

One of the first battles you face on the way to being a more competent 'ukulele player is learning the notes and where they are located on the fingerboard. Not just: [pause] "...there's F!", but more like:

## BOOM!

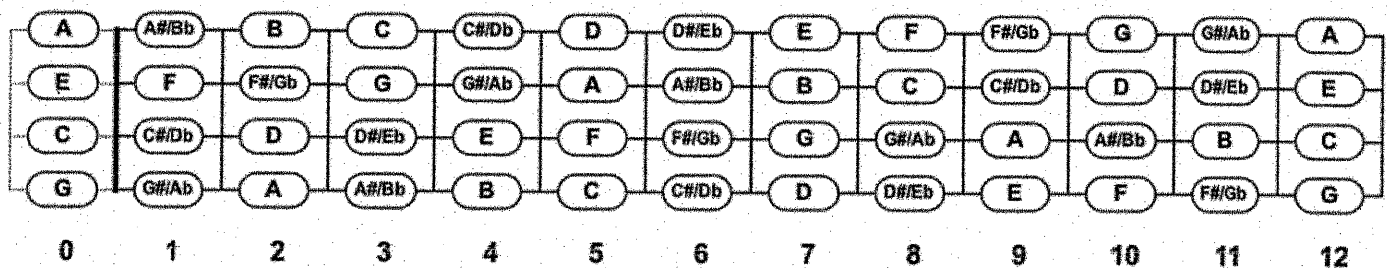
You want to be able to instantly find the nearest location of that one note you are looking for. It takes time, and you can always be faster, but familiarity with your 'ukulele will take you a long ways.

## Learning the Chromatic System:

I find it helps to know why something is the way it is before you go about getting too familiar with it. Which is why I've put together a separate page on how the fretboard layout works:

## How to Memorize the 'Ukulele's Fretboard

Here is a fingerboard chart with the names and locations of the notes:



I suggest starting by learning the natural notes up to the 3rd fret. Since the C major scale is made up of only natural notes, it is a great place to begin. That covers the bottom three strings, so all you have to add is the open G string and A on the 2nd fret (to get the full run of notes on the bottom string, add the B note, 4th fret).

You should be able to see from the chart that notes start to overlap as you move up the fretboard. That should make it easier to make your way up to the next destination: all the natural notes up to the 5th fret. That just adds all the notes on the 5th fret and two on the 4th fret, G and C strings.

Work your way up the fretboard (by frets or by string if you like) and learn the rest of the natural notes. It's all just a big C scale. From there, you just need to fill in the blanks with enharmonics. Because the name of an enharmonic is pretty much a road map right to the location of the note, it's pretty easy to find them. For example: what's in between C and D? Hmm... C#/Db. Pretty simple. And C#/Db is in between all Cs and Ds. Any enharmonic is surrounded by it's two namesakes. You should see how the process goes from here, so learn the location of all enharmonics. Practice is the best for learning this (and anything else) but here are some ideas to hopefully speed up your fingerboard-memorization process:

**Scales** probably make the most sense for learning the fingerboard because you are learning notes anyways. Just like the C scale familiarizes most people with the natural notes inside the first 3 frets, any other scale can teach you the notes that live in between and higher up the neck. Here is a tab of major scales:

# THE MAJOR SCALES

Transcribed by <http://liveukulele.com>

C Major

1

Gtr I

T	0	2	0	1	3	0	2	3	2	0	3	1	0	2	0	3	5	7	8	10	12	14	15	14	12	10	8	7	5	3		
A																																
B	0	2																														

C#/Db Major

5

T																																
A																																
B	1	3	1	2	4	1	3	4	3	1	4	2	1	3	1	4	6	8	9	11	13	15	16	15	13	11	9	8	6	4		

D Major

9

T																																
A																																
B	2	0	2	3	0	2	4	5	4	2	0	3	2	0	2	5	7	9	10	12	14	16	17	16	14	12	10	9	7	5		

D#/Eb Major

13

T																																
A																																
B	3	1	3	4	1	3	5	6	5	3	1	4	3	1	3	6	8	10	11	13	15	17	18	17	15	13	11	10	8	6		

E Major

17

T																																
A																																
B	0	2	4	0	2	4	6	7	6	4	2	0	4	2	0	7	9	11	12	14	16	18	19	18	16	14	12	11	9	7		

F Major

21

T																																
A																																
B	1	3	0	1	3	5	7	8	7	5	3	1	0	3	1	8	10	12	13	15	17	19	20	19	17	15	13	12	10	8		

F#/Gb Major

25

T																																
A																																
B	2	4	1	2	4	6	8	9	8	6	4	2	1	4	2	9	11	13	14	16	18	20	21	20	18	16	14	13	11	9		

G Major

29

T  
A  
B

0 2 4 0 2 0 2 3 | 2 0 2 0 4 2 0 | 3 0 2 3 5 7 9 10 9 7 5 3 2 0 3

G#/Ab Major

32

T  
A  
B

1 3 0 1 3 1 3 4 | 3 1 3 1 0 3 1 | 4 1 3 4 6 8 10 11 | 10 8 6 4 3 1 4

A Major

36

T  
A  
B

2 4 1 2 0 2 4 0 | 4 2 0 2 1 4 2 | 0 2 4 5 7 9 11 12 11 9 7 5 4 2 0

A#/Bb Major

39

T  
A  
B

3 0 2 3 1 3 0 1 | 0 3 1 3 2 0 3 | 1 3 5 6 8 10 12 13 | 12 10 8 6 5 3 1

B Major

43

T  
A  
B

4 1 3 0 2 4 1 2 | 1 4 2 0 3 1 4 | 2 4 6 7 9 11 13 14 | 13 11 9 7 6 4 2

**Just play** and think about the notes. Simple, but once you learn a song, do you really think about the notes or just where your fingers go? If you run through the names of the notes as you play them you can kill two birds with one stone. This is especially important if you learn just from tabs as there is nothing forcing you to even care about the notes.

**Find a note in all locations.** If you have metronome, put it going slowly, if not, just practice this evenly (and slowly) by counting in your head or tapping your foot. Choose a note and locate it on any string. Once you find the note, play it on a click (metronome or virtual – “1 2 3 4...”). Find the note on the next string and play it on the next click (I said go slowly right?). And the next and the next until you cover all the strings. There are some strings (depending on how many frets you have to work with) that will have two note locations. I suggest you practice playing those too. Then pick another note to find the locations of. Try doing this with all the different notes (enharmonics too!).

For example, to do this exercise with the G note it would look like this:

1. Open G string – “click/pick”
2. 12th fret, G string – “click/pick”
3. 7th fret, C string – “click/pick”
4. 3rd fret, E string – “click/pick”
5. 15th fret, E string – “click/pick”
6. 10th fret, A string – “click/pick”

**Write it out.** Print out some copies of a blank fingerboard chart (following page) and fill in the blanks using whatever order you like (natural notes first, string by string, fret by fret, etc...). Study the location of those notes!

