

Common Blues Progressions

These examples show how a basic three chord blues can develop into a sophisticated jazz blues.

- 1) First of all, here is a basic blues in A. Example: Johnny B Goode, Chuck Berry

A	A	A	A
D	D	A	A
E	E	A	A

- 2) 7th chords are added for attention and to signal directions in music to the listener.

A	A	A	A7*
D	D	A	A
E7*	E7*	A	E7*

- 3) A popular variation in the second and tenth bar is shown. Example: Before You Accuse Me, Eric Clapton

A	D *	A	A
D	D	A	A
E7	D *	A	E7

- 4) By making all the chords into dominant 7th chords it sounds even bluesier:

A7*	D7*	A7*	A7*
D7*	D7*	A7*	A7*
E7	D7*	A7*	E7

- 5) 8 Bar Blues. Example: Key To The Highway, Derek and the Dominoes

A7	E7	D7	D7
A7	E7	A7	E7

- 6) Now a very jazzy blues. Four downstrums per bar will give it a good jazz blues feel.

A7	Eb9	D9	G#7	A7	Em7	Bb7	A7	Eb9
D9		D#dim7		A7	Bm7	C#m7	C7	
Bm7	F9	E9		A7	G7	F#7	C9	B9 F9 E9 Bb7