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17 Essential Jazz Guitar Chords For Beginners

The 17 chord shapes shown on the following pages are essential knowledge for every beginning jazz guitarist to get started. The chords you'll learn here are maj7, dominant 7, minor 7, half diminished 7 and diminished 7.

A **red dot ①** represents the root (aka 1 or bass note) of the chord. The root is the note that gives the chord the first part of its name (C or A for example). On this chart, all bass notes are C. By moving the chord shapes up or down the guitar neck you get other chords of the same type (you'll learn how a bit further, in the chapter about transposing chords).

The **numbers (③⑤⑦)** inside the note markers are chord tones. These chord tones give the chord the second part of its name (maj7 or min7 for example). If this is new to you, you should make it easier on yourself and [learn basic chord theory](#).

Notice how each chord only changes one note to the next. This can help you memorize the chords, and relate them to one another. For example: Maj7 and 7th only have one note difference, as well as 7th and m7:

