

# Twelve Bar Blues

The most popular form of blues is the twelve-bar blues

As the name suggests, it is made up of twelve measures that will be repeated over and over. A typical twelve bar blues will be made up of the I, the IV, and the V chords of any key. One of the most common patterns is shown below (there are many others)

1	I	2	I (IV)	3	I	4	I
5	IV	6	IV	7	I	8	I
9	V	10	IV	11	I	12	I (or V)

Pick your key, and then by using the chart below find I, IV, and V chords



Muddy Waters



Buddy Guy



BB King



Albert King



Son House



Elmore James



Howlin' Wolf



T-Bone Walker



Robert Johnson



John Lee Hooker

I Key (Tonic)	IV Subdominant	V Dominant
A	D	E
B $\flat$	E $\flat$	F
B	E	F $\sharp$
C	F	G
C $\sharp$	F $\sharp$	G $\sharp$
D	G	A
E $\flat$	A $\flat$	B $\flat$
E	A	B
F	B $\flat$	C
F $\sharp$	B	C $\sharp$
G	C	D
A $\flat$	D $\flat$	E $\flat$

So, blues in the key of A would use the chords A, D, and E. Seventh chords are often used because of their dissonant quality which gives a more "bluesy" sound or minor chords for some "troublin'" blues. So now, just pick out the right chords. sit back ... and play yourself some blues