

Three-Note Calypso

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Summary

This is the seventh lesson from the Strumming Through The Americas ukulele course. Students will visit the Caribbean. They will explore melody and accompaniment parts for “Three-Note Calypso,” and learn a new chord and strumming pattern. Then students will perform a rendition of both parts.

Objectives

- Locate the Caribbean (specifically Trinidad and Tobago) on a map and relate it to their geographical location.
- Distinguish the cultural elements of the calypso musical style.
- Play a single-note melody with a syncopated rhythm.
- Interpret a D7 chord diagram.
- Adapt a new strumming technique/pattern to the chord progression/cycle of “Three-Note Calypso.”
- Blend melody and accompaniment for a musical performance.

Materials

- Ukulele
- [Google Slides: Three-Note Calypso](#)
- [Caribbean on the Map](#)
- [Calypso Handout](#)
- [“Day O \(Banana Boat Song\)” sung by Harry Belafonte](#)
- [“Day O” sung by Edric Connor](#)
- [Three-Note Calypso Notes](#)
- [Three-Note Calypso Melody, Part 1](#)
- [Three-Note Calypso Melody, Part 2](#)
- [Three-Note Calypso Chords, Part 1](#)
- [Three-Note Calypso Chords, Part 2](#)
- [Three-Note Calypso Strumming](#)
- [Three-Note Calypso Performance](#)
- [S’Cool Sounds Padlet](#)
- Adaptive tools or chord changers for students with disabilities

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Explore

1. Display the [Google Slides: Three-Note Calypso](#). Introduce the lesson by showing the [Caribbean on the Map](#). Explain that the Caribbean is a region with many different nations and unique cultures. Ask: *Can everyone spot Cuba?* (Today we will focus on the other island nations surrounding Cuba!) *Have you ever visited or heard of these islands?* Locate the Caribbean Sea, which surrounds the region, including the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. Drag the cursor to show the distance between the Caribbean and the location of your lesson.
2. Play a short excerpt of [“Day O \(Banana Boat Song\)” sung by Harry Belafonte](#). Ask: *Does anyone recognize this song?* Next, listen to an earlier recording, [“Day O” sung by Edric Connor](#), a Trinidadian singer. Identify the call and response, which is an important feature in music of the African diaspora.
3. Introduce the history of [Calypso](#) music, and the story and lyrics of “Day O.” Show the image of the steel pan in the handout. Ask: *Have you seen the steel pan (drums) before? Where have you seen this instrument?*
4. Tell students they will learn to play a new song, “Three-Note Calypso,” which includes a melody and chord accompaniment part.

Learn

1. Play the [Three-Note Calypso Notes](#) video. Since this is the first time students will learn a melody using individual notes on the ukulele, it may be helpful to pause the video at 0:34 after the notes are introduced. This allows time to find the correct frets and strings. Model and remind students about correct left hand technique, as needed. Resume the video from [0:34](#), where students will have an opportunity to repeat the notes after Mr. Juan has played them.
2. Play the [Three-Note Calypso Melody, Part 1](#) video. Students will learn to put the three notes into the context of the song’s melody. With the syncopated rhythm, students may play the melody slowly at first as they move from one note to the next in sequence. Pause the video after each phrase (0:39, 0:58, 1:11) to focus on the melody phrase-by-phrase.
3. After students show success with individual phrases, play the [Three-Note Calypso Melody, Part 2](#) video. Mr. Juan will guide students twice through the entire melody of the song. Assist them in playing along with Mr. Juan, and repeat the video as needed.
4. Play the [Three-Note Calypso Chords, Part 1](#) video, pausing at 0:56. Students will learn the two chords to play the song’s chord accompaniment, G and D7. Mr. Juan will model the new D7 chord. Similar to the G, the D7 requires students to stack two fingers within the same fret. Model the chord using correct finger placement. Resume the video from [0:56](#), and allow students time to practice transitioning between the G and D7 chords. In the [Three-Note Calypso Chords, Part 2](#)

video, students will practice this transition further and put the movement of the chords into the context of the song. Repeat to practice the chords, as needed.

5. After students show success with the transition between G and D7 chords, play the [Three-Note Calypso Strumming](#) video. Mr. Juan will introduce the new strumming pattern to adapt to the chords. To start, students may practice the strumming using only one of the chords so they can focus on movement of their right hand. Then they may incorporate the chord change with the strumming rhythm. Replay the video as needed.

Perform & Share

1. Use the music backing track and video from Mr. Juan in [Three-Note Calypso Performance](#) to create a class performance video of “Three-Note Calypso.” Students may choose to play either the melody or the chord accompaniment. Play the video a second time from [0:08](#), so students can alternate parts. Play along to assist with the rhythm of the melody and chord accompaniment.

2. Share your musical creations at [S’Cool Sounds Padlet](#).

2. Tell students that in the next lesson, they will travel to Brazil to learn another new song.