Tenor Banjo Chords *(collected and arranged by Douglas McClure)*

This chord list, for the tenor banjo tuned to CGDA, is much **simpler than it looks.** ☺ Just start using it and you'll probably understand it fine. For example, suppose you're playing chord melody from a lead sheet and you see:

A♭m7

1. Look for the **m7** chords (they're under "MINOR CHORDS", on the second page).
2. Since the melody note you need (G♭) is the **seventh** of the chord, go to the **VIIm7** chords.
3. Try out the first chord. You will probably have to **move** it to the appropriate fret. (The chords printed in blue cannot be moved.) In this example, the first chord listed is 1122. Since you need a G♭ on the top string, move the chord up to frets 8899 (because G♭ is on the 9th fret). Play it and see how it sounds.
4. Try the various VIIm7 chords until you find the one you are happiest with. And you're done!

Chord Name	Frets	Tones	Nickname or (Root)
MAJOR CHORDS			
I	1134	R53R	o
	2331	3R5R	c
	3412	3R3R	h
	5134	353R	hh
	4053	355R	(C)
	0523	RR3R	(C)
	6205	35RR	(D)
	0578	553R	(F)
	134	53R	oj
	412	R3R	hj
	620	35R	(D, A)
	086	35R	(A♭, E♭)
	12	3R	ojj
	31	5R	cjj
III	1224	3R53	o
	3113	5R53	h
	1341	53R3	c
	0057	R553	(C)
	0557	RR53	(C)
	0957	R353	(C)
	5530	R5R3	(F)
	0530	55R3	(F)
	2052	5RR3	(G)
	113	R53	hj
	095	R35	(C, G)
	530	5R3	(B♭, F)
	13	53	ojj
	41	R3	cjj
V	1344	53R5	o
	3351	R535	c
	4122	R3R5	h
	6200	35R5	(D)
	6740	3R35	(D)
	3051	R335	(E♭)
	7405	R355	(G)
	122	3R5	oj
	095	R35	(C, G)
	740	R35	(G, D)
	51	35	cjj
	11	R5	ojj
I6	3142	365R	h
	1334	R63R	o
III6	3133	5R63	h
	5113	6R53	hh
	5500	R563	(F)
V6	1122	63R5	h
	3551	R635	c
	6400	36R5	(D)
	314	365	
VI6	1131	R536	h
	1346	53R6	o
Ima7	2231	375R	
IIIma7	3153	5R73	
	1124	3753	
	5520	R573	(F)

Chord Name	Frets	Tones	Nickname or (Root)
Vma7	1334	5375	
	4112	R375	
	3122	73R5	
VIIma7	1133	R537	
	3441	3R57	
Ima9	1312	973R	
IIIma9	1131	5973	
	1361	5393	
Vma9	3142	7395	
	6620	3795	(D)
VIIma9	1113	R597	
	3133	9537	
IXma9	1122	3759	
	1222	3R59	
	1536	R739	
	3551	5379	
	3151	5R79	
I69	1112	963R	
III69	1111	5963	
V69	3144	69R5	
	6420	3695	(D)
VI69	1111	R596	
	1144	6396	
IX69	3144	3659	
	3131	5R69	
	5111	6R59	
	114	639	
DOMINANT CHORDS			
I7	1434	R♭73R	o
	2131	3♭75R	c
	1356	♭753R	oo
	4650	53♭7R	(A)
	212	♭73R	oj
	131	♭75R	cj
	650	3♭7R	(D, A)
	61	♭7R	
III7	3143	5R♭73	h
	1321	53♭73	hh
	2135	3♭753	o
	4641	♭75R3	c
	4341	♭73R3	cc
	0357	R♭753	(C)
	5510	R5♭73	(F)
	5002	♭7R53	(G)
	143	R♭73	hj
	135	♭753	oj
	321	3♭73	hhj
	510	5♭73	(B♭, F)
	21	♭73	ojj
V7	1324	53♭75	o
	2122	♭73R5	h
	3651	R♭735	c
	5213	R3♭75	cc
	1351	♭7535	hh
	6500	3♭7R5	(D)
	213	3♭75	oj
	146	R♭75	
	651	♭735	

Chord Name	Frets	Tones	Nickname or (Root)
VII7	13	♭75	ojj
	1132	R53♭7	h
	4125	R3R♭7	o
	4551	3R5♭7	c
	2125	♭73R♭7	oo
	4351	3♭75♭7	cc
	132	53♭7	hj
	125	3R♭7	oj
	314	5R♭7	
	521	R3♭7	
	321	♭73♭7	
	840	35♭7	(E, B)
	21	3♭7	hjj
I7sus4	1444	R♭74R	
	3131	4♭75R	
IV7sus4	3144	5R♭74	
	4400	R5♭74	(E)
V7sus4	1111	♭74R5	
VII7sus4	1142	R54♭7	
(see also 11 (9sus4) chords)			
IV7sus+4	3145	5R♭7#4	
(see also +11 (9sus+4) chords)			
I7+5	2141	3♭7#5R	
III7+5	4143	#5R♭73	
V7+5	2123	♭73R#5	
	6501	3♭7R#5	(D)
VII7+5	1232	R#53♭7	
I7-5	2121	3♭7♭5R	
III7-5	2143	♭5R♭73	
V7-5	2121	♭73R♭5	
	212	3♭7♭5	
VII7-5	2143	R♭53♭7	
I9	1212	9♭73R	
III9	1121	59♭73	
V9	2142	♭7395	
	6520	3♭795	(D)
VII9	1112	R59♭7	
	3132	953♭7	
	3640	395♭7	(B)
IX9	2133	3♭759	
	1436	R♭739	
	3541	53♭79	
	3141	5R♭79	
	214	♭739	
III9+5	2121	#59♭73	
V9+5	2143	♭739#5	
VII9+5	1212	R#59♭7	
	2121	9#53♭7	
IX9+5	2143	3♭7#59	
I9-5	1232	9♭7♭5R	
III9-5	1232	♭59♭73	
V9-5	2141	♭739♭5	
VII9-5	2123	R♭59♭7	
IX9-5	2123	3♭7♭59	
(see also +11 (9sus+4) chords)			
I7+9	2212	#9♭73R	
III7+9	1221	5#9♭73	

Chord Name	Frets	Tones	Nickname or (Root)
V7+9	1224	5#9♭75	
	3133	♭7#9R5	
	5113	R#9♭75	
	6530	3♭7#95	(D)
VII7+9	1122	R5#9♭7	
IX7+9	2134	3♭75#9	
I7-9	1323	♭9♭73R	
III7-9	2132	5♭9♭73	
V7-9	2132	♭73♭95	
	3540	♭9♭735	(D)
VII7-9	2132	♭953♭7	
IX7-9	2132	3♭75♭9	
	1435	R♭73♭9	
I11 (9sus4)	1222	9♭74R	
IV11 (9sus4)	1122	59♭74	
V11 (9sus4)	1131	♭7495	
VII11 (9sus4)	3142	954♭7	
IX11 (9sus4)	3133	4♭759	
	0335	R♭749	(C)
(see also 7sus4 chords)			
I+11 (9sus+4)	1232	9♭7#4R	
IV+11 (9sus+4)	1123	59♭7#4	
V+11 (9sus+4)	1231	♭7#495	
VII+11 (9sus+4)	2123	R#49♭7	
	2041	95#4♭7	(C)
IX+11 (9sus+4)	4133	#4♭759	
	0345	R♭7#49	(C)
(see also 9-5 and 7sus+4 chords)			
IX13	5420	♭7369	(G)
XIII13	1431	R♭736	
	2124	♭73R6	
	2144	♭7396	
	5411	3♭796	
	431	♭736	
XIII13-9	2134	♭73♭96	
	2431	♭9♭736	
MINOR CHORDS			
Im	1124	R5♭3R	o
	1331	♭3R5R	h
	4124	♭35♭3R	hh
	5631	5♭35R	c
	5205	♭35RR	(D)
	6402	5♭35R	(B)
	124	5♭3R	oj
	631	♭35R	cj
	13	♭3R	ojj
	31	5R	hjj
IIIm	1334	♭3R5♭3	o
	3112	5R5♭3	h
	2351	5♭3R♭3	c
	0056	R55♭3	(C)
	6640	R5R♭3	(F#)
	112	R5♭3	oj
	640	5R♭3	(B, F#)
	12	5♭3	ojj
	51	R♭3	cjj
Vm	1244	5♭3R5	o
	3341	R5♭35	c

Chord Tables

Chord	Frets	Tones	Nick
	6311	♭35R5	cc
	5133	R♭3R5	h
	5730	♭3R35	(D)
	133	♭3R5	oj
	730	R♭35	(G, D)
	41	♭35	cjj
	11	R5	ojj
Im6	2142	♭365R	
IIIm6	3132	5R6♭3	
	4001	6R5♭3	(G)
Vm6	2133	6♭3R5	
	5400	♭36R5	(D)
VIm6	1121	R5♭36	
Im+7	1231	♭375R	
IIIm+7	3152	517♭3	
Vm+7	4133	7♭315	
VIIm+7	1123	R5♭37	
Im7	1131	♭3♭75R	h
	1424	R♭7♭3R	o
	313	♭7♭3R	oj
IIIm7	3142	5R♭7♭3	h
	1134	♭3♭75♭3	o
	6620	R5♭7♭3	(F♯)
	142	R♭7♭3	sj
Vm7	3133	♭7♭3R5	h
	5113	R♭3♭75	hh
	5500	♭3♭7R5	(D)
	113	♭3♭75	aj
VIIm7	1122	R5♭3♭7	h
	3551	♭3R5♭7	c
	6400	5R♭3♭7	(B)
	122	5♭3♭7	hj
	511	R♭3♭7	
Im7-5 (ø7)	1121	♭3♭7♭5R	h
IIIm7-5 (ø7)	2142	♭5R♭7♭3	h

Chord	Frets	Tones	Nick
Vm7-5 (ø7)	3132	♭7♭3R♭5	h
	5112	R♭3♭7♭5	hh
VIIm7-5 (ø7)	2133	♭5R♭3♭7	h
	5400	♭5R♭37	(B)
Im9	2313	9♭7♭3R	
IIIm9	2231	59♭7♭3	
Vm9	3153	♭7♭395	
	5520	♭3♭795	(D)
VIIm9	3122	95♭3♭7	
	1112	R59♭7	
IXm9	1133	♭3♭759	
	1333	♭3R59	
	1426	R♭7♭39	
	3441	5♭3♭79	
	3141	5R♭79	

DIMINISHED CHORDS
(practical summary at end of this section)

Chord	Frets	Tones	Nick
Iо (triad)	1321	♭3R♭5R	h
	2135	R♭5♭3R	o
	135	♭5♭3R	oj
	321	R♭5R	
	510	♭3♭5R	(A)
	21	♭5R	
	13	♭3R	
IIIо (triad)	1324	♭3R♭5♭3	o
	3213	♭5R♭5♭3	h
	1351	♭5♭3R♭3	
	213	R♭5♭3	hjj
	651	♭5R♭3	
	13	♭5♭3	
	51	R♭3	
Vо (triad)	4351	R♭5♭3♭5	c
	1354	♭5♭3R♭5	o
	132	♭3R♭5	hj
	321	♭5R♭5	

Chord	Frets	Tones	Nick
	840	R♭3♭5	(G♯, D♯)
	21	R♭5	
	51	♭3♭5	
Iо7	2132	♭3♭7♭5R	h
	0246	♭♭7♭5♭3R	(D♯)
	3540	♭5♭3♭7R	(A)
	132	♭♭7♭5R	hj
	213	♭♭7♭3R	hjj
	51	♭♭7R	
(or any Iо triad)			
IIIо7	2132	♭5R♭7♭3	h
	0246	R♭7♭5♭3	(C)
	3540	♭♭7♭5R♭3	(F♯)
	132	R♭♭7♭3	hj
	135	♭♭7♭5♭3	oj
	321	♭3♭♭7♭3	
	21	♭♭7♭3	
(or any IIIо triad)			
Vо7	2132	♭♭7♭3R♭5	h
	3540	R♭♭7♭3♭5	(D♯)
	0246	♭3R♭♭7♭5	(A)
	213	♭3♭♭7♭5	hjj
	135	R♭♭7♭5	oj
	13	♭♭7♭5	
(or any Vо triad)			
VIIо7	2132	R♭5♭3♭♭7	h
	3540	♭3R♭5♭♭7	(C)
	0246	♭5♭3R♭♭7	(F♯)
	132	♭5♭3♭♭7	hj
	135	♭3R♭♭7	oj
	213	♭5R♭♭7	hjj
	321	♭♭7♭3♭♭7	
	21	♭3♭♭7	
	13	R♭♭7	
	51	♭5♭♭7	

ALL THE DIMINISHED CHORDS together
(in case you don't care which one you use)

I/III/V/VIIо(7)	2132, 1321, 1324, 1351, 1354, 2135, 3213, 4351
	0246, 3540
	132, 135, 213, 321, 651
	510, 840
	13, 21, 51

AUGMENTED CHORDS
(practical summary at end of this section)

Chord	Frets	Tones	Nick
I+	1234	R♯53R	o
	2341	3R♯5R	c
	5630	♯53♯5R	(A)
	6305	3♯5RR	(D)
	123	♯53R	oj
	630	3♯5R	(D, A)
III+	1234	3R♯53	o
	2341	♯53R3	c
	5630	R♯5R3	(F)
	6305	♯5R33	(B♭)
	123	R♯53	oj
	630	♯5R3	(B♭, F)
V+	1234	♯53R♯5	o
	2341	R♯53♯5	c
	5630	3R3♯5	(D♭)
	6305	R3♯5♯5	(G♭)
	123	3R♯5	oj
	630	R3♯5	(G♭, D♭)

ALL THE AUGMENTED CHORDS together
(in case you don't care which one you use)

I/III/V+	1234, 2341
	5630, 6305
	123
	630

DETAILED EXPLANATION: When I set out to make my own chord sheet for the tenor banjo (tuned CGDA), I first used traditional chord diagrams. (At *www.neckdiagrams. com* I found a good computer program for creating them.) However, I soon discovered that formatting the diagrams on the printed page was a complicated job, and the resulting document was difficult to update when I needed to add new chords. Besides, I had to find a more space-efficient format because I wanted several hundred chords to fit on one double-sided sheet of paper. So I switched to the following text-only system, which has proved quite satisfactory.

As well as the usual **four-note chords**, this list also contains a number of **three-note chords** (sometimes called "junior" or "inside" chords) and **two-note chords**. These are useful when the melody notes are too low to be played on the top strings or when the performer desires a lighter, less dense sound or an easier fingering.

The chords are listed in four columns. The first column gives the **CHORD NAMES** (III7, VIIm7, etc.). These names are composed of two parts:

- a **Roman numeral** (III, VII, etc.), which identifies the **highest note** of the chord (third, seventh, etc.). This is essential for chord-melody playing.
- some **other characters** (7, m7, etc.), which tell you what **type of chord** it is (dominant seventh, minor seventh, etc.). If there are no characters following the Roman numeral, the chord is a simple major triad.

In the second column, the **FRET NUMBERS** are listed, from lowest string to highest:

- Chords in this list which are printed in blue have at least one open string (i.e., a fret number of 0). They are considered **non-movable** because they are normally only playable at the position indicated. For example, it is not very practical to move the chord 6500 (D7) to, say, 7611.
- Nonetheless, many chords listed as non-movable can in fact be moved, particularly to high positions, where the frets are closer together. The aforementioned example of 6500 (D7) is indeed usable in a high position like 14 13 8 8 (B♭7).

- All other chords, printed in black, are **movable**. Although the movable chords listed here are all at the first fret, they can easily be transposed up to any other position on the neck. For example, the 3143 chord (III7) will give you A♭7. You can move it up one fret to 4254 and you will get A7. Continue up another fret to 5365 and you get B♭7. You can transpose it as high as you want; for example, you can move it to 16 14 17 16 to get a high A7 chord.
- All the movable chords can also be moved one fret LOWER, i.e. closer to the nut. Any strings that had been fingered on the first fret will now be open. For example, the aforementioned 3143 A♭7 chord can also be played 2032 to give a G7 chord. Of course, since this lowered version will have at least one open string, it will require a change in fingering.

In the third column, you can find the individual **CHORD TONES**. For example, 5R♭73 means that the fifth of the chord is on the lowest string, the root is on the next string, the minor seventh is on the next and the third is on the top string.

In the fourth column, printed in red, are informal **"NICK-NAMES"** which I use for some of the movable chords ("**III7 h**", "**VIIm7 c**", etc.), based on how far apart the notes are spaced within the chord:

o	"open position" chord: the highest string is fingered on the highest fret of the chord (**I7 o** played 1434)
oo	alternative open chord
h	"half-open position" chord: the four notes are more or less grouped around the same frets (**III7 h** 3143)
hh	alternative half-open chord
c	"close position" chord: the highest string is fingered on the lowest fret of the chord (**VIIm7 c** 3551)
cc	alternative close chord
j	three-note "junior" chord (**III7 hj** 143)
jj	two-note chord

(Junior chords are normally the same as the top three strings of a corresponding four-note chord; in that case, the junior chord uses the same nickname.)

In this column I have also included, in parentheses, the **ROOT NOTES** of all non-movable chords. Two- and three-note non-movable chords have more than one possible root, depending on which strings they are played on.

Within each chord name, the chords are listed in the following order:

- four-note movable chords
- four-note non-movable chords
- three-note movable chords
- three-note non-movable chords
- two-note movable chords
- two-note non-movable chords

This list does not include re-entrant chords (i.e., where the notes do not all go from lowest to highest), chords with unison strings or chords above the ninth fret. (At *http://chordlist.brian-amberg.de/en/tenor-banjo/jazz* you can check out Brian Amberg's incredibly complete list, which seems to include every possible chord.) Nor have I included **fingerings**, as they are usually quite easy to figure out.

Printing: This page is formatted for European "A4" paper (210 × 297 mm). To print it on American "letter" paper (8½ × 11 inches) or any other size, choose "Fit" or "Shrink oversized pages" in Adobe Reader when printing. I recommend printing in color if possible.

This list will probably always be a work in progress. I'll try to keep the **current version** available on-line at *www. dmcclure.org/banjo*. I'd love to hear your comments, corrections and suggestions, especially for good chords I've missed. Write me at *banjo@dmcclure.org* — I look forward to hearing from you!