

Chapter 6: The Hindustan Scale

The Hindustan scale belongs to the group of the hexatonic scales. That is a fancy way of saying that it is a six-note scale.

It's actually a Mixolydian scale minus the sixth note. You can learn more about Mixolydian in the chapter on "Modes." Leaving a note out of a seven-note scale creates a new scale that has a more open feel.

Sometimes, less is more. Guitar players who want to be creative with scales often add notes to scales they already use or know, to add or create new colors or textures to that scale. Meanwhile, many overlook the equally resourceful tactic of leaving out notes in scales. Leaving notes out of an already familiar scale in order to get to a new scale with fewer notes can create equally drastic color changes.

A case in point really is the Hindustan scale. Not only does leaving the sixth note out of the Mixolydian scale create a sound quite different from the Mixolydian sound, it conjures up images of an "exotic" place on earth called... India!

Yes, it's called the Hindustan scale for a reason indeed. One can't help but feel that the scale has a strong Indian vibe and sound.

You see, leaving notes out of scales is fun. 😊

The formula for the Hindustan scale is: **1 2 3 4 5 b7**

As you already know, I'm a big proponent of learning scales one string at a time. It's much easier to see and understand a scale when it's shown on one line. This single-string approach is also the easiest, quickest way to be able to immediately improvise with any new scale. In-position fingerings take much longer to learn because they seem more all over the place and they cover two octaves.

As such, here's the Hindustan scale in the key of C, mapped out on each string.

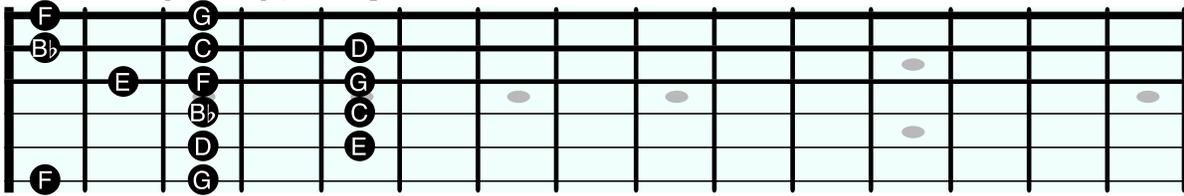
The notes are **C D E F G Bb**. Learning the scale on one string, you'll be able to play this in no time. I of course also teach the in-position fingerings to students who want to learn scales from all over the world or who want to become outstanding improvisers.

The Hindustan Scale

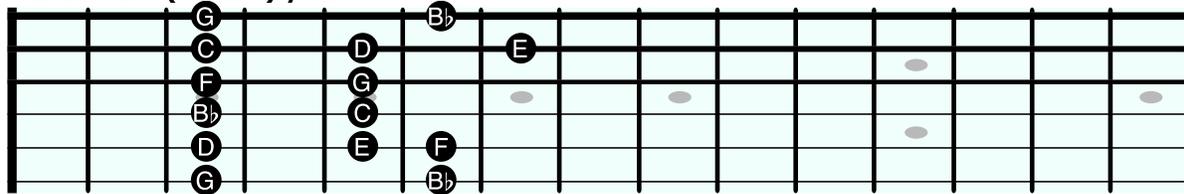
Do	Re	Mi	Fa	Sol	Te	Do
C	D	E	F	G	B\flat	C
1	2	3	4	5	$\flat 7$	1

You can solo with that scale over a C7 groove (or C Mixolydian chord progressions).
 Here are the in-position fingerings:

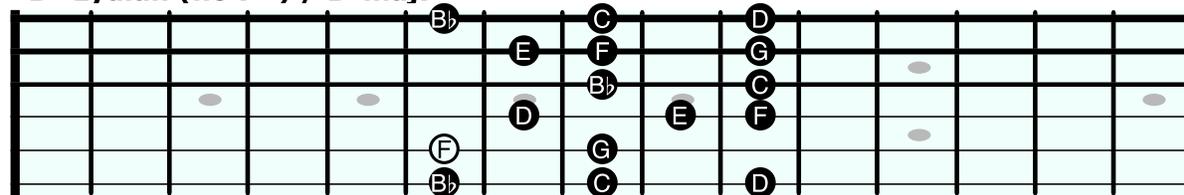
F Ionian (no 3rd) / Fmaj7



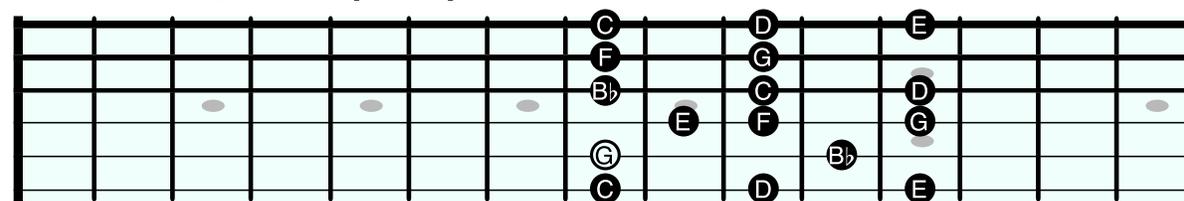
G Dorian (no 9th) / G-7



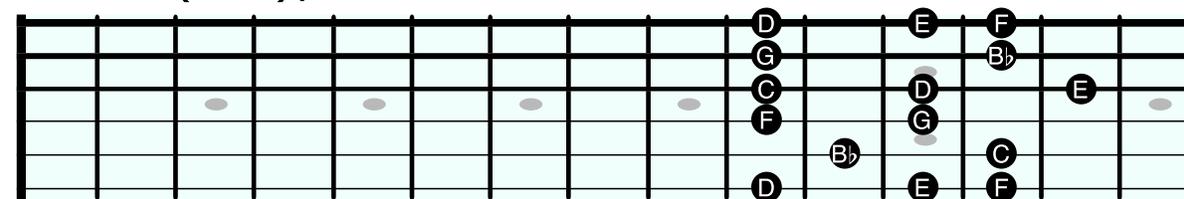
Bb Lydian (no 7th) / Bbmaj7



C Hindustan / C Mixo (no 6th) / C7



D Aeolian (no 5th) / D-7



E Locrian (no 4th) / E-7b5

