

# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

by Curt Sheller

**G**  
Tuning  
**D G B E**

*It's not as hard as  
you think.*

**Curt Sheller Publications**

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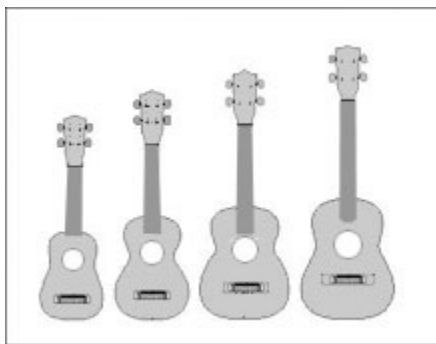
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## Introduction

Memorizing the notes of the ukulele fingerboard is not as hard as one would think. Although there doesn't seem to be any pattern and the same letter can be found on every string. There is a systematic approach that can be used to help remember the notes.

There are four different sized ukuleles in common use today, using any one of three different tunings.



Soprano

Concert

Tenor

Baritone





### “G” Tuning

“G” is found on the Baritone ukulele and sometimes a tenor ukulele.

Finally, and really learning and knowing the names of names of the notes of the ukulele fingerboard is liberating musical moment. A major breakthrough in most player’s learning and enjoyment of the ukulele.

Knowing the names of the notes of the fingerboard is separate from learning to read standard music notation. To learn to read music on the ukulele in “C” tuning, see my series of books: *Reading Music on Ukulele*.

Knowing the notes of the fingerboard is so important. That, I wrote this book to address that need.



# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard



## “G” Tuning

“G” tuning is common on the Baritone ukulele. The high “D” variation can sometimes found on a tenor ukulele.



④

D

③

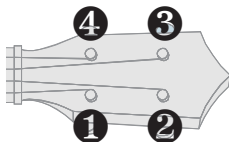
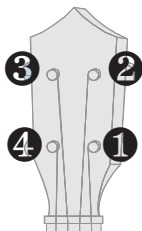
G

②

B

①

E



G Tuning

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# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

## Key Frets

|             |          |          |          |          |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>open</i> | <b>D</b> | <b>G</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>E</b> |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

|                  |          |          |          |          |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>fret (12)</i> | <b>D</b> | <b>G</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>E</b> |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

In addition to the open strings and fret twelve, which most ukulele players seem to remember. There are two other frets with no sharp or flat notes, fret (5) and fret (10). These are easy to remember.

|                 |          |          |          |          |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>fret (5)</i> | <b>G</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>A</b> |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

|                  |          |          |          |          |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>fret (10)</i> | <b>C</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

These are *reference* or *key frets*. From these frets other frets can be derived.



# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard



Frets (1), (4), (6), (9) and (11) can be referenced relative to the open strings, fret (5) and fret (10) by flatting or sharpening all the notes of those frets.

|                  |          |          |          |          |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>open</i>      | <b>D</b> | <b>G</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>E</b> |
| <i>fret (1)</i>  | D#*      | G#       | B#       | E#       |
| <i>fret (4)</i>  | Gb       | Cb       | Eb       | Db       |
| <i>fret (5)</i>  | <b>G</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>A</b> |
| <i>fret (6)</i>  | G#       | C#       | E#       | A#       |
| <i>fret (9)</i>  | Cb       | Fb       | Ab       | Db       |
| <i>fret (10)</i> | <b>C</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> |
| <i>fret (11)</i> | C#       | F#       | A#       | D#       |

\* See page 11 for enharmonic equivalent note spellings.





# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

Frets (3) and (7) have one sharp each.

|                 |          |           |          |          |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| <i>fret (3)</i> | <b>F</b> | <b>A#</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>G</b> |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|

|                 |          |          |           |          |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| <i>fret (7)</i> | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>F#</b> | <b>B</b> |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|

Frets (2), (4), (6) and (8) can be referenced relative to fret (3) and fret (7) by flatting or sharpening all the notes of the those frets.

|                 |    |   |    |    |
|-----------------|----|---|----|----|
| <i>fret (2)</i> | Fb | A | Db | Gb |
|-----------------|----|---|----|----|

|                 |          |           |          |          |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| <i>fret (3)</i> | <b>F</b> | <b>A#</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>G</b> |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|

|                 |    |   |    |    |
|-----------------|----|---|----|----|
| <i>fret (4)</i> | F# | G | D# | G# |
|-----------------|----|---|----|----|



# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard



|          |    |    |   |    |
|----------|----|----|---|----|
| fret (6) | Ab | Db | F | Bb |
|----------|----|----|---|----|

|          |          |          |           |          |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| fret (7) | <b>A</b> | <b>D</b> | <b>F#</b> | <b>B</b> |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|

|          |    |    |   |    |
|----------|----|----|---|----|
| fret (8) | A# | D# | G | B# |
|----------|----|----|---|----|

That is every fret and note of the ukulele fingerboard in “G” tuning, low or high “D”. A lot easier with a system.

Review the frets ascending and descending; with sharps; with flats; mixed sharps and flats. Know the fingerboard inside and out.

Whether practicing or playing; reading or improvising; playing single notes or chords; no matter what style you are playing. **ALWAYS** know the notes you are playing. This will make the notes of the ukulele reflexive and second nature.





# Other Common Ukulele Tunings

### “C” Tuning

Fret (5) is the same as the open strings in “C” tuning.

|             |          |          |          |          |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>open</i> | <b>G</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>A</b> |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

### “G” Tuning

Fret (7) is the same as the open strings in “G” tuning. And the open strings 1, 2, 3, and 4 of a standard tuned guitar. This tuning is common on the Baritone ukulele.

|             |          |          |          |          |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>open</i> | <b>D</b> | <b>G</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>E</b> |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|





## Enharmonic Equivalents

Enharmonic equivalents are where the same pitch can have multiple names. In other words, if two notes have the same pitch but are represented by a different letter name and accidental ( $\sharp$   $\flat$   $\natural$ ) they are enharmonic.

### Sharps to Flats

**A $\sharp$**  is the same pitch as **B $\flat$**

**B $\sharp$**  is the same pitch as **C**

**C $\sharp$**  is the same pitch as **D $\flat$**

**D $\sharp$**  is the same pitch as **E $\flat$**

**E $\sharp$**  is the same pitch as **F**

**F $\sharp$**  is the same pitch as **G $\flat$**

**G $\sharp$**  is the same pitch as **A $\flat$**





# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

## Flats to Sharps

**A $\flat$**  is the same pitch as **G $\sharp$**

**B $\flat$**  is the same pitch as **A $\sharp$**

**C $\flat$**  is the same pitch as **B**

**D $\flat$**  is the same pitch as **C $\sharp$**

**E $\flat$**  is the same pitch as **D $\sharp$**

**F $\flat$**  is the same pitch as **E**

**G $\flat$**  is the same pitch as **F $\sharp$**



# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

## Sharp and Natural Notes



| STRING | ④                                      | ③  | ②  | ①  |
|--------|----------------------------------------|----|----|----|
| open   | D                                      | G  | B  | E  |
| 1      | D#                                     | G# | C  | F  |
| 2      | E                                      | A  | C# | F# |
| 3      | F                                      | A# | D  | G  |
| 4      | F#                                     | B  | D# | G# |
| 5      | G                                      | C  | E  | A  |
| 6      | G#                                     | C# | F  | A# |
| 7      | A                                      | D  | F# | B  |
| 8      | A#                                     | D# | G  | C  |
| 9      | B                                      | E  | G# | C# |
| 10     | C                                      | F  | A  | D  |
| 11     | C#                                     | F# | A# | D# |
| 12     | same as open strings one octave higher |    |    |    |



Sharp & Natural Notes 13



# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

## Flat and Natural Notes

| STRING | ④                                      | ③         | ②         | ①         |
|--------|----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| open   | D                                      | G         | B         | E         |
| 1      | E $\flat$                              | A $\flat$ | C         | F         |
| 2      | E                                      | A         | D $\flat$ | G $\flat$ |
| 3      | F                                      | B $\flat$ | D         | G         |
| 4      | G $\flat$                              | B         | E $\flat$ | A $\flat$ |
| 5      | G                                      | C         | E         | A         |
| 6      | A $\flat$                              | D $\flat$ | F         | B $\flat$ |
| 7      | A                                      | D         | G $\flat$ | B         |
| 8      | B $\flat$                              | E $\flat$ | G         | C         |
| 9      | B                                      | E         | A $\flat$ | D $\flat$ |
| 10     | C                                      | F         | A         | D         |
| 11     | D $\flat$                              | G $\flat$ | B $\flat$ | E $\flat$ |
| 12     | same as open strings one octave higher |           |           |           |





## Word Search

Turns out there are a few words throughout the ukulele fingerboard that can aide in remembering the frets. Here are the fingerboard charts, without the frets.

### Sharps & Natural Notes

|                  |    |    |    |    |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <i>open</i>      | D  | G  | B  | E  |
| <i>fret (1)</i>  | D# | G# | C  | F  |
| <i>fret (2)</i>  | E  | A  | C# | F# |
| <i>fret (3)</i>  | F  | A# | D  | G  |
| <i>fret (4)</i>  | F# | B  | D# | G# |
| <i>fret (5)</i>  | G  | C  | E  | A  |
| <i>fret (6)</i>  | G# | C# | F  | A# |
| <i>fret (7)</i>  | A  | D  | F# | B  |
| <i>fret (8)</i>  | A# | D# | G  | C  |
| <i>fret (9)</i>  | B  | E  | G# | C# |
| <i>fret (10)</i> | C  | F  | A  | D  |
| <i>fret (11)</i> | C# | F# | A# | D# |



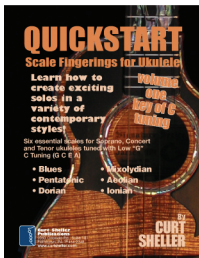


# Learning the Ukulele Fingerboard

## Word Search

|                  | Sharps & Natural Notes |           |           |           |
|------------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <i>open</i>      | D                      | G         | B         | E         |
| <i>fret (1)</i>  | E $\flat$              | A $\flat$ | C         | F         |
| <i>fret (2)</i>  | E                      | A         | D $\flat$ | G $\flat$ |
| <i>fret (3)</i>  | F                      | B $\flat$ | D         | G         |
| <i>fret (4)</i>  | G $\flat$              | B         | E $\flat$ | A $\flat$ |
| <i>fret (5)</i>  | G                      | C         | E         | A         |
| <i>fret (6)</i>  | A $\flat$              | D $\flat$ | F         | G $\flat$ |
| <i>fret (7)</i>  | A                      | D         | G $\flat$ | B         |
| <i>fret (8)</i>  | B $\flat$              | E $\flat$ | G         | C         |
| <i>fret (9)</i>  | B                      | E         | A $\flat$ | D $\flat$ |
| <i>fret (10)</i> | C                      | F         | A         | D         |
| <i>fret (11)</i> | D $\flat$              | G $\flat$ | B $\flat$ | E $\flat$ |





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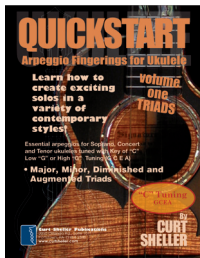
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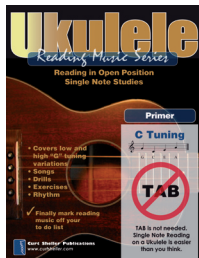
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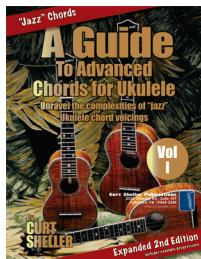
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