



the blues mat

POCKET EDITION

Three chords, one box, and a lot of feel.
Everything here is in the key of A.

FIRST 12-BAR BLUES

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- 03 Seventh chords
- 04 The shuffle
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- 07 Licks
- 08 Make it talk
- 09 FunGuy's 5

progress over polish



The 12-bar blues

02

Twelve bars, three chords, then start over.

Count 1-2-3-4 in every box.

1 A7 I	2 A7 I	3 A7 I	4 A7 I
5 D7 IV	6 D7 IV	7 A7 I	8 A7 I
9 E7 V	10 D7 IV	11 A7 I	12 E7 V

I = home IV = the lift V = the pull back

The quick change

A7	D7	A7	A7
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Same thing, but bar 2 jumps to the IV and back.

The turnaround

Bars 11 and 12 point you back to the top.

That's where the turnaround lick lives.

see page 07



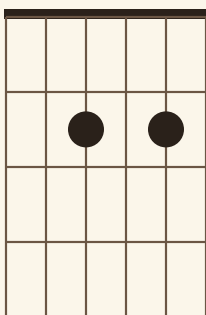
Seventh chords

03

Plain major chords sound happy.
Add the 7th and they sound like the blues.

Open 7ths in A

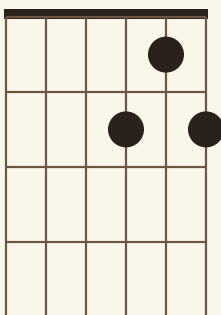
x ○ ○ ○



A7

I

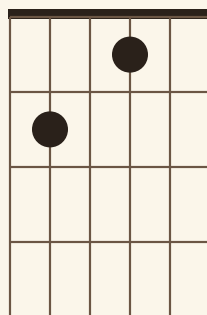
x x ○



D7

IV

○ ○ ○ ○

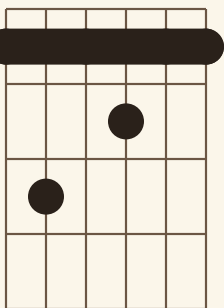


E7

V

Movable 7ths, any key

5

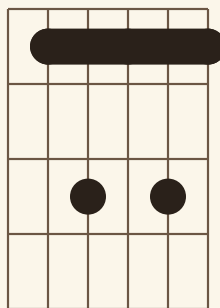


A7

root on 6th string

x

5



D7

root on 5th string

All of A blues in one spot:

A7 fret 5 (6th string), D7 fret 5 (5th),
E7 fret 7 (5th). Slide it to change key.



The shuffle

04

Learn this and you sound like the blues on day one.

The feel

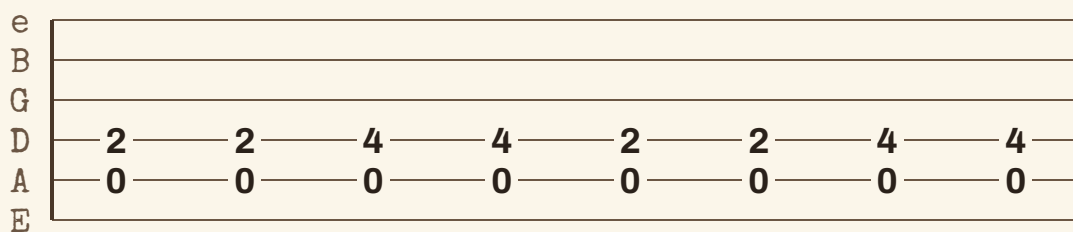
Long, short. Long, short. Like a heartbeat.



say it: DAAH-da, DAAH-da

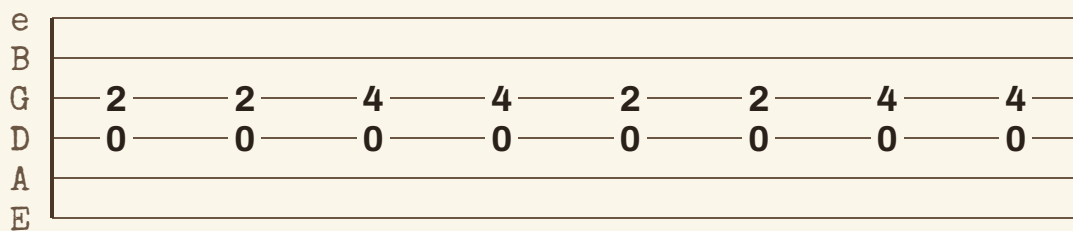
Over A7

A string + D string



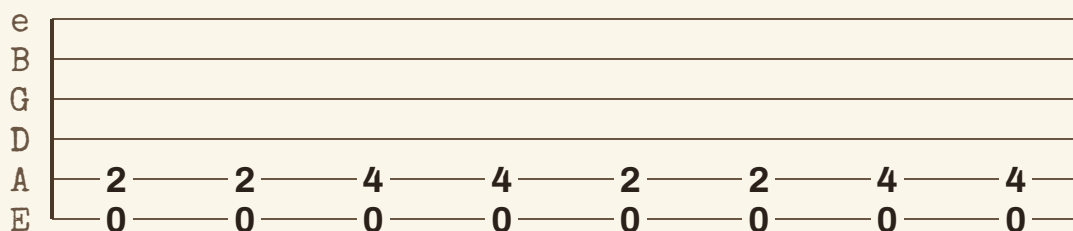
Over D7

D string + G string



Over E7

low E + A string



Same shape, three string pairs. Keep it with a jam track or metronome.

level up: reach for 5



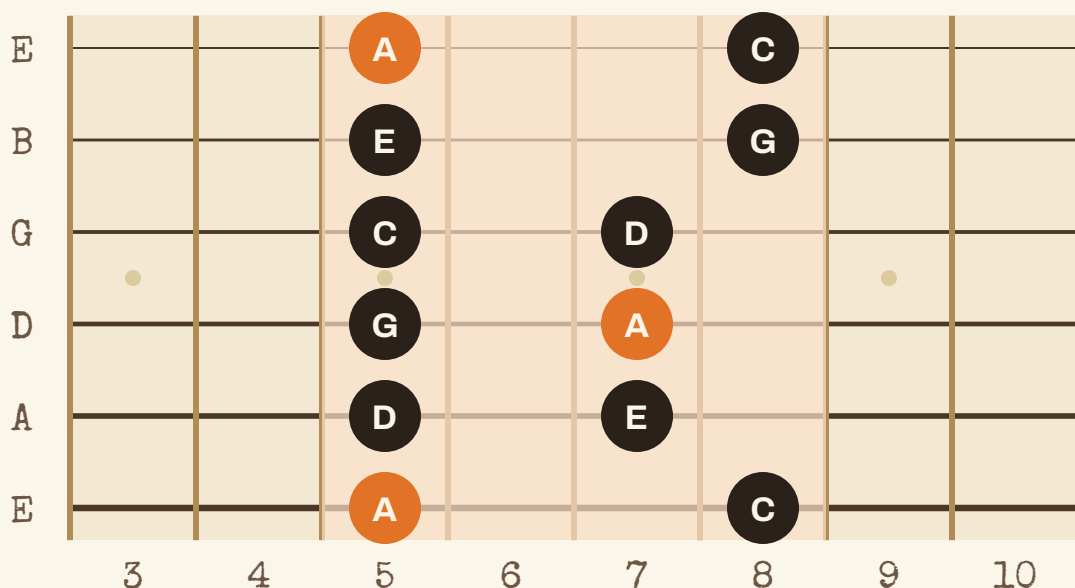
The minor box

05

Five notes, one hand position.
This is home base for blues solos.

A minor pentatonic

frets 5-8



The formula

1 b3 4 5 b7

In A: A C D E G

Orange is A, your landing spot.

Move it, change the key

fret 3 key of G

fret 5 key of A

fret 8 key of C

fret 10 key of D

one shape, every key



Blue note + major box

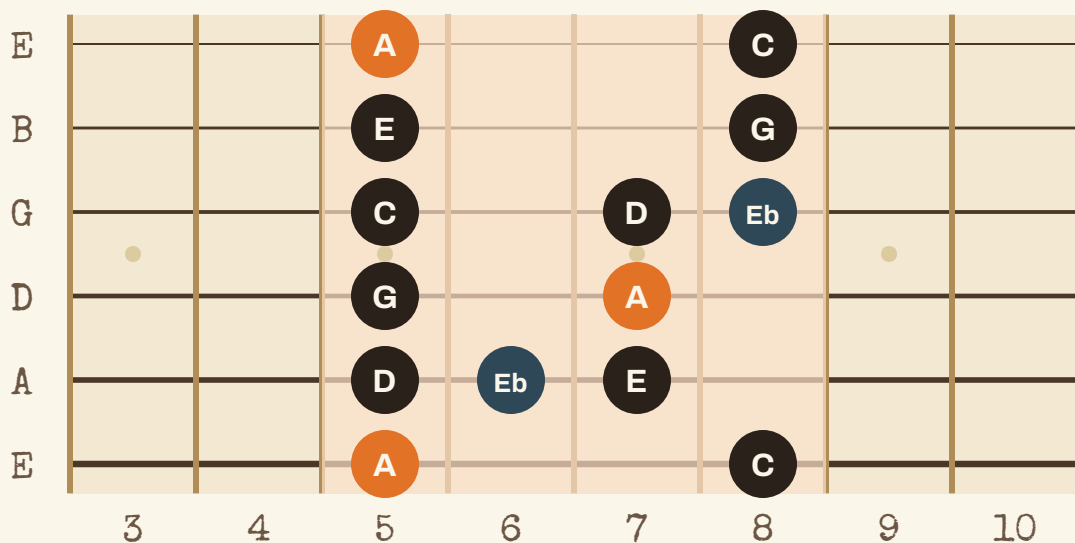
06

One extra note makes it the blues.

One slide makes it sweet.

Add the blue note

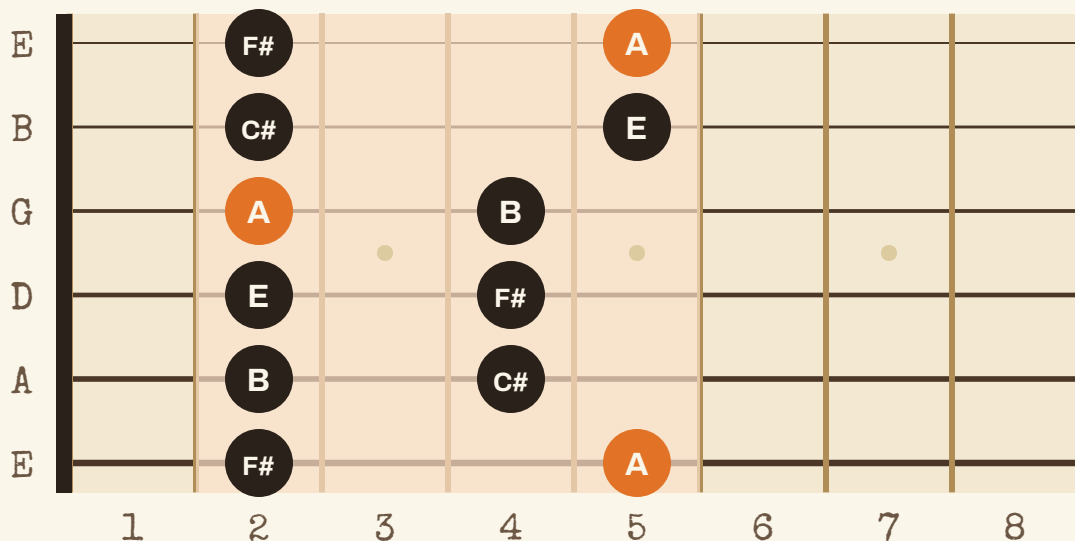
Eb, the flat 5. Pass through it, don't park.



Minor blues: 1 b3 4 b5 5 b7

The major box

Same shape, slid down 3 frets. Brighter.



Major pentatonic: 1 2 3 5 6

mix both. that's the sound.



All in the A box. b = bend, r = release,
~ = vibrato. Play them slow first.

The bend

push it up till it sings

e	
B	
G	7b9 ————— 7r ————— 5 —————
D	
A	
E	

Down the box

end on the root

e	8 ————— 5 —————
B	
G	8 ————— 5 —————
D	7 ————— 5 —————
A	
E	

Double stop

two strings, one hit

e	5 ————— 5 ————— 8 ————— 5 —————
B	5 ————— 5 ————— 8 ————— 5 —————
G	
D	7 ————— 5 —————
A	
E	

The turnaround

bars 11-12

e	5 ————— 5 ————— 5 ————— 5 —————	0
B	8 ————— 7 ————— 6 ————— 5 —————	0
G		1
D		0
A		2
E		0

Turnaround ends on E7. Then back to bar 1.



Five things that turn the box into the blues.

1 Bend it

Half-step and whole-step bends from every note in the box. Bend to pitch.

the notes between the frets

2 Loud, then soft

Whisper a phrase, then dig in.
The contrast is what pulls people in.

3 Steal from legends

Learn a B.B. King lick note for note.
Then Albert King. Then make it yours.

4 Sing it, play it

Hum a line, then find it on the neck.
Ask with one phrase, answer with the next.

5 Record yourself

Play now, judge later. Old takes show you how far you've come.

listen back



What actually kept me playing.
Not rules. Just what worked.

1 Find your why

Know why you picked it up. It gets you through the days you don't want to.

mine? the guitaring grandpa

2 Start with chords

Chords get you playing real songs fast. Songs keep you coming back.

3 Use a metronome

Start slow. Speed up when it feels easy. Your timing will thank you.

4 Find your people

Play for someone. Play with someone. Guitar gets better when it's shared.

5 Enjoy the journey

It's a long road, and the road is the best part. Film the rough takes too.

document it