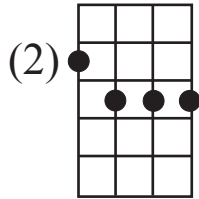


Naming Chords

How to determine the name of a chord.



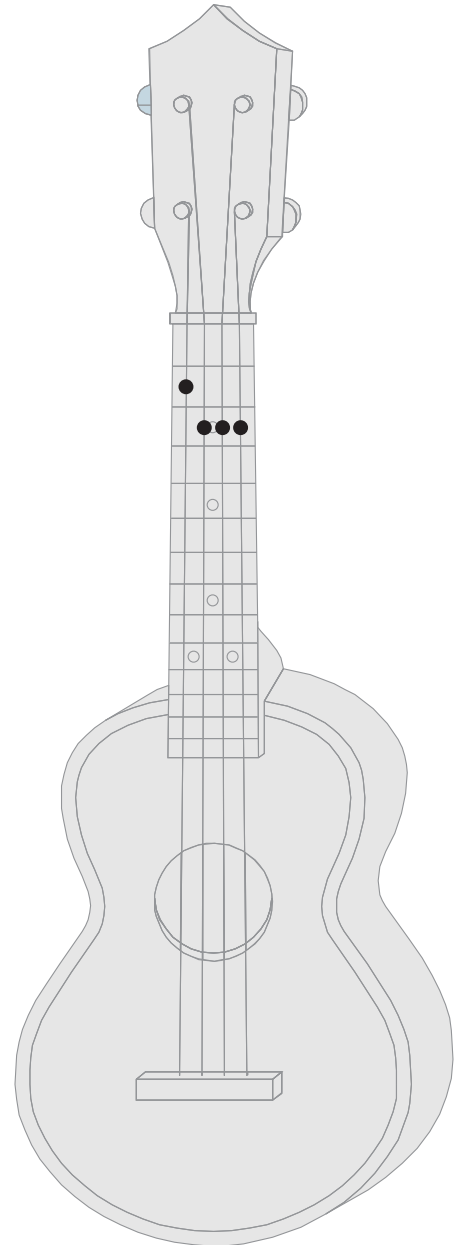
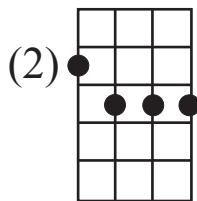
A **Chord** can have alternate names based on how it is being used. A chord's function is an important determining factor in naming a chord.

A **Chord** can NOT be named by its fingerboard shape.

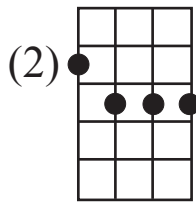
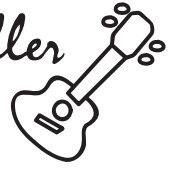
A **Chord** can NOT be named by its lowest note.

A **Chord** might NOT have a root.

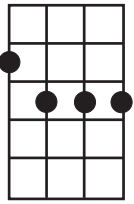
So what is the name of this chord?



answer

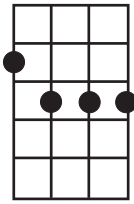


Here are a few of the possible names for the chord.



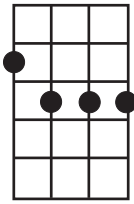
F9

A Eb G C



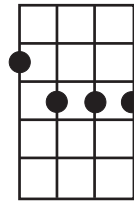
Cm6

A Eb G C



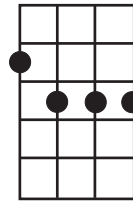
Am7b5

A Eb G C



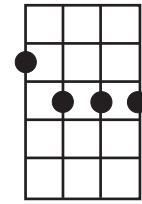
B7#5b9

A D# Fx Cb



Eb6#11

A Eb G C



?

Still no answer!

The context of how a chord is being used will give you some clues and ultimately the answer.

If you know the key signature or tonality of the chord that will narrow down the choices.

Here are some of the common functions for the possible chords above.

Is it F9?

F9 is a direct substitute for **F7**.

F7 can function in a major or minor tonality as a dominant chord, the V of I in a major or minor tonality.

F7 can function as a I, IV or the V chord in a major blues progression. I in the key of F major. IV in the key of C major and a V in the key of Bb major or minor.

F7 can function as a bVII7 substitute for a D7, the V of the key of G.



Is it Am7b5?

Am7b5 is the II chord in the key of G minor.

Is it Cm6?

Cm6 is a direct substitute for Cm7.

Is it B7#5b9?

B7#5b9 is a substitute for B7.

The Bottom Line!

So the bottom line is: unless you know the harmonic function you might not be able to accurately name it.

