

HAL LEONARD

# UKULELE METHOD BOOK 1

BY LIL' REV

AUDIO INCLUDED



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# UKULELE METHOD BOOK 1

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Hal Leonard Ukulele Method Book 1. This method has been designed to help you accomplish your goal of becoming a proficient ukulele player. While there are many styles and techniques to learn from, this book will focus on individual note or melody playing.

Once you begin, you will find that the ukulele is a magical little instrument that always seems to attract a smile. It really has the power to make people happy. Whether it is the novelty of its size or its infectious rhythmic nature, you can expect that your endeavors to play the uke will result in a lot of toe-tapping, finger-snapping, hand-clapping, and plain old-fashioned singing along.

Over time, you will also find that the ukulele's potential extends far beyond the parameters of simple strumming to include fingerpicking, solo, lead and chord-melody playing, intricate strums, rolls, tremolo, slides, and a whole slew of rhythmic and novelty effects.

Practice may not always make perfect, but it sure helps to keep ya moving along. While it is important to work hard, please remember that music should first of all be fun! You don't have to practice for ten hours a day in order to improve. Rather, strive for more consistent practice over shorter periods of time. With diligence, soon you will master important techniques and concepts.

Good luck and happy strumming!

—Lil' Rev

Special Thanks to Jennifer Rupp, Will Branch, and Dennis Felber for technical assistance.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lil' Rev is a Milwaukee, Wisconsin-based award-winning multi-instrumentalist, writer, and music historian. He tours the U.S. teaching and performing original and traditional folk, blues, ethnic, and old-time music.

To learn more about Lil' Rev's schedule, recordings, or programs, visit [www.lilrev.com](http://www.lilrev.com)

## ABOUT THE AUDIO

The audio in this book contains recordings of select exercises and tunes within the lessons. Your goal should be to learn the piece well enough to play along with the recorded uke. Many examples have both chords and melodies written out, so you can play one part while the recorded uke plays the other.

Recorded at Velvet Sky, Milwaukee, WI

Engineered by Scott Finch

Performed by Lil' Rev

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UKULELE

Most ukulele historians agree that the birth of the ukulele began in 1879, when Portuguese agricultural workers arrived in Honolulu aboard the English ship Ravenscrag. Many of these workers—like Augusto Dias, Manuel Nunes, Joao Fernandes, Joao Luiz Correa, and Jose do Espirito Santo—brought with them a remarkable ability to play the machete (a small guitar-like instrument with four cat-gut strings, the precursor to the uke). In turn, these workers also shared an intense passion for working with wood, and thus began a rich tradition of ukulele craftsmanship on the islands.

The year 1915 brought with it the Pan-Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco. Here, the Hawaiian contingent and their beloved ukulele helped to spark its popular appeal amongst players and consumers alike. What followed were Hawaiian-themed songs and musicians, a sheet-music industry that regularly printed ukulele chord symbols on its music, uke-strumming Vaudeville entertainers, and mainland manufacturing companies like Martin, Gibson, Harmony, Lyon & Healy, and Epiphone all working overtime to meet the demand for quality ukes.

Some of the greatest players to emerge from this early era included Cliff Edwards (Ukulele Ike), Wendell Hall (The Red-Headed Uke Player), Johnny Marvin (Honey Duke), Roy Smeck, Frank Crumit, King Bennie Nawahi, Ukulele Bailey, and George Formby (in the UK).





Courtesy of David Garrick

Cliff Edwards: the Golden Voice of the 1920s and '30s.



From BBC Picture Archives/Redferns

George Formby: the Uke Star of the U.K.

P  
T  
w  
S

While the depression years of the 1930s and the war years of the forties may have brought a temporary lapse of interest, uke hysteria began anew in the 1950s with the appearance of baritone uke player Arthur Godfrey, whose numerous television and radio appearances helped to put the ukulele back in the limelight. In the next decade, Tiny Tim's 1968 novelty cover of the Nick Lucas tune "Tiptoe Through the Tulips" made quite a splash, and it's safe to say it is still the best-known uke song amongst non-players in the U.S.

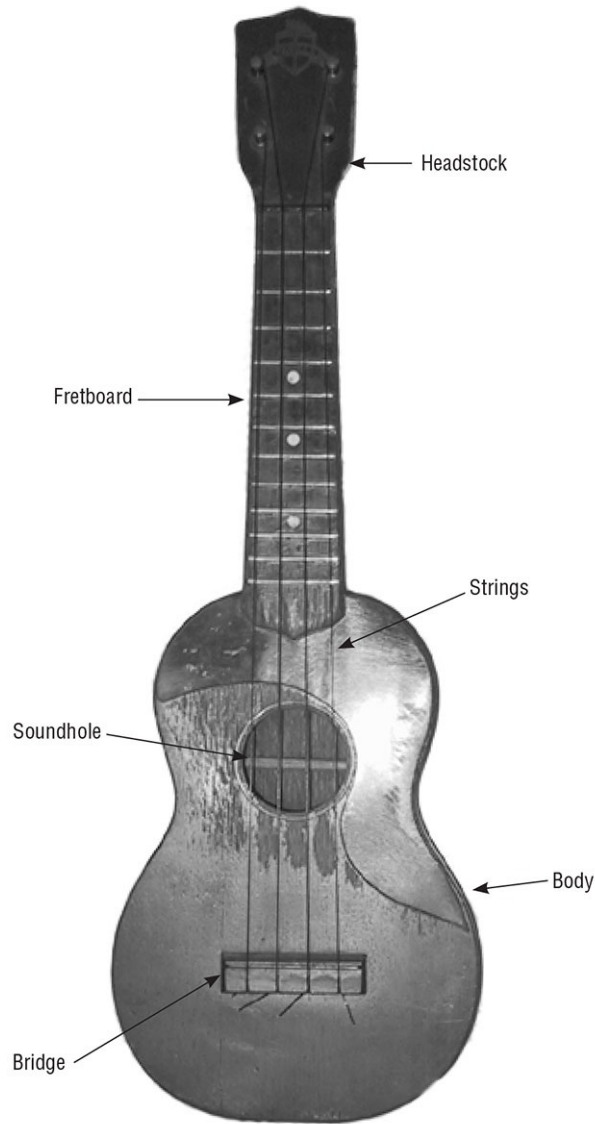
Today's ukulele revival is experiencing a groundswell of interest amongst both the young and old, while drawing from traditional and eclectic sources. There is a vitality to the current crop of professional players, all of whom treat the uke with a lot of historic respect while continuing to push the envelope in many new directions. We are just as likely to hear Canadian virtuoso James Hill play his incredible rendition of the "Super Mario Brothers" theme as we are to hear the young Hawaiian star Jake Shimabukuro play Paul Simon's "Mrs. Robinson," or for that matter, ukulele guru Jumpin' Jim Beloff croon the classic "Bye Bye Blackbird."

So ya see, once you learn the basics of picking and strumming, the sky is the limit... for the history is still being written!

**YOUR UKULELE**

This book is designed for use with any type of soprano, concert, or tenor ukulele—whether they are wood-bodied, banjoukulele, or resonator-style ukuleles. You may use any of these models to study the music in this manual.

# Wood-Bodied Ukulele



# Resonator Ukulele



# Banjo-Ukulele



## PLAYING POSITION

There are many ways to hold your ukulele comfortably. Typically, you will be seated, but you may find it necessary to stand on occasion. See what works best for you.

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The seated position allows you to rest the uke on your right leg. Or, apply a small amount of pressure with your right forearm to press the uke up against your right side rib cage.

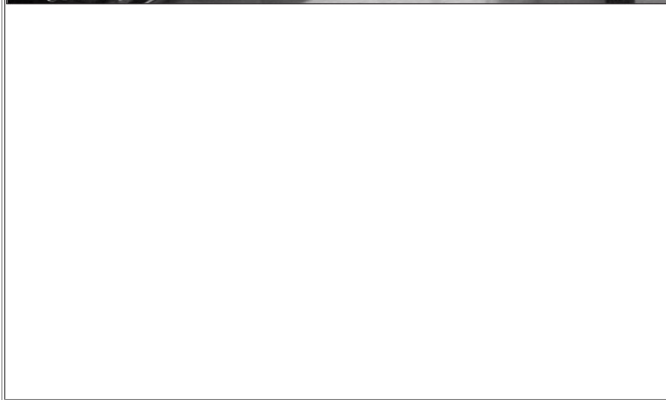


The standing position takes a little more getting used to. You must apply a little more pressure with your right forearm to keep the uke in place.

Some fo  
hold the

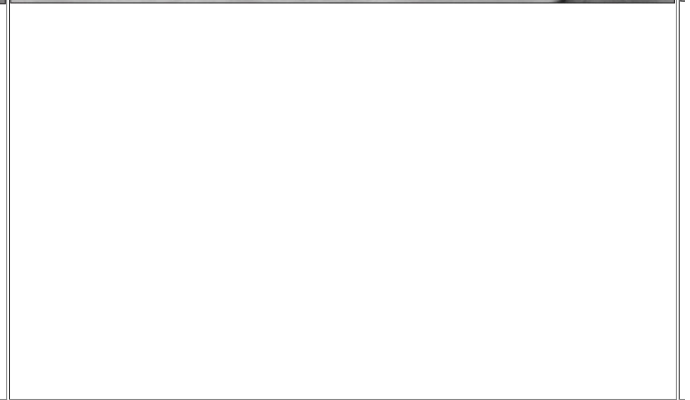
### THE RIGHT HAND

Once you are comfortable holding the uke, you will need to become familiar with the proper hand, thumb, and finger positions so that you will be able to pick and strum properly.



Hand

Hold your hand just slightly above the sound hole with your fingers extended over the fretboard.



Thumb

Place your thumb over the lower end of the fretboard for a gentle brush.

### TUNING

When you tune your ukulele, you will adjust the pitch (highness or lowness) of each individual string. When you tighten a string you will raise the pitch. When you loosen a string you will lower the pitch.

### TUNING TO THE AUDIO



The strings on your uke are numbered 1 through 4, with string 4 being the one closest to your chest. This book uses the standard C tuning (the most common ukulele tuning), so your uke would be tuned as follows:



Pitch:	G	C	E	A
String:	4	3	2	1

Listen to the correct pitch given on the audio track and gently turn the tuning key until the sound of each string matches the sound on the track.

### TUNING WITH AN ELECTRONIC TUNER

An electronic tuner will “hear” whether or not your strings are in tune, allowing you to adjust them to the correct pitch. While I advocate learning how to tune by ear (being able to recognize and match the sound of a pitch without the help of a machine), an electronic tuner can be real handy when you are just starting out and have not yet developed the ability to recognize in-tune pitches. A tuner’s accuracy and efficiency make it a useful tool.

### TUNING BY EAR

Tune the G string (string 4) to a reliable source like a piano, tuning fork, or pitch pipe. Then tune the other strings to the following notes to create this musical phrase (as heard on the first audio track):

“My dog has fleas”

Pitch : G C E A  
String: 4 3 2 1

dog has My fleas

C E G A  
3rd string 2nd string 4th string 1st string

### RELATIVE TUNING

Often, you may have to tune your instrument to itself when there is no other source available. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Assume the third string is tuned correctly to C.
2. Press down on the third string behind the fourth fret (E) and tune the second string until they sound alike.
3. Press down on the second string at the fifth fret (A) and tune the open first string to it.
4. Finally, press down on the second string above the third fret (G) and tune the fourth string to it.

When all of the strings are in tune, they will sound out the familiar musical phrase:

My Dog Has Fleas  
G C E A

1st string  
2nd string  
3rd string  
4th string

### MUSICAL SYMBOLS

Music is written with notes on a staff. The staff has five lines and four spaces between the lines. Where a note is written on the staff determines its pitch (highness or lowness). At the beginning of the staff is a clef sign. Ukulele music is written in the treble clef.

**STAFF** **TREBLE CLEF**

Each line and space of the staff has a letter name. The lines are (from bottom to top) E-G-B-D-F, which you can remember as “Every Good Boy Does Fine.” The spaces are (from bottom to top) F-A-C-E, which spells “face.”

**LINES** **SPACES**

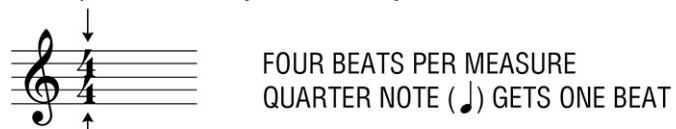
The staff is divided into several parts by bar lines. The space between two bar lines is called a measure (also known as a “bar”). At the end of a piece of music a double bar is placed on the staff.

**BAR LINES** **MEASURE**  
BAR LINE BAR LINE DOUBLE BAR LINE (transition) DOUBLE BAR LINE (end)

Each measure contains a group of beats. Beats are the steady pulse of music. You respond to the pulse or beat when you tap your foot.

The two numbers placed next to the clef sign are the **time signature**.

The top number tells you how many beats are in one measure.



The bottom number of the time signature tells you what kind of note will receive one beat.

Notes indicate the length (number of counts) of a musical sound.

NOTE VALUES    A WHOLE NOTE = 4 beats, C HALF NOTE = 2 beats, D QUARTER NOTE = 1 beat

When different kinds of notes are placed on different lines or spaces, you will know the pitch of the note and how long to play the sound.

## NOTES ON THE C STRING

We begin learning notes on the C string, or third string, because in C tuning, the fourth (G) string is usually not fingered except when making chords. However, many players (like Hawaii's legendary Ohta San) tune the G string low so that it can be used for melody playing.

Diagram showing the fretboard for the C string (third string). The C note is shown as an open string (0 fret), and the D note is shown as the 2nd fret. Below each diagram is a musical staff showing the note on a treble clef.

Play these whole notes using your thumb, and count "1-2-3-4."

1 **C** **D** **C**  
 COUNT: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Now try playing C and D using half notes. Count "1-2-3-4."

2 **C** **C** **D** **D** **C** **C**  
 COUNT: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

In tablature (or tab) notation, the horizontal lines represent strings. The numbers indicate which fret to play (0 = open). You'll always see the tab staff under the main staff.

Keep using your thumb, and count "1-2-3-4" while playing these quarter notes.

3 **C** **C** **C** **C** **D** **D** **D** **D** **C** **D** **C** **C**  
 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4  
 T A E C G  
 0 0 0 0 2 2 2 2 0 2 0 0  
 ↑ open 3rd string ↑ 2nd fret

Let's mix it up a little more now!

4 **C** **C** **D** **D** **D** **D** **C** **C** **C** **C** **D** **C**  
 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4  
 T A E C G  
 0 0 2 2 2 2 0 0 0 0 2 0

## NOTES ON THE E STRING

Diagram showing the fretboard for the E string (fifth string). The E note is shown as an open string (0 fret), the F note as the 1st fret, and the G note as the 3rd fret. Below each diagram is a musical staff showing the note on a treble clef.

Count "1-2-3-4" as you did on the last exercise.

Each time you repeat these exercises, try picking up the speed without sacrificing accuracy.



5

E E E E F F F F G G G G G G E E

T  
A  
B

Now let's mix it up again.

6

E E F F G G F F G G F F G F E E

T  
A  
B

7

E F G G E G F F G F E E G F E

T  
A  
B

### C AND E STRING REVIEW

C D E F G

OPEN 2ND FRET OPEN 1ST FRET 3RD FRET

### FRÈRE JACQUES

(Are You Sleeping?)

Children's Melody

8

T  
A  
B



### MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

9

T 0 2 0 2 | 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 | 0 3 3

A

B

0 2 0 2 | 0 0 0 | 2 2 0 2 | 0

This American folk melody, like “Skip to My Lou,” “Old Dan Tucker,” and so many other “play party” tunes, has become an enduring classic. Just for fun, I have added a schnazzy little ending.

Gray chord symbols are used throughout this book to indicate the chords that back up your melody—they can be played by an instructor or another uke player.



### GO TELL AUNT RHODY

American Folk Song

10

C G7 C

Go tell Aunt Rho - dy. Go tell Aunt Rho - dy.

T 0 0 2 | 0 0 | 2 2 1 | 0 2 0

A

B

G7 C C6

Go tell Aunt Rho - dy the old grey goose is dead.

3 3 1 | 0 0 0 | 2 0 2 0 | 0 0 0 0

This classical uke arrangement will help you get familiar with many of the notes you’ve just learned while switching back and forth between the C and E strings.



### ODE TO JOY

Beethoven

11

C G C G

T  
A  
B

0 0 1 3 | 3 1 0 2 | 0 0 2 0 | 0 2 2

C F C G C

0 0 1 3 | 3 1 0 2 | 0 0 2 0 | 2 0 0

NOTES ON THE A STRING

A B C

open 2nd fret 3rd fret

Count "1-2-3-4" as you did on the previous exercises.

12

A A B B C C B B A

1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3

T  
A  
B

0 0 | 2 2 | 3 3 | 2 2 0

Try saying each note aloud as you play it.

13

A A A A B B B B C C C C B B A A

1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

T  
A  
B

0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 3 3 3 3 | 2 2 0 0

Now let's mix it up again.

14

A B C B A A B C B A

1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

T  
A  
B

0 2 3 2 | 0 | 0 2 3 2 | 0

Now let's play a basic melody everyone knows using the notes we've learned on the C, E, and A strings. Observe the quarter notes and half notes, and play with your thumb.



## TWINKLE, TWINKLE LITTLE STAR

Children's Melody

15

Great melodies never stray too far from our hearts. Often they inspire parodies, like the classic "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," which we also know as "Bah Bah Black Sheep" and "The Alphabet Song."

Little known and often neglected is the great body of work recorded in the 1920s and thirties by old-time country, blues, and jug bands. Their use of the ukulele demonstrates not only its percussive role, but also the full gamut of uke styling—from intricate strums, rolls, and fingerpicking to tremolo and single-string lead work—all, of course, complimented by scat singing, whistling, yodeling, and other vocal embellishments of the period. Some of these important bands were the Hillbillies, Fiddlin' Powers Family, Jimmie Rodgers, Memphis Jug Band, and DaCosta Woltz's Southern Broadcasters.

### PICKUP NOTES

Sometimes a melody will begin before the first beat of the first measure. These notes are called pickup notes and they appear in a partial measure called the pickup measure. Always remember to count the missing beats before playing your first pickup note. When a song begins with pickup notes, the last measure will be short the exact number of beats used as pickups.

The pickup measure in this exercise has only one quarter note. Count "1-2-3-" silently before playing the quarter note on beat 4. Notice that the last measure is short by one beat to balance out the one-beat pickup note.

16

The following pickup measure has two quarter notes. Count "1-2-" silently before playing beats 3 and 4.

17

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2

T  
A  
B

**DOTTED NOTES**

When you see a dotted note, hold that note 50% longer than you would normally hold it. For example, a dotted half note (B) lasts as long as a half note plus a quarter note. A dot adds half the value of the note.

Watch for the dotted half notes on this one.

18

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

T  
A  
B



**OH! SUSANNA**

Stephen C. Foster



19 C

I come from A - la - ba - ma with a ban - jo on my

T  
A  
B

G7 C

knee. We're goin' to Lou - si - an - a, our

G7 C F

love for to see. Oh Su - san - na oh

C G7 C

don't you cry for me. We're goin' to Lou - si -

G7 C

an - a just to strum a - while you see.

**THE C MAJOR SCALE**

**PUTTIN' IT ALL TOGETHER**

Begin by playing the scale in both directions, up and down. Use your thumb (or a felt-tip pick) and go slowly, gradually building up speed. While you are playing the scale, say the notes aloud as you pick them. When you can do this smoothly without breaking your rhythm, then you're ready to begin playing some more basic melodies.



20

C D E F G A B C C B A G F E D C

T  
A  
B

0 2 0 1 | 3 0 2 3 | 3 2 0 3 | 1 0 2 0

Try playing up and down the C scale, picking twice per note. Your goal is to sound smooth and even.

00:00 / 00:00

21

C C D D E E F F G G A A B B C C

T  
A  
B

0 0 2 2 | 0 0 1 1 | 3 3 0 0 | 2 2 3 3

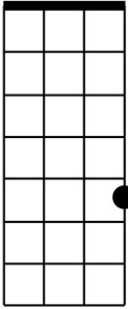
C C B B A A G G F F E E D D C C

3 3 2 2 | 0 0 | 3 3 | 1 1 0 0 | 2 2 0 0

## HIGH D AND HIGH E

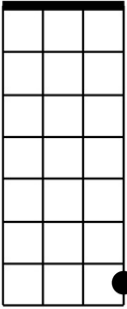
You already know the fingering for low D and E. Higher versions (or octaves) of these notes exist along the A string. Here they are:

**D**



5th fret

**E**



7th fret

Try playing high D and high E using half notes. Count "1-2-3-4."

00:00 / 00:00

22

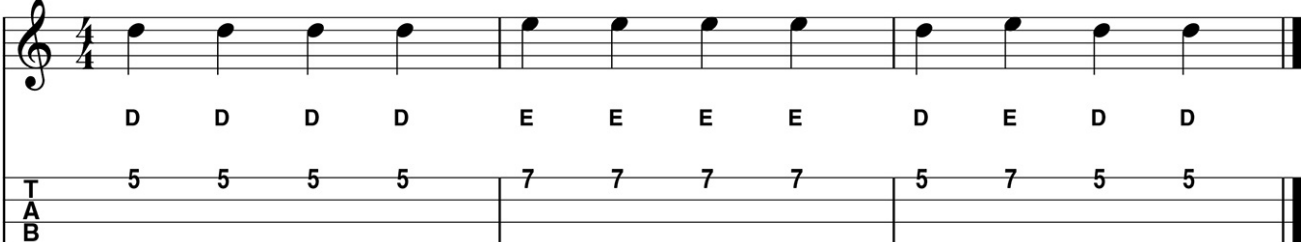


D                  D                  E                  E                  D                  D  
 1                  2                  3                  4                  1                  2                  3                  4                  1                  2                  3                  4

T                  5                  5                  7                  7                  5                  5  
 A  
 B

Remember, use your thumb and count while playing these quarter notes.

23

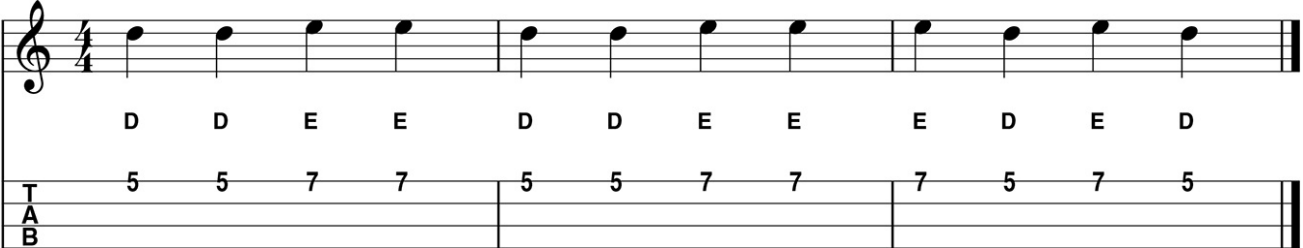


D    D    D    D    E    E    E    E    D    E    D    D

T    5    5    5    5    7    7    7    7    5    7    5    5  
 A  
 B

Let's mix it up a little more now!

24



D    D    E    E    D    D    E    E    E    D    E    D

T    5    5    7    7    5    5    7    7    7    5    7    5  
 A  
 B

This lovely folk melody was known as "Aura Lee" until 1956, when Elvis Presley's rendition made it popular as "Love Me Tender."

00:00 / 00:00

## AURA LEE

Traditional

25

**TIES**

This symbol (K) is known as a tie. When you see two notes tied together (DID), even across measures, play them as a single note. In other words, you simply add the first note to the second and hold them out for the full duration of both notes.

In the twelfth measure of "Wildwood Flower," the number (3) over the first two notes means that you should play these notes with the third (or ring) finger of your left hand. Watch for ties!



**WILDWOOD FLOWER**

Traditional, Late 1800s

26

C G7

I will sing and I'll dance and my laugh shall be

TAB: 0 1 | 3 0 3 | 0 1 0 | 2 0 2

C

gay. I will charm ev - 'ry heart and the

TAB: 0 | 0 1 | 3 0 3 | 0 1 0

G7 C

crowd I will sway. I will live yet to

TAB: 2 0 2 | 0 | 3 3 | 7 7 5

F C

see him re - gret the dark hour when he

TAB: 3 3 2 | 0 3 0 | 3 | 0 2

G7 C

left me lone - ly this frail wild - wood flower.

TAB: 0 0 | 0 3 0 | 2 0 2 | 0

**EIGHTH NOTES**

We're about to encounter some tunes with eighth notes. Two eighth notes equal one quarter note in value.

1 quarter note D = 2 eighth notes HD

One eighth note is written with a flag (E). Consecutive eighth notes are connected with a beam (HD).

To count eighth notes, say "and" in between the beats. In 4/4 time, there are eight eighth notes in a measure.

1 2 3 4 = 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Try these eighth notes. Go slowly and evenly, and count "1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and."

27

T  
A  
B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

The next tune mixes quarter and eighth notes.



### FRÈRE JACQUES

(Are You Sleeping?)

Children's Melody

28

T  
A  
B 0 2 0 0 | 0 2 0 0 | 0 1 3 | 0 1 3

3 0 3 1 0 0 | 3 0 3 1 0 0 | 0 3 0 | 0 3 0

First, play this melody using mostly quarter notes.



### SHORTENING BREAD

Southern Folk Song

29

C G7 C

Mama's little baby loves short-nin', short-nin', mama's little baby loves short-nin' bread.

T  
A  
B 0 3 0 0 | 0 3 0 0 | 0 3 0 0 | 0 2 0

Now, play the same melody using eighth notes. As always, play very slowly at first, then gradually work up to speed.



### SHORTENING BREAD

Puttin' It All Together

30

C

Ma - ma's lit - tle ba - by loves short - nin', short - nin',

T  
A  
B

G7 C

Ma - ma's lit - tle ba - by loves short - nin' bread. Ma - ma's lit - tle ba - by loves

G7 C

short - nin', short - nin', Ma - ma's lit - tle ba - by loves short - nin' bread.

"The ukulele became the official instrument of the Islands when King Kalakaua took it up in 1886 and featured it for the first time with hula dancers."

-Acoustic Guitar and Other Fretted Instruments



## LITTLE BROWN JUG

Minstrel  
Old Time Country

31

C F G7

My wife and I lived all a-lone in a log-hut we

T 3 0 3 3 3 1 0 0 2 2 2 2 0 2  
A  
B

C F

called our own. She loved rum and I loved gin.

3 5 7 0 3 3 3 1 0 0

G7 C

To-gether we had lots of fun. Ha! Ha! Ha!

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

F G7 C

You and me. Lit-tle brown jug don't I love thee. Ha! Ha! Ha!

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

F G7 C

You and me. Lit-tle brown jug don't I love thee.

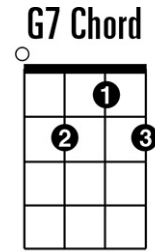
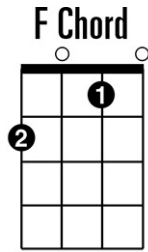
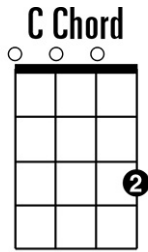
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"The ukulele had this advantage: not even a trained musician could tell if you were really playing it or just monkeying around with it." —Will Rogers

**PLAYING CHORDS**

**C, F, and G7 Chords**





A chord is a combination of three or more notes played together. The chord frames above are like maps of your ukulele's fretboard. As you've seen with single notes, the dots show which strings to depress at which frets. The numbers on the dots tell you which fingers to use. To play a C chord, for example, use the tip of the second finger of your left hand and depress the A string just behind the third fret. Strum all four strings with your right hand, and voilà! Now try the F and G7 chords.

Practice these chords by brushing down with your thumb across all four strings. Strum once for each slash in the measure. Note: concentrate on using your fingertips to depress the strings where shown, so that your fingers don't touch any of the wrong strings.

00:00 / 00:00

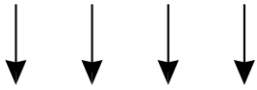
## STRUMMING CHORDS

Once you've learned some basic chords, it's time to begin working on some simple strumming techniques. The most basic way to strum chords is with your thumb, as shown.

### THUMB BRUSH STRUM



With your hand relaxed, let your thumb gently brush across the strings in a downward pattern.



COUNT: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4

Each time you brush down across all four strings, lift your hand back up without touching the strings and bring your hand back down to brush again. Do this until you can get a smooth rhythmic beat.

33

Chord diagrams for exercise 33: C, G7, C, G7, C, F, C, F, C.

Using this familiar two-chord melody, practice the thumb brush strum while singing the words to "Hush Little Baby."

34

Chord diagrams for exercise 34: C, G7, C, G7, C.

Hush little baby, don't say a word, Mama's gonna buy you a mockingbird.

And if that mockingbird don't sing, Mama's gonna buy you a diamond ring.

### FIRST-FINGER STRUM

The thumb brush may be the most basic way to strum, but the first-finger strum is the most common way to strum your ukulele. Make a loose fist with your right hand and let your first (pointer) finger curl out as shown. Place your hand over the lower fretboard and using the tip of your finger, strum down.



As you did with the thumb, brush down across all four strings, lift your hand back up without touching the strings, then brush down again.

35

### 12-BAR BLUES

The basic blues progression below is called a 12-bar blues, because it has twelve measures. From rock to country to pop, the 12-bar blues is the foundation upon which much of American music rests. It is the heartbeat of Chuck Berry, Bill Haley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and hundreds of others.

Practice this chord progression strumming slowly with this rhythmic strum pattern: down, down-up, down-up, down-up.

(Count: 1 ↓ 2 ↑ & 3 ↑ & 4 ↓ &)

### GENERIC BLUES

36

### FINGER AND THUMB STRUM

Now that you are comfortable strumming with your thumb and your first finger, let's combine them to create an interesting rhythm. The time signature is 4/4, four beats per measure. The count is "1-2-3-and-4."

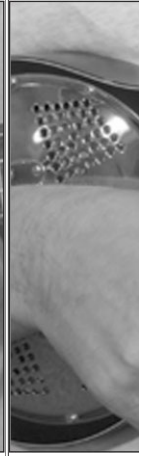
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1. Brush down with your finger on beat 1.



2. Brush down with your finger again on beat 2.



3. Brush down on beat 3.



4. Following quickly, brush up with your finger on the "and" of beat 3 (the eighth note after beat 3).



5. Brush down with your finger again on beat 4.

Listen to the next audio track to get a feel for this new strum pattern. There are many variations that you can play. On the next page is a graphic example of the main strum pattern and a slight variation of it, both of which you'll hear on the audio. The arrows represent downstrokes and upstrokes; F = finger, T = thumb.

						Variation						
F	F	F	T	F	F	F	F	F	T	F	F	F
↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↑
1	2	a	3	&	4	1	2	a	3	&	4	&

Practice this very slowly until you can keep a steady rhythmic beat of "1-2-a-3-and-4." It helps to count out loud.



**STRUM IT**

37

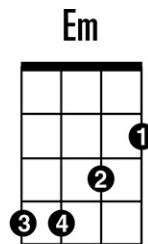
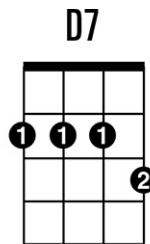
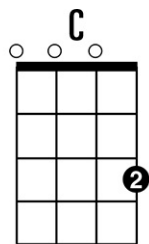
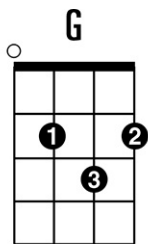
**C**

**G7**

**C**

## THE G CHORD FAMILY

### G, C, D7, and Em Chords



Repeat this progression until you can change chords smoothly. Try playing it with the finger strum pattern heard on the audio.



38

Now try the "Ooh-Wah Uke" progression in the key of G. Use the finger and thumb strum and variation that you just learned.



### OOH-WAH UKE

39

First, become comfortable with picking out the following melody. Then go back and learn the rhythm part by strumming the chords.



### BOIL 'EM CABBAGE DOWN

Bluegrass

40

Boil 'em cab - bage down, boys. Bake the hoe cakes brown, boys.

Chords: G, C, G, D7

Fingerings: 2 2 2 2, 3 3, 2 2 2 2, 0 0

The only song that I can sing is boil 'em cab - bage down.

Chords: G, C, G, D7, G

Fingerings: 2 2 2 2, 3 3 3, 2 2 0 0, 3

Boil 'em cab - bage down, boys. Bake the hoe cakes brown, boys.

Chords: C, G, D7

Fingerings: 2 2 2 2, 3 3, 2 2 2 2, 0 0

The only song that I can sing is boil 'em cab - bage down.

Chords: G, C, G, D7, G

Fingerings: 2 2 2 2, 3 3 3 3, 2 2 0 0, 3

### 3/4 TIME

While most of the songs we have studied so far have had four beats per measure, 3/4 time has only three beats per measure. One of the most common 3/4 patterns is called waltz time. A waltz is an old-fashioned dance that originated in Eastern Europe around the beginning of the eighteenth century. Today, this rhythm is an important part of American music.

THREE BEATS PER MEASURE  
QUARTER NOTE (♩) = ONE BEAT

COUNT: 1 2 3

We count: ONE-two-three,  
ONE-two-three,  
ONE-two-three.

Or we count: OOM-pah-pah,  
OOM-pah-pah,  
OOM-pah-pah.

There are literally thousands of songs in 3/4 or waltz time, including "Goodnight Irene," "Tennessee Waltz," "Melody of Love," "After the Ball," "Scarborough Fair," "Streets of Laredo," and "Norwegian Wood."

Here's a 3/4 picking exercise using the G and B notes. Count as you pick.

**Waltz**

41

Hawaii's late Queen Liliuakalani once said that the word ukulele meant "the gift that came home." Uku means "gift," and lele translates as "to come."

—Old Time Herald

Try this exercise in 3/4 time using the thumb brush strum.

42

**PLAYING THE 3/4 STRUM**

Here's one of the many ways to strum in 3/4 time:

1. Position your pointer finger over the fretboard as if you're about to strum;
2. finger a G chord;
3. strum down on beat 1, putting emphasis on that beat;
4. strum down again on beat 2;
5. follow that quickly with an up-strum on the "and" of beat 2;
6. finish with one final strum on beat 3.

The whole thing looks like this:

Now let's give it a try.

**WALTZ STRUM**

43

1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3

1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3

1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3 1 2 & 3

Play this well-known melody, then play the chord part using the 3/4 strum.



## AMAZING GRACE

By John Newton

Arrangement by Lil' Rev and John Nicolson



44

A - maz - ing \_\_\_\_\_ grace, how sweet the

T					
A	2	3	2 3	2	0
B					

sound that saved a \_\_\_\_\_ wretch like me. I

T					
A	2	2	3	2 3	2 0
B					5 2

once was \_\_\_\_\_ lost, but now am

T					
A	5	2 3	2	0	3 0
B					

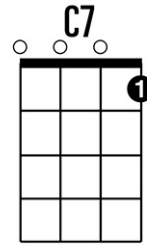
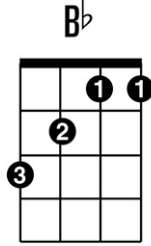
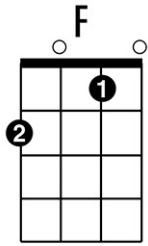
found, was blind, but \_\_\_\_\_ now I see. \_\_\_\_\_

T					
A	2	2	3	2 3	2 0
B					3

John Newton was the captain of a slave ship. While sailing on the high seas, he experienced a religious conversion and returned to Africa to set his captives free. He went on to pen many classic hymns, but this one took on a life of its own.

**THE F CHORD FAMILY**

**F, BE, and C7 Chords**



Try playing the F chord all by itself.

45

Now let's add the C7 chord.

**HUSH LITTLE BABY**

46

Hush lit-tle ba - by don't say a word. Ma-ma's gon-na buy you a mock - ing - bird.

If that mock - ing - bird don't sing, Ma-ma's gon-na buy you a dia - mond ring.

Finally, let's add the BE chord.

47

Try strumming the following exercise à la "Rolling in My Sweet Baby's Arms." The finger strum pattern is easy to hear and follow. Your goal is to change chords smoothly without breaking the flow. When you can do this, you'll be ready to learn other songs in the key of F.



**Rolling**

48

F

C7

F

B<sup>b</sup>

F

C7

F

00:00 / 00:00

### JUKING THE UKE

While the most common type of blues structure is the 12-bar (because it has twelve measures), blues tunes come in all shapes and sizes, from eight, twelve, sixteen, to even thirty-two bars. Here's an eight-bar example. The finger strum pattern is easy to hear and follow.

Lil' Rev

49

F

C7

B<sup>b</sup>

F

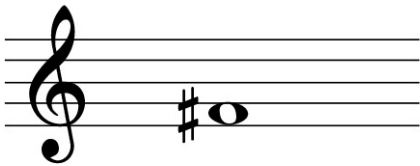
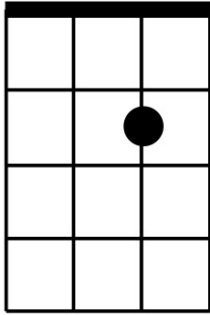
C7

### SHARPS AND FLATS

The symbol B stands for sharp and raises the pitch by a half step (or one fret). When you see the sharp symbol before a note on the staff line, you raise that note by playing up one fret. Conversely, when you see the flat symbol (E), you play that note one fret down.

# F-SHARP (F#)

F#



2nd fret



## DOWN IN THE VALLEY

Southern Folk Song

G

50

Down in the val - ley, val - ley so

T 2 3 0 2 3 2 0 3

A

B

D7

low. Hang your head o -

0 2 2 0 5

G

ver, hear the wind blow.

5 3 2 0 3

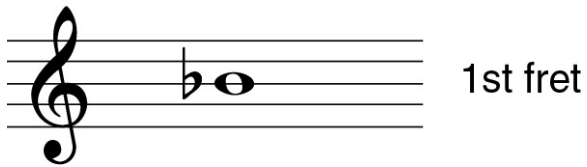
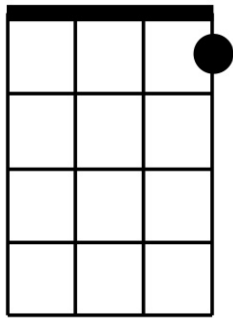
Now try playing the chords to this tune along with the audio.

### KEY SIGNATURES

One convenient way to avoid assigning a flat (E) to every B in a piece of music is to simply put a flat sign at the beginning of each line. Then every time you see a B note, you play a BE. This is called a key signature and it works for all kinds of sharps and flats. The exercises below use the key signature.

# B-FLAT (B $\flat$ )

B $\flat$



51

T  
A  
B

52

T  
A  
B

## PRACTICE TIP

Regular practice is essential. Practicing a half hour each day is better than practicing two hours every four days. Find a regular time of the day that works for you.

## THE F MAJOR SCALE

Now that you know the BE note, you know all the notes in the F major scale. The key signature (with B flattened) tells us that we're in the key of F. Notice the new note high F. Play this with your pinky finger on the 8th fret of the first string.

53

T  
A  
B



## CLEMENTINE

54

T  
A  
B

Moving up the F major scale:

55

Now let's try playing a basic melody in the key of F using our thumb to pick each note. Go slowly first and gradually pick up speed.

### PAW PAW PATCH

Traditional Folk

56

Here's a great melody for you to practice in the key of F. After you can pick the melody well, go back and try to sing and strum while tapping out the rhythm with your foot.

### SKIP TO MY LOU

American Game Song

57

F

C7

Skip, skip, skip to my Lou, skip, skip, skip to my Lou,

T 0 1 0 0 0 3 3 0 3 3 3 1

A

B

F

C7

F

skip, skip, skip to my Lou, skip to my Lou my dar - ling.

0 1 0 0 0 3 3 0 1 0 3 1 1

Notice the new key signature in these next two songs. Remember to play every F note one half step higher to FB.



### IN THE MOON'S PALE SHIMMER

(Au Claire de la Lune)

French Folk Song

58

In the moon's pale shimmer, my dear friend Pier - rot.

T 0 0 0 2 3 2 0 3 2 2 0

A

B

I would like to write you, just a word or so.

0 0 0 2 3 2 0 3 2 2 0

Watch for FBs in the thirteenth and fifteenth measures.



### SHE'LL BE COMING 'ROUND THE MOUNTAIN

Folk Song

59

She'll be com-ing 'round the moun-tain when she comes. \_\_\_\_\_ She'll be

T  
A  
B

com-ing 'round the moun-tain when she comes. \_\_\_\_\_ She'll be com-ing 'round the

moun-tain, she'll be com-ing 'round the moun-tain, she'll be com-ing 'round the moun-tain when she comes.

**THE SINGLE ROLL STROKE**

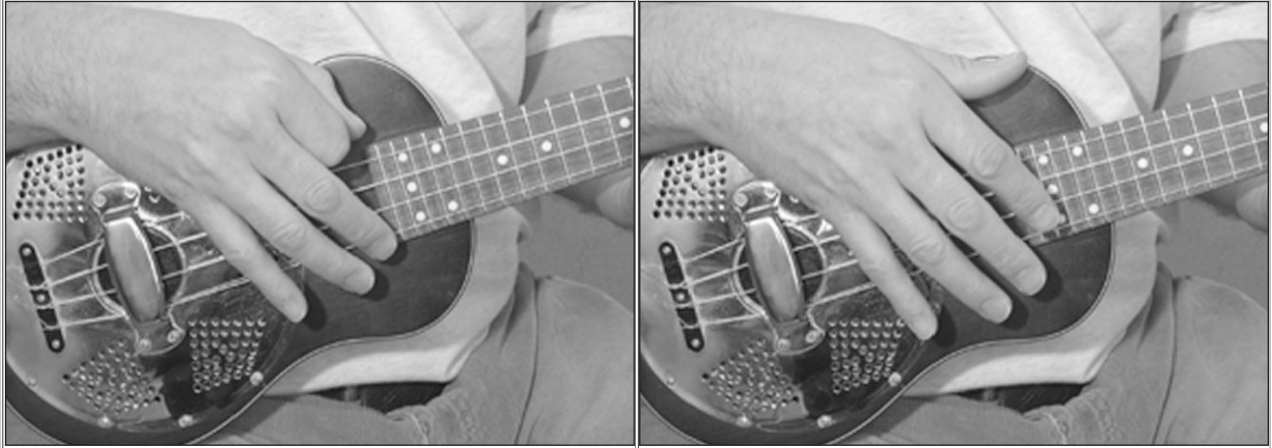
The roll stroke is a lively rhythmic strumming technique that emphasizes the downbeat of the strum by unraveling your righthand fingers one-by-one. When properly executed, it should sound like one continuous flowing beat.



1. Bring your right-hand pinky down across all four strings.

2. Let your third (ring) finger follow right after your pinky.





3. Now your second (middle) finger follows down across all four strings.

4. Finally, bring your pointer finger down across all of the strings.

Think of your fingers unraveling in a steady progression, one after the next. When this is mastered, you can try adding your thumb, which will follow right after the pointer finger in its downward motion.

At the end of "Shave and a Haircut," try the roll stroke on the D7 chord, then quickly over the G chord. This may take a little practice, but it's well worth the effort. When notes and tablature are shown in stacks as seen below, this indicates a chord, or a group of notes played simultaneously.



## SHAVE AND A HAIRCUT

### Bluegrass Lick

This lick is traditionally used to end songs. When you have it up to speed, you can use it to end songs in the key of G (including "Boil 'Em Cabbage Down").

Beverly Uke-a-Billy Challenge: See if you can figure out how to play this lick in other keys.

## PLAYING TREMOLO

Tremolo is a very beautiful and pleasing sound when played on the ukulele. Here's how to do it:



1. Spread the fingers of your right hand as shown.



2. Position your pointer over the tenth fret.



3. Using continu

The musical symbol we will use for tremolo is (k).

61

Go back and review the melody for "[Aura Lee](#)." Once you have it in your head, play this chord progression using tremolo. Notice the new E7 chord. This is just like the D7 chord fingering that you know, but up two frets. There is also another new chord here that is easy to play: Am. Look at the next page for the Am chord fingering. Count "1-2-3-4" for each measure. Then try playing this along with audio below the song.

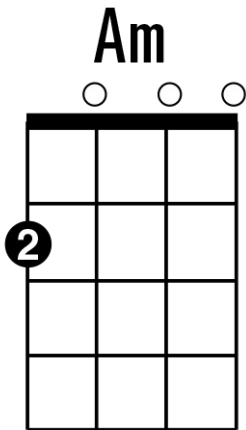


## AURA LEE

62



# The Am Chord



Familiarize yourself with this new chord, and get re-acquainted with the C, F, and G7 chord shapes. Then try playing "Doo-Wop Uke" using tremolo. Work toward keeping the tremolo going smoothly by switching from chord to chord without losing the beat. Remember to use the pad of your pointer finger.



## DOO-WOP UKE

## RESTS

Music is made up of both sound and silence. Silence is represented by musical symbols called rests. They are just as important as the notes you play. Each type of note has a corresponding rest of the same name and duration:

Whole Note      Half Notes      Quarter Notes      Eighth Notes

COUNT: 1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Whole Rest      Half Rests      Quarter Rests      Eighth Rests

COUNT: 1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Remember to count while you do these exercises.

64

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

Sometimes it helps to tap your foot during rests to keep time.

65

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4    1 2 3 4

"Goodnight Ladies" contains both quarter rests and eighth rests. Notice the key signature!



**GOODNIGHT LADIES**

66

Good - night la - dies, good - night la - dies,

2 3 2 3 2 3 0 0

T  
A  
B

**G** **D7**

good - night la - dies we're going to leave you now.

2 3 3 3 2 3 0 2 3

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

**MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG**

67

Mer - ri - ly we roll a - long, roll a - long, roll a - long,

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

T  
A  
B

**G** **D7** **G**

mer - ri - ly we roll a - long, o - ver the deep blue sea.

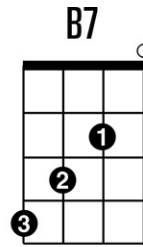
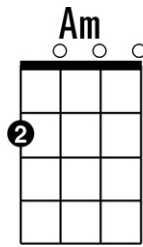
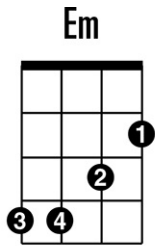
2 0 3 0 2 2 2 0 0 0 2 0 3

**G** **D7** **G**

**THE E MINOR CHORD FAMILY**

**Em, Am, and B7 Chords**

You already used the Am in "Doo Wop Uke"; now meet its relatives in the E minor family.



Minor chords offer a nice contrast to the bright sounds of the major and seventh chords we have seen. Some folks describe the sound of minor chords as “spooky” or “sad.”

Let’s start by strumming the Em chord.

**Em**

Now mix it up with the Am chord.

**Em Am Em Am Em**

Try this 8-bar minor blues progression.

**Em B7 Am**

00:00 / 00:00

Here’s a typical 12-bar minor blues progression in Em. Remember to count “1-2-3-4.” Listen to the different strum variations that are played on [audio track #40](#). Try mixing it up as you play this tune and use several different strum patterns that you’ve learned.

00:00 / 00:00

## THE HAUNTED UKE BLUES

### Blues Progression

71

My house is getting haunted, there must be spooks all in my uke.

My house is getting haunted, there must be spooks all in my

uke. Everytime I play a tune,

it just comes out oh so blue.

Try picking out this minor melody using your thumb.



## HEY, HO, NOBODY HOME

English Folk Melody

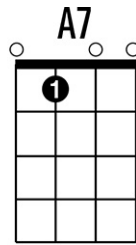
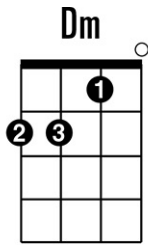
72

Hey, ho, no - bod - y home, meat nor drink nor

mon - ey have I none yet will I be mer - ry.

## MORE CHORDS

Dm and A7 Chords



Get familiar with the chord positions shown, then practice changing between the chords.



73

Dm A7 Dm A7 Dm

Now let's really mix it up!

74

Dm C Dm A7

Dm C A7 Dm

Here's a challenge: try changing chords every one or two beats instead of every four. Practice slowly at first and gradually work up to speed.



75

Dm C Dm A7 Dm C Dm A7 Dm

C Dm A7 Dm C Dm A7 Dm

Now that you're familiar with the Dm chord, let's play a minor melody. Go slowly and pay attention to each note's time value. Gradually work up to playing a little faster. There's a new chord in "Scarborough Fair" that you haven't seen yet, the A chord. You can find this chord and many others in the Chord Chart at the back of the book.



**SINNER MAN**

Traditional Folk



76

**Dm** **C**

Oh, sin - ner man, where ya gon - na run to? Oh, sin - ner man, where ya gon - na run to?

Oh, sin - ner man, where ya gon - na run to? All on that day.

0 1 0 2 | 0 0 0 3 0 3 | 3 0 2 0 | 3 3 3 1 3 3

0 1 0 2 | 0 0 0 3 0 3 | 0 3 0 | 2



**SCARBOROUGH FAIR**

Traditional

77

**Dm** **C** **Dm**

Are you going to Scar - bor - ough Fair? Sing par - sley,

sage, rose - mar - y and thyme. Re - mem - ber me to one who lives

there, for once she was a true love of mine.

2 2 | 0 0 | 0 1 0 | 2 | 0 0 3

5 3 | 0 2 3 | 0 | 0 5 5 3 0 | 0 3 1

0 0 | 0 2 | 3 1 | 0 2 0 | 2

**F** **G** **A** **Dm** **F**

**C** **Dm** **G** **C** **Dm**

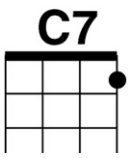
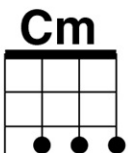
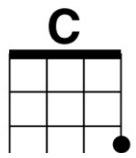
**CHORD CHART**

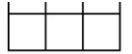
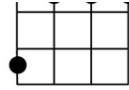
Here are all the chords we used in this book, and some other common chords you may encounter in your ukulele adventures.

**MAJOR**

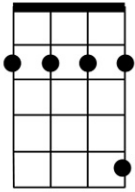
**MINOR**

**7TH**

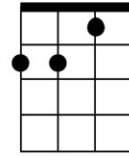




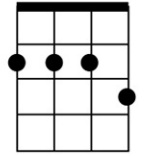
**D**



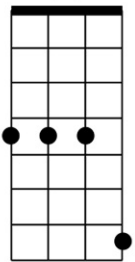
**Dm**



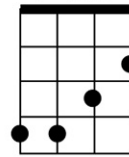
**D7**



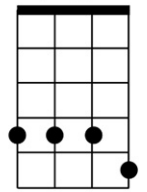
**E**



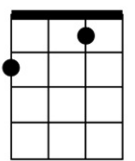
**Em**



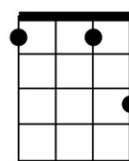
**E7**



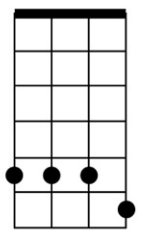
**F**



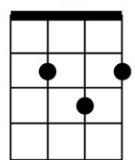
**Fm**



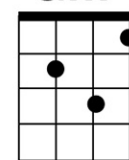
**F7**



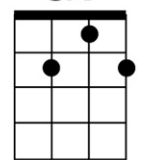
**G**



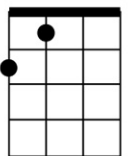
**Gm**



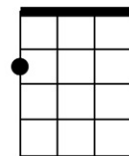
**G7**



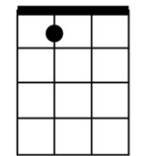
**A**



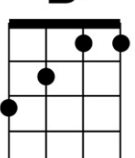
**Am**



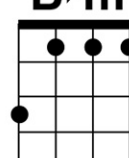
**A7**



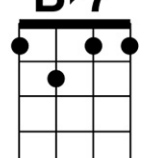
**B<sup>b</sup>**



**B<sup>b</sup>m**

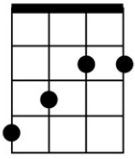


**B<sup>b</sup>7**

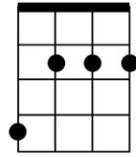




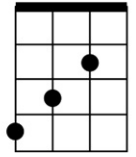
**B**



**Bm**



**B7**



The **HAL LEONARD UKULELE METHOD** is designed for anyone just learning to play ukulele. This comprehensive and easy-to-use beginner's guide by acclaimed performer and uke master Lil' Rev includes many fun songs of different styles to learn and play.

**INCLUDES:**

- Types of Ukuleles
- Tuning
- Music Reading
- Melody Playing
- Chords
- Strumming
- Scales
- Tremolo
- Music Notation and Tablature
- Traditional Blues Songs
- Folk Songs
- Children's Songs
- Old-Time Favorites
- Ukulele History

