Capo Reference Chart

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The capo is an invaluable tool for those who play acoustic guitar. There are essentially five keys that are most commonly played by acoustic guitar players: A, C, D, E and G. With a capo, you can use the chord shapes of any of those guitar friendly keys to play in any other key. In every case, you have several options, depending on the chord shapes you want to play, and the musical range you want to play in. For example, playing higher up the fret board gives you more of mandolin sound.

Below you can find two charts to help you understand what keys are available to you with a capo, and what key you are actually playing in with a capo. Both charts give essentially the same information, but from different vantage points. In Option 1, you take the chord you are playing with your known capo position, and then determine the actual chord you are playing. In Option 2, you take the chord that you want to play, and determine various chord shape options available to you at various capo positions. Download the printable version here to keep as a reference in your guitar case!

Option 1: Cross reference the chord and capo position to see the actual chord
Example: The "D" chord played with your capo on the "3rd fret" is an "F"

Capo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A	Bb	B	C	Db	D	Eb	E	F
C	Db	D	Eb	E	F	Gb	G	Ab
D	Eb	E	F	Gb	G	Ab	A	Bb
E	F	Gb	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C
G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	Db	D	Eb

Option 2: Locate the actual chord to find alternative chord shapes in various capo position
Example: For the key of Bb, you can play in "G" on the "3rd fret".

Capo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Ab	G1			E4		D6		C8
A		G2			E5		D7	
Bb	A1		G3			E6		D8
B		A2		G4			E7	
C			A3		G5			E8
Db	C1			A4		G6		
D		C2			A5		G7	
Eb	D1		C3			A6		G8
E		D2		C4			A7	
F	E1		D3		C5			A8
Gb		E2		D4		C6		
G			E3		D5		C7	