

Soprano, Concert, and Tenor vs. Baritone Ukulele Chords

When I first got a ukulele, without knowing why, I bought a soprano uke. I sat down to play and realized that even though I have played guitar for over 40 years, I was confused. Questions like, if I play a "C" chord on a guitar, what chord do I play on a uke. The answer is unbelievably simple, but I was sure confused at the time. The following is pretty much what I heard when I asked others.

"The ukulele GCEA tuning is the high 4 notes on a guitar with a capo behind the 5th fret. The G on most ukes is an octave higher. Which gives a different sound, but does not change your fingering for chords and scales. So...the D chord is a G, E is A, F is Bb...."

WHAT?

You could tell me that 10 times, and it wouldn't be any clearer to me. Here is something simple that did make sense.

CHORD TONES VS. CHORD SHAPES

First, a "C" chord on one stringed instrument is a "C" chord on any other stringed instrument. A "C" chord on a mandolin **sounds** the same **tonally** as a "C" chord on a guitar, banjo, ukulele, etc. A "C" chord is a "C" chord, is a "C" chord, is a "C" chord, etc. The same is true of other chord tones. So, if the song or tune calls for a "C", play a "C".

- An "A" chord is an "A" chord, is an "A" chord, is an "A" chord, etc.
- A "G" chord is a "G" chord, is a "G" chord, is a "G" chord, etc.
- And, on and on!

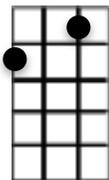
CHORD SHAPES

I think this is where jammers get confused - When you play a "C" chord on any chorded instrument, you most likely place your fingers in different places than on different instruments. This finger placement is the **chord shape**. In other words, it is the arrangement and placement of your fingers on the strings. The sound you hear is the **chord tone**, but the place you place your fingers is the **chord shape**. Many of us watch others' hands as we play to see the **chord shape** they are playing. This is great *if they are playing an instrument that is tuned the same as your instrument.*

Soprano, Concert, and Tenor Ukes are tuned the same –
Baritone Ukes are tuned differently, so they have different chord shapes

Both of these are "C" chords! Same chord tone but different chord shape

Baritone "C" Chord Shape



**Soprano, Concert & Tenor
"C" Chord Shape**

