

LESSON 4

You've got the blues...

If you haven't heard of the **blues**, then where have you been? It's been around for ages and has been used by such music legends as B.B. King, Eric Clapton, and Muddy Waters. Blues is fun (and easy) to play.

12-Bar Form

The most typical blues uses a form called **12-bar form**. This doesn't mean that the song is only twelve bars (measures) long. Rather, the song uses several 12-bar phrases (or sections) repeated over and over.

Generally, blues songs use only three chords: the **first, fourth and fifth** chords of the key (indicated with Roman numerals I, IV and V). Thus, as a bass player, it's important to know the first, fourth and fifth notes of each key's scale. To find these three notes, count up the scale from the root of the key:

Key	Chord / Scale Tone							
	I			IV	V			
Blues in "C"	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Blues in "F"	F	G	A	B \flat	C	D	E	F
Blues in "G"	G	A	B	C	D	E	F \sharp	G
Blues in "D"	D	E	F \sharp	G	A	B	C \sharp	D

Listen to the following example of 12-bar blues in "G" on Track 20. Then follow the chord symbols and play along with your own bass line...

20 Blues in G

IMPORTANT: Notice the number of measures each chord is played during the 12-bar form. This is the most common 12-bar blues chord progression...



Chord	Measures
I	= four
IV	= two
I	= two
V	= one
IV	= one
I	= two