

Nashville Numbers

or what to do when someone says
 "lets play Margaritaville in Key of C, its a 1, 4, 5"

Do Re Mi_Fa Sol La Ti_Do or the major scales

Do Re Mi_Fa Sol La Ti_Do illustrates the major Scale which most western music is based on. It is a subset of the 12 notes we have. There are seven unique notes in the major scale. "Do" is in there twice because the second Do is an octave higher

The first note is followed by a note that is two notes higher, the next note is two notes higher, the next note is one note higher, the next note is two notes higher, the next note is two notes higher, the next note is two notes higher and then you are back to the first note that is one note higher and is the same note but one octave higher

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do
 2 2 1 2 2 2 1

Count	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Notes	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	
Major Scale	Do		Re		Mi	Fa		Sol		La		Ti	Go back to DO

So the Major scale in the Key of C is: C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C

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All that Nashville numbering System does is give a number to the notes in the Major scale.

Major Scale Key of C							
Note	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
Nashville Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Look at the two chord song, Jambalaya, in key of C

Jambalaya

[C]Goodbye Joe, me gotta go, me oh [G7]my oh Me gotta go pole the pirogue down the [C]bayou
 My Yvonne, the sweetest one, me oh [G7]my oh Son of a gun, we'll have good fun on the [C]bayou

Chorus

[C]Jambalaya, a-crawfish pie and-a fillet [G7]gumbo 'Cause tonight I'm gonna see my machez a[C]mio
 Pick guitar, fill fruit jar and be [G7]gay-oh Son of a gun, we'll have big fun on the [C]bayou.

It could also be written as:

[1]Goodbye Joe, me gotta go, me oh [57]my oh Me gotta go pole the pirogue down the [1]bayou
 My Yvonne, the sweetest one, me oh [57]my oh Son of a gun, we'll have good fun on the [1]bayou

Chorus

[1]Jambalaya, a-crawfish pie and-a fillet [57]gumbo 'Cause tonight I'm gonna see my machez a[1]mio

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or what to do when someone says
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Pick guitar, fill fruit jar and be [57]gay-oh Son of a gun, we'll have big fun on the [1]bayou.

If you know the key of the song, in this case C you replace the number with the appropriate major chord

Name IE: 1 = C 5 = G If the number has a 7s, minors +5, etc qualifer associated with it you play that chord as a 7th, minor, etc.

So Jambalaya is a two chord song consisting of 1 and 57 chords. Knowing this you can play Jambalaya in all 12 keys by playing the 1st and 57th chords of each key.

The 12 keys are as follows:

	Nashville #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Major Key	C Major	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
	D Major	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#
	Db Major	Db	Eb	F	Gb	Ab	Bb	C
	E Major	E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#
	Eb Major	Eb	F	G	Ab	Bb	C	D
	F Major	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E
	G Major	G	A	B	C	D	E	F#
	Gb Major	Gb	Ab	Bb	B	Db	Eb	F
	A Major	A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#
	Ab Major	Ab	Bb	C	Db	Eb	F	G
	B Major	B	C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A#
	Bb Major	Bb	C	D	Eb	F	G	A

A lot of songs written in the western world are based on the 1, 4, 5 chord progression, it is estimated that over 75% are based on that progression, Blues, Folk, Country, etc.

Look at the songs you play and you will begin to see these patterns. It makes it much easier to remember songs, play, transpose and play with others when you understand this concept.

So if I told you we are going to play Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville and I said it was a 1, 4, 5 the verse was a 1, 5 and the chorus was 4, 5, 1, could you play it in your favorite key? Try it!!

Tip - Find the keys you can comfortably sing in an learn those keys.