Open Guitar Chord Positions

when tuned to CCGCCG, (lowest to highest)

Major Scale Chords

C major, or the “I” chord; (or a minor)

G7, or the major “V7” chord

F major, or the “IV” chord

Open

Close

Minor Scale Chords

c minor, or the “i” chord (or Ab)

d modal, d diminished; (or Bb major)

g minor or the minor “v” chord (or Eb)

f minor or the “iv” chord (or Db)

Bb minor (Hijaz scale) use with C and f minor

In general, play chords in “open” position with fingers 1 & 3 and chords in “close” position with fingers 1 & 2

Chords in blue are used less often and derive from the 2 notes on strings 3 & 4 that could be heard as intervals in two different 3-note chords (or “triads”). For instance, the interval defined by the notes C and E can be found both in the C major triad and the a minor triad. Pairing these open-tuning chords with a second guitar playing the standard-tuning chords often produces a pleasing effect.

Most of the chords illustrated here are played on the 3rd & 4th strings. However, note that it’s possible to invert the fingering above and play the chords on strings 1 and 2., as shown below:

C major, or the “I” chord

d minor, or the “ii” chord

- notes by Munir, March 2006