Styles & Genres



American Music: Blues 1: 12-Bar Blues

TWELVE-BAR BLUES is a popular form of music, especially with guitarists; it's quite easy to learn, and great fun! It follows a certain formula based on twelve "units" (or bars) and is quite recognisable when heard. A basic form of this formula can be expressed like this:

I is the root note of the key you're in, so if you're playing the blues in "C", the chord is C major.

IV is the fourth note of the scale - 4th note in the C scale is F, so the chord is F major.

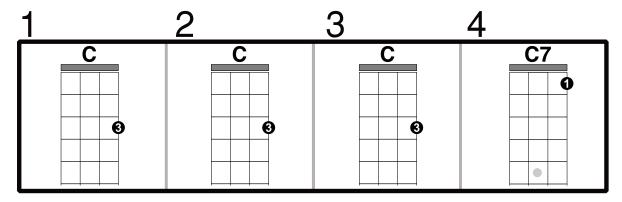
V is the fifth note of the scale - G, so the chord played is G. (The V chord is very often played in its "7th" form, so you would play a G7.)

Therefore, applying the formula to the C scale, you would get this:

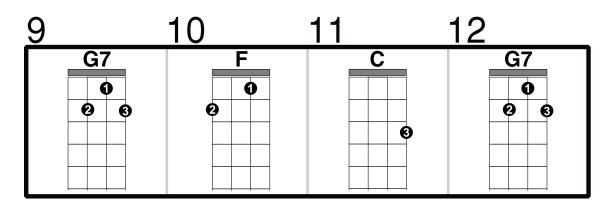
There are lots of slight variations to the formula, but that's basically it. Try the following sequence playing four strums for each unit:

1	2	3	4
I	I	I	17
5	6	7	8
IV	IV	I	I
9	10	11	12
V 7	IV	I	V 7

1	2	3	4
C	C	C	C7
5	6	7	8
F	F	C	C
9	10	11	12
G7	F	C	G7



5	6		7	8
F		F	С	С
	0	0		
		9	8	8



Twelve-Bar Blues

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