

How Much Should You Spend on a Ukulele?

Jennifer Hughes

Ukuleles may cost less than six-string guitars in general but spending money on one is still something that shouldn't be taken lightly. Even if you spend just \$30 on a ukulele, it's still money down the drain if the ukulele happens to be poorly made, won't stay in tune and has a dull, weak sound when played.

Ukuleles vary in price depending on brand, tonewood quality, materials, construction and more. "You get what you pay for" doesn't always apply either, because there are ukuleles in a lower price range that may sound as good as those in the upper price tiers. Many of the [best ukulele models](#) don't even cost upwards of \$1000 if sound quality is your priority.

Here's an overview of the general ukulele price ranges to give you an idea of what you can expect from a uke in those tiers.

Premium/Professional: \$1000 and up

If you buy a ukulele at this price range, expect it to have the best quality in terms of craftsmanship and sound. Ukulele models that cost \$1000 and above are usually professional-grade instruments that are made by hand and given a thorough inspection by [skilled luthiers](#). These ukes are made of premium-quality wood and hardware, often have electronics installed and come with a hardshell case.

High-end: \$500 to \$1000

Many high-end uke models are considered workhorse instruments because of their reliability and overall quality. Many professional musicians look for secondary or backup ukuleles in this price range because they sound great and function as they should yet can still be considered affordable by those serious about their craft. If you're looking for performance-level quality, you'll find a lot of ukes here that will fit the bill.

Mid-Level: \$200 to \$500

When you feel it's time to move up and get a better-quality uke, you can find one in this price category. There are a lot of ukes here that can take your playing to the next level - you will be able to appreciate the uke sound more, plus you can also get the benefit of having a uke with a better-quality build and tone. Many ukes in this category feature solid wood tops and electronics. You can still expect a few quality control issues here and there, but nothing a good setup can't fix.

Beginner/Intermediate: \$50 to \$200

A big chunk of the ukulele market is targeted toward beginners and intermediate-level players, which is why you'll find most ukulele models in the mid-level price range. The ukuleles in this category are mostly purely acoustic, which means there are no pickups installed, though you may find a few models that do come equipped with electronics.

Most, if not all of the ukuleles in these price range are factory-made and mass-produced, and some quality control issues are common like sharp frets and rough finishing. Most of the time, however, you won't get these problems if you buy from a trusted brand. Ukulele models in this price tier are great for beginners to start with; models in the upper end of the spectrum tend to have the best quality.

Budget: \$50 and below

Budget ukuleles may often get lumped together with toy-grade ukuleles. These instruments are usually made of laminated wood or plastic and other cheap materials. There are a few good and serviceable entry-level ukuleles in the \$30-\$50 range but go any lower than that and you'll most probably end up with a toy-like instrument that's not recommended for any sort of serious work.

With that said, how much should you spend on your next ukulele? Well, the answer is this: what you consider to be a reasonable price based on your budget and personal preferences. The general advice is to buy the best uke you can afford. It doesn't mean going for the most expensive one in your budget range, but the one that has the features, sound and specs you're actually looking for.

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