

Bar(re) chords

Barre chords can be used to play chords up the neck of the ukulele, and are just the basic shapes played further up to give a different sound (pitch) to the basic chord sound.

Music theory: (from someone who has never been taught – so bear with me if I don't quite get the terminology or the theory right, but this is how I understand it.)

The keys for music are:

A, A#/Bb, B, C, C#/Db, D, D#/Eb, E, F, F#/Gb, G, G#/Ab, then back to A

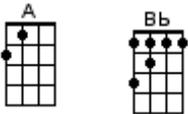
= sharp, b = flat

Note that A# and Bb are the same, as are the other "# and b" equivalents

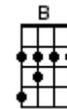
Also note that there are no B#/Cb, and E#/Fb - they don't exist.

So there are 12 keys, before you go around again

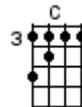
So, if you play, for example the A chord (and if you intend to play a barre chord it is a good idea to play the A chord shape with your 2nd and 3rd fingers, rather than the first and second as you probably do now), and you want to play a A#/Bb chord then simply slide the A chord shape up one fret, and place your index finger across the first fret, creating a barre.



Then if you want to play a B simply slide up one more fret to



And again, if you want an alternative position for the C chord you can play

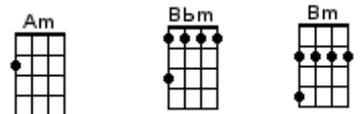


And this continues in the order of the keys shown above

You might wonder why you would want to play C in this position, but it gives a slightly different sound to the same chord by using different notes to construct the same chord. Or maybe it is just a bit easier to play the chord run in the particular song. An example is the start of "Lola" where you play Bb, C, D, so you could play these up the neck if you wished. You would play the Bb shown, then the C shown, and then bar the 5th fret and you have the D chord, right up to the 12th fret where you are back to A again.

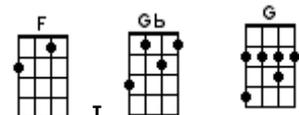
The same applies to Am, A#m/Bbm, Bm, etc

In this case I play the Am with my third finger, and use my first finger to barre, and put my second finger along the top of my first finger to help it press down and keep it out of the way



So this applies to all of the base chord shapes, but the two most useful ones on the ukulele are the A, as shown and the F.

With the F shape, again use your second and third fingers for the basic shape, then slide up one fret for F#/Gb, and another fret for the G chord (I don't have a picture of the GB as a barre chord, but hope you can see what I mean i.e. the first fret should use a full barre, but if you can manage as it is shown that's fine, too).



It is also a way to play the difficult E chord, although it does take some practise.

If you play the open C chord with your little finger, a quick calculation will show that a barred 4th fret with the same shape will give you an E chord

