



3 String Cigar Box Guitar Theory

Welcome to the wacky world of 3 string cigar box guitars! I hope you enjoy the challenge, as I do, of mastering your new instrument.

3 string cigar box guitars are typically tuned to open chords, which make playing easier. By applying music theory, we can use advanced concepts like double stops, inversions and chord fragments to make unique and beautiful sounding music typical of these instruments.

The following tables and charts are to help you navigate your instrument.

But remember: even with all of these charts, THERE ARE NO RULES, so try different tunings, exotic scales, invented chords and whatever else helps you to have fun with your instrument!

-John

Fretboard Diagram

A I-V-I

fret	A	E	A
1	A#/B $\flat$	F	A#/B $\flat$
2	B	F#/G $\flat$	B
3	C	G	C
4	C#/D $\flat$	G#/A $\flat$	C#/D $\flat$
5	D	A	D
6	D#/E $\flat$	A#/B $\flat$	D#/E $\flat$
7	E	B	E
8	F	C	F
9	F#/G $\flat$	C#/D $\flat$	F#/G $\flat$
10	G	D	G
11	G#/A $\flat$	D#/E $\flat$	G#/A $\flat$
12	A	E	A

Fretboard Diagram

Personalized

fret			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

Fretboard Diagram

6 String EADGBE

fret	E	A	D	G	B	E
1	F	A [#] /B ^b	D [#] /E ^b	G [#] /A ^b	C	F
2	F [#] /G ^b	B	E	A	C [#] /D ^b	F [#] /G ^b
3	G	C	F	A [#] /B ^b	D	G
4	G [#] /A ^b	C [#] /D ^b	F [#] /G ^b	B	D [#] /E ^b	G [#] /A ^b
5	A	D	G	C	E	A
6	A [#] /B ^b	D [#] /E ^b	G [#] /A ^b	C [#] /D ^b	F	A [#] /B ^b
7	B	E	A	D	F [#] /G ^b	B
8	C	F	A [#] /B ^b	D [#] /E ^b	G	C
9	C [#] /D ^b	F [#] /G ^b	B	E	G [#] /A ^b	C [#] /D ^b
10	D	G	C	F	A	D
11	D [#] /E ^b	G [#] /A ^b	C [#] /D ^b	F [#] /G ^b	A [#] /B ^b	D [#] /E ^b
12	E	A	D	G	B	E

Major Scale

<u>KEY</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>	<u>VII</u>	<u>VIII</u>
	maj	min	min	maj	maj	min	dim	maj
A^b	A ^b	B ^b	C	D ^b	E ^b	F	G	A ^b
A	A	B	C [#]	D	E	F [#]	G [#]	A
A[#]	A [#]	C	D	D [#]	F	G	A	A [#]
B^b	B ^b	C	D	E ^b	F	G	A	B ^b
B	B	C [#]	D [#]	E	F [#]	G [#]	A [#]	B
C	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
C[#]	C [#]	D [#]	F	F [#]	G [#]	A [#]	C	C [#]
D^b	D ^b	E ^b	F	G ^b	A ^b	B ^b	C	D ^b
D	D	E	F [#]	G	A	B	C [#]	D
D[#]	D [#]	F	G	G [#]	A [#]	C	D	D [#]
E^b	E ^b	F	G	A ^b	B ^b	C	D	E ^b
E	E	F [#]	G [#]	A	B	C [#]	D [#]	E
F	F	G	A	B ^b	C	D	E	F
F[#]	F [#]	G [#]	A [#]	B	C [#]	D [#]	E [#]	F [#]
G^b	G ^b	A ^b	B ^b	C ^b	D ^b	E ^b	F	G ^b
G	G	A	B	C	D	E	F [#]	G
G[#]	G [#]	A [#]	C	C [#]	D [#]	F	G	G [#]

Natural Minor Scale

<u>KEY</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>	<u>VII</u>	<u>VIII</u>
	min	dim	maj	min	min	maj	maj	min
A^b	A ^b	B ^b	C ^b	D ^b	E ^b	E	G ^b	A ^b
A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A
A[#]	A [#]	C	C [#]	D [#]	F	F [#]	G [#]	A [#]
B^b	B ^b	C	D ^b	E ^b	F	G ^b	A ^b	B ^b
B	B	C [#]	D	E	F [#]	G	A	B
C	C	D	D [#]	F	G	G [#]	A [#]	C
C[#]	C [#]	D [#]	E	F [#]	G [#]	A	B	C [#]
D^b	D ^b	E ^b	E	G ^b	A ^b	A	B	D ^b
D	D	E	F	G	A	A [#]	C	D
D[#]	D [#]	F	F [#]	G [#]	A [#]	B	C [#]	D [#]
E^b	E ^b	F	G ^b	A ^b	B ^b	B	D ^b	E ^b
E	E	F [#]	G	A	B	C	D	E
F	F	G	G [#]	A [#]	C	C [#]	D [#]	F
F[#]	F [#]	G [#]	A	B	C [#]	D	E	F [#]
G^b	G ^b	A ^b	A	B	D ^b	D	E	G ^b
G	G	A	A [#]	C	D	D [#]	F	G
G[#]	G [#]	A [#]	B	C [#]	D [#]	E	F [#]	G [#]

Blues Scale

<u>KEY</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>II</u>	<u>III</u>	<u>IV</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>VI</u>	<u>VII</u>
A^b	A ^b	B	D ^b	D	E ^b	G ^b	A ^b
A	A	C	D	D [#]	E	G	A
A[#]	A [#]	C [#]	D [#]	E	F	G [#]	A [#]
B^b	B ^b	D ^b	E ^b	E	F	A ^b	B ^b
B	B	D	E	F	F [#]	A	B
C	C	D [#]	F	F [#]	G	A [#]	C
C[#]	C [#]	E	F [#]	G	G [#]	B	C [#]
D^b	D ^b	E	G ^b	G	A ^b	B	D ^b
D	D	E [#]	G	G [#]	A	C	D
D[#]	D [#]	F	G [#]	A	A [#]	C [#]	D [#]
E^b	E ^b	F	A ^b	A	B ^b	D ^b	E ^b
E	E	F [#]	A	A [#]	B	D	E
F	F	G	A [#]	B	C	D [#]	F
F[#]	F [#]	G [#]	B	C	C [#]	E	F [#]
G^b	G ^b	A ^b	B	C	D ^b	E	G ^b
G	G	A	C	C [#]	D	F	G
G[#]	G [#]	A [#]	C [#]	D	D [#]	F [#]	G [#]

Chord Analasis Chart

Chord Type	Notes Degrees (from major scale)
Major	I -III-V
Minor	I- ^b III-V
Diminished	I- ^b III- ^b V
Dominant 7th	I-III-V- ^b VII
Major 7th	I-III-V-VII
Minor 7th	I- ^b III-V- ^b VII
Minor/Major 7th	I- ^b III-V-VII
Suspended 4th	I-IV-V
Suspended 2nd	I-II-V
5th	I-V
Dominant 7th / Suspended 4th	I-IV-V- ^b VII
Minor 6th	I- ^b III-V- ^b VI
Minor #6th	I- ^b III- [#] VI
Augmented	I-III- [#] VI
Diminished VII	I- ^b III- ^b V- ^{bb} VII

Chord Quick Chart

KEY	Major			Minor			Dom 7th			
	I	III	V	I	$\flat$ III	V	I	III	V	$\flat$ VII
A$\flat$	A $\flat$	C	E $\flat$	A $\flat$	B	E $\flat$	A $\flat$	C	E $\flat$	G $\flat$
A	A	C $\sharp$	E	A	C	E	A	C $\sharp$	E	G
A$\sharp$	A $\sharp$	D	F	A $\sharp$	C $\sharp$	F	A $\sharp$	D	F	G $\sharp$
B$\flat$	B $\flat$	D	F	B $\flat$	D $\flat$	F	B $\flat$	D	F	A $\flat$
B	B	D $\sharp$	F $\sharp$	B	D	F $\sharp$	B	D $\sharp$	F $\sharp$	A
C	C	E	G	C	E $\flat$	G	C	E	G	B $\flat$
C$\sharp$	C $\sharp$	F	G $\sharp$	C $\sharp$	E	G $\sharp$	C $\sharp$	F	G $\sharp$	B
D$\flat$	D $\flat$	F	A $\flat$	D $\flat$	E	A $\flat$	D $\flat$	F	A $\flat$	B
D	D	F $\sharp$	A	D	F	A	D	F $\sharp$	A	C
D$\sharp$	D $\sharp$	G	A $\sharp$	D $\sharp$	F $\sharp$	A $\sharp$	D $\sharp$	G	A $\sharp$	C $\sharp$
E$\flat$	E $\flat$	G	B $\flat$	E $\flat$	G $\flat$	B $\flat$	E $\flat$	G	B $\flat$	D $\flat$
E	E	G $\sharp$	B	E	G	B	E	G $\sharp$	B	D
F	F	A	C	F	A $\flat$	C	F	A	C	E $\flat$
F$\sharp$	F $\sharp$	A $\sharp$	C $\sharp$	F $\sharp$	A	C $\sharp$	F $\sharp$	A $\sharp$	C $\sharp$	E
G$\flat$	G $\flat$	B $\flat$	D $\flat$	G $\flat$	A	D $\flat$	G $\flat$	B $\flat$	D $\flat$	E
G	G	B	D	G	B $\flat$	D	G	B	D	F
G$\sharp$	G $\sharp$	C $\sharp$	D $\sharp$	G $\sharp$	C	D $\sharp$	G $\sharp$	C $\sharp$	D $\sharp$	F $\sharp$



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