morning

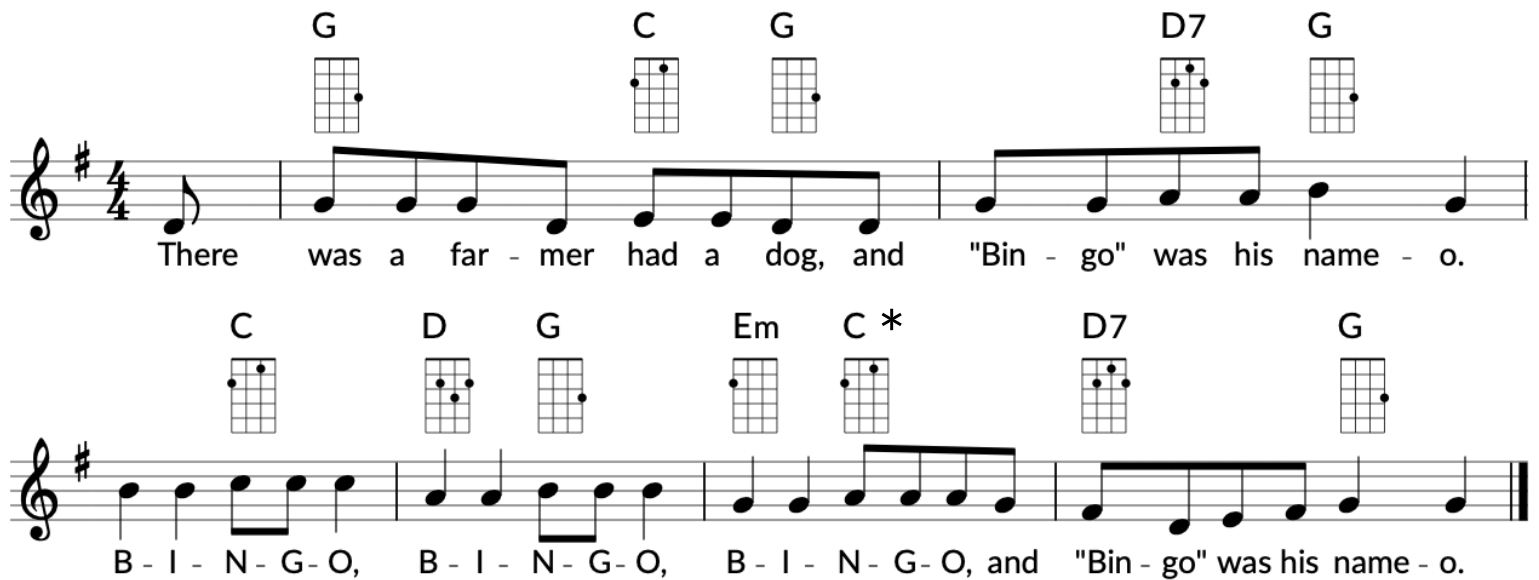
Strumming Suggestions:



Link to video: <https://youtu.be/KmdN-IPgzWs>

Bingo

DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

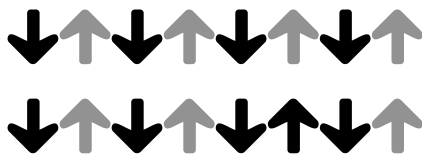


There was a farmer had a dog, and "Bin - go" was his name - o.

B - I - N - G - O, B - I - N - G - O, B - I - N - G - O, and "Bin - go" was his name - o.

* Eventually Am will work better in place of this C

Strumming Suggestions:



Link to video: <https://youtu.be/T5Nu3Ph637E>

Bingo

Traditional Folk Song

Key of G

G C G
There was a farmer had a dog

D7 G
And "Bingo" was his name-o

C
B-I-N-G-O

D G
B-I-N-G-O

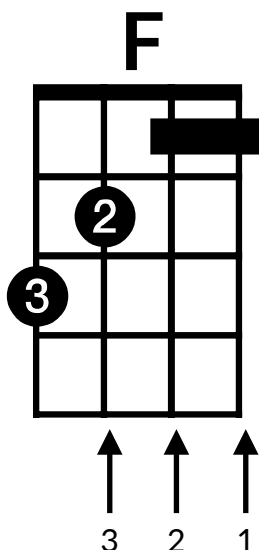
Em C*
B-I- N-G-O

D7 G
And "Bingo" was his name-o

The F Chord

This is a bonus chord to get you going with the next major challenge for baritone ukulele. While none of the songs in this method have used the F chord, it is a significant chord on baritone ukulele for two reasons. First, it is used all the time in the key of C. The three most common chords in the key of C are C, F, and G/G7 (G7 is pretty easy, so it won't be discussed right now). The F chord, the same on baritone ukulele as the guitar, is a "quitting chord." A lot of people quit with this chord. Don't give up. Your first finger barres (remember that warm-up?) strings 1 and 2 at the first fret (pull against the headstock). The thumb adds a little support. Finally, add the other two fingers.

- Use the fingertips on fingers 2 & 3 (Middle and Ring)!
- Get a clear sound on the fretted strings!
- Practice with an arch on fingers 2 & 3 (make a mouse hole)
- Make sure the thumb isn't sticking over the opposite side of the fretboard. You'll want it behind the fretboard to give you a better grip
- Don't over grip!
- Make sure your fingers are behind the fret and not ON the fret

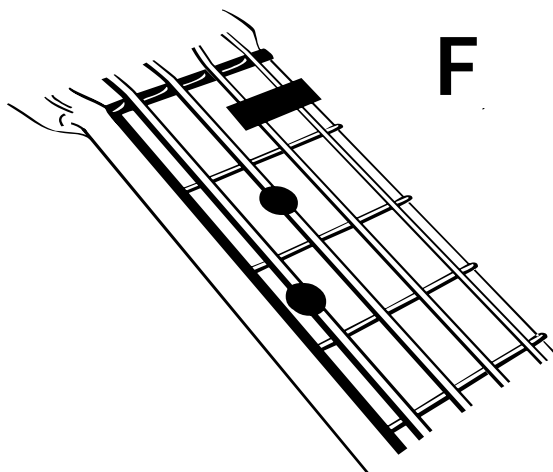


Quick Check!

How are you holding your ukulele?

Are you playing with your fingertips where appropriate?


Do you have space underneath your fretting fingers?



The Farmer in the Dell


DGBE Ukulele (Baritone)

F



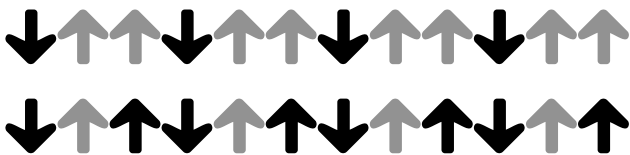
The far - mer in the dell, the far - mer in the dell.
We strum and sing, "Hel - lo!" We strum and sing, "Hel - lo!"

F F C F



Heigh - ho, the Der - ry oh! The far - mer in the dell.
Heigh - ho, the Der - ry oh! We strum and sing "Hel - lo!"

Strumming Suggestions:



(Swing the beat in 12/8)

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/eG4iXME9JZI>

F

The farmer in the dell
The farmer in the dell
Heigh-ho, the Derry oh!

C F

The farmer in the dell

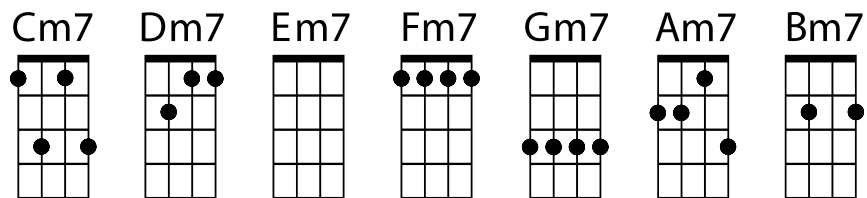
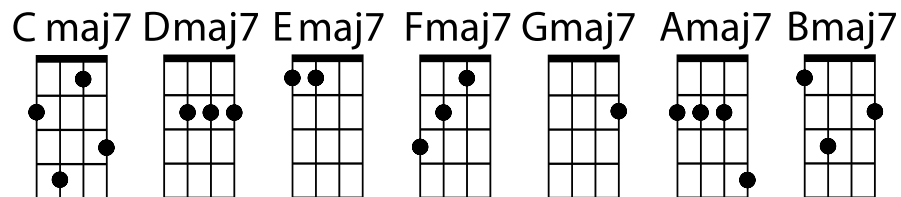
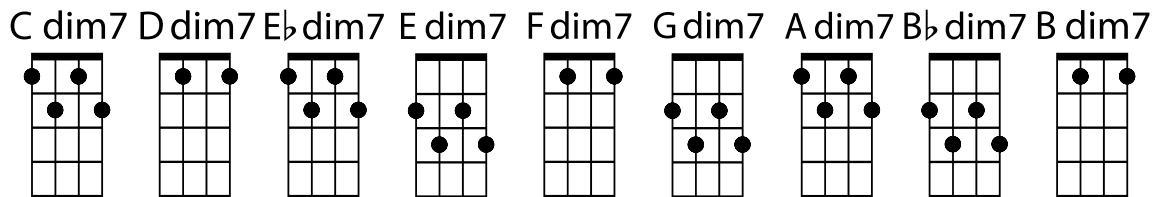
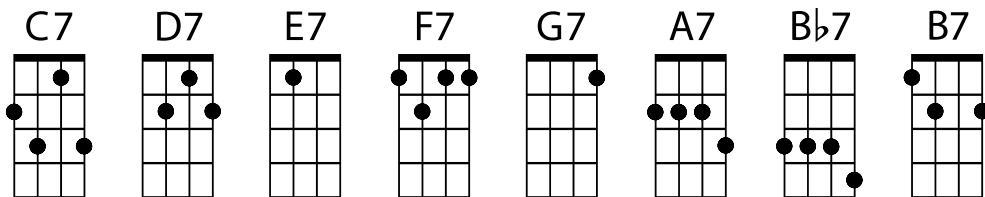
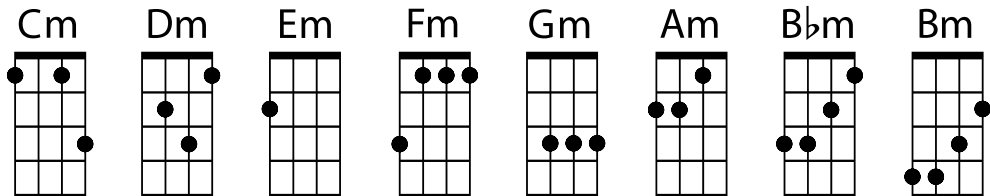
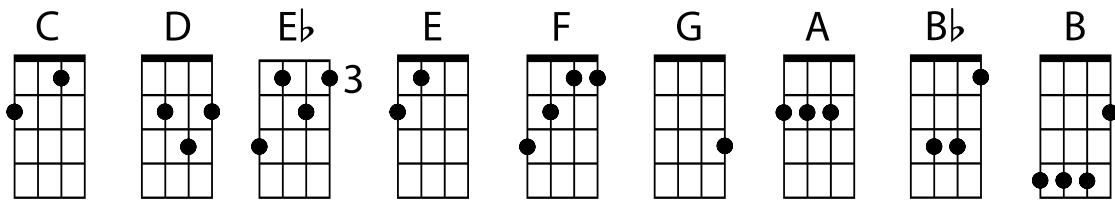
F

We strum and sing, "Hello!"
We strum and sing, "Hello!"
Heigh-ho, the Derry oh!

C F

We strum and sing, "Hello!"

DGBE Chord Chart

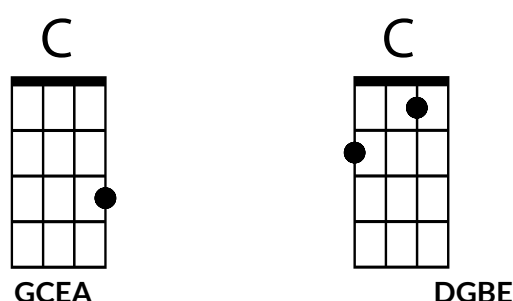


Tips for Moving from GCEA to DGBE

Here are some practical tips for moving from GCEA to DGBE

- Use DGBE only resources at first. If you are looking at GCEA chord charts and trying to play DGBE shapes, your brain will not function properly. This may mean buying additional resources, such as Jim Beloff's "The Daily Ukulele" for DGBE.

Example:



- If DGBE resources are not available, try to use resources that show either NO chord shape diagrams (only chord names), or those that show both (e.g. Petey Mack's Singalong Book, and all of the resources used at the Silver Creek International Ukulele Festival)
- If you are using a baritone scale ukulele, and you are used to playing a soprano, concert, or tenor ukulele, it may be exceptionally beneficial to go slow and focus on finger accuracy with "taller" frets, and (potentially) a wider and thicker neck).
- It may be beneficial to do some basic hand stretching exercises before and after playing.
- If you find that the sound of a baritone is pleasing to your ear, but the neck of the ukulele is too big, you can use strings like Pepe Romero Baby Baritone strings to convert a tenor or even a concert to baritone tuning.
- There are no polycarbonate travel baritone ukuleles. Your best option is to buy a Enya Nova Pro (metal frets) and use Pepe Romero Baby Baritone Strings for such an instrument.
- Tablature will look the same, but written notation will be different than GCEA. Keep in mind that the baritone ukulele is a Perfect 4th lower in pitch than GCEA, and is written an octave higher in traditional notation.
- Playing baritone but need a GCEA ukulele? Put a capo on the 5th fret!

Next Steps

Now that you have worked through this method, what are the next steps?

- You can play along with many baritone play along videos on my YouTube channel, [YouTube.com/UkePlayAlongs](https://www.youtube.com/UkePlayAlongs) .
- There are a few baritone-centric YouTube channels or series, including all of my tutorials at [YouTube.com/UkeStuff](https://www.youtube.com/UkeStuff), as well as Phil Doleman, All for Uke, Abigail Flowers, Ukulele Mike Lynch, Matt Dahlberg, and Matt Stead (Learn Ukulele with Matt)
- You can keep learning new chords, including diminished and jazz chords!
- You can keep learning new strumming patterns, particularly the “chuck” (also known as the “chunk” or “palm mute”).
- You can learn the basic chord shapes and how to move them up and down the neck of the ukulele.
- You can learn the notes of the fretboard (start with the 3rd and 1st strings!)
- You can learn how to play the melody line of any song.
- You can learn Chord Melody, which allows you to play the melody and chords at the same time, usually with just your thumb—try to use music with both traditional notation and tablature.
- You can learn “fingerstyle” which is a way of picking chords with your strumming hand while you continue to use the ukulele as an accompaniment to singing.
- You can learn how to play songs written in tablature, which is how advancing or advanced ukulele players approach solo playing (think of Jake Shimabukuro, Taimaine, or James Hill)
- You can learn “clawhammer” picking, which is a special type of playing that originated with bluegrass banjo players.
- You can find a private teacher, online or in person, or subscribe to a online method.
- You can join a group near you so you can play and sing your favorite songs with others.
- You can join communities online, you can attend ukulele events, such as The Silver Creek International Ukulele Carnival.

But most importantly, keep working on your skills and having fun!

Resources for Next Steps

If you are interested in further instruction on the ukulele, check out the following websites. Some of these are subscription-based, and appear in alphabetical order. Please note that no one paid for inclusion in this list.

Aloha City Ukes (Ukulele Dealer)
<https://alohacityukes.com>

Baritone Ukes (Website)
<https://baritoneukes.com/>

Got a Ukulele (Ukulele Reviews)
<https://www.gotaukulele.com>

Humble Baritronics
<https://humblebaritronics.blogspot.com/>

Living Water Ukulele Strings
<https://www.kenmiddleton.co.uk/shop>

Matt Dahlberg (Instruction)
<https://mattukulele.com/>

Matt Stead (Instruction)
<https://www.mattsteadukulele.com/>

Uke Magazine (UK)
<https://worldofukes.co.uk/uke-magazine-shop>

The Uke Republic (Ukulele Dealer)
<https://www.ukerepublic.com>

Uke Education (Spencer Gay - Music)
<https://www.ukeeducation.org/>

UkeStuff (YouTube and Blog/Website with music)
<https://www.youtube.com/ukestuff> <http://www.ukestuff.info>

Ukulele Mike Lynch (Instruction)
<http://www.youtube.com/@MusicTeacher2010> www.ukulelemikelynch.com

Ukulele Magazine
<https://ukulelemagazine.com/>

The Ukulele Site (Ukulele Dealer and Instruction)
<https://theukulelesite.com>

Ukulele Underground (Lessons, Forum)
<https://ukuleleunderground.com>