

Some variations on 12 bar blues

A quick recap

The 12 bar blues is made up of only 3 chords. These are the I (one) chord, IV (four) chord and the V (five chord), often with a flattened 7th.

12 Bar Blues in the Key of C



The 'quick change'

A common variation on the 12 bar blues, is the 'quick change'. The first 4 bars of a 12 bar blues only focus on the I chord (see above). In a slow blues song, this can drag on a bit. So, a lot of blues musicians make a simple change. Instead of playing the I chord for 4 bars, they go up to the IV chord for the second bar, then return to the I chord. It just helps to break up the first 4 bars of music and make them more interesting. A quick change looks like this in the first 4 bars of a 12 bars blues progression:

The 'Quick Change'

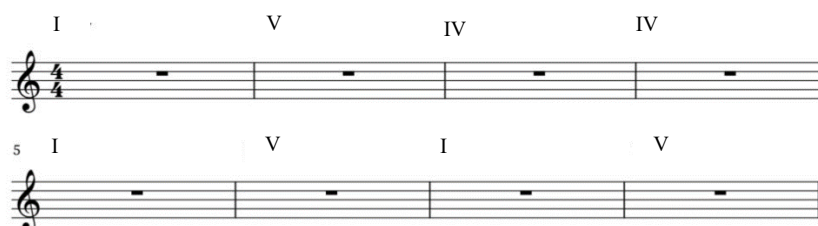


After this, the progression follows the normal 12 bar blues structure. For examples, listen to '[Before You Accuse Me](#)' by Bo Diddley or '[Boot Hill](#)', by Stevie Ray Vaughan.

8 bar blues

This is a common variations on the 12 bar blues. Eight bar blues is a shortened version of 12 bar. There are a few different patterns to play with. Today, let's try....

8 Bar Blues



Key To The Highway Key:A Writer: Big Bill Broonzy/ Chas Segar

--- [D7] ----- [E7]

A |-----|
 E |-----|
 C | -4--3--2--1--|
 G | -5--4--3--2--|

I got the [A] key to the [E7] highway,
 Billed [D] out and bound to [D7] go.
 I'm gonna [A7] leave here running
 [E7] Walking is most too [A] slow [E7]

I got the [A] key to the [E7] highway,
 Billed [D] out and bound to [D7] go.
 I'm gonna [A7] leave here running
 [E7] Walking is most too [A] slow [E7]

I'm going [A] back to the [E7] border
 [D] Woman, where I'm better [D7] known.
 You know you [A7] haven't done nothing
 [E7] Drove a good man away from [A] home [E7]

When the [A] moon peaks over the [E7] mountains
 [D] I'll be on my [D7] way.
 I'm gonna [A7] roam this old highway
 [E7] Until the break of [A] day [E7]
I got the [A] key to the [E7] highway,
Billed [D] out and bound to [D7] go.
I'm gonna [A7] leave here running
[E7] Walking is most too [A] slow [E7]

Oh give me [A] one, one more kiss [E7] darlin'
 [D] Just before I [D7] go,
 'Cause when I [A7] leave this time you [E7] know I
 I won't be back no [A] more [E7]

I got the [A] key to the [E7] highway,
 Billed [D] out and bound to [D7] go.
 I'm gonna [A7] leave here running
 [E7] Walking is most too [A] slow [E7]
I got the [A] key to the [E7] highway,
Billed [D] out and bound to [D7] go.
I'm gonna [A7] leave here running [E7]
Walking is most too [A] slow [E7] [A]

