



# Ukuleila's Tips for Beginners

The word ukulele is Hawaiian and it means "jumping flea". Emigrants from Madeira had brought their instruments to Hawaii at the end of the 19th century. They developed the ukulele from the Portuguese braguinha and rajao.

The soprano ukulele is the original and the most famous type of ukulele. Usually it is tuned gcea (some prefer the adf#b tuning). Please note: the strings are counted upwards. So in gcea, a is the 1st string and g is the 4th string.

There are also bigger ukuleles. The concert ukulele is the next in size (usually tuned gcea). Then there is the tenor (usually tuned gcea, often with a low g-string) and the baritone ukulele (dgbe).

How to tune your ukulele:

Take the standard pitch of a' (440 Hz) from an electronic tuner, a tuning fork or from a musical instrument like the piano. Tune up your a-string (1st string with gcea tuning, 4th string with adf#b tuning).

Now press your finger on one of the other strings in the fret given below. So you will always get an "a" on each string (note: it's one octave higher on the b-string in the 10th fret). Now you can compare each string directly with your already tuned a-string or to the tuning fork etc. and tune it to the right pitch.

	gcea	fret	adf#b	fret
1st string	A	none	H	10.
2nd string	E	5.	F#	3.
3rd string	C	9.	D	7.
4th string	G	2.	A	none

Strings are more important for the sound than you may think! Try out different kinds of strings. Nylon strings usually have a full and mellow sound. Fluoro-carbon strings have a bright sound and a very good intonation.

Change the strings of your ukulele at least once a year - or earlier, when they are worn out (for example near the frets).

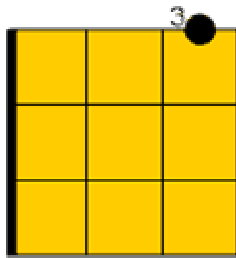
Don't expose your instrument to sudden changes of climate or temperature.

When you take your instrument with you, always carry it in a hard case or a padded bag.

You should keep it there as well at home, when you don't play your instrument for a longer period. That way your ukulele is protected from dust or damages.

The first ukulele chords are easy to learn! In this chart, the thick line on the left is the saddle of your instrument.

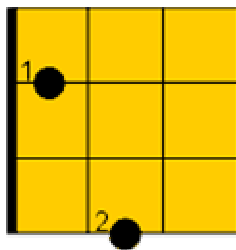
Now put the ring finger of your left hand on the 1st string (that is the one nearest to your feet!) in the 3rd fret. Strum all four strings. And here it is - your first chord:



### C major (gcea tuning)

Note: if you use  $adf\#b$  tuning, the same chord sounds a whole note higher, so it is a D major chord then. On the baritone ukulele with  $dgbe$  tuning, this chord is a G major chord.

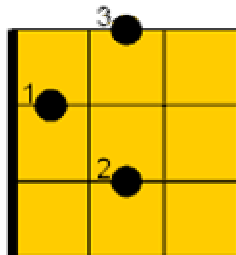
For the next chord you need two fingers. Put your index finger on the 2nd string in the first fret and your middle finger on the 4th string in the 2nd fret.



### F major (gcea tuning)

Note: if you use  $adf\#b$  tuning, the same chord sounds a whole note higher, so it is a G major chord then. On the baritone ukulele with  $dgbe$  tuning, this chord is a C major chord.

Now this is the third chord a ukulele beginner should learn. Put your index finger on the 2nd string in the 1st fret. Put your middle finger on the 3rd string in the 2nd fret and your ring finger on the 1st string in the 2nd fret.



### G7 (gcea tuning)

Note: if you use  $adf\#b$  tuning, the same chord sounds a whole note higher, so it is a A7 chord then. On the baritone ukulele with  $dgbe$  tuning, this chord is a D7 chord.

With these three chords you can already play a lot of songs on your ukulele. Make your own music! Play and sing the songs you like! Be patient with yourself. Maybe it will take some time until you are able to change between the chords fast enough.

Don't worry! It's just a question of practice.

You will soon be able to improve your ability and you will have a lot of fun with your ukulele!

Hubert Pfeiffer  
Flugplatzstraße 27  
97318 Kitzingen  
Germany  
[www.brueko.de](http://www.brueko.de)

© 2008 Hubert Pfeiffer, Kitzingen  
All texts and graphics used in this document are in our domain.  
Ukuleila has been drawn and made available exclusively for us by Anna Widenmeyer.