

GEORGE GOODMAN'S HARMONICA CHEAT SHEETS

By George Goodman

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Preface

George Goodman's Harmonica Cheat Sheets is a combination of four great tools to kick start your harmonica playing.

The Blues Harp Cheat Sheet

This Cheat Sheet provides chords, cross harp key, 12 Bar Blues Progression, and Blues Scale harmonica tabs covering all 12 keys.

Harmonica Chord Cheat Sheet

All major keys or scales consist of 7 notes. Chords can be built upon each of these notes of the scale. So a particular key will have 7 corresponding chords.

The Harmonica Chord Cheat Sheet will show you where the notes are on the harmonica for each of these chords in all 12 keys.

Also use the **Harmonica Chord Cheat Sheet** to help determine song keys and to aid in transposing songs to new keys.

Pentatonic Scale Cheat Sheet

A vast number of melodies are built off of 5 note scales known as pentatonic scales. There are 2 flavors – major and minor and they occur in a number of different spots on the harmonica.

Circle of Fourths and Fifths

Make sense of playing in positions using the **Circle of Fourths and Fifths** and learn how to choose the correct key harmonica depending on the key and style of a song.

Harmonica Tabs and the Major Scale

Basic harmonica tabs are provided to indicate which holes to blow or draw and bends or overblows if any.

First off, each hole of the harmonica is numbered 1 through 10 which you will see on the top plate just above the corresponding hole.

So in the harmonica tabs, numbers refer to the hole on the harmonica.

Harmonica Tabs Key

4 = blow 4

- = Draw

b = Semi-tone bend

bb = Whole tone bend

o = Overblow

Major Scale

For example, let me demonstrate the major scale over the full range of the harmonica.

The full range of the 10 hole diatonic harmonica is three octaves so the corresponding major scale can be played in 3 different ranges.

I'll call these the lower, middle and higher ranges.

Here are the tabs for the major scale and because we are using a C major harmonica we will be playing the C major scale.

1 -1 2 -2bb 3 -3bb -3 4

4 -4 5 -5 6 -6 -7 7

7 -8 8 -9 9 -10 10

The one other element that we will cover is the overblow and in particular 6o.

This note is tabbed in the **Blues Harp Cheat Sheet** and like bending requires redirecting the flow of air to generate a unique combination of reed vibrations. The resulting effect is to produce a tone that is a minor third above the note that you are blowing. So in the case of our C harmonica, blow 6 is the note G. 6o is the note Bb which is a minor third above G.

Blues Harp Cheat Sheet

Blues Key	I7	IV7	V7	Cross Harp
C	C7	F7	G7	F
G	G7	C7	D7	C
D	D7	G7	A7	G
A	A7	D7	E7	D
E	E7	A7	B7	A
B	B7	E7	F#7	E
F#	F#7	B7	C#7	B
C#	C#7	F#7	G#7	F#
Ab	Ab7	Db7	Eb7	C#/Db
Eb	Eb7	Ab7	Bb7	Ab
Bb	Bb7	Eb7	F7	Eb
F	F7	Bb7	C7	Bb
Chord Tabs	-1 -2bb -2 -3 -4 -5 6 -7 -8 -9 9	1 2 3 -3b 4 5 6 6o 7 8 9 x 10	1 -1 -2b(b)-3bb 4 -4 -5 -6 7 -8 -9 -10 10	
Blues Scale Tabs		1 4 7 9	-1b -4b x	-1 -4 -8 -9
				-2bb -5

Blues Key

The first column in the **Blues Harp Cheat Sheet** is the **Blues Key** column which displays the 12 different possible keys that the Blues can be played in.

The most common Blues keys would be A and E which is due more to the tuning of the guitar than anything else.

The Blues key goes up by a perfect 5th as you go down the column. C is the first key, then going up a 5th we arrive at G. The next key is D, then A, E and so on.

I7, IV7, V7

A standard blues progression uses 3 chords that usually take the form of dominant 7th chords. These 3 chords consist of dominant 7th chords, noted in roman numerals, built on the root or first note of the key, **I7**, the fourth note of the key, **IV7**, and the fifth note of the key, **V7** or shortened to I, IV, V.

Under columns **I7**, **IV7**, and **V7** are the chords that are used for a typical blues. For example, if the Blues Key were G, the three chords used would be G7, C7, and D7.

These chords are four note chords consisting of a root, major third, fifth and minor seventh.

Cross Harp

Cross Harp is the key harmonica to use in relation to the **Blues Key**. Looking again at the **Blues Key** of G, a C harmonica would be used for cross harp. Blues in A would require a D harmonica and Blues in E would require an A harmonica for playing in cross harp or second position.

Chord Tabs

The **Chord Tab** row of the **Blues Harp Cheat Sheet** shows the harmonica tabs for each of the three chords in a typical Blues progression. The harmonica tabs for each chord is divided into 4 columns with each column representing a note in the chord. The first column signifies the root note of the chord, the second column signifies the 3rd of the chord, the third column signifies the 5th of the chord and the fourth column represents the 7th of the chord.

I7 Harmonica Tabs

Let's look at each of the chords separately using our C harmonica starting with the I7 chord. If we look at our **Blues Harp Cheat Sheet** and locate the C harmonica in the **Cross Harp** column, then look across to the **I7** column, we see that the I7 chord will be G7. The notes that make up the G7 chord are G, B, D, and F.

The first note we see for the I7 chord, -1, is in the third column and so represents the fifth of the chord. The next note, -2bb is in the fourth column and represents the 7th of the chord.

The second row of the I7 harmonica tabs show -2 -3 -4 and -5 which is the full four note dominant 7th chord.

The third row also shows the entire 4 note dominant 7th chord which will sound a full octave higher than the second row: 6 -7 -8 -9.

The fourth row shows a single entry in the root column, blow 9.

IV7 Harmonica Tabs

Go back to the **Blues Harp Cheat Sheet** and look at the **Cross Harp** or C row. Under the **IV7** column is the C7 chord and the notes of the chord are C, E, G and Bb.

The full IV7 chord can be sounded in the lower range of the harmonica shown in the first row. The first note in the chord is the root and is blow 1. That's followed by blow 2, blow 3 and draw 3 with a semi-tone bend.

The second row displays the entire IV7 chord as well starting with blow 4, blow 5, blow 6, and then to get the 7th of the chord you need to overblow hole 6.

The third row starts at blow 7 for the root, then blow 8 for the third of the chord and blow 9 for the fifth of the chord. There is not a way to get the 7th of the IV chord in the upper range of the harmonica and so that space is marked x.

Finally you can sound the root again on blow 10

V7 Harmonica Tabs

Back to the **Blues Harp Cheat Sheet**, **Cross Key** of C row and we see that the **V7** chord is D7. The notes of the D7 chord are D, F#, A, and C.

The C harmonica can't play D7 above the first octave because that would require F# (Our C harmonica has an F natural, not F#). In this case, the harmonica can play the notes to a Dm7 chord which are here on the C harmonica:

1 -1 -2bb -3bb 4 -4 -5 -6 7 -8 -9 -10 10.

The **V7** chord is possible in the first octave of the harmonica by using bending. Here are the tabs for the D7 chord in the bottom octave:

-1 -2b -3bb 4 – a single bend on draw 2 produces F#.

In the **Blues Harp Cheat Sheet**, notice that the first line of tabs for the V7 chord shows -2b(b). A single bend on draw 2 is part of the V7 chord. A double bend on draw 2 would result in a minor seventh chord similar to the upper octaves.

Blues Scale Tabs

The **Blues Scale** is a six note scale that is characterized by flattening certain pitches to create the signature Blues sound. In the Blues scale, the second is omitted, the third is lowered from a major third to a minor third, a flattened fifth is added, the sixth is omitted and the seventh is flatted.

In comparison to a major scale, the notes of the **Blues Scale** consist of the root, flat 3, 4, flat 5, 5, flat 7.

The **Blues Scale** can be played throughout a Blues progression irrespective of the chord being played whether on the I, IV, or V.

For example, if the Blues key is G, playing a C harmonica in second position, the G Blues scale can be played throughout the Blues progression.

The tabs are broken into octaves over the rows and into degrees of the scale by columns.

The first column shows the root; second column is the flat 3; third column, 4; fourth column, flat 5; fifth column, 5; sixth column, flat 7.

Pentatonic Scales

Pentatonic Scales are covered in a following section but note that these scales also work well with **The Blues**.

Blues Progression – 12 Bar Blues in G

The image displays a 12-bar blues progression in G major, organized into three lines of four bars each. Each bar contains a single chord represented by a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a chord symbol above the staff. The first line (bars 1-4) consists of four measures of G7. The second line (bars 5-8) consists of two measures of C7, two measures of G7, and two measures of G7. The third line (bars 9-12) consists of one measure of D7, one measure of C7, one measure of G7, and one measure of D7. The final bar (bar 12) ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

A simplified example of the typical **12 Bar Blues** progression is shown above. Some variations to this progression are common but this represents the most common form.

Bars 1 – 4: I7

Bars 5 and 6: IV7

Bars 7 and 8: I7

Bar 9: V7

Bar 10: IV7

Bar 11: I7

Bar 12: V7 (I7 if last time around)

Harmonica Chord Cheat Sheet

The **Harmonica Chord Cheat Sheet** displays all 12 Major Keys, the chords built upon each degree of the major scale and the harmonica tabs for the notes of each chord.

This table can be used for a bunch of things

- Learn the chord tones on harmonica
- Help determine the key of a song
- Transpose songs to different keys
- Find particular chords on different key harmonicas

Chord	I Major 7				ii minor 7			iii minor 7				IV Major 7				V7				vi minor 7				viiø7											
Tabs	1	2	3	-3	-1	-2bb	-3bb	1	2	3	-3	-4	-2bb	-3bb	1	2	3	4	-2	-3	-4	-5	-1	-2bb	-3bb	1	2	3	-3	-4	-5	-6			
	4	5	6	-7	-4	-5	-6	4	5	6	-7	-8	-5	-6	4	5	6	7	6	-7	-8	-9	-6	-7	-8	-9	-6	7	8	9	-7	-8	-9	-10	
	7	8	9	10b	-8	-9	-10	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	10	9	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	-10	10	10	10	-10	10	10	10				
	10																																		
C Maj	CM7				Dm7			Em7				FM7				G7				Am7				Bø7											
G Maj	GM7				Am7			Bm7				CM7				D7				Em7				F#ø7											
D Maj	DM7				Em7			F#m7				GM7				A7				Bm7				C#ø7											
A Maj	AM7				Bm7			C#m7				DM7				E7				F#m7				G#ø7											
E Maj	EM7				F#m7			G#m7				AM7				B7				C#m7				D#ø7											
B Maj	BM7				C#m7			D#m7				EM7				F#7				G#m7				A#ø7											
F# Maj	F#M7				G#m7			A#m7				BM7				C#7				D#m7				E#ø7											
C# Maj	C#M7				D#m7			E#m7				F#M7				G#7				A#m7				B#ø7											
Ab Maj	AbM7				Bbm7			Cm7				DbM7				Eb7				Fm7				Gø7											
Eb Maj	EbM7				Fm7			Gm7				AbM7				Bb7				Cm7				Dø7											
Bb Maj	BbM7				Cm7			Dm7				EbM7				F7				Gm7				Aø7											
F Maj	FM7				Gm7			Am7				BbM7				C7				Dm7				Eø7											

Starting in the upper left is the **Chord** row. In this row are all of the 7th chords built upon each degree of the major scale and are named in roman numerals. The 7th chord built upon the first note of a major scale is the **I Major 7**, IM7, chord. The 7th chord built upon the second note of a major scale is the **ii minor 7** chord and so on.

The next row, **Tabs**, displays the harmonica tabs for each of the chords. Each cell in the **Tabs** row is divided into 4 sub columns and rows. The first sub column represents the root of the chord. The second represents the 3rd of the chord. The third sub column represents the 5th of the chord and the fourth represents the 7th of the chord. Note that simple three note triads don't include the 7th. Each sub row represents a different octave on the harmonica.

Following the **Tabs** row is each of the twelve different keys and their respective chords. The **C Maj** row shows that the key of C Major is made up of the following chords:

I Major 7 = CM7

ii minor 7 = Dm7

iii minor 7 = Em7

IV Major 7 = FM7

V7 = G7

vi minor 7 = Am7

viiØ7 = BØ7

Ø = half diminished is also known as minor7b5.

Now, for example, if you are playing a song in the key of C and the progression is C Am Dm G7 (I vi ii V7), you can figure out where the notes to these chords are on the harmonica by looking at the **Harmonica Chord Cheat Sheet**. If the chord is not a 7th chord, only the three note triad tabs are shown.

C is the I Major chord; in tabs: **1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10**

Am is the vi minor chord; in tabs: 1 2 **-3bb** 4 5 **-6** 7 8 **-10** 10

Dm is the ii minor chord; in tabs: **-1** -2bb -3bb **-4** -5 -6 **-8** -9 -10

G7 is the V7 chord; in tabs: -1 -2bb **-2** -3 -4 -5 **6** -7 -8 -9 **9**

Now you can find out where each of those chords' notes is found on your harmonica. The notes of a songs' melodies are mostly comprised of the same notes that make up the chord so learning these chord tones on the harmonica over the full range of the instrument is key to stepping up to the next level of harmonica musicianship.

Pentatonic Scale Cheat Sheet

Chord – Pentatonic Scale	Harmonica Tabs				
I - Major Root, 2 nd , 3 rd , 5 th , 6 th	1	-1	2	3	-3bb
	4	-4	5	6	-6
	7	-8	8	9	-10
	10				
ii - Minor Root, 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th , 7 th					1
	-1	-2bb	3	-3bb	4
	-4	-5	6	-6	7
	-8	-9	9	-10	10
iii – Minor Root, 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th , 7 th					-1
	2	3	-3bb	-3	-4
	5	6	-6	-7	-8
	8	9	-10		
IV – Major Root, 2 nd , 3 rd , 5 th , 6 th				1	-1
	-2bb	3	-3bb	4	-4
	-5	6	-6	7	-8
	-9	9	-10	10	
V – Major Root, 2 nd , 3 rd , 5 th , 6 th				-1	2
	3	-3bb	-3	-4	5
	6	-6	-7	-8	8
	9	-10			
vi – Minor Root, 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th , 7 th		1	-1	2	3
	-3bb	4	-4	5	6
	-6	7	-8	8	9
	-10	10			

Licks and phrases are formed from the notes that make up the notes of the chords or the notes in the scales. A popular source for licks also comes from 5 note scales called **Pentatonic Scales**. These can take the form of major or minor pentatonic scales.

The major pentatonic scale would be used when playing a major chord and the minor variety fits over a minor chord.

Looking at the **Pentatonic Scale Cheat Sheet** we see two column headings.

The first column is the **Chord – Pentatonic Scale** column which displays the chord and the corresponding pentatonic scale whether major or minor.

For example, the first entry is **I – Major**. The chord built upon the first note of a major scale is a major chord and the major pentatonic fits over this chord.

Underneath this are the scale tones as they relate to the chord. The major pentatonic scale takes the following form including the notes:

- The **Root** or first note of the chord.
- The **2nd** which is the second note of that chord's major scale.
- The **3rd** which is the third note of that chord's major scale as well as the second note of the chord.
- The **5th** which is the fifth note of that chord's major scale as well as the third note of the chord.
- The **6th** which is the sixth note of that chord's major scale.

The **Minor Pentatonic** sounds great over minor chords and includes the following five notes:

- The **Root** or first note of the chord.
- The **3rd** which is the third note of the minor scale and second note of the minor chord.
- The **4th** which is the fourth note of the chord's minor scale.
- The **5th** which is the fifth note of the minor scale and third note of the minor chord.
- The **7th** which is the seventh note of the minor scale and the fourth note of the minor 7th chord.

The second column contains the **Harmonica Tabs** for the corresponding pentatonic scale. The **Harmonica Tabs** column is broken down into five columns with each column representing one of the five notes of the pentatonic scale. The root being the left hand column.

From the Cheat Sheet we see that we can play a major pentatonic scale for three different major chords and a minor pentatonic scale for the three minor chords over the full range of the harmonica.

Let's go back to our example progression introduced in the **Harmonica Chord Cheat Sheet** above:

C Am Dm G7 (I vi ii V7).

When the C chord is playing, the corresponding pentatonic scale would be the **I – Major** pentatonic scale:

C, I – Major: 1 -1 2 3 -3bb 4 -4 5 6 -6 7 -8 8 9 -10 10

Over the Am chord, play the **vi – Minor** pentatonic scale:

Am, vi – Minor: 1 -1 2 3 -3bb 4 -4 5 6 -6 7 -8 8 9 -10 10

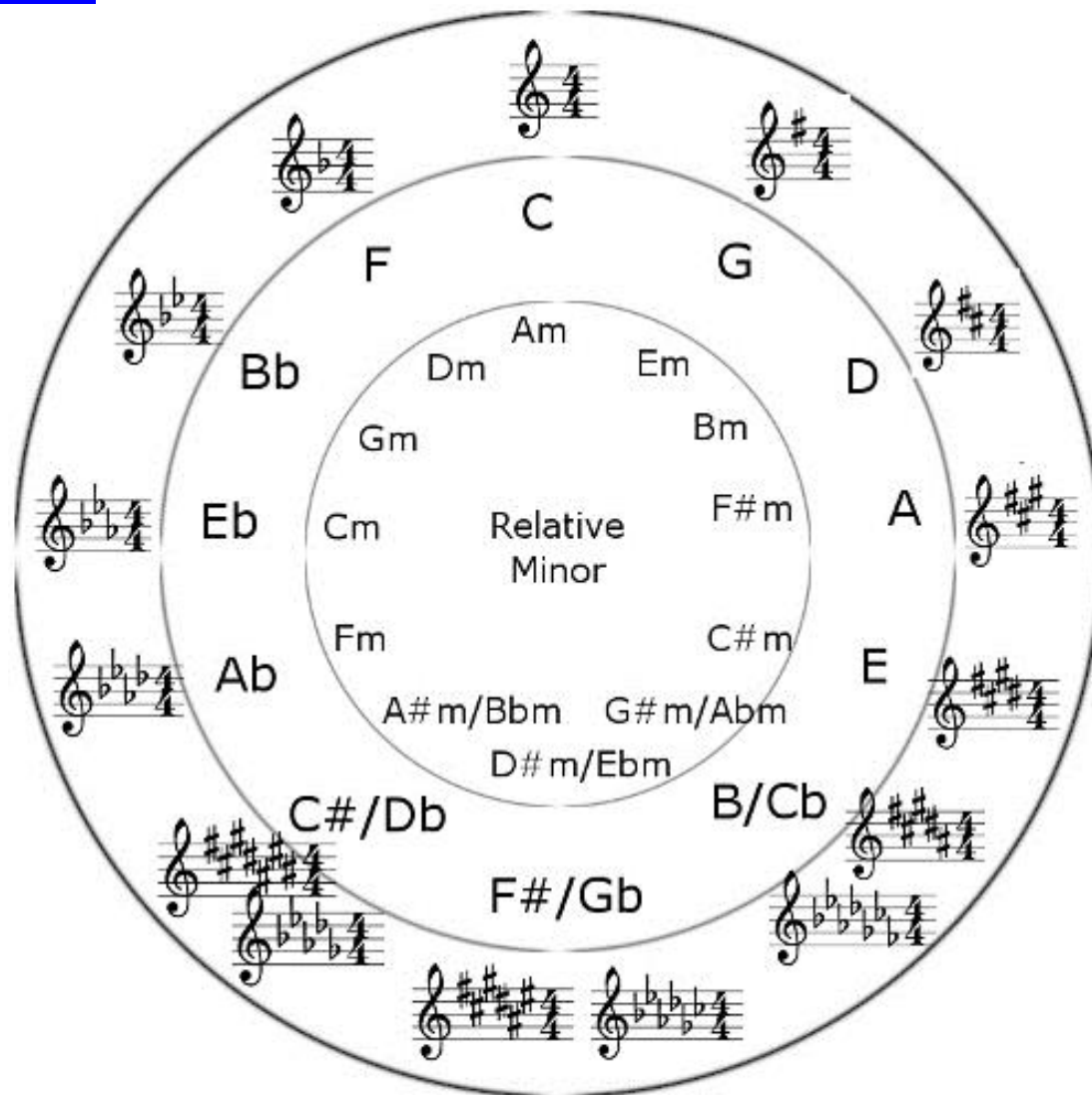
Over Dm, play the **ii – Minor** pentatonic scale:

Dm, ii – Minor: 1 -1 -2bb 3 -3bb 4 -4 -5 6 -6 7 -8 -9 9 -10 10

Over G7, play the **V – Major** pentatonic scale:

G7, V – Major: -1 2 3 -3bb -3 -4 5 6 -6 -7 -8 8 9 -10

Circle Of Fourths/Fifths



This image displays the Circle of 4ths and 5ths. When navigating around the circle in a clockwise direction, you are going around the circle of 5ths – each step represents going up a perfect 5th interval. Navigating in a counter-clockwise direction is going around the Circle of 4ths – each step represents going up a perfect 4th interval.

The Circle is very useful for determining key signatures as well as figuring out the key harmonica to use for different positions.

Let's look at the most common positions and song types for a C harmonica.

Playing in **first position**, the key of the harmonica matches the key of the song and so needs to be C. First position is common for folk, country and rock.

Second Position – song key is G; this is common for the blues, rock, and country. For Blues in G go one step around the circle of fourths from G for second position, which is C and so use a C harmonica. Look at the **Blues Harp Cheat Sheet** to confirm.

Third Position – song key is D minor. A song in the key of D minor could use a C harmonica played in third position. (Starting at D, D is first position, G is second, and C is third position from D).

Fourth Position – song key is A minor. A song in the key of A minor could use a C harmonica played in fourth position. (Starting at A, A is first position, D is second position, G is third and C is fourth position from A).

Twelfth Position – song key is F. A song in the key of F major could use a C harmonica played in twelfth position.

Taken the other way around

If a song is in the key of **C major**, use a C harmonica in **first position**. You could also use a G harmonica in **twelfth position**.

For Blues in C, use an F harmonica in **second position**. The F harmonica produces a C7 chord on -2-3-4-5.

For a song in C minor, use a Bb harmonica in **third position** or a Eb harmonica in **fourth position**.

Wrap Up

Key #1

Pick out the correct key harmonica. The Circle of Fourths/Fifths and Blues Harp Cheat Sheet were designed for this.

Key #2

Find the holes, draw and blow, that match the notes in the chord and appropriate scales. These will make up the majority of the notes in any melody. Use the Harmonica Chord and Pentatonic Scale Cheat Sheets for this.

About The Author



George Goodman is a musician/farmer/father located in Parksville, British Columbia on beautiful Vancouver Island. George grew up in a musical family where any manner of instrument was available and completed the Commercial Music Diploma program from Capilano College majoring on Tenor Saxophone. George continues his life-long musical passion by playing solo gigs on guitar,

harmonica and vocals, as a member of a number of bands playing rock, folk and blues on saxophone, harmonica, and keyboards as well as an instructor to music students worldwide live online via Skype or locally in-person.

GeorgeGoodman.com - George has written and produced a growing collection of instructional videos teaching how to play classic rock, blues and folk songs on guitar and harmonica. New videos are uploaded regularly and are all free to view.

HarpNGuitar.com – A unique step-by-step video series that gets you playing guitar and harmonica together quickly and easily by demonstrating the basic principles that will enable you to confidently play your favourite songs on guitar and harmonica. All lessons are in high quality audio and video.

Other Books By George Goodman

[The Guitar and Harmonica Method](#) - provides aspiring musicians with the basic tools and knowledge needed to play guitar and harmonica together, to be able to perform great songs with confidence and to gain a deeper musical understanding.

Up Next

- George continues to work on his upcoming debut solo album scheduled for 2015 release.
- More great classic song lessons are also in the works and continue to be produced and released for free on GeorgeGoodman.com/song-lessons.
- [HarpNGuitar](http://HarpNGuitar.com) expansion – new instructional videos are constantly being added to the growing course list.

Stay in touch with all of George's activities by subscribing to his website, signing up for his rss feed, or following him on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. You can find all the information here: GeorgeGoodman.com/subscribe.

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