

The **guitar** is a [fretted musical instrument](#) that usually has six [strings](#).<sup>[1]</sup> It is typically played with both hands by strumming or plucking the strings with either a guitar [pick](#) or the fingers/fingernails of one hand, while simultaneously fretting (pressing the strings against the frets) with the fingers of the other hand. The sound of the vibrating strings is projected either acoustically, by means of the hollow chamber of the guitar (for an [acoustic guitar](#)), or through an [electrical amplifier and a speaker](#).

The guitar is a type of [chordophone](#) - wherein the sound is produced by way of a string, stretched between two fixed points, vibrating when plucked - traditionally constructed from wood and strung with either gut, [nylon](#) or steel strings and distinguished from other chordophones by its construction and [tuning](#). The modern guitar was preceded by the [gittern](#), the [vihuela](#), the four-course [Renaissance guitar](#), and the five-course [baroque guitar](#), all of which contributed to the development of the modern six-string instrument.

There are three main types of modern [acoustic](#) guitar: the [classical guitar](#) (Spanish guitar/nylon-string guitar), the [steel-string acoustic guitar](#) and the [archtop guitar](#), which is sometimes called a "[jazz guitar](#)". The tone of an acoustic guitar is produced by the strings' vibration, amplified by the hollow body of the guitar, which acts as a [resonating chamber](#). The classical guitar is often played as a [solo](#) instrument using a comprehensive [finger-picking](#) technique where each string is plucked individually by the player's fingers, as opposed to being strummed. The term "finger-picking" can also refer to a specific tradition of folk, blues, bluegrass, and country guitar playing in the United States. The [acoustic bass guitar](#) is pitched one octave below a regular guitar.

[Electric guitars](#), introduced in the 1930s, use an [amplifier](#) and a [loudspeaker](#) that both makes the sound of the instrument loud enough for the performers and audience to hear, and, given that it produces an electric signal when played, that can electronically manipulate and shape the tone using [an equalizer](#) (e.g., bass and treble tone controls) and a wide variety of electronic [effects units](#), the most commonly used ones being [distortion \(or "overdrive"\)](#) and [reverb](#). Early amplified guitars employed a hollow body, but solid wood guitars began to dominate during the 1960s and 1970s, as they are less prone to unwanted [acoustic feedback](#) "howls". As with acoustic guitars, there are a number of types of electric guitars, including [hollowbody guitars](#), [archtop guitars](#) (used in [jazz guitar](#), [blues](#) and [rockabilly](#)) and [solid-body guitars](#), which are widely used in [rock music](#).

The loud, amplified sound and sonic power of the electric guitar played through a guitar amp has played a key role in the development of [blues](#) and [rock music](#), both as an [accompaniment](#) instrument (playing [riffs](#) and [chords](#)) and performing [guitar solos](#), and in many rock subgenres, notably [heavy metal music](#) and [punk rock](#). The electric guitar has had a major influence on [popular culture](#). The guitar is used in a wide variety of musical genres worldwide. It is recognized as a primary instrument in genres such as [blues](#), [bluegrass](#), [country](#), [flamenco](#), [folk](#), [jazz](#), [jota](#), [mariachi](#), [metal](#), [punk](#), [reggae](#), [rock](#), [soul](#), and [pop](#).