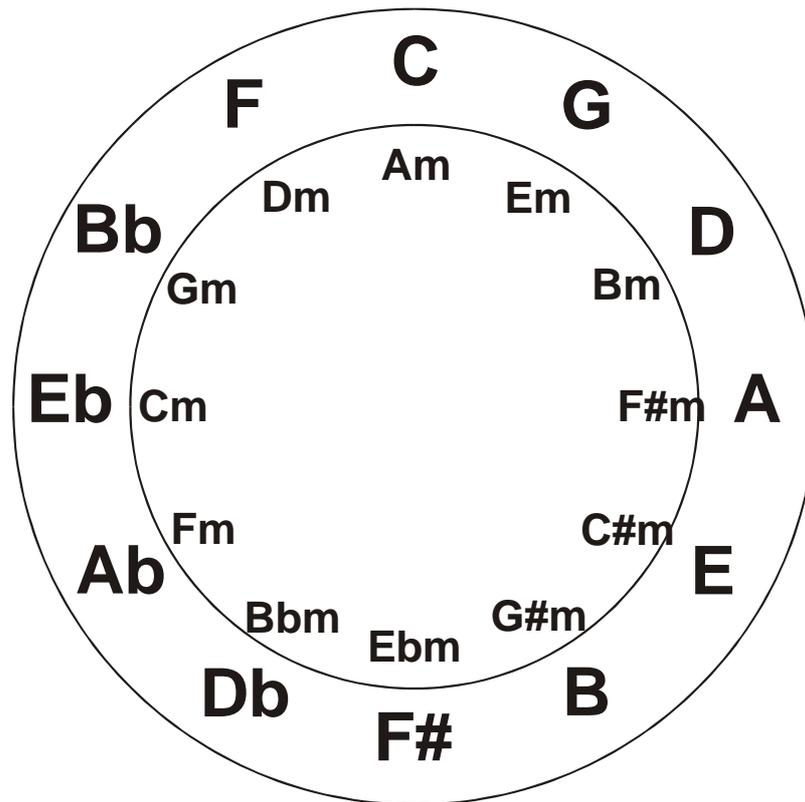# The Circle of Fifths

How to use the Circle of Fifths:

The outer circle shows the names of the major chords, the inner the relative minor chords.

The chords in both inner and outer circles are arranged clockwise in "Fifths" as follows (just a simple count) i.e: Root = C, count 5 steps: (1)**C**, (2)D, (3)E, (4)F, (5)**G**

In reverse, or counter clockwise, the chords are arranged in fourths i.e: Root = C, count 4 steps: (1)**C**, (2)D, (3)E, (4) **F**

Please note you always count up the scale

This is an over simplified view, but I'm only aiming to get you started here.

A large number of songs and tunes only have three chords and those three common chords are the Root, Fourth and the Fifth.

So as we've already established in the circle, if the song is in the key of C, one of the other two chords is going to be G, in fact the next chord name moving around the circle in a clockwise direction. The other common chord, the fourth is the next chord name along the circle but in the counter clockwise direction in this case F.

What the circle does is remove the guesswork. If your song is in the key of D for example, the fifth chord is found next to the D in the clockwise direction, in this case A, and the fourth chord is found next to the D but in the counter-clockwise direction, in this case G.

Putting this to practical use. At a session the fiddler wants to play Turkey in the Straw in the key of A. You know it but in the key of G.

In the key of G, the other two chords will C and D. From the circle, you work out C is the fourth and D is the Fifth. To transpose those chords to the new key of A, refer to your circle to find the A chord name, and you quickly deduce that fourth chord C becomes D, and fifth chord G becomes E.

If the tune also contains a minor chord, it is most probably the relative minor. Find the Root, A – remember, we are playing Turkey in the Straw in A), the relative minor chord name is opposite in the inner circle, in this case F#m.

There, you probably know as much as I do about music theory. Anyone out there want to expand on this, go ahead, I need to know!

Captain Wirtzy's online seminars

Intervals (Semi tones)

	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	½
A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	**D**	D#/Eb	**E**	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	**A**
G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	**C**	C#/Db	**D**	D#/Eb	E	F	F#	**G**
C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	**F**	F#	**G**	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	**C**
D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	**G**	G#/Ab	**A**	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	**D**
1	-	**2**	-	**3**	**4**	-	**5**	-	**6**	-	**7**	**8**