

21 Easy Ukulele Folk Songs (Free Sample)

BEGINNING UKULELE SONGS BOOK 5

FOR SOPRANO, CONCERT AND TENOR UKULELES
WITH C TUNING (G, C, E, A)

Rebecca Bogart and Jenny Peters

Purchase of the book gives you access to a free online video course.

To see a sample video visit

ukulele.io/FolkVideo

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21 Easy Ukulele Folk Songs. —1st ed.

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Thank You for Downloading This Sample of *21 Easy Ukulele Folk Songs*

Learning folk music doesn't have to be frustrating with *21 Easy Ukulele Folk Songs*. We've put careful thought into creating great sounding yet easy to play versions of favorite traditional songs. We've arranged the book so you can master the easiest music first and then gradually tackle harder tunes as your skills improve.

If you've learned the C, F, and G7 chords and a few basic strums, then this book is for you.

What Songs Are Included?

Here is a list of all the songs in *21 Easy Ukulele Folk Songs*; the titles in CAPITALS are included in this sample. You'll find a nice mix of classic folk and blues songs with a bit of history about each song:

- LOVELY EVENING
- Lil' Liza Jane
- Happy Birthday
- Go Tell Aunt Rhody
- Wabash Cannonball
- Big Rock Candy Mountain
- WORRIED MAN BLUES
- St. Louis Blues
- Goodnight, Irene
- Down by the Riverside
- Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child
- Sakura
- All through the Night
- Beautiful Dreamer
- Molly Malone
- Shenandoah
- The Ash Grove
- Take Me Out to the Ball Game
- Turkey in the Straw
- My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean
- Sweet Betsy from Pike

Lots of Ways to Play Each Song

The image shows a musical score for a song in 4/4 time. It features a treble clef and a melody line with lyrics. Below the melody is a ukulele tab staff with four strings labeled T, A, and B. The tab staff shows fret numbers for each string and includes chord changes for C, F, and C. The lyrics are: Oh, Shen - an - doah, I long to hear you, Oh Shen - an - doah, I love your daugh - ter, Oh Shen - an - doah, I'm bound to leave you.

You can either sing the song and strum the chords or you can play the melody. All of the songs are written out on a standard music staff with a treble clef. Lyrics appear below the musical notation, and a chord letter appears above it each time there's a chord change. If you play by ear, the lyrics and chord changes are all you need. If you read music, you can learn the melody and rhythm from the standard music notation.

If you have a friend or family member who plays ukulele, you can create duets, with one person playing melody and the other one strumming chords. That's because below the music staff is a tab staff that works like a road map showing you how to pluck the melody on the strings of the ukulele.

We usually suggest several strumming patterns for each song. Some strums are easier when you are first learning a song, and some are more difficult so you can upgrade to a more complicated rhythm as you gain more skill.

Free Online Video Course Included When You Buy the Book

Each song has an accompanying online lesson video with lyrics and chord changes so you can hear as well as see the music. It's a fun and friendly way to learn musical skills. The complete book includes a section called "How to Access Your Free Video Course at ukulele.io" that details how to set up your account at our website and access the course.

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About This Book

Welcome to *21 Easy Ukulele Folk Songs!* We're glad you're here. Before we get started: if you see a word in ***bold italics***, that means it's defined in the Glossary at the end of this book sample. There's also a Chord Glossary with photos and chord stamps for the most common ukulele chords.

Don't Forget About the Free Video Course!

Hey, we just wanted to remind you that you get a free video course with purchase of the complete book. The videos can help answer questions you might not even know you had. They also make learning ukulele easier and more fun. You'll see exactly how to place your hands to do the strums and make the chords. You'll be able to hear exactly how the chords and strums should sound. And if you don't know one of the songs or if you don't read music, the videos will help you hear how the songs go.

Each chapter of *21 Easy Ukulele Folk Songs* has its own matching unit in the video course. In the free video course, Jenny performs a simple arrangement of each tune, singing and strumming the melody first, then fingerpicking the melody on her ukulele. This approach lets you see two ways of playing the song. Use your own imagination and preferences to come up with a way that works best for you. If you have a friend to play with, you could:

1. Sing and strum one or two verses.
2. One person plays the melody and the other strums the chords.
3. Sing and strum another verse and/or chorus to round out the song.

We've included some of the songs in several ***keys***. That's because some keys are easier for playing, and some keys are easier for singing. You could play a song first in one key, change keys using a ***bridge***, and then continue in the second key. Our arrangement of "Sweet Betsy from Pike" does this in the keys of C and G major.

We've also included several versions of some of the songs, including some chord melody (solo ukulele) arrangements. Playing these arrangements will require more skill, but it's fun to play both the melody and the accompaniment of a song on your ukulele.

Some Notes on Strumming

Here are the three main strumming patterns we will refer to:

Strum #1 All down strums on a steady ***beat***.



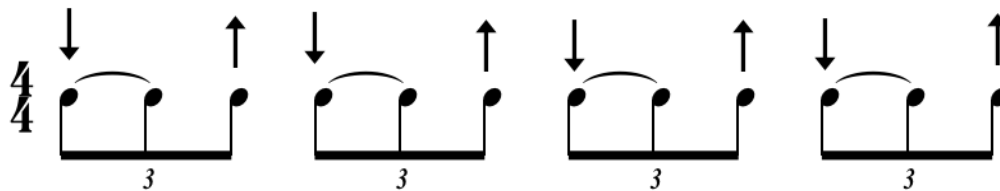
Strum #2 Down-up strums with an even division of the beat. All the strums are equally spaced.



Strum #3 Down-up strums with an uneven division of the beat. Wait a little longer after each down strum before you play the next up strum.



Here's music notation showing the rhythm of Strum #3.



Use the fingernails of your right hand for the down strum and the thumbnail of your right hand for the up strum. Some people also use the pads of their fingers. Do downward strums with the middle three fingers of your right hand. Adjust the angle of your strumming hand so that your fingernails rest gently on String 4, the string closest to the ceiling. Now turn your forearm as if you were rattling a doorknob and allow your fingernails to gently brush down all four strings toward the floor. You may have to experiment to refine your hand shape and the amount of pressure on the strings. Listen to be sure that you are strumming all four strings.

Just in case you were wondering, most uke players do not use a pick because it can break the ukulele's strings. There are felt picks available which will not harm your ukulele's strings.

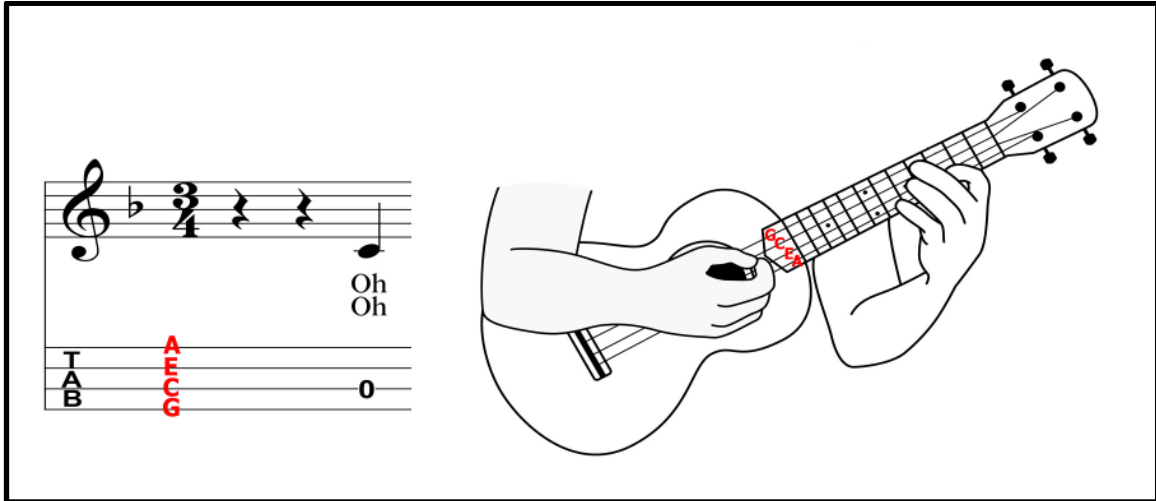
You should strum across the bottom of the fretboard on the main body of the instrument, NOT where the strings cross over the sound hole in the middle of the instrument. The drawing on the next page shows where your right hand should strum.

Learning these patterns takes time. If your fingers get sore, don't worry. It can take a while to build up thicker skin. We'll suggest some more complicated strumming patterns later in the book that are derived from these three basic patterns.

How to Read Tablature

Lines of the Tab Staff

Each line of the tab staff represents a string on the ukulele. The sounds that are higher in *pitch* are closer to the top of the page just as they are on the standard music *staff*. However, the unfortunate result is that standard tab notation places the lines upside down from how they are arranged on the ukulele.



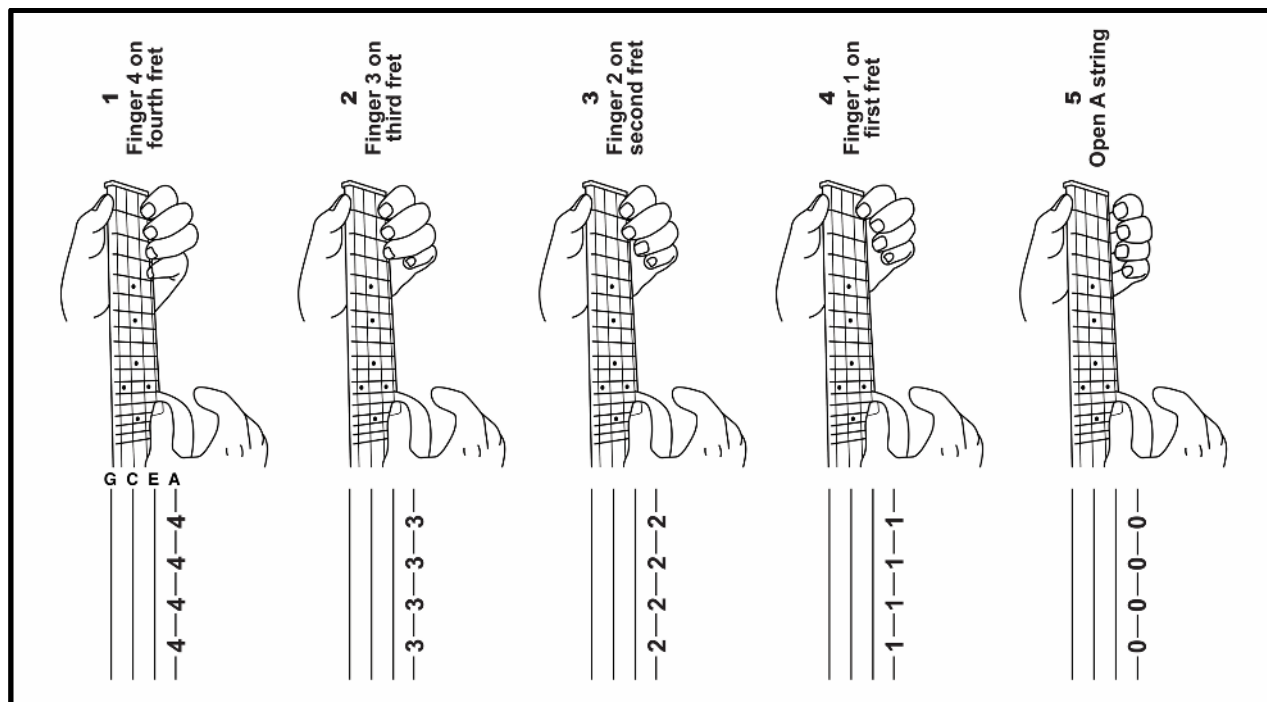
So:

- The top line of the tab staff is the A string (the string closest to the floor when you're playing).
- The line below that is the E string.
- The line below that is the C string.
- The bottom line of the tab is the G string, which is the string closest to the ceiling when you are playing.

Numbers on the Tab Staff

The numbers on the lines of the tab staff tell you which fret to **stop** with a left hand finger. **Stopping** (also called **fretting**) a string means to use a left hand finger and push down firmly so that the string contacts the fret. Your finger goes between the frets, not on a fret.

For example, a 5 means to means to put one of your left hand fingers in the fifth fret, and push down on the string as you pluck it with your right hand. A 7 means to stop the string in the 7th fret and pluck it with your right hand. A 4 means to stop the string in the fourth fret and pluck it with your right hand. A 0 means to pluck a string with your right hand without using your left hand at all. We call an unstopped string an **open string**.



The image above shows a person fretting the A string. Usually we use finger 1 on the first fret, finger 2 on the second fret, finger 3 on the third fret, and finger 4 on the fourth fret. Having your fingers in this arrangement is referred to as **first position**.

For practice reading tab, try playing the sounds shown in the parts of the image. Reading from right to left:

1. Start with finger 4 in the fourth fret and pluck the A string 4 times.
2. Then use finger 3 in the third fret and pluck the A string 4 times.
3. Next use finger 2 in the second fret and pluck the A string 4 times.
4. Next use finger 1 in the first fret and pluck the A string 4 times.
5. Finally, pluck the open A string 4 times.

Playing the C Major Scale in Tab Notation

We recommend practicing the C major scale while reading the tab notation as the next step to getting comfortable with reading and playing tab notation. It will help your brain link the look of the tab staff to the muscular patterns needed to play certain notes. Since most melodies are made from fragments of scales, learning this eye-hand coordination will make it a lot easier for you to read tab melodies.

C Major Scale

C D E F G A B C

T
A
B 0 2 0 1 3 0 2 3

C B A G F E D

T
A
B 3 2 0 3 1 0 2 0

Putting It Together: Reading a Melody in Tab

Here's an excerpt from our first song, "Lovely Evening." To read the tab, first look at which string line the number is on. Then use your left hand to stop that string in the fret that matches the number shown. Remember that 0 means an open string. We've labeled the lines to make it easier to see which line goes with which string.

Oh how love - ly is

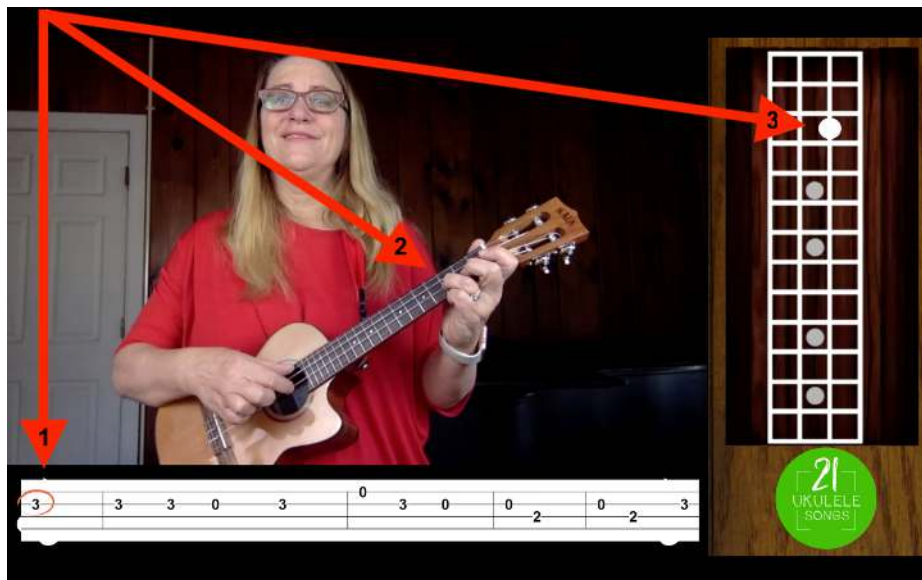
T
A
C
B
G 0 2 0 0 1

- For the first **note**, don't do anything with your left hand and pluck the C string with your right hand.
- For the second, stop the C string in the second fret.
- For the third note, don't do anything with your left hand and pluck the E string with your right hand.
- For the fourth note, don't do anything with your left hand and pluck the C string with your right hand.
- For the fifth note, stop the E string in the first fret.

Special Lesson Video Format for Tab Melodies

The free video course has 21 lesson videos, one for each song in the book. Most have a special onscreen format to help you learn tab. As you watch the video lesson, you'll hear the way the music should sound. You'll also see lots of visual cues to help you link how the tab looks with how the music sounds.

Arrow #1 in the screenshot below points to the tab symbol that corresponds to the note you are hearing. In this example it is a 3, circled in red in the video lesson. You'll see Jenny fretting and plucking the string in the main frame of the video. Arrow #2 points at Jenny's finger fretting the string in the first fret.



Arrow #2 points at Jenny's finger fretting the string in the first fret.

Arrow #3 points at a dot on the fretboard at the right of the screen. The dot is supposed to represent your finger. It's also supposed to help you see which string and fret go with the tab symbol.

If you think the ukuleles in the lesson videos sound different from yours, it's not your imagination! We are playing tenor ukuleles in the videos, so the G strings are one octave lower than the soprano ukulele that most folks play. Tab staff doesn't show tenor uke's low G because there's no room for it, but as you train your musical ear you'll be able to hear the difference.

How to Tune Your Ukulele

The main thing to know about tuning your ukulele is that you need to compare the sound of the string you are tuning to a source that you know is in tune. For a pitch source you can use a piano, an online tuner, a tuning app, or a clip-on electric tuner.

Adjust your string to match the sound of the source by turning the tuning peg. Don't worry if you're not sure which way to turn the peg – there are only two directions possible, so experiment until your string sounds like the source.

Which direction to turn the peg depends on how the string was attached to the tuning peg by the person who put the string on your uke, so you have to use your ears to figure it out. One thing remains constant; when the string gets tighter, the pitch (sound) goes up, or higher. When the string gets looser, the pitch goes down.

Be sure to pluck the string as you turn the peg! This will help you hear if the sound is getting higher or lower. Also plucking as you turn will help you avoid tightening the string so much that it breaks.

Once you get your string to match the sound of the tuner, try tuning the string's pitch higher and then lower, just to get more practice listening and turning the tuning peg at the same time.

By the way, it's best to first tune your string's pitch slightly lower than the target pitch and then gradually adjust it back up until it matches. As you lower the string's pitch, you're loosening the tension on the string. Then pluck as you turn the peg to adjust the pitch from slightly too low to perfectly in tune.

Tuning this way will help the tension above the tuning peg nut to equal the tension on the instrument's neck. This will help keep the string in tune longer – always a good thing! Don't worry if you didn't understand this last paragraph; as you get more experience tuning your ukulele, you'll understand better how it works.

Fingerpicking Technique

Jenny uses two different ways of *fingerpicking* the melodies of the songs.

- **Plucking with your index finger:** use this method for a faster moving song. Put your right thumb against the edge of the *fretboard* and pluck with your right index finger, pulling the string toward the ceiling to make the sound. This method will give you more rhythmic control and let you play faster.
- **Plucking with your thumb:** use this method for a slower moving song. This method will give you a richer sound.

As you work your way through the book, we'll teach you how to fingerpick chords one note at a time (called "broken" chords). We'll also teach you two techniques for quick moving melody notes. One is called a "hammer on" and the other is called a "pull-off."

A Little More About Your Free Video Course!

With purchase of the complete [21 Easy Ukulele Folk Songs](#) you get access to a video course hosted at [ukulele.io](#) as a free goodie. Watching the video lessons can make learning the ukulele easier and more fun, so we hope everyone who buys the book will sign up. As the old saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words, and a video is probably worth a lot more.

So, if you'd like to see what's involved with signing up for the free course, you can visit [ukulele.io/access-free-video-course](#).

Here's what some customers have to say about the free course:

"You can watch and play along with the video and sound tracks. All the learning procedures are set out to keep you happy, as you watch, listen and learn to play. It's an excellent tutorial programme."

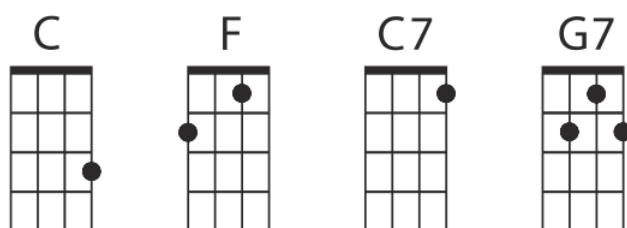
"The videos are charmingly amateurish in a way that makes me think "I can do it too"."

"Between this book and the associated video tutorials, I learned so much so quickly. I was able to pick out some songs (on my ukulele) the first day I messed around with it."

Sample Two Chord Folk Song

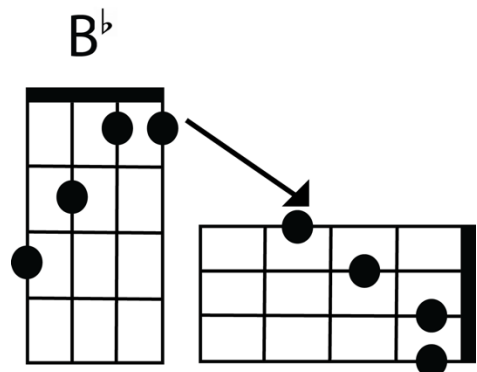
The question of exactly what a folk song is has many different answers. We've gone with Google's definition: music that originates in traditional popular culture or that is written in such a style. So you'll find songs in this book whose composers are known as well as songs whose origins are lost in the past.

We've included versions of "Lovely Evening" in the keys of F and C. The song is easier to play in the key of C, and easier for most folks to sing in the key of F. We've assumed you already know how to play these chords:



How to Play the B Flat Major Chord

As you can see from the photograph, you will need to put your first finger on two strings at once to master this chord. Experiment with different finger angles and pressures to make sure your first finger is fretting two strings at once. You might try practicing just the first finger position by itself until it is comfortable, or at least sounding good, and then try adding the other fingers.



Using one finger to stop more than one string at a time is a technique used in another type of ukulele chord called a **barre chord**. While learning this skill can be challenging, the advantage of a barre chord is that you can move it to different frets to get lots of different chords from one hand shape.

Lovely Evening

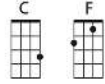
As previously mentioned, you'll see versions of "Lovely Evening" in the keys of C and F. "Lovely Evening" in F uses the B flat chord, which is one of the hardest three-finger ukulele chords. It is a commonly used chord, so it's best to master it. If you are struggling to play this chord, you might want to play only the C major version of "Lovely Evening." You can always come back to the F major version later. The E Minor chord (see the chapter on "Minor Mode") will help you learn the B flat chord shape.

"Lovely Evening" is a German folk song. It's usually sung as a *round*. Bing Crosby recorded the song in a medley on his 1961 album "101 Gang Songs." The music sounds very calm because there are only two chords. There's also a feeling of gentle swaying created by the use of three beats per *measure*.

Strumming Pattern:



Lovely Evening



C F C

Oh how love - ly is the eve - ning,

0	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

5 F C

is the eve - ning. When the bells are

1	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

9 F C F C

soft - ly ring - ing, soft - ly ring - ing.

0	3	3	1	0	0	3	3	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

13 C F C

13 Ding, Dong, Ding, Dong.

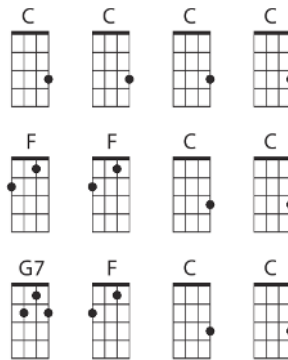
0	0	0	0
---	---	---	---

Sample Three Chord Blues Song

A Very Brief Introduction to the Blues

Blues is a uniquely American style of folk music that originated in the African American communities of the southern U.S. around the turn of the century. Many elements of the blues can be traced back to the music of Africa. Most American popular music grew out of the blues.

The blues uses a 12 measure chord progression consisting of chords that have a specific pitch spacing and relationship to one another. (“Bar” is another word for “*measure*.”) The simplest form of 12-bar blues uses the **chord progression** below. Each letter stands for a measure of music.



Songs that use the 12-bar blues often have a section where one musician makes up new melodies while others continue to play the 12-bar blues progression. Blues melodies are always made from a specific family of notes called the **blues scale**. That’s what makes them sound “bluesy.”

It can be fun to try your hand at blues improvisation using a recording to play along with. You can find one here: goo.gl/AgTBLH. If you’re interested in learning more about blues improvisation, visit ukulele.io/21MOREprint to check out our book *21 More Songs in 6 Days: Learn Intermediate Ukulele the Easy Way*.

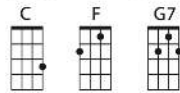
Worried Man Blues

The origins of “Worried Man Blues” are lost in the mists of the 19th century. Its famous opening line, “It takes a worried man to sing a worried song,” was popularized on records in 1930, when it was recorded by the Carter Family. It was also recorded by Woody Guthrie and the Kingston Trio, and in 2001 it was used as the theme song for the PBS series *American Roots Music*.

“Worried Man Blues” has a 16 **bar verse** and **chorus**, rather than the 12 bars most often used by blues songs. It is usually performed with the chorus alternating with the verses. Some versions of this song have many verses which tell a detailed story of waking up to discover that you’ve been sentenced to working on a railroad for 21 years. We’ve included three verses here – hopefully enough to convey a condensed version of the story.

Strumming Pattern:
 ↓ ↓↑ ↓ ↓↑

Worried Man Blues



C

It takes a wor-ried man to sing a wor-ried song. It

F

takes a wor-ried man to sing a wor-ried song. It

C

takes a wor-ried man to sing a wor-ried song. I'm wor - ried

G7

now, but I won't be wor - ried long. I

C

I

The musical score is written in 4/4 time. The guitar part is shown on a six-line staff with fret numbers (0-7) and strumming patterns (3, 3, 3, 3, 0, 3, 3, 7, 7, 7, 5, 3, 3). The vocal line is written in a treble clef with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "It takes a wor-ried man to sing a wor-ried song. It takes a wor-ried man to sing a wor-ried song. I'm wor - ried now, but I won't be wor - ried long. I".

17

went down to the riv-er - side and I lay me down to sleep. I
 Twenty - one links of chain were bound a round my legs. _____
 17 asked the judge to tell me what will be my fine? I

3 3 3 0 3 3 3 3 3 3 7 7 7 5 3 3

21 F C

went down to the riv-er - side and I laid me down to sleep. I
 Twenty - one links of chain were bound a - round my legs. _____
 21 asked the judge to tell me what will be my fine? I

0 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 2 0 3 3

25

went down to the riv-er - side and I laid me down to sleep. When I woke
 Twenty - one links of chain were bound a - round my legs. And on each
 25 asked the judge to tell me what will be my fine? Twen - ty one

3 3 3 0 3 3 3 3 3 3 7 7 7 5 3 3 2 3

29 G7 C

up there were shack - les on my feet.
 link there were i - ni - tials of my name.
 29 years on the old Rock Is - land line.

5 5 5 7 5 3 0 3 3

Get the Rest of the Beginning Ukulele Songs Series!

One of our books can help you move to the next level with your playing no matter where you are in your ukulele journey. All feature detailed and easy-to-follow instructions. We pick songs and carefully put them in an order that will help you build up gradually to more difficult skills. With our approach you'll continue to improve your playing without getting frustrated or developing bad habits.

Each is available in both paper and eBook versions and comes with its own companion video course at ukulele.io.

Book 1: 21 Songs in 6 Days: Learn Ukulele the Easy Way

Learn the five easiest ukulele chords (C, Am, F, C7, and G7) and three basic strums. Learn to change chords while keeping a steady strum going. By the end of the book you'll be playing five chord songs. Book purchase includes a 101-minute video course to help you learn faster.

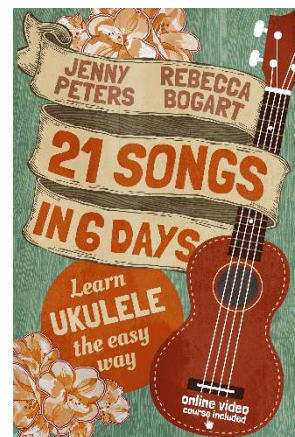
Get your copy at ukulele.io/Buy21Songs.

I could not have asked for a better way to learn the ukulele!! Pairing the book with the online video lessons was the perfect way for me to learn! I felt like I was having my own private lesson.

I can't wait to move onto the next book and keep learning! I have not been able to sing with my church choir nor ring in our bell choir, with everything that has happened. Music is cathartic for me and I am extremely thankful for my ukulele, which oddly enough I just had laying around, and for your books and videos. You have been a life saver!!

Thank you!!!

Daisy Richardson



Book 2: Easy Ukulele Songs: Five with Five Chords

Hone your ability to change chords by playing five favorite five chord songs. Learn four more easy chords. Learn fancier strumming patterns that combine the 3 basic strums from Book 1. Also get more practice with harder tab melodies and an introduction to the blues and blues improvisation in the key of C. Comes with 10 video free course to help you learn the songs.

Get your copy at ukulele.io/5x5.

Total ukulele beginner. I enjoyed this work. It takes the skills learned in book 1 to a new level. I enjoyed a couple of the songs, especially "Five Foot Two." It's nice to find 1920s style songs because they are so naturally ukulele songs. I also enjoyed "Greensleeves" because the ukulele sounds more lute-like. The pedagogical learning approach is cool, thoughtful, and systematic. An excellent series. I bought this after reviewing other ukulele learning methods online and trying others from the library.



Book 3: 21 Easy Ukulele Songs for Christmas

21 seasonal favorites arranged in order of difficulty. After learning one new chord (D minor), you'll be able to play every song in the book with the chords you learned in Book 2 of the series. Get more practice reading tab melodies and using a variety of strumming patterns. The free course that comes with your book has a lesson video for every song in the book. Great for caroling or playing duets with fellow uke lovers.

Get your copy at ukulele.io/xmasnow.

I have purchased both the 21 songs in 6 days and the Christmas one. I have never picked up an Instrument in my 48 years of being on this earth and these books are making everything so easy to learn and are a lot of fun!!! THANK YOU!!!!!!

You sure can use my name!

Scott Harkema



Book 4: 21 MORE Easy Ukulele Songs: Learn Intermediate Ukulele the Easy Way

Learn the most important intermediate ukulele chords. If you've been working your way through the Beginning Ukulele Songs series, you'll learn five new chords, including the including the dreaded B flat chord: D, E minor, B flat, G minor, and C major 7.

You'll get more practice fingerpicking melodies and learn how to fingerpick accompaniments too. We'll introduce new fancier strumming patterns, songs in minor mode, and songs with three beats per measure. And get more practice with the blues by playing more difficult blues songs in a variety of keys. Finally, you'll learn how to play great ukulele solo (chord melody) arrangements of several songs.

All songs include both a standard music staff and tab notation, and several strumming patterns. The accompanying free course includes 40+ lesson videos.

Get your copy at ukulele.io/21MOREprint.

I thought you may like to know, I am joining my Ukulele group for a performance in a local village Hall, early in November. It may not be the greatest achievement ever, but I am looking forward to the show. Rest assured without the help of your books and videos, this experience would have been beyond me, thank you for helping have such fun.

Roy C. Edwards



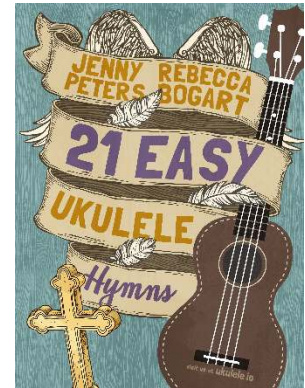
Book 6: 21 Easy Ukulele Hymns

22 favorite hymns arranged in order of difficulty. The book begins with fourteen 2 and 3 chord hymns and includes favorites such as “Amazing Grace,” “Be Thou My Vision,” “Nearer My God to Thee” and “Fairrest Lord Jesus.” Many hymns are presented in 2 keys so you can choose a comfortable key for singing or playing. There’s melody tab and a suggested strumming pattern for every hymn. Get your copy at ukulele.io/hymns.

Check out our Hymn Kits at ukulele.io/hymnkits to get access to a 210-minute video course plus 13 chord melody hymn arrangements and bonus hymns.

I have been anxiously awaiting this book becoming available and it has been worth the wait. I received mine yesterday, and found myself going back to play songs out of it multiple times throughout the day. I love all the variety to the different ways to play the many songs-picking, strums, different keys. Playing these wonderful old hymns will bring hours of joy to my life, and I look forward to picking up extra tips from the video tutorials. I definitely would recommend adding this book to your ukulele music collection.

Janet Wentz



Other Courses that Work Great with Your Book

Do a deeper dive into various ukulele topics with our online courses and kits.

Learn Easy Ukulele Chord Melody Today!

Get everything you need to know to start playing chord melody at an easy level with this exciting course. If you can play the songs in our books, you can learn easy ukulele chord melody with this course. Find out more at ukulele.io/Easy-ChordMelody.

- Learn to play chords and melody at the same time for a beautiful 'solo ukulele' sound.
 - Don't want to sing? This is the perfect course for you!
-

Easy Ukulele Hymn Kits

With a Hymn Kit you'll get:

- a 45+ video course to help you learn the hymns.
- sheet music for tags and turnarounds so you can connect your hymns together.
- fabulous solo ukulele arrangements of hymns so you can play the melody and accompaniment yourself.

Available in Regular and Premium versions. Find out more at ukulele.io/21-easy-ukulele-hymns-is-here/.

How to Improve Your Strumming (Available Summer 2021)

Do you struggle with singing and strumming at the same time? Do you wish you had a toolbox of "go-to" strumming patterns that would work with most songs? Do you know how to play lots of chords, but struggle with choosing a strumming pattern for a song you would like to play?

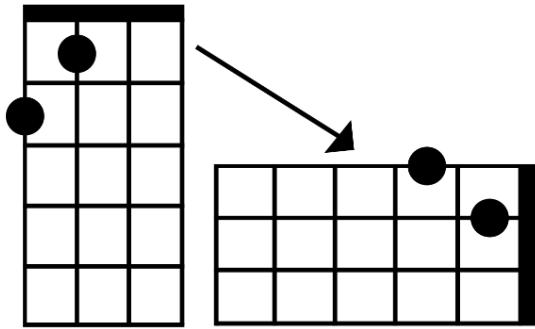
Our course "How to Improve Your Strumming" will help you gain mastery over the mysteries of ukulele strumming. You'll learn:

- how to sing and strum at the same time.
- how to choose good strumming patterns based on what you hear when you listen to a song.
- how to create strumming patterns that work with most songs.
- how to know when to change chords.
- concepts such as strong and weak beats, harmonic rhythm.

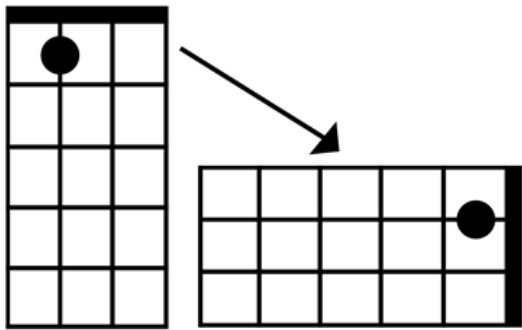
Visit ukulele.io to sign up for our mailing list so we can let you know when this course is available.

Chord Glossary

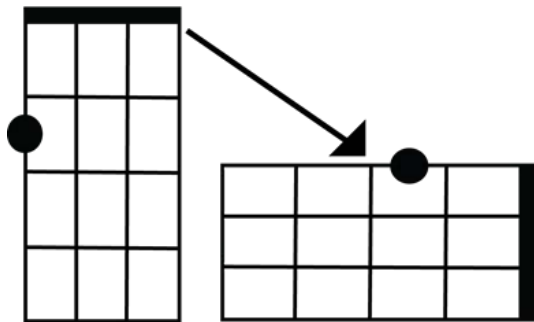
A



A7



Am



B^b

A diagram showing the fingering for the B^b chord. It consists of two ukulele fretboards. The left fretboard shows the full chord with dots on the 2nd fret of the C string, the 3rd fret of the G string, the 4th fret of the D string, and the 5th fret of the A string. An arrow points from the 4th fret of the D string to the right fretboard, which shows a partial view of the chord with dots on the 3rd fret of the G string, the 4th fret of the D string, and the 5th fret of the A string.



B

A diagram showing the fingering for the B chord. It consists of two ukulele fretboards. The left fretboard shows the full chord with dots on the 2nd fret of the C string, the 3rd fret of the G string, the 4th fret of the D string, and the 5th fret of the A string. An arrow points from the 4th fret of the D string to the right fretboard, which shows a partial view of the chord with dots on the 3rd fret of the G string, the 4th fret of the D string, and the 5th fret of the A string.

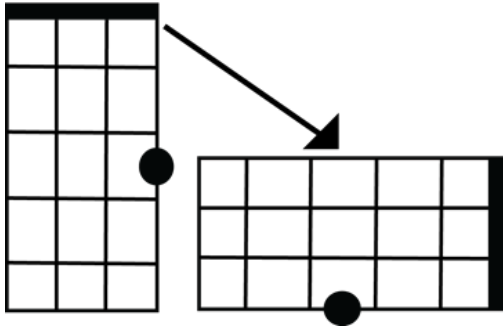


Bm

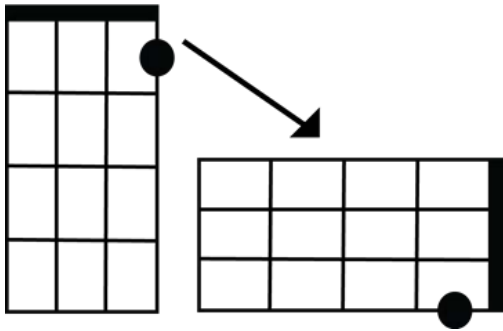
A diagram showing the fingering for the Bm chord. It consists of two ukulele fretboards. The left fretboard shows the full chord with dots on the 2nd fret of the C string, the 3rd fret of the G string, the 4th fret of the D string, and the 5th fret of the A string. An arrow points from the 4th fret of the D string to the right fretboard, which shows a partial view of the chord with dots on the 3rd fret of the G string, the 4th fret of the D string, and the 5th fret of the A string.



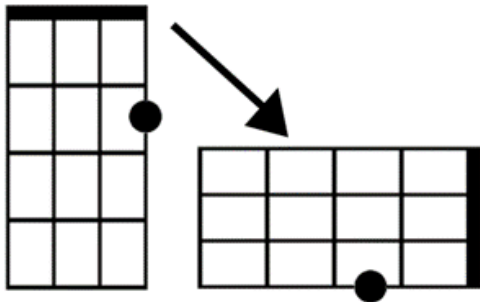
C

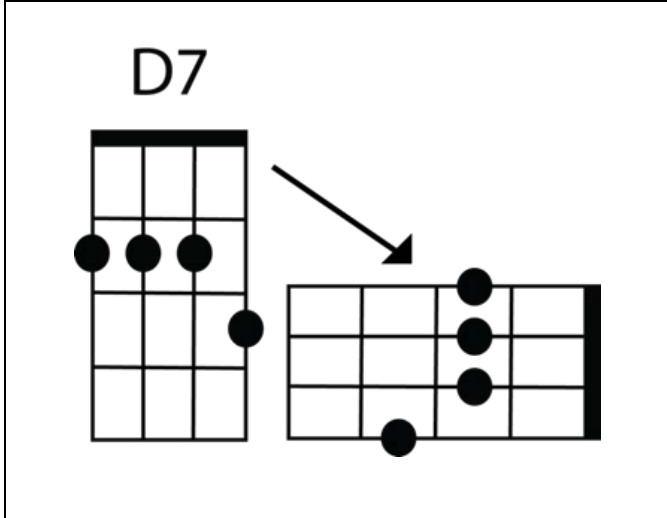
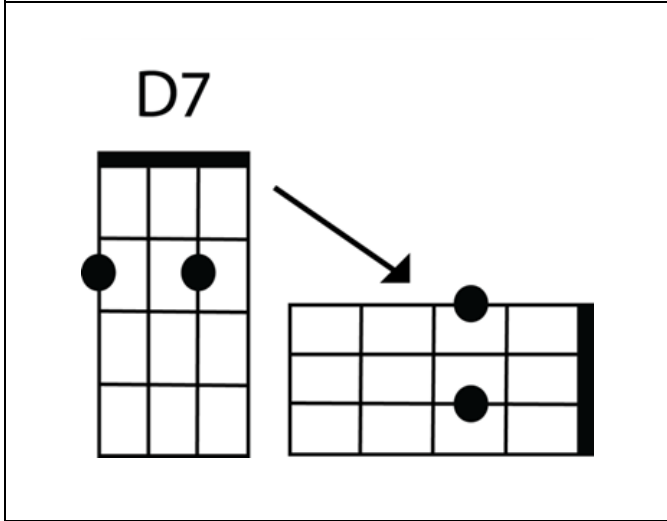
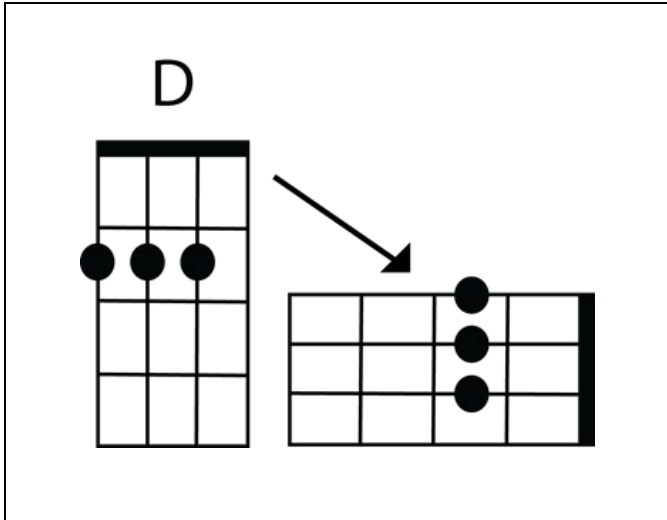


C7

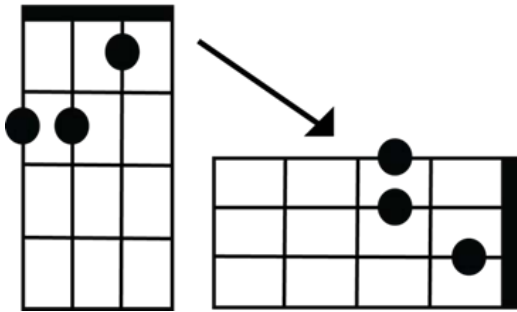


C maj7

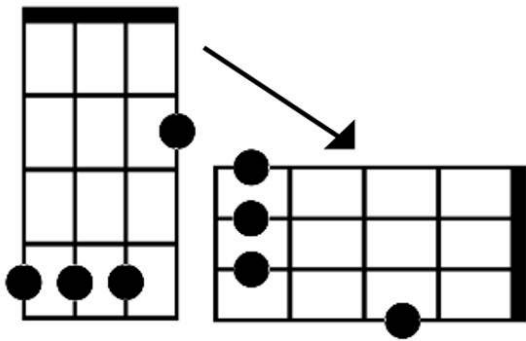




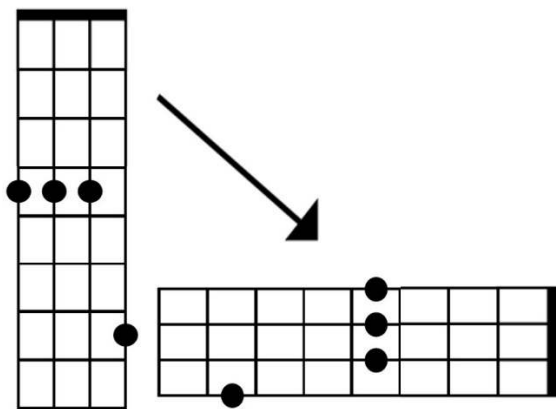
Dm

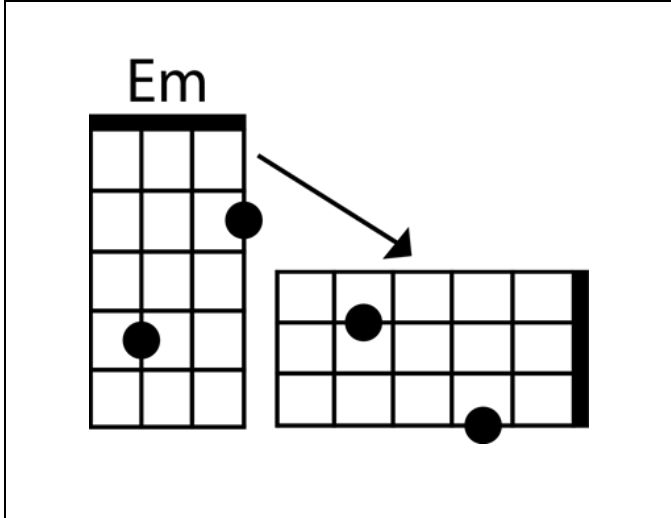
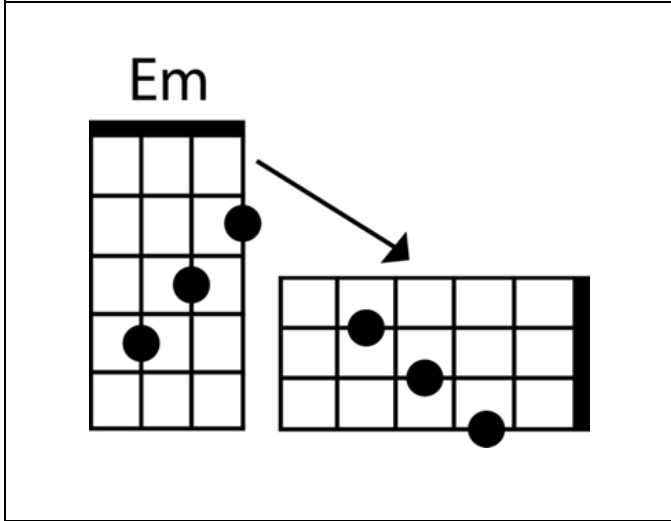
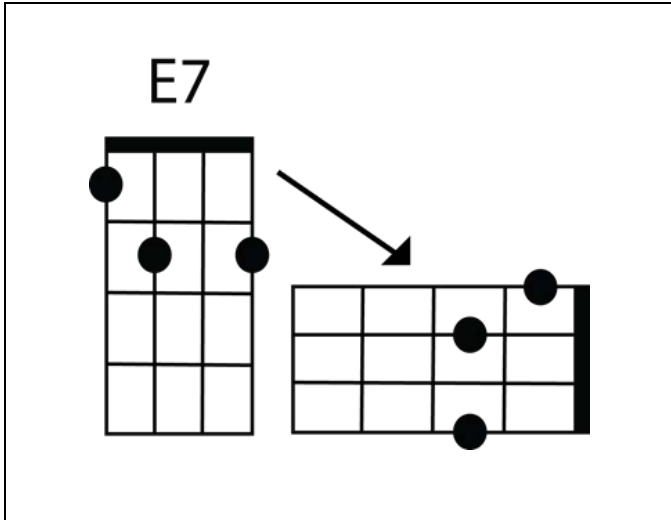


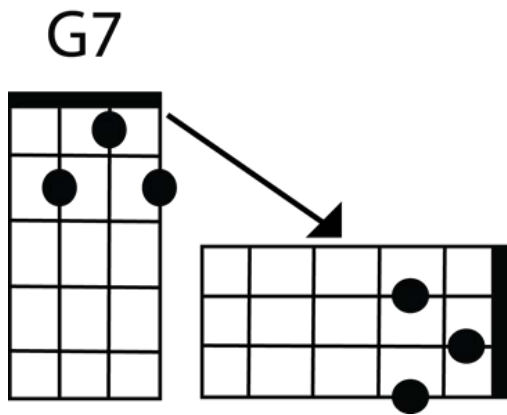
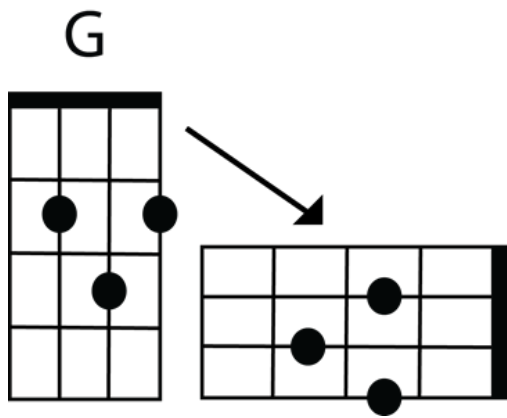
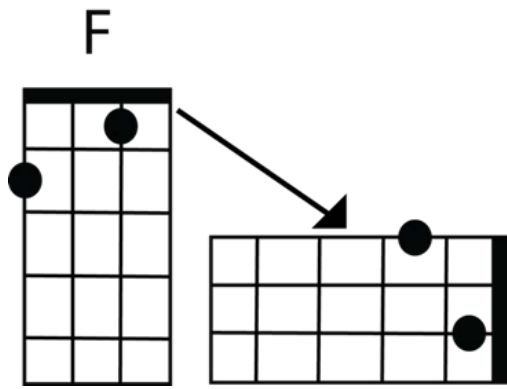
E

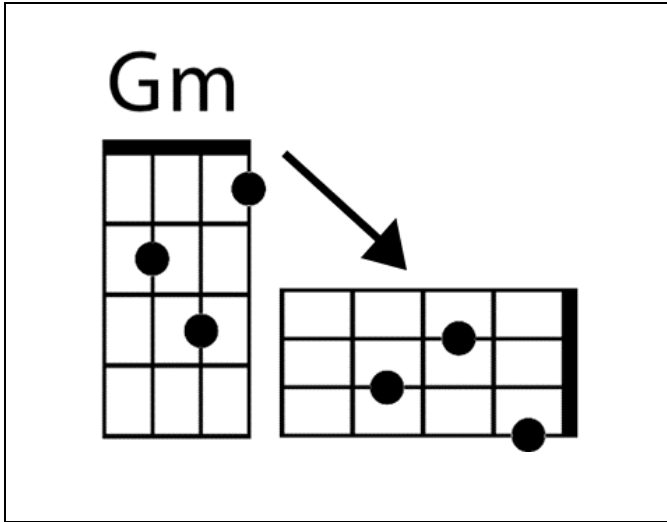


E









Glossary

A

Accidental - a *flat*, *sharp* or *natural*.

B

Bar - same as a *measure*. A measure is the space on a musical staff between two bar lines. Every measure begins with a strong beat.

Bar lines - the vertical lines on the musical and tab staves that go from the top line of the staff to the bottom line of the staff. Bar lines are longer than note stems and do not touch any notes.

Barre or bar - using one or more fingers to stop multiple strings on the fretboard. Usually this is done with the index finger.

Barre chord - a chord that contains a *barre*.

Beat - regularly timed sounds that occur the same distance apart in time in a row. Examples of sounds with a beat are the sound your heart makes, i.e. a heartbeat, or the sound of someone dribbling a basketball.

Blue notes - a note or group of notes that are different than the notes used in Western folk music. Usually in the blues we play the different note near its next door note so our ears can imagine the note that belongs in the African scale. In staff notation, a blue note will have a flat, sharp or natural in front of it.

Blues scale - a group of musical sounds that spaced in the specific way that is used in blues music. The blues scale probably came with African people to the United States. For the blues songs in this book we are playing in the key of C, which is the same as all the white keys on the piano. When we add a black key to the white key scale, the music sounds different. The black key, for example, E flat, added in on top of the white key, such as E, gives the music a bluesy feel. The added black key notes are an attempt to approximate African scales. Western folk music tends to use 8 notes per octave, while African folk music tends to use 5 notes equally spaced per octave. Some of these African scale notes do not exist in Western musical instruments. For example, if you look at a piano keyboard, you can see that there ARE five black keys but the spaces between them are not equal. Thus, when you sing or play a flat note and somebody else is playing a regular note, your ear hears the sound the flat note and the regular note make together as bluesy.

Bridge – transitional music that connects two different parts of a song, such as the verse and the chorus.

Braguinha - a Portuguese fretted string instrument, like a small guitar, that was an ancestor of the ukulele.

Broken chord - a chord played one pitch at a time. On the ukulele one plays a broken chord by plucking one string at a time rather than strumming all the strings together.

C

Cavaquinho - another Portuguese fretted string instrument like the braguinha.

Chord – two or more pitches played at the same time. On the ukulele, chords are usually four pitches played together because the instrument has four strings.

Chord progression - order of chords in a song.

Chord stamp - a symbol or drawing of the ukulele strings with little dots that represent where to place your fingers on the fretboard to make the chord.

Clef - A clef is a musical symbol used to indicate the pitch of the notes written on the staff. It is always shown at the beginning of each line or stave of music. See also *treble clef*.

E

Etude - a piece of music that is designed to help you learn and practice a new musical skill. In French, etude means study so etudes are sometimes called studies.

F

Finger numbers - these are applied to the left hand. Finger 1 is the index or “pointer” finger; finger 2 is the middle finger; finger 3 is the ring finger; and finger 4 is the pinky. For playing ukulele, we do not count the thumb because it is behind the neck of the ukulele and not available to stop a string (see “stopping”).

Fingerpick (fingerstyle) – means to pluck the ukulele strings with the fingertips or fingernails as opposed to strumming them.

First position - means your finger 1 (index finger) is in the first fret, the one closest to the tuning pegs.

Flat - a musical symbol placed in front of musical note. It means to lower the sound slightly, by the amount that musicians call a “half step.” When you look at a blues scale, you can see a little sign that looks like a small letter “b” next to some of the notes. That sign is called is a flat and it lowers the pitch of the note by one-half step.

Fretboard - the long skinny part of the ukulele with metal strips in it. It is usually made of a different color wood than the larger curvy part of the instrument.

Fretting - pushing the strings against the fretboard with the fingers of your left hand so each note you play sounds clear. “Fretting” means the same thing as “stopping.”

Frets - strips of metal that run across the short dimension of the long skinny fretboard. When you push down a string with your finger in between the frets, the string is held very tightly against the fret.

G

Guitar - a large fretted string instrument. It usually has six or more strings in comparison to the ukulele’s four strings.

I

Improvisation - Musical improvisation means to make up music as you are playing.

K

Key - short for “key signature,” which is a group of flats or sharps at the beginning of each line of written music. The key signature matches up to a specific group of sounds that sound good together. These sounds have precise relationships with one another, and a name: “scale.” Usually the name of the key is the same as the name of the chord that starts or ends the song. In most folk and pop music the starting and ending chords are the same.

L

Lead sheet - a way of writing out a song without using notes on a musical staff to show the pitches of the melody. Instead, the words are written out with chord stamps above them. You have to learn the melody of the song from hearing it sung to be able to use a lead sheet of a song.

M

Machete - another small guitar-like instrument like the braguinha, cavaquinho, and rajão.

Major - a type of chord. The distances between the pitches of a major chord make it sound happy or bright to most people.

Measure - the space on a musical staff between two bar lines. Every measure begins with a strong beat.

Melody - notes played one at time, one after the other.

Minor - another type of chord. The pitch relationships of a minor chord make it sound dark or sad to most people.

Mode – another word for scale.

Musical improvisation - to make up music as you are playing.

N

Natural - a musical symbol placed in front of a musical note. It cancels any sharp or flat symbol that would normally apply to that note.

Note - a round symbol that is placed on a line or space of a musical staff. Some notes are circles or ovals; other types of notes are circles or ovals with lines attached. The circle or oval part of the note can be filled in (solid black) or left empty (white). This circle or oval is called the note head. Each note represents one sound. The color (either black or white) of the note head combined with the stem (the vertical line) indicates how long each sound should last. Sometimes the word “note” is used to refer to just the sounds. For example, you might say, “she played a lot of notes in that song.”

Nut - the raised ridge at the top of the ukulele fretboard. It holds the strings slightly away from the fretboard so they can vibrate.

O

Octave - distance to the same letter note, either higher or lower. You might hear an octave in action when your mom and dad sing the same note and your dad’s voice is lower and your mom’s is higher but they both sound like they are singing the same note. In Western folk music we have eight notes in an octave. “Oct” means “eight.” Two other examples of words that use “oct” to mean eight are octagon and octopus.

Octave transposition – Rewriting a song’s melody so it goes up, rather than down, so ukuleles without a “low G” tuning can play it.

P

Pickup - a pickup means the music begins on a weak beat instead of a strong beat. Almost all music is organized into patterns of strong and weak beats. One very common pattern is strong-weak-weak-weak. Almost all the songs in this book use this pattern. Another common pattern is strong-weak-weak. “*Amazing Grace*” uses this pattern.

Pitch - whether a sound is high or low. An example of a high sound would be birds tweeting. An example of a low sound would be a thunderstorm.

Pluck - pulling your right (strumming) hand finger against a string firmly and then gradually releasing it so the string vibrates and you hear a nice clear musical sound.

R

Rajão - a Portuguese fretted string instrument, similar to a small guitar. Braguinha, cavaquinho and machete are other similar instruments.

Rhythm - how sounds make patterns in time. For example, a rainstorm has a different rhythm than a rooster crowing.

Round - a song that can be sung by two groups or two people starting at different times. This way of singing doesn’t work with just any song – the song needs to have been written so that it will sound good when different parts of it are overlapped.

S

Scale - a ladder of musical notes arranged in a specific pattern, usually with small distances in pitch, all going up or down. The names of some common types of scales in Western music are major, minor, and blues. There are hundreds of types of scales in the world.

Second position - means your finger 1 (index finger) is in the second fret, one fret away from the tuning pegs.

Sharp - a musical symbol placed in front of musical note. It means to raise the sound slightly, by the amount that musicians call a “half step.”

Stopping - pushing a string against the fretboard with a finger of your left hand so that one end of the string rests against a fret. The other end of the string is tied to the bridge below the sound hole. We say the fret is “stopping” the string because the string can’t vibrate where it is being pushed onto the fret. The contact with the fret shortens the amount of the string that is vibrating. Only the part of the string that is in the air and not touching anything is free to vibrate.

Sound hole - round hole in the body of the ukulele.

Spiritual – a song created by African Americans that imparted Christian beliefs and values while also describing the hardships of slavery.

Staff - a musical staff is made of five equally spaced horizontal lines. There are four spaces. Each line and space of the musical staff represents a specific musical pitch. A tab staff is also made of equally spaced horizontal lines but there are four instead of five for the ukulele. See “tab staff.”

Stem - a vertical line attached to the round part of a musical note. The stem helps indicate the rhythm of the note. Note stems are shorter than bar lines and are attached directly to a round note symbol.

String numbers - ukulele strings are numbered from the floor to the ceiling when you are holding the uke in playing position. That means the string closest to your eyes is string 4 with a pitch of G. String 3 has a pitch of C. String 2 has a pitch of E, and string 1 is closest to the floor and has a pitch of A.

Strum 1- downward strums with a steady beat. Another way to think of it is down strums with equal time between each strum so that the strums sound evenly spaced in time.

Strum 2 - even down-up strokes played with a steady beat. This means there is an equal amount of time between each down and up strum so they sound evenly spaced in time.

Strum 3 - down-up strokes to a steady beat, but the time after the down stroke is longer than the time after the up stroke. Some well-known songs such as *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* or Queen’s *We are the Champions* use a 6/8 time signature. The pattern of beats in 6/8 time is STRONG-weak-weak STRONG-weak-weak. Usually when we strum a song with a 6/8 time signature we use Strum 3. We do a down strum on the STRONG and an up strum on the second weak beat just before the next STRONG. Most listeners will hear this music as having steady beats that are unevenly divided. Your feeling when you play will be long-short long-short. This long-short pattern is the feeling of Strum 3.

T

Tablature, or tab staff - a staff especially for fretted stringed instruments including the ukulele. Each line represents one string of the ukulele. There are numbers on the tab staff that tell the player which fret to stop the string on.

Tag- a tag is fragment of music that creates a distinct end to a song. In other words, the listener hears the song end without a gradual fade in volume.

Transpose – To play music originally in one scale in a different scale.

Treble clef – A clef is a musical symbol used to indicate the pitch of the notes written on the staff. It is always shown at the beginning of each line or staff of music. The treble clef is also known as the G clef and it indicates that the second line up from the bottom of the staff is G4, the same pitch as the ukulele G string (with standard ukulele tuning.)

Triple meter – a time signature with three beats per measure.

Third position - means your finger 1 (index finger) is in the third fret, two frets away from the tuning pegs.

Time signature - the numbers at the beginning of each song on the staff immediately to the right of the clef. It tells you how many beats are in each measure and what the pattern of strong and weak beats is in the song. The 4/4 time signature has the pattern strong-weak-weak-weak. The 3/4 time signature has the pattern strong-weak-weak. The 6/8 time signature has the pattern STRONG-weak-weak STRONG-weak-weak. Every measure begins with a strong beat.

Turn around - a passage at the end of a section of music which leads to the next section.

Tuning pegs - located just beyond the nut. Each string is wound around a tuning peg. You can change the pitch of the string by turning the peg to tighten or loosen the string. Tightening the string makes the pitch go higher (a sound more like birds chirping or a girl’s voice). Loosening the string makes the pitch go down (a sound more like thunderstorm or a man’s voice).

Transposing - playing or singing music starting on a different pitch but keeping the same sound of the melody and chords. When we transpose music, we change what is called the “key.”

V

Vamp - a short section of music that is repeated many times.

W

Work song - a song people sing while working to help them stay together or to express their feelings about their job.

Recommended Reading

Here are some other great ukulele resources to check out:

[**21 Songs in 6 Days: Learn Ukulele the Easy Way**](#) by Rebecca Bogart and Jenny Peters: Learn five basic chords (C, C7, F, G7 and Am) and three fundamental strumming patterns by working through the six days and 40-plus lesson videos.

[**Easy Ukulele Songs: Five with Five Chords**](#) by Rebecca Bogart and Jenny Peters: Continue playing five chord songs and tab melodies year-round with this short book. Comes with 10 lesson videos to help you learn the songs.

[**21 Easy Ukulele Songs for Christmas**](#) by Rebecca Bogart and Jenny Peters: Great sounding yet easy to play versions of seasonal favorites beginning ukulele players who have learned the C, F, and G7 chords and a few basic strums. Includes online lesson videos.

[**21 MORE Songs in 6 Days: Learn Intermediate Ukulele the Easy Way**](#) by Rebecca Bogart and Jenny Peters: Learn the most important intermediate ukulele chords, how to fingerpick melodies and accompaniments, and new fancier strumming patterns. All songs include a standard music staff and tab notation. Plus, all songs include several strumming patterns. Also included is an introduction to blues improvisation.

[**21 Easy Ukulele Hymns**](#) by Rebecca Bogart and Jenny Peters: 22 favorite hymns arranged in order of difficulty. The book begins with fourteen 2 and 3 chord hymns. Many hymns are presented in 2 keys so you can choose a comfortable key for singing or playing. There's melody tab and a suggested strumming pattern for every hymn.

[**Ukulele for All: Beginning Method for Group or Individual Study Book**](#) by Rebecca Bogart and Jenny Peters includes a teacher manual, student book and complete audio/video teaching curriculum. Designed so you can successfully teach kids (grades 4-8) how to play the ukulele in as little as 30 minutes a week. Includes melody tabs and dedicated chapter on blues improvisation.

[**First 50 Songs You Should Play on Ukulele**](#) by Hal Leonard Corporation. This big music publishing company owns a lot of copyrights so there is plenty of current music in this book. You should be able to tackle many of them after completing the Beginning Ukulele Songs series. Songs are presented with melody in standard music notation and chord symbols (no tab).

[**Ukulele for Beginners: How to Play the Ukulele in Easy-to-Follow Steps**](#) by Will Grove-White: This beautifully designed book has a lot of great content about the history of the ukulele and some of its famous players. A good gift for a fellow ukulele lover.

[**Ukulele for Dummies**](#) by Brett McQueen and Alistair Wood: Another good book to try next. Also begins with three-chord songs.

[**Ukulele Exercises for Dummies**](#) by Brett McQueen and Alistair Wood: Another good book for learning how to practice and improve your ukulele skills. This book is systematic and written by fine teachers.

[**The Daily Ukulele**](#) by Jim and Liz Beloff: This fabulous book is full of good songs – most of the recent tunes are from the 60s and 70s. There is no lesson information, but now that you know five chords you should be able to tackle some of them.

[**The Daily Ukulele Leap Year Edition**](#) by Jim Beloff: More fabulous songs from Jim. This version has more modern tunes by groups such as Black Keys and Green Day.

[**Easy Songs for Ukulele**](#) by Lil' Rev: Fingerpick the melodies of 20 pop, folk, country, and blues songs.

[**Ukulele Song Books 1 and 2**](#) by Rosa Suen: Many folk and popular songs are written out with words and chords in these two books.

[**Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain, Revised and Expanded Edition**](#) by Oliver Sacks: A scientific exploration of music's physical effect on the human brain. Full of interesting real-world stories.

[**This Is Your Brain on Music**](#) by Daniel Levitin: Explains our physical and emotional attachment to music, using hundreds of contemporary artists and songs as examples

About the Ukulele Sisters



Jenny Peters is a Grammy nominated full time music educator in the Chicago area. She has taught thousands of beginners on a variety of instruments during her many years of teaching.

Jenny developed her unique beginner-friendly method of teaching ukulele when she learned to play in order to include ukulele to her fourth grade General Music classes. She has gone on to become a popular YouTube ukulele personality who owns seven different kinds of ukuleles!

Jenny and Rebecca have now written six books in the Beginning Ukulele Songs series: Book 1, *21 Songs in 6 Days Learn Ukulele the Easy Way*; Book 2, *Easy Ukulele Songs: Five with Five Chords*; Book 3, *21 Easy Ukulele Songs for Christmas*; Book 4, *21 MORE Songs in 6 Days: Learn Intermediate Ukulele the Easy Way*; Book 5, *21 Easy Ukulele Folk Songs*, and Book 6, *21 Easy Ukulele Hymns*.

The Illinois Music Educators Association has invited Jenny to do presentations on how to teach ukulele, and she has written articles on the subject for the magazine of the Illinois chapter of the American String Teachers Association. She is a member of the National Association for Music Education (NaFME), the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) and the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP). Jenny plays six other instruments besides ukulele: piano, violin, viola, cello, bass and organ. She currently heads a successful elementary and middle school orchestra program. Before that she taught Elementary General Music for ten years.

Jenny has served on the faculties of Lake Forest College and the College of Lake County. She taught piano, violin and chamber music at the Music Institute of Chicago and the Lake Forest Music Institute. She holds a Master of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Illinois and Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Washington. She earned her teacher's certification from Trinity International University to share her passion for music with students of diverse backgrounds.

Rebecca Bogart has been introducing beginners of all ages to music for over 40 years. She believes that helping more people play music makes the world a better place.

She learned to play ukulele from her sister Jenny using the method taught in the Beginning Ukulele Songs series. While she has spent countless hours playing music with two hands at the piano, learning to have the left-hand fret chords while the right hand strummed was a surprisingly challenging experience! Rebecca brings a ukulele beginner's perspective to the Ukulele Sisters' writing team.

Rebecca has been passionate about the piano and music her entire life. She has played for audiences in Italy, taught master classes at Harvard and won more than a few piano competitions. She made her solo debut at Carnegie Hall in early 2014. Several of Rebecca's piano students have won national and international awards and appeared on NPR's radio show "From the Top." She has been a featured presenter at the California Music Teachers Association and has recorded a CD of

American solo piano music *American Retrospective*. She completed her Masters degree in Piano at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

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