

Japanese Scales for Guitar: A Comprehensive Guide to Unlock Exotic Pentatonicism

The world of guitar scales is vast and diverse, offering guitarists a boundless palette of colors and flavors to express their musical ideas. Among this vast array of scales, Japanese scales stand out as a fascinating and exotic family of pentatonic scales that adds a unique and captivating dimension to the guitarist's arsenal.



JAPANESE SCALES FOR GUITAR. (Basic Scale Guides for Guitar Book 16) by Rob Silver

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In this comprehensive guide, we will embark on a journey through the enchanting world of Japanese scales for guitar. We will explore their rich history, unravel their unique structures, and delve into practical applications that will empower you to incorporate these exotic scales into your playing, opening up new vistas of melodic expression and soloing prowess.

A Brief History of Japanese Scales

The roots of Japanese scales can be traced back to the traditional music of Japan, particularly the ancient court music known as gagaku. Gagaku music, with its distinctive pentatonic melodies and subtle microtonal inflections, has played a profound role in shaping the development of Japanese scales.

Over the centuries, Japanese scales have been adapted and integrated into various forms of Japanese folk music, such as min'yō and enka. In the 20th century, Japanese scales found their way into the realm of Western music, notably through the influence of jazz musicians who incorporated them into their improvisations.

Characteristics of Japanese Scales

The defining characteristic of Japanese scales is their pentatonic structure. Pentatonic scales, as their name suggests, consist of only five notes per octave, arranged in a specific pattern. This simplicity and lack of half-steps give Japanese scales their distinctive exotic sound, which is often described as ethereal, haunting, and evocative.

Japanese scales are typically constructed based on intervals of whole steps and minor thirds, creating a unique and characteristic melodic contour. They can be classified into two main categories: the in scale and the yo scale.

1. **In scale:** The in scale is characterized by its ascending pattern of whole step, whole step, minor third, whole step, and whole step. It has a bright and uplifting sound, and it is often used in traditional Japanese folk music.

2. **Yo scale:** The yo scale is characterized by its descending pattern of whole step, minor third, whole step, whole step, and whole step. It has a darker and more somber sound, and it is often used in Japanese popular music and jazz.

Practical Applications of Japanese Scales

The exotic pentatonicism of Japanese scales opens up a world of creative possibilities for guitarists. These scales can be used to create captivating melodies, add flavor to your solos, and explore new harmonic territories.

Here are some practical applications of Japanese scales:

1. **Melodic improvisation:** Japanese scales are perfect for creating unique and expressive melodies. Their pentatonic structure provides a strong melodic framework while still allowing for plenty of room for improvisation.
2. **Soloing:** Japanese scales can add a fresh and exotic dimension to your guitar solos. Their distinctive sound can help you stand out from the crowd and create solos that are both memorable and captivating.
3. **Harmonic exploration:** Japanese scales can be used to create interesting and unusual harmonies. Try using them as the basis for chord progressions or as melodic lines over existing chords.

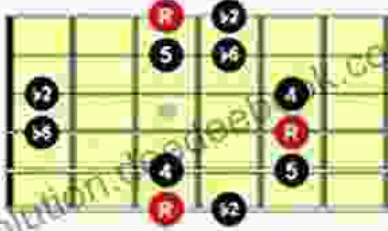
Learning Japanese Scales

Learning Japanese scales is relatively straightforward, as they are based on simple intervallic patterns. Here are some tips for getting started:

1. **Start with the in and yo scales:** These are the two most basic Japanese scales, and they will provide you with a good foundation for exploring the rest of the family.
2. **Use a scale diagram:** A scale diagram is a visual representation of the notes in a scale, and it can be helpful for visualizing the fingerings and intervals.
3. **Play along with recordings:** Listening to recordings of Japanese scales can help you get a feel for their sound and rhythm.
4. **Experiment with different fingering:** There are many different ways to finger Japanese scales, so experiment with different fingerings to find the ones that are most comfortable for you.

Below are scale diagrams for the in and yo scales in the key of C:

THE IN SCALE-POSITION 1



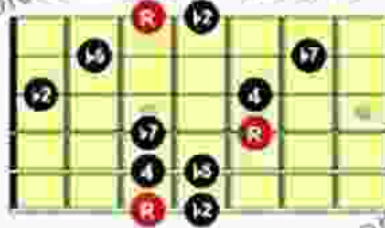
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THE IN-SEN SCALE-POSITION 1



THE IWATO SCALE-POSITION 1



THE KUMOI SCALE-POSITION 1



THE HIROJOSHI SCALE- THE WHOLE NECK



THE IN SCALE-POSITION 1



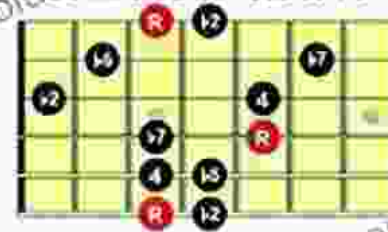
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THE IN-SEN SCALE-POSITION 1



THE IWATO SCALE-POSITION 1



THE KUMOI SCALE-POSITION 1



THE HIROJOSHI SCALE- THE WHOLE NECK



Japanese scales for guitar offer a gateway to a world of exotic pentatonicism, unlocking new possibilities for melodic expression and soloing. Their unique structures and haunting sound add a fresh and captivating dimension to the guitarist's palette.

Whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting your guitar journey, exploring Japanese scales is a rewarding endeavor that will expand your

musical horizons and inspire your creativity.

So, take your guitar, immerse yourself in the enchanting world of Japanese scales, and let the exotic pentatonicism of the East ignite your musical imagination.

Additional Resources

- Guitar Lesson World: Japanese Scales for Guitar
- Fretjam: Japanese Scales for Guitar
- YouTube: Japanese Scales for Guitar (Tutorial)



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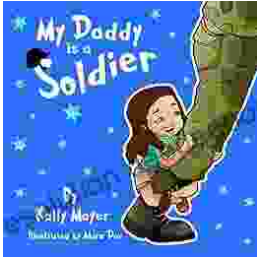
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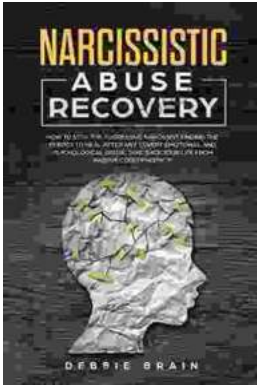
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