

## The Cuckoo Song

Doc Watson [version](#). Traditional song recorded in 1929 by Clarence Ashley and many others since, more notes on the music, arrangement and links to other versions at the end of this document. **Sing along parts** shown bolded in italics. New chorus after solos. Original chorus at end.

### **Chorus:**

Fm Eb Fm  
Oh the Cuckoo (***oh the Cuckoo***) is a pretty bird (***is a pretty bird***) and she ***warbles as she flies***  
Eb Fm  
But she never (***but she never***) hollers cuckoo (***hollers cuckoo***) til the ***4th day of July***

Jack of diamonds, jack of diamonds, I know you of old  
You have robbed my poor pockets of my silver and my gold  
**(Chorus)**

I have gambled in England and I gambled in Spain  
I'll bet you ten dollars I'll beat you next game  
**(Chorus)**

(solos)

Seven sisters, nine bright shiners, all the stars hang down and cry  
On my way to greener pastures, if you go, why not I

### **New Chorus:**

Oh the Cuckoo (***oh the Cuckoo***) is a pretty bird (***is a pretty bird***) and she ***warbles as she flies***  
She'll bring you (***she'll bring you***) no trouble (***no trouble***) and she'll ***tell you no lies***

I'm a walkin' and a talkin' and a wanderin' go I  
I'm a walkin' for my true love, he will come by and by  
**(New Chorus)**

Oh the leaves they, they do wither, and the roots they do die (*all stop on "die", then 2 beat pause*)

And your love he, he will leave you and he'll never say why (WHY WHY)  
**(New Chorus)**

If he should leave me (***uh, huh***) I will get up, (***mmm hmmm***) in my best finery  
And I'll walk as (***uh, huh***) proud past him, (***mmm hmm***), as he walked by me.  
**(New Chorus Acapella!)**

**(together):**

**Gonna build me a cabin on a mountain far away**

**Gonna live there with my true love til we both do pass away**

**(original Chorus together):**

**Oh the Cuckoo, is a pretty bird, and she warbles as she flies**

**But she never hollers cuckoo til the 4th day of July**

Notes on the music:

We will be doing the song in Fm.

2 chords Fm and Eb

Typical 4 bars:

Fm            EbFm

1xxx2xxx3xxx4xxx

Sometimes hangs on the Fm between verses a little longer.

Typically there are 4 bars of instrumental (1 time through the same chord progression) between the verses.

Same 4 bar chord progression for solos, figure 16 bar solos for as many people who want one.

*Links to other versions:* Clarence Ashley version you can find at about 3 ½ minutes into [this](#) video. Some history of his 1929 recording in the interview that opens the video. A rendition based on the Doc Watson version by Billy Strings (with some more history) [here](#). Another version [here](#) by the Holy Modal Rounders. John Sherman version with just accordion and vocal [here](#).