

# THE BLUES HARP PLAYERS GUIDE - 1 A TO SURVIVING MINOR KEYS

1. The magical beauty of the 2nd position in STANDARD blues is that you can be fairly reckless in your playing and note selection and "weedwack" your way around the harp without hitting many "bad" notes. Doing this in a minor key song does NOT generally work because standard blues licks very often don't "fit" in a minor key.
2. There are many different types of minor scales. THE minor scale, also known amongst harp players as the "natural minor", can be found by playing the natural notes on the harmonica, starting on hole 6 draw. Playing 3rd position gives you a type of minor scale.
3. The EASIEST way to survive a minor key is to NOT play or, play a minor tuned harp.
4. You should get a minor tuned harp and compare the notes on it with the notes in your standard playing and position playing.
5. Minor key harps are sold (labeled) in the cross harp (2nd) position. To play with a song in E minor (Em), you need to play an "E" natural minor harp. The harps labeled and tuned "harmonic minor" are different and not best suited for minor blues.
6. What's wrong with minor tuned harps? Nothing! Sounding good to the audience should always be the most important thing.
7. The down side to minor tuned harps is this.
  - a. You'll probably have to carry twice as many harps with you.
  - c. It is still possible to play "bad" notes. Playing full bends on holes 2,3,5 & 6 draw will most likely sound "wrong".
  - b. Playing everything in 2nd position is limiting and may stunt and limit your musical growth and playing technique.

# THE BLUES HARP PLAYERS GUIDE - 1 B TO SURVIVING MINOR KEYS

1. Learning to play in minor key songs with standard harmonicas will give you many new ideas for your standard blues playing and will undoubtedly strengthen it.
2. The companion page of material is arranged so that the given notes will not only work over minor blues, BUT OVER STANDARD BLUES TOO!
3. Memorize the safe areas first while making note of the danger zones. First start with 2nd and 3rd position. Expand later to 4th, 5th and 6th. Don't be afraid to use tape over the harmonica holes.
4. You MUST practice with the CD or with minor key songs. It's all about hearing the relationship between the note you are playing and the chord changes of the song.

Try switching back and forth between a minor tuned harp and the position you are trying to learn in order to better memorize the "safe" and "wrong" notes.

5. The 12 different (harmonica) keys can arranged either chromatically or by the "circle of 5ths".

When trying to determine what harp and position to use, first determine what key the song (band) is in and then refer to the "circle of 5ths" to determine the harp and position.

1st position is always given. The rest are counted in order to the LEFT.

For example, 2nd is next on the left, followed by 3rd, 4th, 5th etc.



<p>2<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 6<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>☺ 2<sup>nd</sup> ☠</p>	<p>4<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 6<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>1<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 8<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>☺ 3<sup>rd</sup> ☠</p>	<p>6<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 7<sup>1</sup> 6<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>2<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 8<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>☺ 5<sup>th</sup> ☠</p>	<p>3<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 6<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 7<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>1</sup></p>
<p>3<sup>1</sup> 6<sup>1</sup> 10<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>☺ 4<sup>th</sup> ☠</p>	<p>8<sup>1</sup> 6<sup>1</sup> 6<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 8<sup>1</sup> 7<sup>1</sup> 8<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>3<sup>1</sup> 7<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>☺ 6<sup>th</sup> ☠</p>	<p>4<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 3<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>1<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 7<sup>1</sup> 10<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>☺ 1<sup>st</sup> ☠</p>	<p>2<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 9<sup>1</sup> 9<sup>1</sup> 9<sup>1</sup> 10<sup>1</sup> 10<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 1<sup>1</sup> 9<sup>1</sup> 7<sup>1</sup></p>
<p>2<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>☺ 12<sup>th</sup> ☠</p>	<p>1<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>1</sup> 4<sup>1</sup> 5<sup>1</sup> 8<sup>1</sup> 6<sup>1</sup> 8<sup>1</sup></p>						

{ avoid unbent 3 draw and 2 & 5 blow }

{ similar to 2nd, but 2 holes up }

{ similar to 2nd, but resolve on 2 exhale }

{ similar to low end 1st, but one hole up }

{ similar to high end 1st, but resolves on 6 inhale }

{ similar to 2nd, but one hole up }

# THE BLUES HARP PLAYERS GUIDE - 3

## TO SURVIVING MINOR KEYS

12 <sup>th</sup>	1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4	5 5	6 6	7 7	8 8	9 9	10 10	11 11	12 12
1 <sup>st</sup>	1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4	5 5	6 6	7 7	8 8	9 9	10 10	11 11	12 12
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4	5 5	6 6	7 7	8 8	9 9	10 10	11 11	12 12
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4	5 5	6 6	7 7	8 8	9 9	10 10	11 11	12 12
4 <sup>th</sup>	1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4	5 5	6 6	7 7	8 8	9 9	10 10	11 11	12 12
5 <sup>th</sup>	1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4	5 5	6 6	7 7	8 8	9 9	10 10	11 11	12 12
6 <sup>th</sup>	1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4	5 5	6 6	7 7	8 8	9 9	10 10	11 11	12 12

CIRCLE OF 5<sup>ths</sup>

CHROMATICALLY

C	G	D	A	E	B	F <sup>♯</sup>	C <sup>♯</sup>	A <sup>b</sup>	E <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>	F	C	...	...
C	D <sup>♯</sup>	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	F <sup>♯</sup>	G <sup>b</sup>	G	A <sup>b</sup>	A	B <sup>b</sup>	B	C	...