

Woodstock Ukulele™

Tuning and Playing Instructions

Woodstock Ukulele

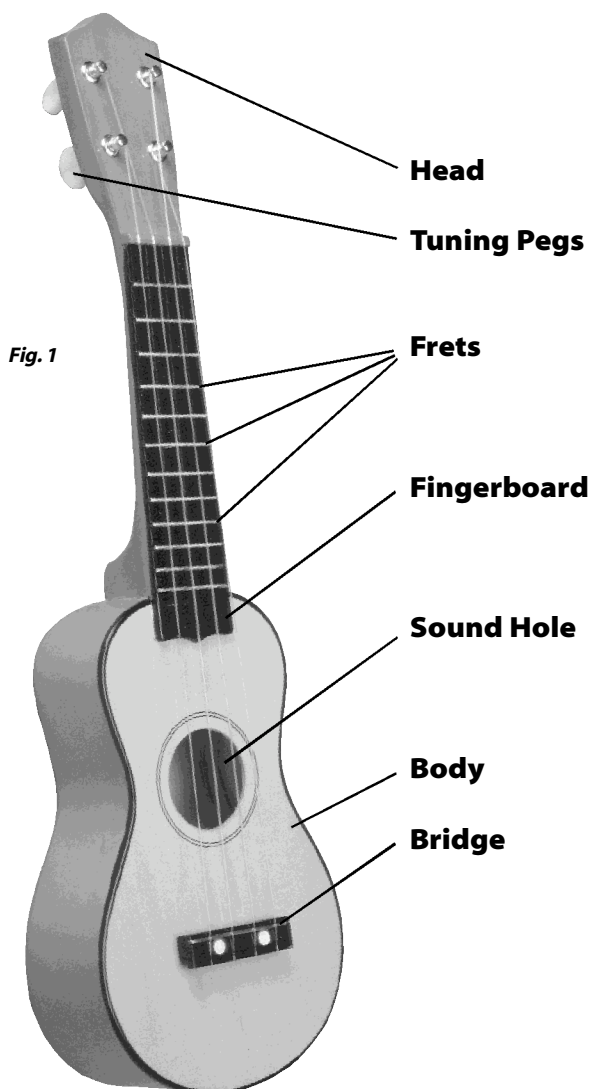
Congratulations! You are now the proud owner of a genuine ukulele. The ukulele has been a popular instrument with both professional and amateur musicians for over 100 years.

History: The name ukulele literally means “jumping flea.” The predecessor to the ukulele was a Portuguese, guitar-like instrument, called the *braguinha*, which was introduced to Hawaii in 1879 by immigrants from the island of Madeira. The ukulele, as we know it, soon became very popular with the Hawaiian people. In 1915, the sweet sounds of the ukulele were heard by a larger American audience at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. A Hawaiian music craze – one that lasted into the 1930s – swept the country.

During the 1950s and 60s, the ukulele experienced a revival, thanks in part to a popular television show, *Arthur Godfrey and his Ukulele* and to Hollywood surfer movies such as *Blue Hawaii*, starring Elvis Presley. It remains a favorite today, because it is lightweight and portable, easy to play, and it has a very appealing sound that lends itself to many different styles of music.

Parts of the Ukulele

This diagram will help you get to know the parts of your ukulele.

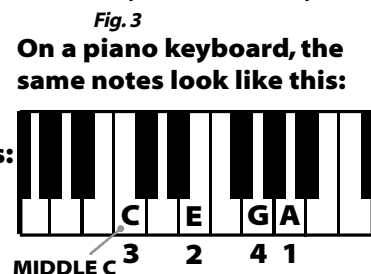
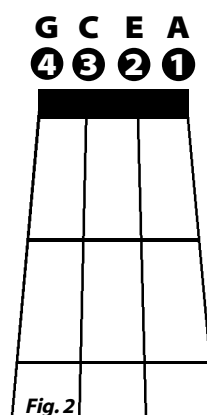


How to Hold Your Ukulele

You should hold the ukulele as if it were a small guitar. You can hold it against your body with your right forearm or let it rest in your lap if you're sitting down. The head of the ukulele should extend to the left in a horizontal position. Your right hand should fall naturally near the sound hole. This hand plucks or strums the strings, while your left hand presses the strings to the fingerboard to make different notes. To get the best sound, you will need to press the strings down firmly just behind the fret, but not touching it. If you're left-handed, you can tune the strings in the reverse order and hold the ukulele with the head extending to your right.

How to Tune Your Ukulele

Before you attempt to tune your ukulele, tighten the screw in the back of each tuning peg to prevent the pegs from slipping, but don't tighten too tight. You'll need to tune your ukulele each time you play it. Turn the tuning pegs to raise or lower the pitch of each string until it is in tune. You may occasionally need to retighten the screws in the back of each tuning peg, so that the instrument stays in tune while you are playing. The strings of your ukulele should be tuned to these notes:



Note that the 4th string is tuned to a note that is actually higher than the 2nd and 3rd strings. If you don't have a piano, you can purchase a pitch pipe at your local music store or tune your ukulele as follows:

Beginning with the 3rd string, tune it to middle C. Or tune it so that the string is just tight enough so that it doesn't buzz when you

pluck it. Now, with your left index finger, press that string down firmly to the fingerboard just behind the 4th fret. That's an E note. Pluck that string and pluck the open 2nd string. The two notes should sound the same. If they don't, decide whether the 2nd string is higher or lower. Then, by turning the tuning peg, tighten or loosen the 2nd string until the sound matches that of the 3rd string, 4th fret. Tune the other two strings this way:

2nd string pressed down at the 5th fret = A (open 1st string)
2nd string pressed down at the 3rd fret = G (open 4th string)

Learning Your First Chords

Figures 5-7 show you how to play chords on your ukulele. If you learn these three chords, you'll be able to play lots and lots of fun songs. The position of the “dot” tells you which string to press down and behind which fret to press. The number inside the dot tells you which finger to press with. Your fingers are numbered 1 through 4 (see figure 4), with your index finger being number 1 and your pinkie finger being number 4. Don't count your thumb. A string that is marked with a circle instead of a dot indicates that it is an “open” or unfingered string. You still have to play it to make the chord.

