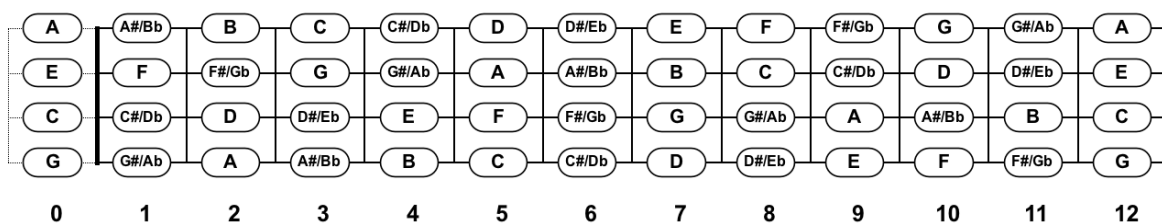


# 'Ukulele Fretboard Diagram: The Notes & Where to Find Them

A player's most important piece of foundational knowledge is, without a doubt, the notes on a 'ukulele fretboard. They hold the key to everything and yet, these 48 little destinations get pushed aside by almost everybody! They are like the times tables of your uke – not fun, but useful and necessary.



Before we get too excited about what is where, it's nice to have a vague idea why things are laid out the way they are on an 'ukulele fretboard.



## What Makes a Fretboard:

Western music uses 12 notes, in this order:

A - A#/Bb - B - C - C#/Db - D - D#/Eb - E - F - F#/Gb - G - G#/Ab

It's called the chromatic scale. Once you get to the end, it repeats back to A. This chromatic scale also happens to be exactly the same as your 1st string (closest to the floor) – A. If you were to play every note on your A-string, in order, starting on the open A note, you would be playing the above line of letters.

The 12th fret marks what's called an "octave" – the same note, a full do-re-me-fa-so-la-ti-do scale away. That means once you get to the 12th fret, everything repeats!

This is true of all the strings. The open strings of a 'ukulele are: G-C-E-A. What are the 12th fret notes of the 'ukulele? G-C-E-A an octave above!

**Takeaway:** You only really need to learn the notes of the 'ukulele up to the 11th fret.

Out of the chromatic scale we can find 7 natural notes:

A - B - C - D - E - F - G

They are considered "natural" because they are not altered with sharps or flats.

A sharp (#) raises the pitch of the note a half step. A flat (b) lowers the pitch of the note a half step. A half step is one fret on the 'ukulele.

These flat or sharped notes are called "enharmonics" and each has two names. There are 5 enharmonics:

A#/Bb - C#/Db - D#/Eb - F#/Gb - G#/Ab

Because of the way the 12 notes are spaced, there's an enharmonic between every natural note and the next **except**:

- B and C
- E and F

As long as you can remember that ***B/C and E/F are always next-door neighbors***, you can always figure out the chromatic scale.

## Offsetting the Chromatic Scale for Each String:

Since the chromatic letter line repeats from G#/Ab back to A again, you can start on any note and get the same order, every time. This is exactly what happens with the other three strings.

The **E-string** is simply:

E - F - F#/Gb - G - G#/Ab - A - A#/Bb - B - C - C#/Db - D - D#/Eb

The **C-string**:

C - C#/Db - D - D#/Eb - E - F - F#/Gb - G - G#/Ab - A - A#/Bb - B

The **G-string**:

G - G#/Ab - A - A#/Bb - B - C - C#/Db - D - D#/Eb - E - F - F#/Gb

Put it all together and you get your first rough note map of the 'ukulele fingerboard:

A - A#/Bb - B - C - C#/Db - D - D#/Eb - E - F - F#/Gb - G - G#/Ab

E - F - F#/Gb - G - G#/Ab - A - A#/Bb - B - C - C#/Db - D - D#/Eb

C - C#/Db - D - D#/Eb - E - F - F#/Gb - G - G#/Ab - A - A#/Bb - B

G - G#/Ab - A - A#/Bb - B - C - C#/Db - D - D#/Eb - E - F - F#/Gb

## Enter the Matrix

Understanding the notes on a piano keyboard is easy compared to a 'ukulele fretboard. This is because there is only one place for each note – middle C only exists in a single spot.

On 'ukulele however (with a few exceptions), each note exists in several places. I like to think of this as the fingerboard “matrix.” Because of how the chromatic scale lands on each string, the picture gets much more challenging

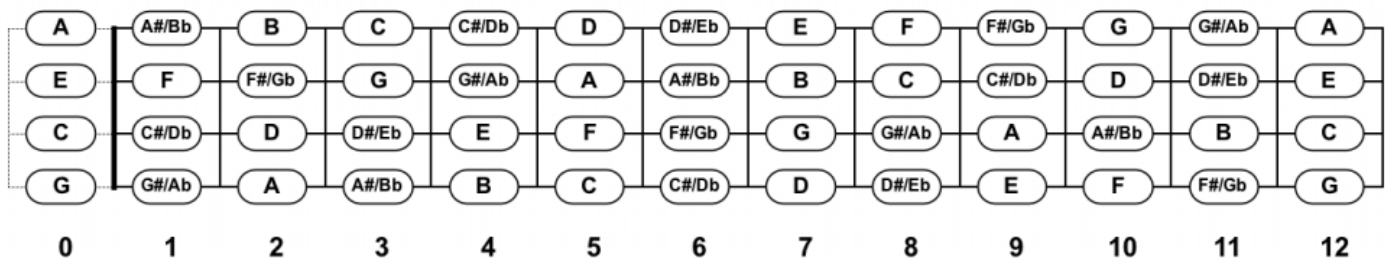
to understand. Finding the “right” note becomes a hefty chore. Not only do you have to locate options, but you must decide which to use to play the song!

Now that you have an idea why things are the way they are, let’s get down to business and rock that fretboard chart for your uke!

## GCEA ‘Ukulele Fretboard Note Charts

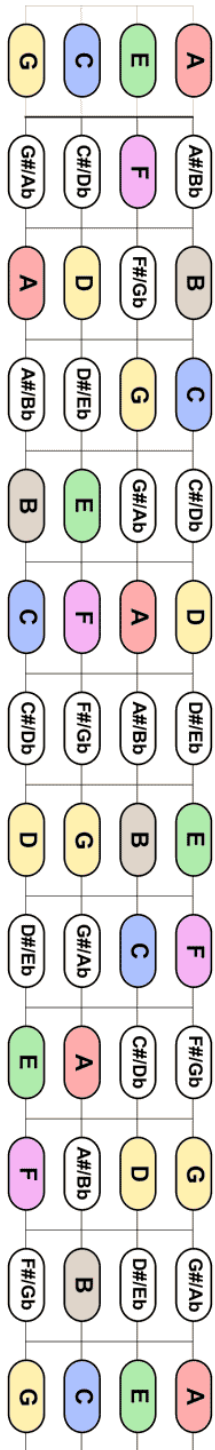
There’s not much to a fingerboard chart. One set of lines run horizontal and represent the strings. The others are vertical and represent the frets. In each finger space the note is shown. Simple.

Here are two formats for your reference.



If you want a fancy version with highlighted natural notes, here’s a colored fingerboard chart:

# 'ukulele Fretboard Note chart



# <sup>1</sup>Making it Stick

I teach at several week-long 'ukulele workshops every year and the recurring theme is always: "learn your fretboard!" I say it to my students, I've heard Herb Ohta Jr. say it to his students, James Hill says it to his students. It's the bottom line. If you want to reach the next level, those 48 notes need to be in your head, instantly accessible.

So how do you do it? It's not hard. It just takes some work. Lucky for you, I've created a template with some tips and suggestions on my page about memorizing the 'ukulele's fretboard.

Now go forth and study! This small facet of knowledge will make most things much easier as you learn to play 'ukulele.

I promise. (So does Herb.)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://liveukulele.com/lessons/fretboard-charts/#charts>