

?

SO

you've just
got your

FIRST

UKULELE





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So You've Just Got Your **First Ukulele**

Five Nuggets to Know

1. How the Ukulele is Tuned

From the string nearest your head to the string nearest the ground it goes: gCEA (there are other tunings, but this is by far the most common, so don't worry your pretty little head about those for now). Unlike most instruments, the string nearest your head is pitched higher than the next two strings. You can hear the notes here: [Tuning Notes](#)

2. How to Read Chord Charts

[How to Read Ukulele Chord Charts](#)

3. How to Make Your Ukulele Sound Good

Definitely worth getting into good habits right from the start:

[Get Good Tone](#)

4. The History of the Ukulele

John King is the patron saint of ukulele history. This is an excellent article on the early history of the uke:

[A Strum Through Ukulele History](#)

5. These 10 Tips for Beginners

[Ten Tips for Ukulele Beginners](#)

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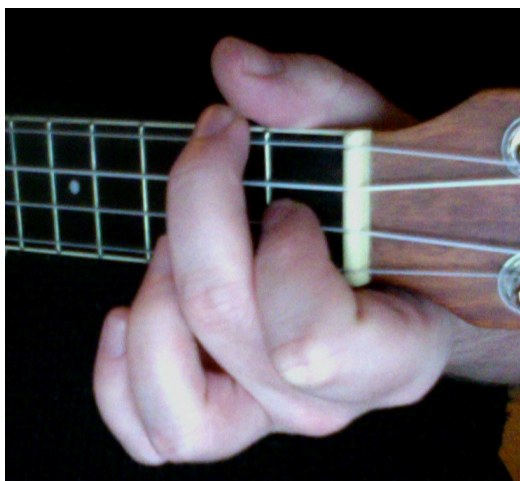
Five Chords to Learn

1. C



Ring finger on the third fret of the A string.

2. F



Middle finger on the G string at the second fret. Index, E string first fret.

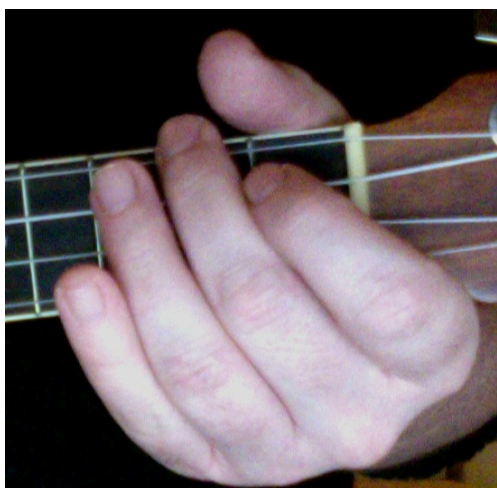
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3. G7



Middle finger: C string, second fret. Index (pointer) finger: E string, first fret. Ring finger: A string, second fret.

4. Am (A minor)



Middle finger: G string, second fret.

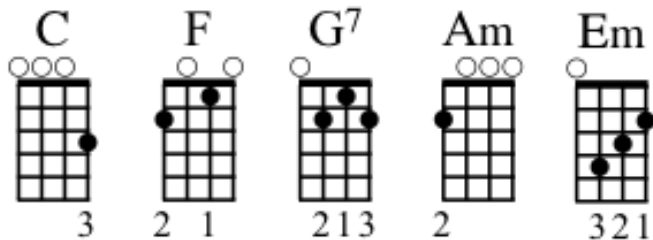
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5. Em (E minor)



Ring finger: C string, fourth fret. Middle finger: E string, third fret. Index finger: A string, second fret.

This is how the chords look in diagram form:



Once you've learned these chords you can [use them to play these songs](#).

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Five Songs to Play

1. Somewhere Over the Rainbow

When Israel Kamakawiwo'ole covered this song it became an instant ukulele classic. This version is the more beginner-friendly one played by Jason Castro on American Idol.

[Over the Rainbow](#)

2. Ring of Fire

The ultimate Johnny Cash song.

[Ring of Fire](#)

3. Hallelujah

Originally by Leonard Cohen but the definitive version was recorded by Jeff Buckley. Beirut regularly play this live on the ukulele.

[Hallelujah](#)

4. Blitzkrieg Bop

Three chord classic from the Ramones. Make sure you start by shouting, "1,2,3,4" at an entirely unrelated tempo.

[Blitzkrieg Bop](#)

5. I Wanna Be Like You

From the Jungle Book.

[I Wanna Be Like You](#)

More songs and tips for [ukulele beginners here](#).

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Five Websites to Visit

1. Ukulele Hunt

That would be my website and probably the place you got this. To make sure you don't miss anything, you can get email updates by entering your address in the sign up form in the top right hand side of this page.

[Ukulele Hunt](#)

2. Top 50 Ukulele Sites

Including this one on the list is cheating; a bit like being granted 3 wishes and saying, "I wish for a million wishes." There are loads of websites here that you have to check out. The best place to start finding out what's available on the net.

[Top 50 Sites](#)

3. Sheep Entertainment Chordfinder

A handy website for finding any chord you want to play. Make sure you click 'soprano-C' on the right hand side first if you're playing in standard tuning.

[Chordfinder](#)

4. Ukulele Underground

Loads of videos to learn from and a huge forum.

[Ukulele Underground](#)

5. Chordie

If you can't find the chords for a song written up for ukulele, Chordie has loads of chords and can be adjusted for uke. It's aimed at guitar so it's not always ideal or accurate, but it's better than nothing.

[Chordie](#)

So You've Just Got Your **First Ukulele**

Five Freebies to Grab

1. AP Tuner

Nothing is going to ruin your ukulele playing more than being out of tune. With AP Tuner you can play the uke into a mic and it will tell you when it's in tune. For standard tuning, you're looking for G4,C4,E4,A4. [AP Tuner](#)

Mac alternative: [Chromatic Tuner](#)

2. GoChords

A quick and easy way to write up your own chord sheets. Free too! [GoChords](#)

3. Audacity

Free sound recording software. The quickest way to get better is record yourself as often as possible and catch what mistakes you're making: [Audacity](#)

Mac alternative: [GarageBand](#)

4. Power Tab

Write your own ukulele tabs. The website itself is very confusing. You can download it directly here: [PowerTab](#)

Mac alternative: [GuitarPro](#). Not free but better than Power Tab and suitable for Windows/Mac/Linux. It's the software I use.

5. Ukulele Music

Get a whole load of ukulele music, sessions and interviews on the Uke Hunt podcast. You can [find all the info here](#). Or [subscribe on iTunes](#).

So You've Just Got Your **First Ukulele**

Five Things to Buy

1. Ukulele Tuner

If you're going to be playing the uke out and about, you'll need a tuner. These clip on to the end of the uke and can tell whether you're in tune no matter how much noisy it is.

[Ukulele Tuners](#)

2. Strings

If you've got a cheap ukulele, the chances are the strings that came with it are poor. Putting better quality strings such as Aquila will improve the sound.

[Aquila Strings](#)

3. Ukulele for Dummies

The book I wrote for ukulele beginners. It's the most comprehensive ukulele book out there. It covers all the basics and goes on to introduce playing a bunch of styles.

Buy it on [Amazon US](#) or [Amazon UK](#). Or [read more about it here](#).

4. Ukulele Chord Book

Always useful to have a reference book on hand.

[Ukulele Chord Book](#)

5. Ukulele Tags and Cards

The coolest tags to hang off your uke case. Make sure you check out the other items for sale at the Jumping Flea Market:

[Ukulele Tags](#)

So You've Just Got Your **First Ukulele**

Five Videos to Watch

1. Jake Shimabukuro – While My Guitar Gently Weeps

The most popular ukulele video on YouTube. It's a masterclass in arranging a song for instrumental ukulele.

[Jake Shimabukuro - While My Guitar Gently Weeps](#)

2. James Hill – Billie Jean

James Hill is absolutely the best ukulele in the world right now.

[James Hill - Billie Jean](#)

3. Roy Smeck – His Pastimes

The Wizard of the strings. A legend on the ukulele and many other stringed instruments.

[Roy Smeck - His Pastimes](#)

4. Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain – Shaft

The original ukulele orchestra and still the best.

[Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain - Shaft](#)

5. Eddie Vedder – Can't Keep

The Pearl Jam frontman reworks one of his songs for the ukulele.

[Eddie Vedder - Can't Keep](#)

So You've Just Got Your **First Ukulele**

Five YouTube Channels To Subscribe To

1. Sophie Madeleine

Beautiful voice, great ukeing and outstanding songwriting. Also check out her duo [Rocky and Balls](#).

youtube.com/misssophiemadeleine

2. Keston Cobblers' Club

Great British folk group. Don't always include the ukulele but always include the amazing.

youtube.com/kestoncobblersclub

3. UkuleleTim

Top-notch ukulele instrumentalist who blogs at [Ukulele Secrets](#).

youtube.com/ukuleletim

4. Nicholas Abersold

Ukulele playing pair travel the world meeting up with fellow ukers.

youtube.com/nicholasabersold

5. Garfunkel and Oates

Actors Kate Micucci (The ukulele-playing Gooch on *Scrubs*, and the ukulele-playing Shelley in *Raising Hope*) and Riki Lindhome (Life is Short, Gilmore Girls) team up for innuendo-laden duets. for something more family friendly, check out [Kate Micucci's *Dear Deer*](#).

youtube.com/rikilind

And if you want to check out my YouTube videos you can [subscribe to my channel here](#).

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To keep up to date with all the new goings on the ukulele world and get regular new chords and tabs sign up to receive updates from my blog [Ukulele Hunt](#) by entering your email in the form at the top right of this page.

And for some in depth uke playing tuition take a look at my [How to Play Ukulele eBooks](#).

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