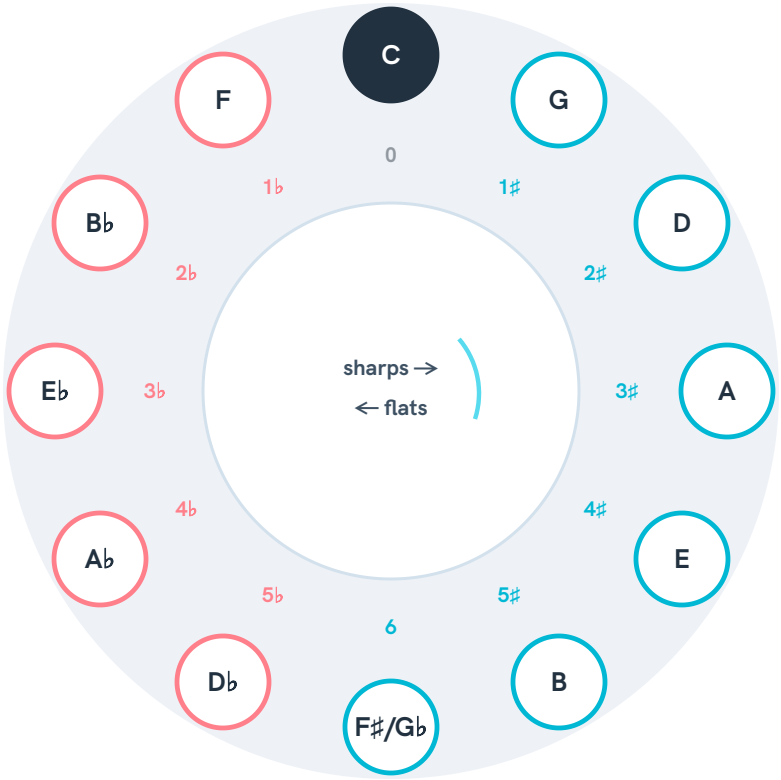
The Circle of Fifths

all twelve keys arranged like a clock — each step up a fifth adds one sharp



Start at C (no sharps, no flats) and climb a fifth — the same jump as C up to G (shown below) — and you land on G major: **one sharp**. Another fifth: D major, **two sharps**. Every clockwise step adds one sharp; every counter-clockwise step adds one **flat**. Go far enough and the two paths meet at the bottom, where F♯ and G♭ are the same keys spelled two ways.



One **fifth**: five letter names up (C-D-E-F-**G**). That single interval builds the whole circle.

The sharp order — and a sentence to remember it

Sharps always arrive in the order **F C G D A E B**: "**F**ather **C**harles **G**oes **D**own **A**nd **E**nds **B**attle." Flats arrive in the exact mirror order (B E A D G C F) — the battle, reversed.

Try it Play the circle: start on any C and play **C → G → D → A → E**, each a fifth above the last (or drop an octave when you run out of piano). Feel how every landing sounds like a fresh "home". Songwriters ride this circle constantly — and every 5-finger scale you have learned (C, G, F, D, A) is a **neighbor on this clock**. Practice: Exercise 58. Parallel minors: Exercise 82.

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