

Jazz Blues Guide

Jazz Standards Volume 1

Your complete guide to Jazz
Blues Mastery

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Jazz Blues Guide

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How to Use This eBook

Welcome to the Jazz Blues guide!

Glad to have you.

The blues forms the basis of jazz and all popular music.

The jazz blues is one of the most universally played song forms.

So by studying the material in this course, you will be prepared for almost any jazz standard.

Working with this book will also build your confidence with understanding, soloing, and comping over jazz blues chord progressions.

I recommend pacing yourself through the eBook.

The material ranges from beginner to advanced.

So, if you are more advanced you might feel comfortable with the material in a matter of weeks.

I strongly recommend that you are comfortable with my other eBooks:

- Beginner Jazz Chords
- Beginner Jazz Improvisation

Both of these eBooks are available on my website.

If you are a beginner, then I recommend working through the course chronologically.

By working through each section you will not miss out on anything important.

So, pick up your favourite guitar and let's begin learning the jazz blues!

Harmonic Analysis

Let's begin by learning how the jazz blues is constructed.

Harmonically analyzing any chord progression will help you memorize and understand the chords in a deeper way.

Firstly, let's look at the classic I V I blues in the key of Bb.

You can hear the I IV V blues used by jazz musicians on such tunes as:

- Back at the Chicken Shack (Jimmy Smith)
- Blues for Charlie (Grant Green)

This is not the standard jazz blues progression used by jazz musicians.

However, if a jazz musician calls a "down home" or "I IV V" blues on the band stand then they will most likely be referring to this progression:

The image shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, each with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb). The first staff is labeled Bb7 and contains four measures of rhythmic notation. The second staff is labeled Eb7 and Bb7, with Eb7 over the first two measures and Bb7 over the last two. The third staff is labeled F7, Eb7, Bb7, and F7, with each label over one of the four measures. All staves contain rhythmic notation consisting of eighth notes.

Each of the three chords in a jazz blues is a dominant 7th.

Most tunes are either in a major or minor key.

Ted Greene said that there are three keys in music:

➤ **Major, minor, and dominant**

Therefore, you could argue that along with tunes such as Day Tripper (The Beatles) and Honky Tonky Woman (Rolling Stones), the blues is in a dominant key.

Hardly any other jazz standards are firmly in a dominant key.

Let's move on and look at the universally accepted jazz blues progression you will hear jazz musicians use.

You can hear the following jazz blues progression used on tunes such as:

- Tenor Madness (Sonny Rollins)
- Billie's Bounce (Charlie Parker)
- C Jam Blues (Duke Ellington)

The two most important bars that you need to be aware of in a jazz blues are bars 4 and 8.

You will learn how to improvise over both of these later in the course.

The four chord in bar 2 is used as a passing chord.

This is sometimes referred to as a "quick change".

Some traditional blues tunes such as Key to the Highway use this.

The diminished chord in bar 6 is also a passing chord.

E diminished is the same chord as Bb diminished which is just a tonic diminished.

Moreover, you can ignore the chords in bars 2 and 5 when improvising!

The biggest changes you need to know that separate the jazz blues from a traditional blues are the introductions of:

- Short Major ii V I (bar 4)
- Short Minor ii V I (bar 8)
- Long Major ii V I (bars 9-10)
- Short I VI II V (bars 11 and 12)

These harmonic stamps are the fundamental differences from the first blues progression.

Your first assignment is to memorize the jazz blues chord progression.

The jazz blues is most commonly played in the key of Bb.

Other common jazz blues keys include F, Eb, and C.

You should ultimately be able to play the blues in any key.

Playing in any key is easier, once you can play jazz blues in the four primary keys listed earlier.

Memorize the chord progression using this process:

1. Play the jazz blues chords using "basic" shapes demonstrated on page 8 to begin with.
2. Play along to one of the suggested jazz blues themes in Bb.
3. Repeat the process in the three other keys provided.
4. Add more inversions to your comping if you know them such as extended and drop 2 chords.

Jazz Blues Progression in Bb

IV Chord

Major ii-V

Chord progression: B^b7, E^b7, B^b7, F^m7, B^b7

The staff shows a 4/4 time signature with four measures of rhythmic slashes. Brackets above the staff group the chords: B^b7 (measure 1), E^b7 (measure 2), B^b7 (measure 3), and F^m7 B^b7 (measures 4-5).

#Idim Chord

Minor ii-V

Chord progression: E^b7, E^{dim}7, B^b7, D^m7^b5, G7^b9

The staff shows a 4/4 time signature with four measures of rhythmic slashes. Brackets above the staff group the chords: E^b7 (measure 1), E^{dim}7 (measure 2), B^b7 (measure 3), and D^m7^b5 G7^b9 (measures 4-5).

I VI II V in Bb

Chord progression: C^m7, F7, B^b7, G7, C^m7, F7

The staff shows a 4/4 time signature with four measures of rhythmic slashes. Brackets above the staff group the chords: C^m7 (measure 1), F7 (measure 2), B^b7 G7 (measures 3-4), and C^m7 F7 (measures 5-6).

Jazz Blues Themes in Bb

- Tenor Madness
- Sonnymoon for Two
- Blues Walk

Jazz Blues Chords

Audio example 1

Chord progression: B^b7, E^b7, B^b7, Fm⁷ B^b7

T	6	6	8	8	6	6	9	6
A	7	7	6	6	7	7	8	7
B	6	6	8	8	6	6	10	6
	6	6	6	6	6	6	8	6

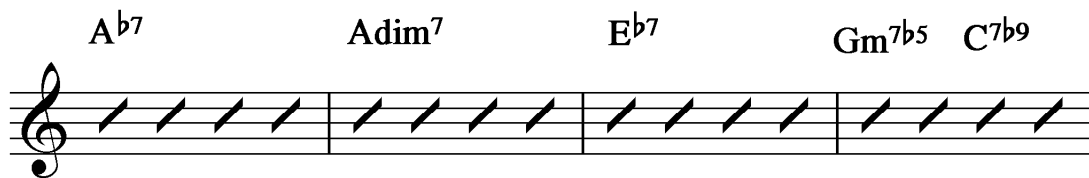
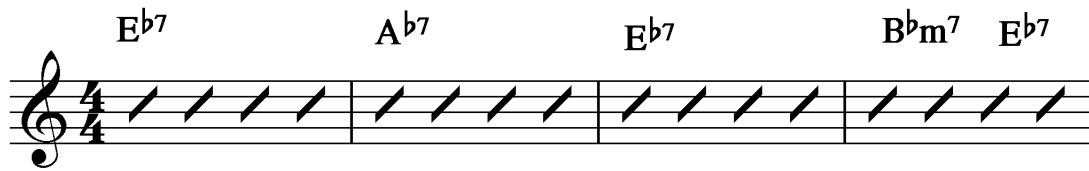
Chord progression: E^b7, Edim⁷, B^b7, Dm⁷^b⁵ G⁷

T	8	8	8	8	6	6	6	3
A	6	6	6	6	7	7	5	4
B	8	8	8	8	6	6	6	3
	6	6	7	7	6	6	5	3

Chord progression: Cm⁷, F⁷, B^b7 G⁷, Cm⁷ F⁷

T	4	4	1	1	6	3	4	1
A	3	3	2	2	7	4	3	2
B	5	5	1	1	6	3	5	1
	3	3	1	1	6	3	3	1

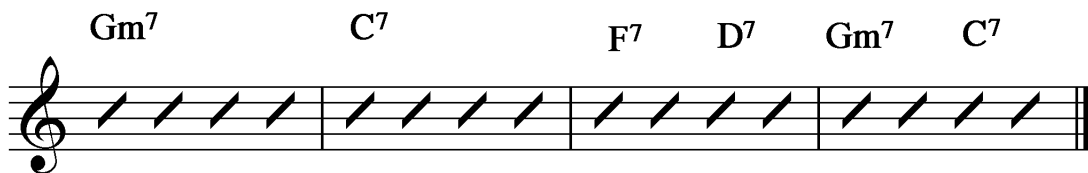
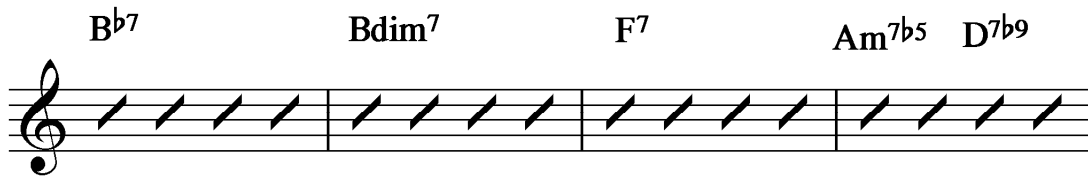
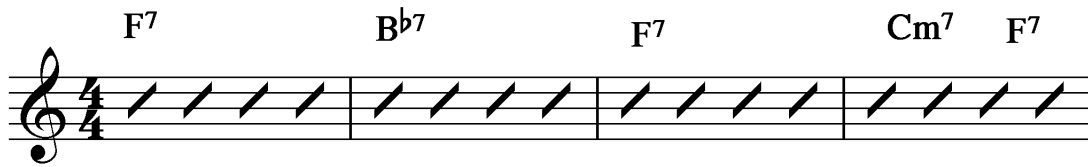
Jazz Blues Progression in Eb



Jazz Blues Themes in Eb

- Sandu
- Blue Trane
- The Sidewinder

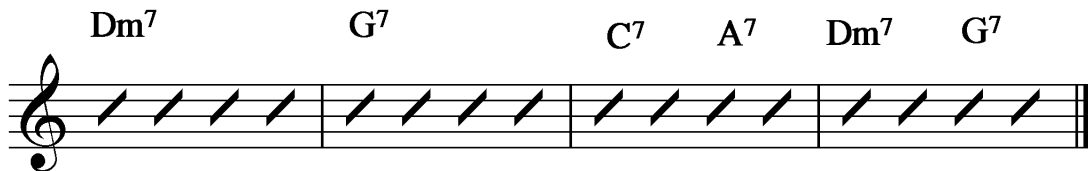
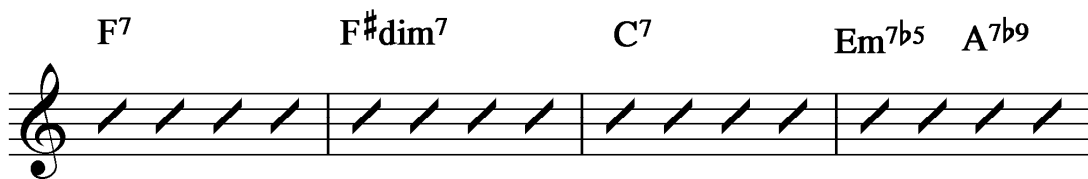
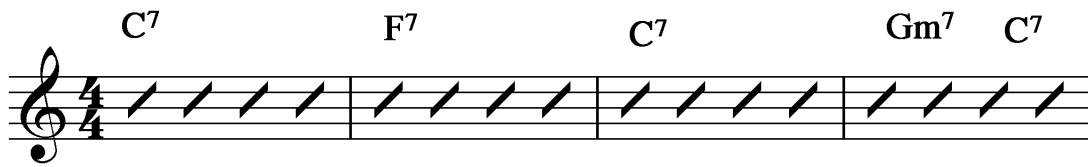
Jazz Blues Progression in F



Jazz Blues Themes in F

- Billies Bounce
- Straight No Chaser
- Blues for Alice

Jazz Blues Progression in C



Jazz Blues Themes in C

- C Jam Blues
- Thing's Aint What They Used To Be
- Turnaround

Summary

Here are a few notes summarizing the jazz blues harmonic analysis.

There is one commonly used looped 12 bar progression in a jazz blues.

The progression forms the basis for many jazz blues themes.

Themes are usually played round twice before improvisation.

Sometimes the jazz blues theme is only looped once at the end.

So, a jazz blues arrangement might look something like this:

- Jazz blues theme (24 bars)
- Soloist one
- Soloist two
- Trade fours
- Final Jazz blues theme (12 or 24 bars)

Here is a checklist that I recommend using before moving on.

Can you do each of the following?

- Identify the key differences between a traditional and jazz blues
- Play the chords to a jazz blues in tempo using basic chords
- Play the chords to a jazz blues in at least 3 different keys.

If you can do each of these, then move onto the next section.