

Which guitar?

Your 3 main choices



1. NOT GUITAR : ukulele is an option

1. A good, genuine alternate is the ukulele. Think very seriously about one.
2. For children, girls, lightly built, less than the age of 11, especially because of smaller fingers, smaller palms & shorter hands, weaker muscle tone you could consider a ukulele first.
3. Even if adult, if you have smaller hands and fingers, weaker muscle tone, less in stamina ... you may want to start and stay with a ukulele. It's a great fun instrument in itself.
4. Adult learners or those who are sure of moving to the classical guitar or regular acoustic/electric guitar later may want to consider a baritone ukulele as the 4 strings of a ukulele or in the same tuning as the 1st 4 strings of a standard guitar.
5. The DEFAULT ukulele would be the alto ukulele also called the concert ukulele. For children less than 5, or if you like the sound, you can consider a soprano ukulele.
6. The most popular form of ukulele music – though originating in Hawaii -is American folk, blue-grass, Nashville, country music & more.

2. Classical Guitar

1. You **MOSTLY** read music notation and play the printed music in front of you.
2. The genre roots are in western classical but the music comes from all over the world – Europe, Spain, Andalusia, North Africa, South America, Latin & more.
3. This is the typical traditional, orchestra instrument. It's standardised. The size and dimensions are identical. They mostly look the same.
4. You can learn to play to a reasonable level – your level – with minimal talent, just learn and play the music.
5. You always sit and play. It does not have a shoulder strap.
6. You read music notation and play pieces and works of music. There are traditional and modern systems, methods, techniques that have evolved and developed over 400+ years.
7. It's usually tuned E,B,G,D,A,E 1st to 6th with very few alternatives.
8. You use your fingers p,i,m AND a only. You sit in a traditional characteristic and optimal position.
9. You never sing with it – you could, but its not taught that way.
10. You never amplify it - add a pickup - nor ever use a plectrum.
11. You can appear for music examinations as an option. Preferably ABRSM, LCM-RGT, Trinity-Guilhall suggested in our order of preference.

For the Classical Guitar you sit in one particular way, play in one particular style, genre or system and play one particular guitar. Standard size and shape. Nylon strings. No plectrum. No strap – you never stand and play. You do not sing with it. It is a solo instrument.

You can check the history elsewhere but could have originated from the Indian Sitar to Greek Zithara; then the Gittara to the Zyther, Vihuela, the Lute and finally to the modern classical Guitar. (400 years back). The flamenco guitar and style are similar but different from the classical guitar.



Checklist for a Classical Guitar start ...

1. Own a good (the best you can afford) classical guitar.
2. A carry-bag.
3. Guitar foot-stool.
4. Music Stand
5. A tuner may help especially if you don't know how to tune a guitar.
6. Metronome. (Phone app. will do).

3. Acoustic Guitar

1. Everything else comes into this category.
 - a. Acoustic steel string.
 - b. Semi-acoustic with a electronic pickup
 - c. An electric
 - d. Arch-type for blues, jazz etc.
 - e. hawaiian guitar
 - f. harp-guitar
 - g. 12-string acoustic
 - h. Many fretted string instruments are similar. Ukulele, Banjo, Mandolin, Balalaika etc.
 - i. Flamenco guitar. (Similar to the classical guitar but different in construction and strength).
2. Many other fretted instruments have the same concepts of chords, tune, rhythm, plectrum, strumming. Banjo, Mandolin, Ukulele, Balalaika etc.
3. There are NO RULES - period. Any tuning, stand, sit, hold how you want, use a pick, plectrum or cardboard, sing, whistle, holler. The guitar can be any size, colour, shape, more strings, double-strings. You can read music, play by ear, electrify, thump, beat, burn it. No one is going to stop you.

4. If you don't learn to read music you will need to be talented. To find the key, play rhythms, identify chords, change chords everything will be up to you and your ear, hearing and aural sense.
5. HOWEVER - think 100 years back. No electricity, no amplifiers, no pickup. The guitar was just another ordinary instrument in the orchestra - the classical guitar is the origin of the Modern VERY, VERY Popular Guitar.
6. If you study the Classical Guitar, its history, read music notation, play classical works and can play it with some proficiency - playing any and all other types, styles, genres and forms of guitar is INFINETLY easier.

4. Do you want to sing?

1. Do you like the sound of a classical guitar? Prefer an acoustic?
2. Play and sing at the same time?
3. What genre of music do you want sing and play? Jazz? Pop? Western classical?
4. You have to learn to accompany others with your guitar. Whether acoustic or classical.
5. If classical Read music. Accompany a classical voice solo, duet or group of singers. Also able to accompany a flute, clarinet, saxophone, violin, cello or other instrument.
6. As a classical guitarist you can get away without singing AND not accompany any singer at any time.
7. If acoustic solo guitarist find the key, play chords. Accompany a singer or group of singers, It would help if you can also accompany a flute, clarinet, saxophone, violin, cello or other instrument.
8. If a rhythm guitar player in a band, you must understand drums, rhythm and percussion and how to play and work with the basics of lead guitar, bass guitar and other band group instruments.

5. So which guitar?

A lot depends on what genre or style of music you like to listen to, what you think you can play, can eventually play and enjoy that style or genre over a period of time.

NOTE : Taste in music changes over age. Starting with Contemporary, Intense, Sophisticated, Unpretentious to Mellow Over time and age.

- *Classical Music.*
- *Jazz.*

- ❑ Blues. (Story telling, selling genre – you can start with ballads)
- ❑ Country. (Nashville, finger-picking, slide etc.)
- ❑ Rock. Classic Rock. Metal.
- ❑ Folk. (Usually vocal support).
- ❑ Band guitarist. (Play rhythm, lead, fill-in, bass etc. for ALL each or one of the above genres. Guitar orchestra in the case of classical).

Do you sing OR want to learn to sing?

If you do, playing the acoustic and accompanying yourself can be a very important goal.

Accompanying another

ELSE you will have to learn to accompany another singer or singers in many possible conditions. You set the key and they pickup the key OR they start singing and you are able to pick up the key.

6. Bass? Rhythm? Lead?

If you choose electric ... apart from learning the guitar, rhythm first and perhaps some basics of bass and lead before you start specializing. Inherently electric means collaboration and playing with other guitarists, drummer or other musicians.

Check your preference early. Which sound do you like? Low Bass? High lead? If you also want to sing, can sing playing bass or lead AND singing is much more difficult. At the highest levels of voice, its best to leave the playing to other band-members and focus on your singing.

An added complexity with electric guitar choice is that you can gadgets, wah, fuzz, delay, phasers and a whole to get whatever sound you want.

If you are interest in the Bass guitar. It is still worthwhile to buy a 6-string guitar and learn the right basics on this first. This may include learning the bass clef notation.

NOTE : *The mindset, discipline, hard-work, instinct, talent required for RHYTHM guitar is entirely different from a LEAD guitar character and persona and a BASS guitar player and personality. Anyone can play all but the good, talented ones will gravitate to ONLY ONE of these.*

Checklist for an Acoustic Guitar start ...

1. Own a good (the best you can afford) acoustic guitar. (Or electric 6-string. Go for a 12-string, 4 or 5 string bass LATER as an additional guitar).
2. A carry-bag.
3. Music Stand
4. A tuner may help especially if you don't know how to tune a guitar.
5. Metronome. (Phone app. will do).
6. Plectrum(s). Thin for lead, thick for bass. Medium for loud rhythm.

What can I do with an Acoustic Guitar?

Accompany	Rhythm	Lead	Bass	Play & Sing
Provide the rhythm with timing. Play chords. Identify the key. Make chord changes. May have to lead the singing.	Play in between the lead and bass. Do not get in the way of either. Seamlessly mould the music with rhythm and the most appropriate chords at all times.	If instrumental take the lead literally and figuratively. Play the tune, air, melody, song or main theme. If NOT then play in between the licks, riffs, interludes. Intro. Coda, finale.	Provide the bass, root and grounding for the whole piece of music. Support and play with the drums, rhythm & percussion. Provide the correct bass notes at all times.	Be able to strum and play to your singing. This can be very simple chords to very complex. Could also be playing the lead, rhythm or bass and sing as well.

What can I do with a classical Guitar?

Solo Instrument

The classical guitar is primarily a solo instrument. Play pieces. Learn the pieces - read or memorize them and play them to the best of your ability. 100's of 1000's of songs written for the guitar. Other music and other instruments transcriptions also available. Develop a wide repertoire. The ultimate is to be able to play guitar concertos with a full orchestra backing you.

Accompany

Play the music as written for accompaniment to other instruments such as voice, flute, clarinet, cello, recorder, violin, clarinet etc.

Orchestra

Play one part or more from music as arranged and asked to as a part of a Guitar duet, trio, quartet, ensemble or guitar orchestra.

Eventually more than ONE guitar

A major factor is the sound you like? You like a nylon string sound? Acoustic steel string sound? You like the sound of an electric? You like the sound of a bass guitar? You are never happy with the "raw" sound and want to always change it to something "else"?

Classical. Solo or Group-guitar-orchestra. Accompanying another classical instrument such as flute, violin, recorder

Acoustic playing to accompany another singer. Accompany yourself singing. Playing at parties.

- ❑ A classical guitar to play classical music OR modern songs in classical style.
- ❑ An acoustic guitar.
- ❑ An acoustic with a pickup.
- ❑ A 12-string to play ballads and accompany songs at parties.
- ❑ An electric guitar to play lead.
- ❑ A bass guitar. Usually electric, you may go for an acoustic or even fretless bass.
- ❑ An arch-type semi-acoustic for jazz.

When you go electric, you will need an amplifier, appropriate speakers. Gadgets aplenty exist as options for you get to whatever sound you want from your Systems.

Not too low-cost a guitar please!!!

- ❑ *Never buy the cheapest guitar or any guitar only on price.*
- ❑ *You may get lucky. A very GOOD sounding new one or even price-less antique will be an old pre-owned one.*
- ❑ *Low-cost means poor manufacturing. High action, maybe already warped, heavy strings, will cut your fingers, more strain to play, the sound quality is poor – you won't feel like playing, you will play less than you would on a good one.*
- ❑ *Be proud of your instrument. Even if you do not want to show-off you should feel happy, quiet satisfaction every time you take out your instrument.*

Accessories to be added

ANY and ALL guitars

- B You should buy a music stand with the full intent of reading music, keeping you song books, chord or lead-sheets. A portable unit to carry to class sometimes becomes a consumable, lasts only for 2-3 years. A heavier more permanent one for home.



Figure a : A portable music stand upright, once folded and in a carry bag.

- B Keeping your music as a beginner the best available in the market is as in the figure below ...



Get about 30 of these sheets and place them in a light-weight folder that holds these. You can even buy 2 folders. Leave one at home. Bring one with the music we are doing at that time, this week sheet music only.

- C You can also pick-up a guitar tuner that shows and helps you tune strings. Some tuners also include a metronome and that can also be useful.

If ACOUSTIC ...

While optional you may want to definitely over time get all of these if not immediately ...

1. The guitar case that comes with your guitar may be too light, not protective and low-cost. You may want to get a padded, more water-proof, more comfortable one – especially if you travel by 2-wheeler to class. Do NOT carry other heavy stuff in the guitar case along with the guitar – carry a separate back-pack for the rest of the below accessories including books.
2. You will need a shoulder strap to stand and play get a good comfortable one. Plectrums can broadly be THICK, MEDIUM and THIN. Get one of each to start with. Over time you will prefer one or the other.
3. You also have a choice of acoustic strings. Usually needs a change at least once a year, depending on how much you play. Strings again come as LIGHT, MEDIUM or HEAVY. As a beginner you may choose LIGHT – easier on the fingers. Do NOT hesitate to buy a new set and change it even with a new guitar – the original strings are usually never that good.
4. You can pick up a guitar capo – will explain the need for that at class.

If CLASSICAL ...

1. The guitar case that comes with your guitar may be too light, not protective and low-cost. You may want to get a padded, more water-proof, more comfortable one – especially if you travel by 2-wheeler to class. Do NOT carry other heavy stuff in the guitar case along with the guitar – carry a separate back-pack for the rest of the below accessories including books.
2. You will need a guitar footstool. A heavier sturdier one may last longer.
3. You also have a choice of nylon classical strings. Usually needs a change at least once a year, depending on how much you play. Strings again come as LIGHT, MEDIUM or HEAVY. As a beginner you may choose LIGHT – easier on the fingers. Do NOT hesitate to buy a new set and change it even with a new guitar – the original strings are usually never that good.



Figure b : A guitar footstool



I recommend

If you can afford it buy 2 guitars. A classical guitar and an acoustic steel string. Learn all the styles, use the right guitar for the right sound you wish for, for any particular song. Budget Rs. 18,000/-.

If you are looking at becoming a bass guitar player then you need this and you should get yourself a 6-string guitar as well to get all your fundamentals in place.

If you are still undecided ... you could go online to our website and choose the guitar icon on our home page OR use the below link ...

http://themusicinternational.com/choose/choose_guitar.php

When you fill in the detail and submit, we will receive it and see how best we can meet your "Being a guitarist" needs.

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