

GETTING STARTED WITH UKULELE

TWO WAYS TO APPROACH BUYING A UKULELE

- 1) Buy something inexpensive, in case you soon want a different size or wood combination.
- 2) Buy something that costs more (all-solid or solid-top only) because it might make you more likely to play.

COST OF A NEW UKULELE

\$60 to \$120 (and up) for a laminate-wood ukulele • \$175 and (way) up for an all-solid wood ukulele

4 MAIN UKULELE SIZES (from smallest to largest, with typical lengths)

- ▶ soprano (21.0" length) and usually tuned high g (G-C-E-A)
- ▶ concert (24.0" length) and usually tuned high g
- ▶ tenor (26.5" length) and tuned either high g or low G
- ▶ baritone (30.25" length) and tuned D-G-B-E (typically low D, sometimes high d), so how you play a chord (the chords shape) differs. For instance, what is a C chord in G-C-E-A tuning is an F chord in D-G-B-E tuning.

CHOOSING A SIZE

The overall size affects (1) the ukulele's sound – as do other factors), and (2) the fret spacing on the neck – and therefore how much room you'll have to place each fretting finger, and to stretch fingers up the fretboard.

OTHER NEEDS

- ✓ a clip-on tuner, \$12 & up (Snark brand tends to be good), and/or a phone app or online tuner
- ✓ a carrying bag (a padded one is best – \$35 and up) or hard case (for a solid-wood ukulele – \$65 and up)
- ✓ a humidifier (works best in a hard case, mostly for an all-solid or solid-top ukulele) – \$4 for Herco brand, or make your own (put holes in a small plastic pill bottle, wet & wring out a sponge, place sponge in bottle)

WHERE TO FIND YOUR UKULELE (with advantages of each)

Borrowing from a Library: some local libraries lend ukuleles, which means you can try one at no cost.

Buying from a local store:

- ▶ you can try out ukuleles in person (but bring a clip-on tuner with you, or borrow or buy one at the store)
- ▶ it *should* be simpler to make a return, if needed (but check the store policy, and store reviews)
- ▶ you are supporting a local business

Buying online:

- ▶ usually there is more selection – brands, price range, types
- ▶ there might be *reliable* (not falsified) sound samples (such as at TheUkuleleSite.com)
- ▶ a set-up (which makes the uke easier to play) might be included with your purchase (see below)
- ▶ people who work at the four stores listed below understand and appreciate ukuleles

Recommended online stores:

TheUkuleleSite.com -- TheUkuleleSite sets up each higher-priced ukulele before shipping it, and there are more higher-cost ukuleles (if that's what you want); and free shipping with orders \$500 and up.

MimsUkes.com -- also sets up each ukulele before shipping, and she has a great selection of lower-cost Ohana ukes, free shipping with a \$200+ uke. But she limits how many she sells each week.

Uke-Fan.com sets up ukuleles, but their website does not list their entire stock, so call them for assistance.

Recommended Online/Local: MagicFluke.com (in Sheffield, MA) sells very sturdy ukuleles that are fun to play and have an authentic ukulele sound. They are made in Massachusetts, and their customer service is outstanding.

Recommended starter ukuleles: There are so many inexpensive ukuleles now, some of them the same ones with different brand names, that's it hard to keep up. But you can contact me with any questions (on any of this) at MusicPlusComedy@gmail.com

Learning sites: UkeBuddy.com (chord diagrams/names, tuner) • Ultimate-Guitar.com (song chord names & lyrics)
• transposr.com (change song key/chords)