

The GITTYLELE™ Ukulele Kit

Assembly Instructions & How-To Guide



Product #: 36-011-01

Gitty Kits™
by C. B. Gitty Crafter Supply

View this guide in full color online:
www.CBGitty.com/GittyleleKit

C. B. GITTY 
CRAFTER SUPPLY
WWW.CBGITTY.COM

SAFETY WARNING: This kit contains some small parts that could be choking hazards for young children. Always supervise children when building this kit, and follow all safety recommendations for any tools or supplies you will be using. Be careful of splinters and sharp edges on wooden pieces. Keep bags and other plastic packaging materials away from children, as they could be choking hazards. Read instructions fully before beginning.

Maybe you'd like to play a little love song for the apple of your eye, or possibly plink your way over a Hawaiian island rainbow. Maybe you're looking to build your first instrument by hand. No matter what your motivation, you can play soft, mellow tones on your very own hand-built cigar box ukulele in no time.

This guide will walk you through the assembly of the C. B. Gitty "Gittylele" Ukulele Kit. Using just a few basic tools you will construct a fully playable, great-sounding and awesome-looking ukulele, sure to be the envy of friends and neighbors alike. The ukulele is a fun and easy-to-play instrument with a unique, happy sound, and the one you build from this kit will provide many hours of musical enjoyment.

Want to build more?
Visit www.CBGitty.com/kits for our full line of awesome musical instrument kits!

The body and neck of our Gittylele are all made from thin plywood panels custom cut on a high-power CNC laser machine. This kit was 100% designed in the United States, and all of the wooden parts are USA-made in our own New Hampshire workshops!

PART 1—KIT CONTENTS & TOOLS NEEDED



Kit Inventory

Refer to the labeled photo above to identify each of the parts in your kit. Verify that everything is present and that you are familiar with what's what.

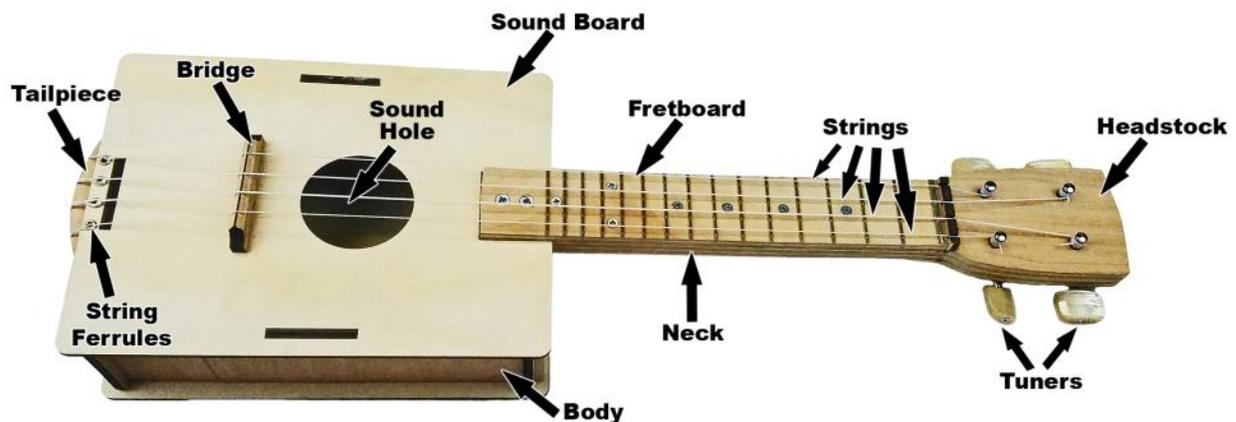
- A. Front Body Panel
- B. Back Body Panel
- C. Fretboard
- D. Nut
- E. Tailpiece
- F. Bracing Block
- G. Body Side—Top
- H. Body Side—Bottom
- I. Body Sides (2)—Left and Right
- J. Tuners (4) - *style of tuners supplied in kit may vary slightly from those pictured*
- K. Tuner Mounting Screws (8)
- L. Fretboard Mounting Screws—Short (7)
- M. Fretboard/Neck Mounting Screws—Long (2)
- N. Neck Brace with (2) Screws
- O. String Ferrules/Bushings (4)
- P. Bridge
- Q. Set of Ukulele Strings
- R. Neck Top/Middle Pieces (2—one with engraved branding)
- S. Neck Bottom Piece (with tuner mounting holes)

Tools Needed

The following tools and supplies are what we recommend for completing this kit—they are the same ones we used when making this guide. You may be able to substitute other tools and methods, but please before using any tool (hand or power) make sure you follow all safety recommendations!

- Wood glue
- Hand drill
- Phillips screwdrivers (#1 and #2 points recommended)
- Ruler or measuring tape
- Clamps (or several heavy books, or even strong rubber bands)
- Cotton swabs or paper towels/tissues
- Sand paper
- A digital chromatic tuner

The photo below shows a completed ukulele built from this kit, with all of the key components labeled. Refer to this diagram throughout the rest of these instructions, if you are not sure of where we're headed.



PART 2—ASSEMBLY

Step 1—Sanding

The process of cutting these parts out on the laser can leave a brownish residue behind. Fortunately, it can easily be sanded off with some fine-grit sand paper. Pre-sanding any of the parts that will be visible when the ukulele is assembled is a good way to get started. Of course it can always be done after assembly if desired.

The laser residue marks should come off fairly easily. Be careful not to over-sand the wood, which could remove layers of the plywood. You may also want to use some fine grit sandpaper (220 or higher) to smooth off the fret ends on the fretboard, for more comfortable playing.

Step 2—Building the Neck

The neck for this kit is included in four parts and will be put together in three different sections. The parts are shown in the photo below. Note that one piece will have laser-engraved “GITTYLELE” text on it.



Lay out the three main pieces of the neck (Parts R & S on the kit contents photo), arranging them as in the photo above. Place the piece with the pre-drilled tuner holes on a flat surface and spread a thin layer of glue evenly throughout the whole piece.

Before you apply any glue, make sure that you will be able to quickly move to Step 3 (attaching the fretboard) before the glue starts to set up! Using a small foam paint brush can help spread the glue.

Now carefully place the one of the remaining two neck pieces on top of this, and repeat the gluing process, taking care not to get too much glue in the holes intended for the screws. Repeat for the top neck piece, which has the “GITTYLELE” branding on it. Once these three pieces are together, carefully align them so that the edges are flush with one another and the screw holes are lined up.

Step 3—Attaching the Fretboard

Now it's time to screw the fretboard (Part C) to the neck, using the smaller screws (Part L) in the first 7 holes, starting at the NUT end of the fretboard. Leave the last two holes open at the body end of the fretboard, as these will be used to attach the neck to the body later. The screws serve a dual purpose, acting as both a

method of clamping the first three parts of the neck together, as well as taking place of traditional fret markers. It is best to put in the screws while the glue is still wet.

It is recommended to countersink the screws slightly, so they do not protrude and interfere with playing. If you are using a drill, use the lowest speed setting until you have the screw in place, and then hand-tighten a few turns to get them seated to avoid stripping out the hole. Overtightening may cause stripping of the hole.

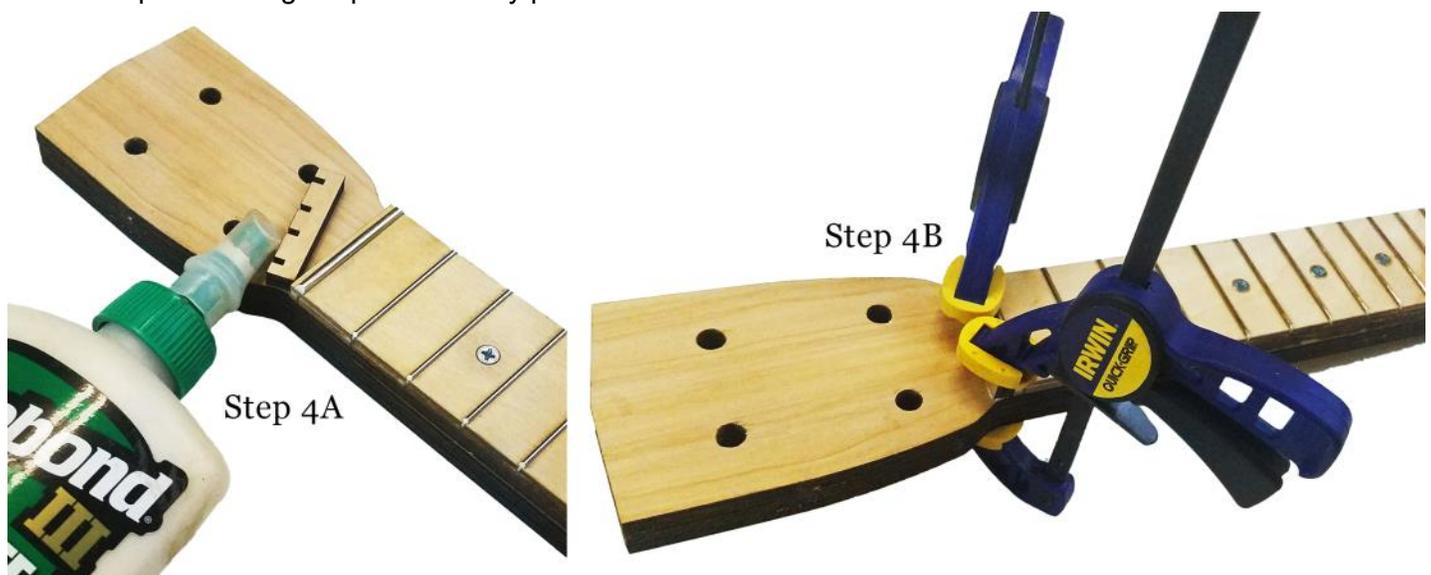


Once you have everything positioned correctly, clamp firmly to a flat work surface, or place weights along the surface of the neck. Make any necessary adjustments to ensure that the sides are flush, wiping away any excess glue. A flat work surface (like a table or bench top) is highly recommended for this step to eliminate any bowing or warpage that might occur in the neck—you want it to be as straight and flat as possible!

Before weighting or clamping the headstock, it is recommended to remove any glue that may have gotten into the tuner holes (the four larger holes in the headstock) using a cotton swab. This will prevent the glue from hardening and obstructing the hole, making the tuners easier to install at a later step.

Step 4—Attaching the Nut

Traditionally the nut (Part D) is the first point of contact for the strings, giving them the angle and guidance to line up correctly on the fretboard. Here, the nut plays a different, but equally important part of the string retainer that keeps the strings in place as they pass over the first fret on the fretboard.



Spread some glue along the bottom of the nut, and position it so that it's flush with the headstock and the top of the fretboard.

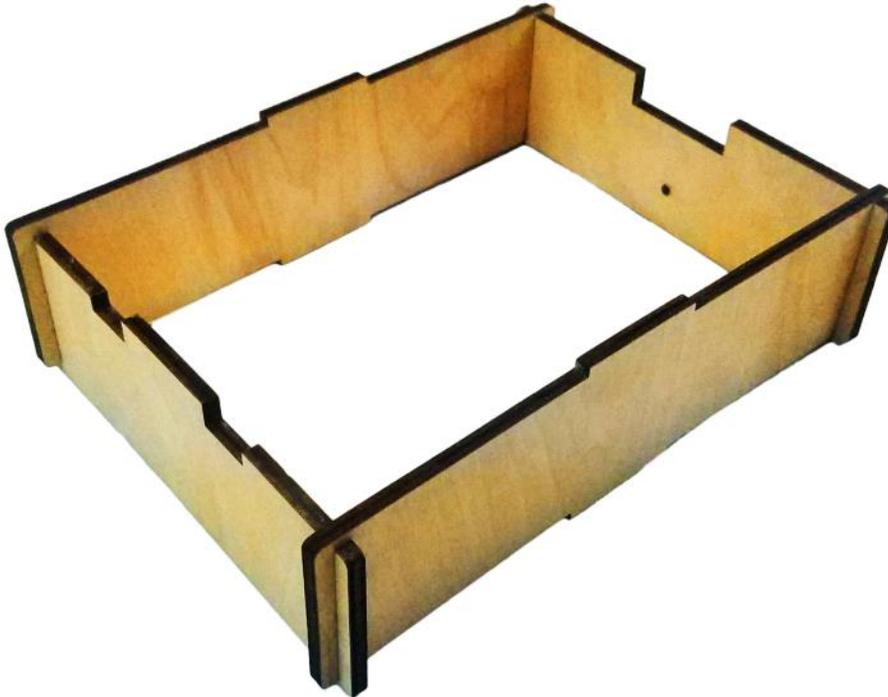
Smaller quick clamps come in handy here, but a full-size clamp will work as well. A small weight can also work, as long as you can keep even downward pressure.

Step 5—Assembling the Instrument Body



The body of your ukulele is made up of 4 parts. Two sidewall pieces (Part I), and two end pieces (Parts G & H). These parts fit together by sliding the open sides at the end of each piece together until they are flush. Take care not to use too much force to piece these together to avoid breaking the wooden tabs.

To ensure a flush, tight fit on the corners, gently tap with a hammer or press together with your clamp.

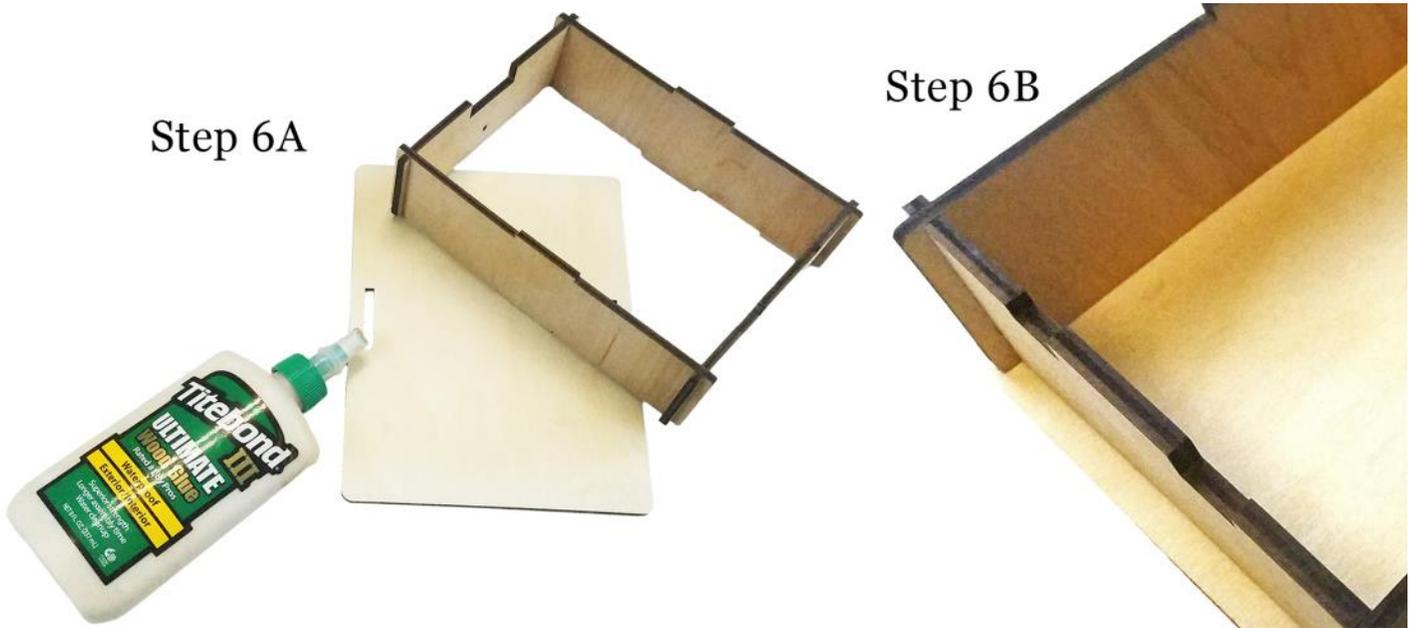


We recommend squeezing a little glue into the slots to help sturdy up the box, but it is not absolutely necessary to do so. The top side of this box has the cut-out for the neck as well as the tailpiece, and the bottom simply has two tabs that will fit into the piece that make up the back of the instrument.

Step 6—Gluing on the Back

Now it's time to attach the back piece of the ukulele (Part B) to the body frame you have assembled. Run a thin layer of glue around the bottom edge the body frame. Line up the two tabs on either side with the holes on the back plate and carefully press into place. Set your clamps evenly around the sidewall, or place your

book or weights evenly. Wipe away any excess glue and leave to set.



If you are using clamps, space them evenly so that as much of the side walls make contact with the body as possible. Do not overtighten the clamps, as it may cause some damage or warping.

If you are using a book or other weight, place the back piece on a flat surface and evenly distribute the weight for the same effect as described above.

Step 7—Gluing in the Neck Brace

Now it is time to install the bracing for the neck (Part F). Spread a layer of glue on one side of the included block. Push up against the top of the box, it should fit neatly. Clamp into place as shown in the photo below.



Step 8—Shaping the Neck

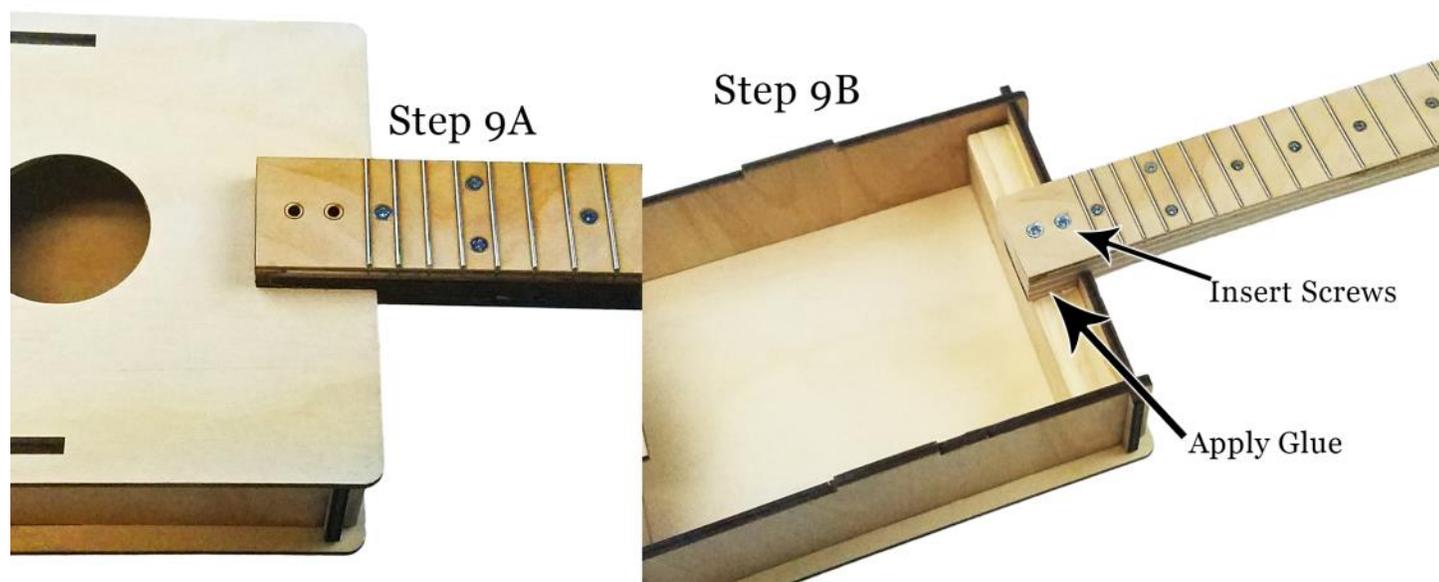
Before attaching the neck to your Gittylele, it is highly recommended that you do some shaping the neck by sanding and rounding the back edges to make the instrument more comfortable to play. Think of a conventional guitar, ukulele or other stringed instrument—the back of the neck (where the palm of your hand sits) tends to be smooth and rounded.

A wood rasp or file makes this process a lot quicker, though regular sandpaper will work as well, Try to get the wood as smooth to the touch as you can.

If you decide to do this step, be careful not to round the portion of the neck that fits into the instrument body, as it could leave an unsightly gap.

Step 9—Installing the Neck

Now it's time to install the neck. Dry fit the soundboard (Part A) loosely on top of the box– the cutout in the soundboard will frame the location for the neck. Place a dollop of glue down on top of the brace in the cut-out and spread it into a thin layer. Be careful not to get it onto the soundboard itself.



Now place the neck into the slot, and push it so that it rests firmly against the soundboard. Carefully screw the neck to the brace using the two longer screws provided (Part M), counter-sinking slightly so that they sit flush with the rest of the fretboard. It will not be necessary to clamp this together, as the screws will keep the surfaces pressed together.

Step 10—Optional Piezo Pickup Installation

If you are planning on installing a piezo pickup in your Gittylele, now would be a great time to plot out and drill the holes for your jack. This is an optional add-on not included with the basic kit. For more information about how to do this, check out this how-to article: <http://www.CigarBoxGuitar.com/InstallPiezoHarness>

Step 11—Installing the Tailpiece

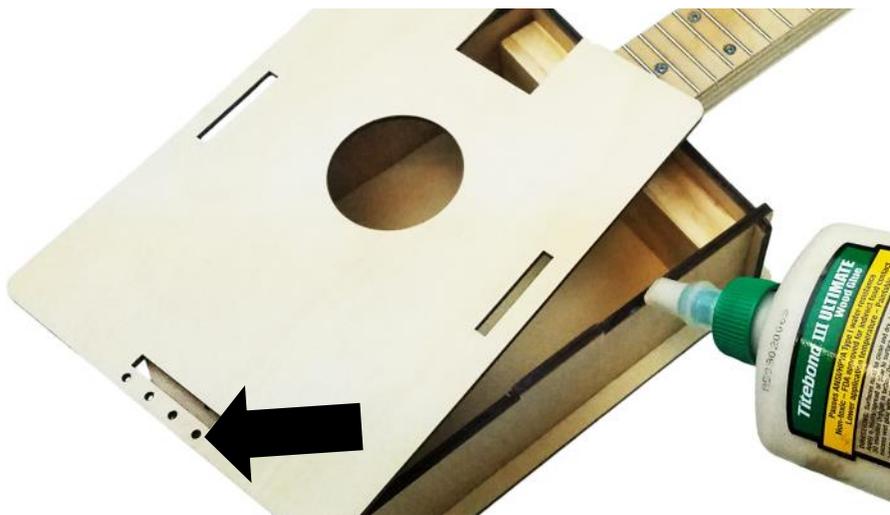
To install the tailpiece (Part E), carefully remove the soundboard from the instrument. Note the tab on the bottom of the box. Run a bead of glue in the two slots provided on the bottom of the box and push down the tailpiece just to contact.

The glue will help give the tailpiece an added layer of security against shifting around.



Step 12—Installing the Sound Board

Now it is time to install the soundboard (Part A) of your Gittylele. Run a bead of glue along the top of the side-walls, the same way you installed the back of the instrument.



Carefully fit the soundboard in place using the tabs on either side. Wipe away excess glue and clamp or weight appropriately for drying.

As with previous steps, it's important to distribute the weight evenly on each side to maximize the strength of the bond.

Clean out any excess glue that may have gotten into the holes of the tailpiece.

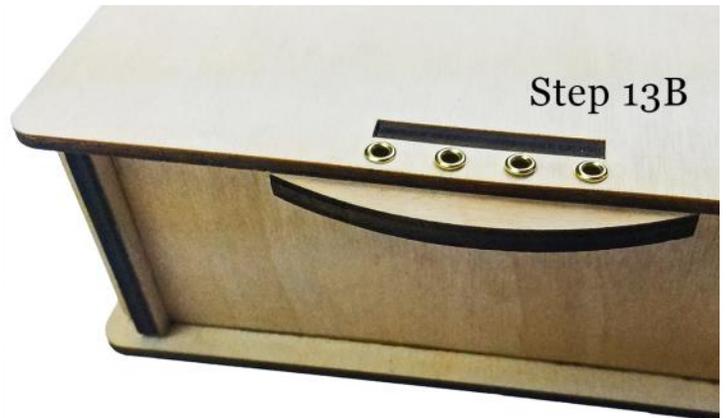
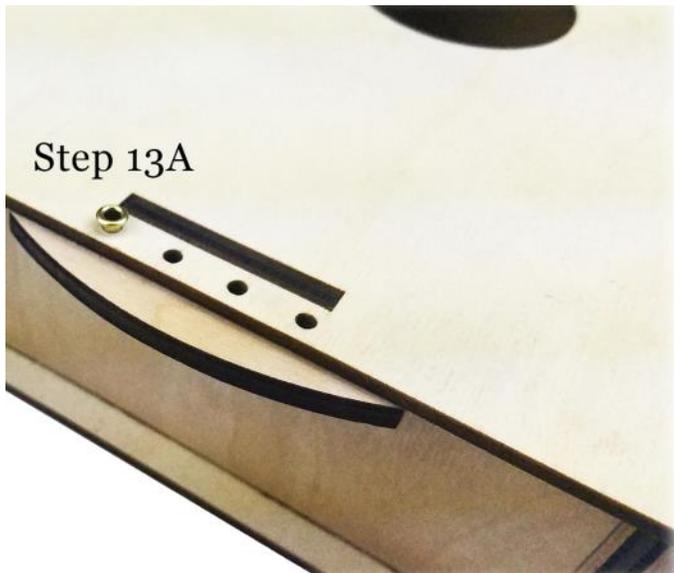
OPTIONAL STEP—Decorating

This step is entirely optional, but if you want to add some custom decoration to your ukulele, this is a good time to do it, before any additional hardware gets added. Staining, painting, wood burning, drawing, application of stickers/decals—this is YOUR ukulele and there are no rules. Decorate it how you want!

Just be careful about adding anything that will interfere with the strings once they are installed—maybe read ahead to get an idea of where they will be. We also recommend not adding anything that will get in the way of being able to comfortably play the instrument. For example, we advise against adding any hardware or additions that would stick up and interfere with the “picking zone” on the instrument—where the picking hand will be moving when plucking/strumming the ukulele.

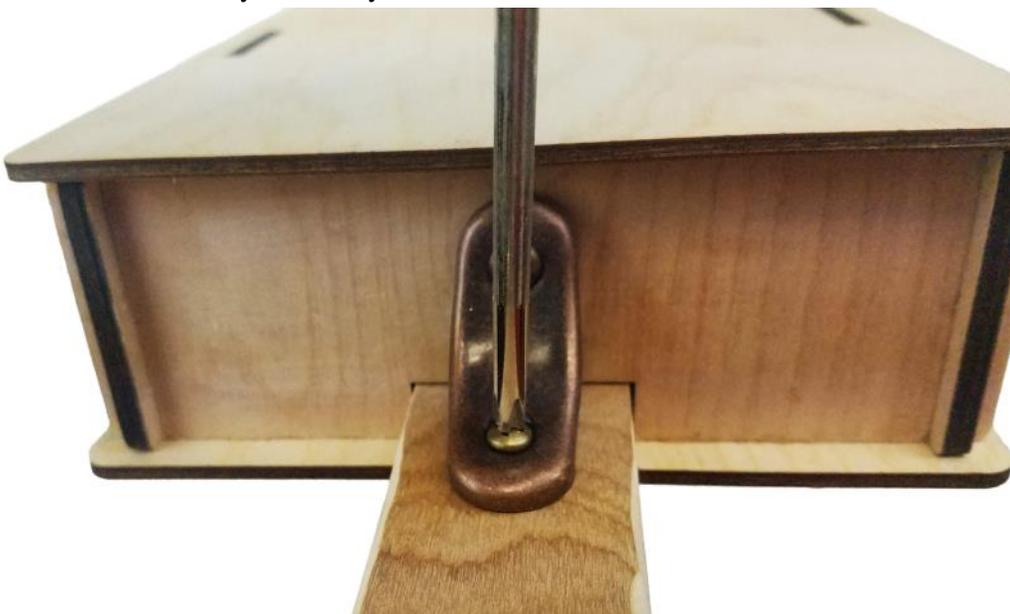
Step 13—Finishing the Tailpiece

Once the soundboard has dried, you are officially into the home-stretch of building this ukulele! Proceed by first turning the instrument so that the tailpiece is facing toward you. Place the provided ferrules into the pre-drilled holes. These should go in fairly easily; however, a light tap of a hammer may be required in some instances.



Step 14—Installing the Neck Brace

Locate the neck brace (Part N) in your remaining parts. Flip the ukulele over to find the pre-drilled holes on the back of the neck, and the top of the body. Take one of the two provided screws and carefully fasten one end of the brace, leaving it slightly loose while you screw the other end into the body. Tighten these with your screwdriver until they are firmly seated.



Step 15—Installing the Tuners

After installing the neck brace, you are ready to install the tuners (Part J).

The easy way to determine what side the tuners go on would be to orient the open gear on the back so that it is pointing downwards toward the body of your instrument (see picture below). Using the pre-drilled screw holes and provided screws (Part K), screw these to the headstock with your fine-tip screwdriver:

Step 15A



Step 15B



Caution: It is not recommended to use a power screwdriver on this step. These are tiny screws, and they may not withstand the torque of the drill. Hand-tightening with a screwdriver will ensure that the heads do not strip, and you will be able to seat them firmly enough.

Step 16—Installing the Strings

To start, take the pack of strings (Part Q) that came with your kit, and open it up. Identify the four separate numbered clear string envelopes in the pack.

Stringing your Gittylele is a fairly straightforward process. You will be making a looped knot at one end of each string, feeding it up through the holes in the tailpiece and then through the loop of the knot. The strings will then run them up the neck and wrapping them around the tuner post, ending by threading the string end through the hole on the post.

The 4th and 1st strings are the same gauge (thickness). The 4th string is placed above the thickest string, closest to the top of the box when in the playing position. The 3rd string is the thickest of the four. The second string goes below the 3rd and above the 1st, with the 1st as the bottom most string when in the playing position.

Or to put it another way, when looking at the instrument from the front, the strings will go 4, 3, 2, 1 from left to right: small, largest, second largest small. See the photo on the next page for a visual reference.

NOTE: for left-handed playing, just reverse the order of the strings!



Step 17—Installing and Notching the Bridge

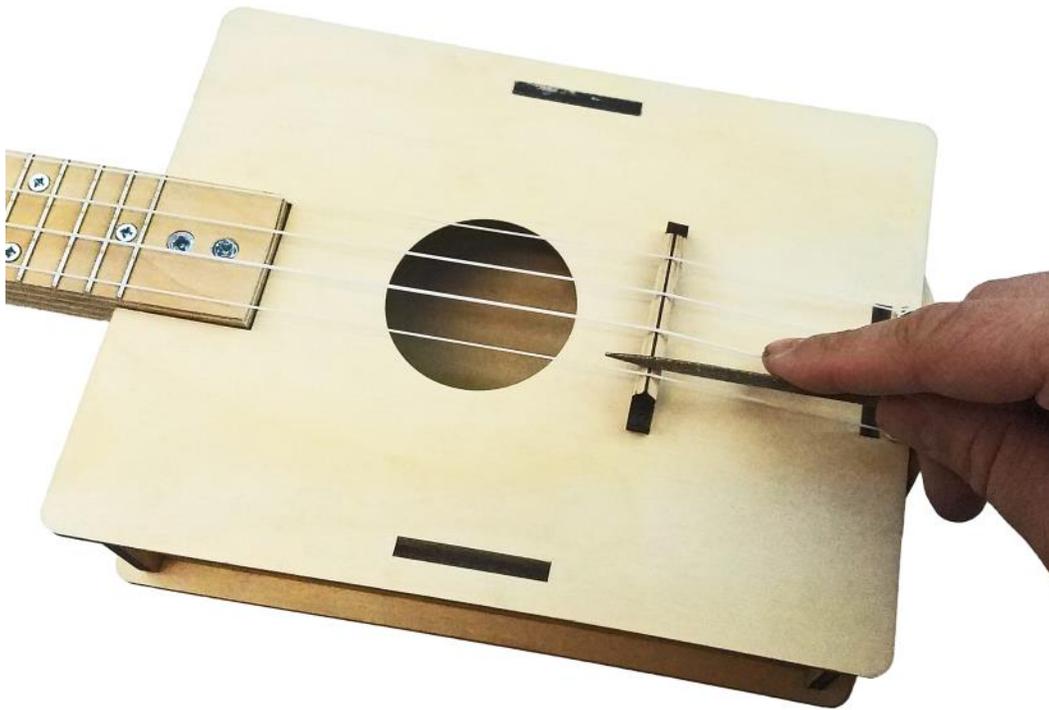
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Now measure 13 inches from the bottom of the nut to the top of the bridge, as shown in the photo on the next page. Slide the bridge around under the strings until the top ridge is exactly at 13 inches.



It is recommended that you file a tiny groove just enough for the string to sit, so they don't slip when playing. A kitchen knife can be used for this purpose—only a very small groove/slot is needed to help keep the string in place.



If you find the action is a little high you can sand or file down the bridge to bring it down to the desired height. Action is the distance from the strings to the fretboard, and generally lower is better as it makes it easier to fret notes and chords. It is important to not go overboard with lowering the action though, as this can cause buzzing and other issues. If the action ends up too low, you can always put a thin spacer (pennies or nickels work well) under each end of the bridge to raise it up a little.

PART 3—TUNING AND PLAYING

Once your strings are installed, the construction part of this kit is complete. **Congratulations, you have finished your Gittylele!** Now all that's left is to get it tuned up and get busy making music!

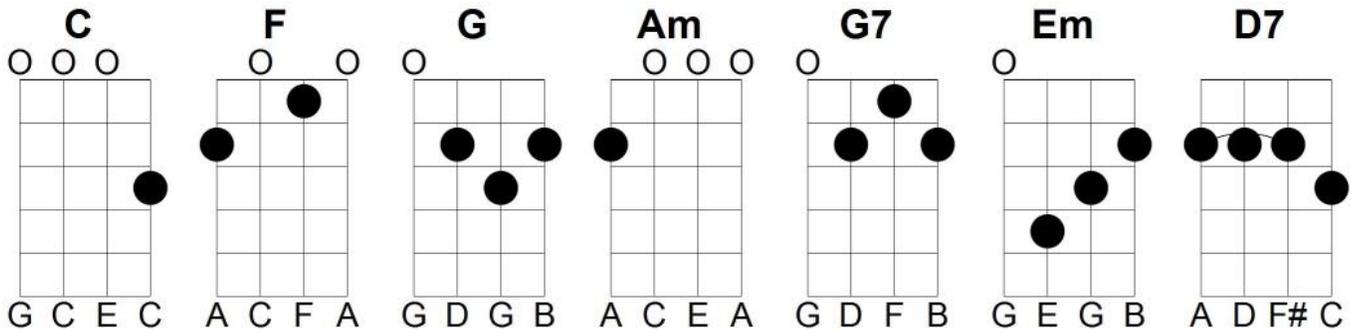


Step 1—Getting your Ukulele in Tune

Your Gittylele is designed to be tuned to G C E A, with G being the top string (when held in playing position)

and A being the bottom string.

If you have a digital chromatic tuner, you can easily use that to tune your ukulele, especially if it has a Ukulele mode. For a good visual and audio reference, we recommend www.ukutuner.com, which gives you the pitch of each string, as well as a nice representation of the headstock.



To help you get started playing your ukulele, above are some of the more common chords that you'll want to learn. In the diagrams, the vertical lines represent the four strings of the ukulele (the leftmost being the top string when you are playing, the rightmost being the bottom string), and the circles tell you where to put your fingers. The open circles at the top of the diagram indicates an open (unfretted) string.

Using just these chords, you can play a large number of both traditional and popular songs, from folk to country to rock and pop. You should be able to follow along with any printed or online sheet music or tablature that shows the guitar chords. There are many sites online that present tablature and chords for popular songs, such as www.ultimate-guitar.com and others.

Step 3—More How-to-Play Resources

There are many online resources for how to play the ukulele, including a growing library of video how-to lessons over at www.CigarBoxGuitar.com. C. B. Gitty also sells a How to Play the Ukulele book that includes an audio CD. Find it at <http://www.cbgitty.com/books>. You can also search on YouTube for “ukulele lessons” and find a wealth of free how-to info.

CLOSING

We hope that you've enjoyed this process of building yourself an awesome ukulele from this kit, and that you'll have many years of enjoyment playing this instrument. But your instrument-building career doesn't have to stop here! C. B. Gitty Crafter Supply offers a variety of musical instrument kits featuring cigar boxes and other reclaimed materials, from the simplest one-string diddley-bows to 4-string cigar box guitars. www.GittyKits.com

We also have a huge variety of parts and accessories that you can use to branch out and build your own custom instruments. www.CBGitty.com/CigarBoxGuitarParts

Want to share your new Ukulele with the biggest community of homemade instrument builders? Head over to <http://www.CigarBoxNation.com> and share your build and customizations, and see what the community is working on!

Questions? Comments? Concerns?

Feel free to e-mail us at support@cbgitty.com with any questions or comments you may have, and we'll do our best to get back to you

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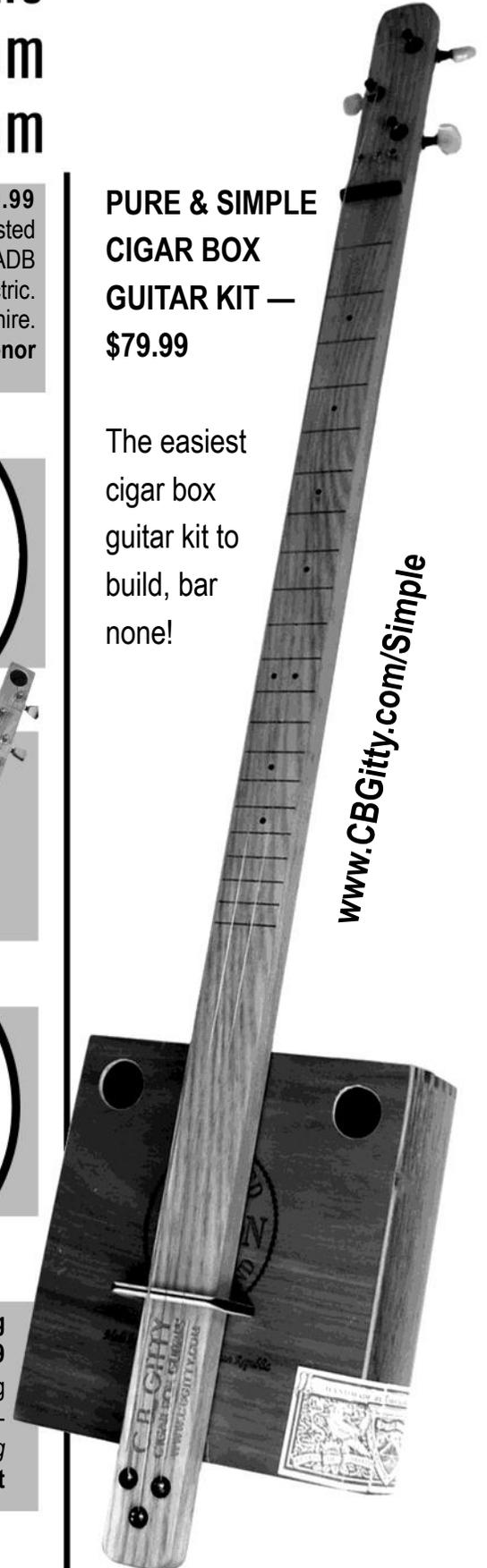


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