

Title:

Guide to the Types and Styles of the Ukulele

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Summary:

Ukuleles are small guitar-like instruments that have been popular in Hawaii for many years. Musicians everywhere enjoy playing these today. Learn about the different types and styles of ukuleles in this article...

Keywords:

ukuleles, ukulele, bushman ukuleles, ukes

Article Body:

The ukulele is a very small guitar that originated from an island in Portugal called Madeira. This instrument was called "braguinha" in Portuguese. In 1879, travelers took a ship from the island of Madeira to Hawaii. Craftsmen who witnessed this instrument being played were fascinated and began producing it for Hawaiians. The instrument was nicknamed "ukulele," which actually means, "jumping flea." It is also called "uke" for short.

Ukes are different from guitars in several ways. They are usually very lightweight and easy to carry. Original style ukes are easier to learn to play because they have fewer strings. They are also easier on the fingers. Ukes are, however, limited in the range of notes that can be played. They are great for musicians who want simplicity!

Today this instrument is still very popular in Hawaii and is being shipped to music lovers around the world. Let's take a look at the types and styles of ukuleles.

Four Types of Ukuleles

There are four standard types of ukuleles, which are concert, soprano, tenor, and baritone. The most commonly used type is the soprano ukulele. Each type, except the baritone, is tuned using the well-known tune/phrase "my dog has fleas!" This involves hitting the keys G, C, E and then A. The tenor type is one octave down from soprano. The baritone's tuning is accomplished using this order of keys: E, B, G, D.

There are also hybrid ukuleles being produced today, such as the banjulele

(banjo body), taropatch (eight-stringed instrument) and ukelin. These specialty instruments are usually developed by individuals or specialty musical instrument companies. Some are even highly collectible today.

The soprano uke is the smallest at about 21 inches long. The concert uke is about 23 inches long. The baritone uke is 30 inches long, and the tenor uke is 26 inches long. The baritone and tenor ukes are more similar to regular-sized guitars, only with just four strings.

Styles of Ukuleles

Ukuleles may also come in a variety of styles, colors, and shapes to reflect the personality of the musician. Some examples of style variety are the Bushman ukuleles, which come in styles such as Jenny Soprano, Jenny Pineapple, Jenny Concert, Jenny Tenor, and Jenny Baritone.

A ukulele maker might use a variety of high-quality woods to produce the instruments such as Mahogany to give the instrument a brilliant finish. The shapes of the instrument may vary as well. Some resemble the regular guitar shape while others might be completely oval-shaped, similar to a pineapple shape, or have a piece "cut away" at the neck.

With prices ranging from \$169 and up, anyone can own a ukulele. They can be ordered online for music fans that live in areas where the ukulele is not readily available locally. There is also a wide variety of ukulele strings and accessories such as felt picks, tuners, amplifiers, shoulder straps, strap buttons, tuning machines, ukulele humidifiers, and more. Whether one wants a cheap ukulele to keep around the house for fun or an expensive one for professional concerts, it's easy to find just the right style online.