

# THE UKULELE

The ukulele is a small guitar-like instrument with four strings. It was developed in Hawaii from similar instruments originally played by Portuguese sailors. There was a ukulele craze in America in the early 20th century which in turn led to its adoption by amateur musicians all over the world. Its low price-tag, portability and the relatively ease with which it can be played have helped ensure its continued popularity, but probably more important than any of these reasons is the fact that it is so much fun to play!

In Britain, the most famous player was George Formby, whose hits included *Leaning on a Lamppost* and *When I'm Cleaning Windows* (Formby often played a 'banjolele' - basically a ukulele with the body of a small banjo). The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain was formed in 1985 and performs all styles of music on the humble uke.

There has been something of a ukulele renaissance in the last few years with the instrument featuring in pop songs, TV adverts etc. There is also a lively community of players who share tunes, techniques etc. on the internet.

## TUNING

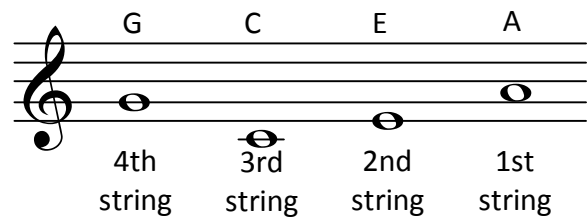
The first string (the one closest to the ground) is tuned to the note A

The second string is tuned to E

The third string is tuned to C

The fourth string (the one closest to your nose) is tuned to G<sup>1</sup>

On a musical staff, the notes look like this:



If you know that your 3rd string is in tune, you can play the note at the fourth fret and tune the 2nd string to it.

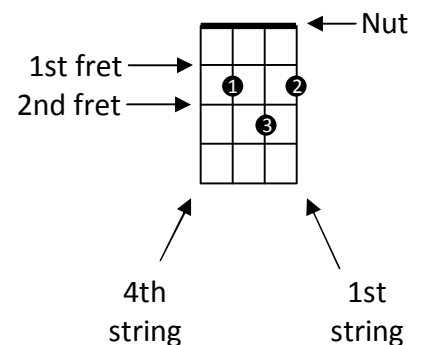
You can then play the note at the third fret of the 2nd string and tune the 4th string to it.

Finally, play the second fret note on 4th string and tune the 1st string to it.

## CHORD DIAGRAMS

The ukulele is generally used to play 'chords'. These are notated with diagrams like the one on the right. This shows that the 1st string should be pressed behind the second fret; the 2nd string should be pressed behind the third fret; the 3rd string should be pressed behind the second fret; and the 4th string should be left 'open'.

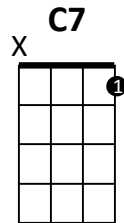
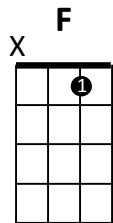
The numbers in the diagram show which left-hand fingers press down on the strings: 1=index finger; 2=middle; 3=ring; and 4=pinke.



<sup>1</sup> There are other tunings, but this seems to be becoming the standard.

## FIRST TWO CHORDS

For these chords, we'll only use the first, second and third strings. Be sure not to strum the fourth! DON'T PRESS TO HARD. You only need to apply enough pressure with your left hand to obtain a clear sound. Make sure that the left-hand fingers being used don't touch any other strings.



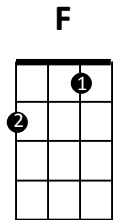
### TERIBUS

**F F F F      C7 C7 C7 C7**

**F F F F      C7 C7 F F**

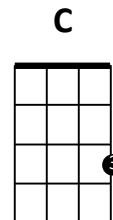
## ADDING THE FOURTH STRING

To include the fourth string, we must add another finger to the F chord, the C7 uses the open 4th string, so it doesn't change.



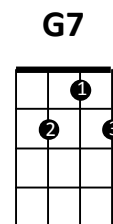
Play 'Teribus' again, using the four-string shapes (from now on, all our shapes will use all the strings).

## THE CHORD OF C



Play 'Teribus' one last time, replacing C7 with C

## THE CHORD OF G7



### MAIRI'S WEDDING

**C C C C      F F C C**

**C C C C      C C G7 G7**

### SCOTLAND THE BRAVE

**C C C C      F C G7 G7**

**C C C C      F C G7 C**

**G7 G7 C C      C G7 F G7**

**C C C C      F C G7 C**