

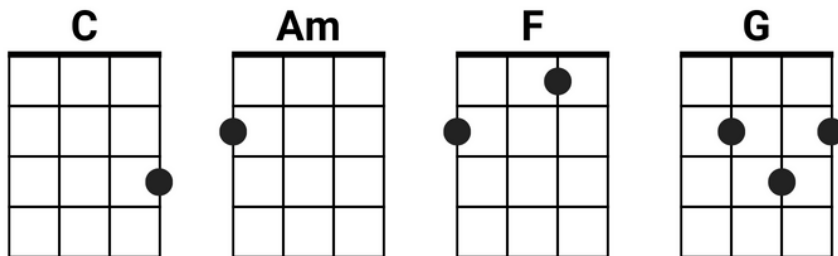
SO YOU WANT TO LEARN THE UKULELE!

Welcome to an international community of music lovers! The ukulele is the world's friendliest instrument, with festivals, local groups, and places to connect all over the internet. Best of all, it's one of the easiest instruments to learn - anyone can learn a few chords and play a song in less than an hour.

This guide was created by Amy Clare Tasker.

It's available for free, but if you'd like to say thanks, please check out my [Ko-Fi donation page](#).

YOUR FIRST FOUR CHORDS



With these four chords, you can play hundreds of songs!

Let The Axis of Awesome prove it to you: [4 Chords | Music Videos | The Axis Of Awesome](#)

Here's a starter songbook with a dozen songs that use just four chords: [4 CHORD SONGBOOK](#)

TUNING

The standard tuning for ukulele is GCEA. Each open string plays a different note, and when you strum the strings together, it creates a chord. A chord is simply 3 or more notes played at the same time. By pressing your finger down on different frets, you can change the note that each string plays, and therefore change the chord.

[UkeBuddy has a helpful info page here](#), with more detailed explanations, diagrams & a free tuner.

STRUMMING

You can strum the strings in whatever way feels good to you - most people use their thumb or their first finger. Don't forget to also use your ears, and decide what sounds best to you.

The most basic thing to do is a single down-strum on each chord. Once you're comfortable with that, try different patterns. The Island Strum is the most common pattern, and a great one to learn first. [How to Play the Island Strum – Beginning Ukulele Tutorial](#)

Bernadette Teaches Music has a detailed series of strumming videos for beginners here:

[HOW TO Strum A Ukulele for Beginners - Ukulele Strumming Challenge | DAY 1 of 5](#)

After that, the possibilities are endless! Check out [32 Ukulele Strumming Patterns](#) on UkuleleGo.

YOUTUBE LESSONS

You can find videos on YouTube for just about any ukulele topic you can think of, and once you start down the rabbit hole, you'll discover a wonderland of tips, song tutorials, instrument reviews, and more. Here are a few of my favourite channels:



Bernadette Teaches Music

I recommend you start here with the [30 Day Uke Challenge](#). It takes you from “how do I hold this instrument?” through all the basics you’ll need to know.



One Music School

Another great place to start is Katie’s [Ukulele 101 - Beginners Series](#)

Song Tutorials & More



[Abby Lyons](#)



[Musical Mama](#)



[The Ukulele Teacher](#)



[Elise Ecklund](#)



[Phil Doleman](#)



[U Can Uke](#)



[Christopher Davis
Shannon](#)



[The Ukulele Fool](#)



[Ukulele Cheats](#)



[Marco Cirillo Ukulele](#)



[The Ukulele Project](#)



[Ukulele Zen](#)

CHOOSING YOUR FIRST UKULELE

There are different sizes of ukulele: the soprano is the classic Hawaiian instrument, the concert is a little bigger, and the tenor is a little bigger again. These are all tuned GCEA, so the main difference is how they feel in your hands, and the different tone qualities you get from a smaller or larger body for the sound to resonate in.

If you can, the best way to choose what size ukulele to buy is to go to a shop and try out how the different sizes feel. If that's not possible, maybe go for a concert size, since it's the middle one.

There are other ukulele sizes, including the teeny tiny sopranino and sopranissimo ukes, and larger baritone (tuned DGBE) and bass ukuleles (tuned EADG). I wouldn't recommend these for beginners. Unless you have a strong reason to get one of these sizes, you're probably better off choosing one of the three standard sizes: soprano, concert, or tenor.

You can find lots of buying guides online - one particularly trusted source is Barry Maz at Got A Ukulele. His [reviews on YouTube](#) and [on his website](#) are informed and impartial. He also has a section of the website dedicated to [beginner tips](#), including how to buy your first uke.

Many ukulele players will tell you to resist the temptation of buying a cheap instrument on Amazon. That's not because cheap instruments are bad, but that the quality control when buying from Amazon is poor, with the ukulele coming straight from a warehouse without being checked by someone who knows what flaws or damage to look for.

In London, take a trip to [Denmark Street](#), where there are about a dozen music shops all in a row. You can compare their selections, ask advice from the specialists who work there, and try out a lot of different instruments, new and second-hand.



Expect to spend at least £40 to get something playable - my current favourite at that low price point is the [Flight Teak ukulele](#) which comes in soprano and concert sizes. If you can spend between £60 and £100, you'll likely get something considerably better that will last you a long time.

If you're ordering online and want the most budget-friendly option to get started with the ukulele, I recommend the [Octopus Academy range](#), which many teachers use in their classrooms.

Some well-spected ukulele brands with good beginner instruments include (in alphabetical order): Baton Rouge, Kala, Cordoba, Enya, Flight, Makala, Octopus, Ohana, and Snail. All of these brands offer quality ukuleles under £100.

SONGBOOKS & SONG SHEETS

There are a number of ukulele songbooks kicking about online, ready for you to download for free and start strumming! Usually these books are PDFs compiled by ukulele clubs or festivals so that their members or attendees can play the same songs together.



The People of Lewisham's Ukulele Club has [a great big list of songbooks here](#).

If you're looking for individual songs, you can find almost anything on sites like these:

[UkuTabs](#)

[Uke Buddy](#)

[Ukulele Hunt](#)

[Ukulele Tabs](#)

[Ultimate Guitar](#) (filter by Ukulele chords)

[Chordify](#) (subscription costs apply)

COMMUNITY (IN PERSON)

One of the fastest ways to progress as a ukulele player is to play with other people! The Ukulele Project has branches in London, the South East, the East Midlands, the North West, Scotland, Wales, and online. You can also look for your local ukulele groups on the [club directory here](#).

Ukulele Wednesdays is a free weekly jam in London. All are welcome. [More details here](#).

Ukulele Festivals are pure joy, and take place all over the UK and the world. Some are one day in a tent in a field, others are a weekend in a hotel or a theatre... Almost all of them have some combination of technique workshops, play-alongs, open mics, and professional performances. Find an event near you on [Got a Ukulele's festival calendar here](#).

COMMUNITY (ONLINE)

The online ukulele community is a great place to ask questions, get advice, and even buy and sell second-hand instruments. There are any number of Facebook groups where you can connect, and lots of impressive players to follow on Instagram. Some ukulele clubs went online during lockdown and continue to run digital strum-along sessions (like [Uke-Tok](#)).

Just search for "ukulele" on your social media platform of choice, and follow a few links. Once you've done that, the algorithms will take care of the rest.

Here are a few Facebook groups to get the ball rolling:

[Ukulele Lovers](#)

[Ukulele Underground](#)

[Ukulele Society of Great Britain](#)

[Uke to Bridge](#)

KEEP ON STRUMMING! 🎵

