

Best Tenor Ukulele

Nothing says summer like the soothing sounds of the ukulele. These instruments have a sweet sound that is evocative of beaches, sun and island paradises. This small member of the guitar family comes from Hawaii, so it's no wonder the ukulele has such a sunny sound.

Tenor ukuleles are larger than concert and soprano ukuleles. This gives them a deeper, fuller sound. It also makes them easier to play for those with larger hands. For these reasons, tenor ukuleles are gaining in popularity.

Another advantage of the tenor ukulele is that the larger neck allows for a greater range of sounds to be played. This has seen the tenor ukulele become used more and more in live performance over recent years.

If you're thinking about buying a ukulele, you want to be sure you're getting the best instrument available. Check out our guide to the best tenor ukuleles below before you make your decision.

Top 5 Tenor Ukuleles 2018

Product Name	Best Feature	Grade
Kala Koa Tenor Gloss Ukulele	Great sound.	A
Lohanu LU-T Tenor Ukulele	Lifetime warranty.	A
Hricane UKS-1	Excellent build quality.	A-
Aklot Solid Mahogany Tenor Ukulele	Electric and acoustic capability.	B
Luna Mahogany Series Tattoo Tenor Ukulele	Unique, beautiful looks.	B

1. Kala Koa Tenor Gloss Ukulele

Kala is one of the most respected names in the ukulele market. When they offer instruments like this, it's easy to see why.

The Kala Koa is a beautiful looking ukulele. Made from koa wood from Hawaii's Big Island, it's as authentic as it is striking. This is a ukulele that will impress right away.

But the Kala Koa is more than just a display piece. The sound produced by this ukulele is bright and clear, with the carefully selected Koa wood adding to the resonant tone of the music. This attractive instrument is equally at home in the studio or on the beach.

The high gloss of the body adds to the appearance of this ukulele. However, it does lead to some smudging. While this is easily wiped away, it can get annoying to have to wipe down the uke constantly.

Also, the Kala Koa is harder to fret than some other ukuleles. For a practiced player, this won't be a problem. But if you're looking for a uke to learn on, this may not be the best option.

Still, the Kala Koa sounds as beautiful as it looks. It earns its place at the top of this list.

Pros:

- Attractive appearance.
- Beautiful sound, with bright, even tones and good resonance.
- Very high-quality construction.

Cons:

- Difficult to fret for beginners.
- High gloss finish smudges easily.

2. Lohanu LU-T Tenor Ukulele

With a body constructed of mahogany and a rosewood fingerboard, the Lohanu LU-T is another attractive looking ukulele. While Canada is not the first country you associate with the ukulele, this Canadian company have nevertheless made a very well-constructed instrument for its price point. In fact, this uke carries an unlimited lifetime warranty.

Unusually, the LU-T has a rounded back, which the manufacturers claim gives it a better sound. There's no denying that this is a great sounding uke. Tones are warm and clear, and the sustain is far better than might be expected for a ukulele of this price.

The Lohanu LU-T comes in a bundle with a soft padded case, a tuner, and a strap. It also includes two picks, a pick holder and a spare set of strings. The instrument comes pre-strung and with the buttons for the strap already attached.

All you need to do with this ukulele is tune it up and start playing. To that end, the manufacturer also offers free video lessons for those learning how to play.

It's clear that this is an instrument aimed at those getting started with the ukulele. But instead of offering a cheap throwaway instrument, Lohanu have taken the trouble to make a uke that they are willing to stand by with a generous warranty. This makes the LU-T great value, and surprisingly good for a starter instrument.

Pros:

- Solid build quality.

- Great sound.
- Comes with a package including case, strap, strings, and tuner.
- Lifetime warranty.

Cons:

- The included tuner is of low quality and difficult to use.

3. Hricane UKS-1

One of the more popular tenor ukuleles out there, the Hricane UKS-1 has a lot to offer. Hricane is a respected company in the ukulele field, and the UKS-1 definitely has the build quality to support that.

The UKS-1 is an attractive instrument, too. The Sapele body nicely compliments the rosewood fingerboard and white strings, and the decorative pattern around the soundhole is a nice touch.

Fortunately, the UKS-1 sounds as good as it looks. The notes are warm and rich, and sustain is impressive. While it might not have the sound quality demanded by professional players, it should be more than adequate for those who just want to play for friends and family, or simply themselves.

All in all, the UKS-1 is a great starter uke that is nevertheless of high enough quality for intermediate players, too. The carry case that is included with the instrument adds even more value to this competitively priced ukulele.

Pros:

- Visually attractive
- Pleasant and melodious sound.
- Great build quality.

Cons:

- Lacks the sound quality needed by professional players.
- No tuner included with purchase.

4. Aklot Solid Mahogany Tenor Ukulele

The rich mahogany of this Aklot ukulele gives it a luxurious look and a warm tone. The look is further accentuated by a unique bridge for the strings that gives the instrument a contemporary edge, as well as decorative detailing around the sound hole.

The Aklot is definitely on the more affordable end of the spectrum when it comes to pricing. So it's almost a surprise to encounter the high build quality and pleasant sound of this offering.

The Aklot comes bundled with an advanced tuner, plus a zippered case, a strap, spare strings, and a cleaning cloth. Nine online lessons are also included. It's clear that this is a ukulele very much designed for the entry-level side of the market.

But this beginner's uke hides a secret. Its 1/4 inch mono jack output and three band preamp give this ukulele the ability to become electric. While the instrument still sounds great as an acoustic, it's cool to have the option to plug in if you want to.

Pros:

- Electrical capability
- Attractive design
- Includes everything a beginner needs to get started

Cons:

- The included soft case doesn't look very durable
- Sound quality is high for this price point, but professionals may need more.

5. Luna Mahogany Series Tattoo Tenor Ukulele

A lot of ukuleles look as well as sound great. But this striking instrument from Luna has a truly unique appearance that ensures it will stand out.

The body of the ukulele is decorated with a traditional Hawaiian tattoo design that's sure to attract attention. For added visual impact, the fret markers are shaped like shark teeth. This ukulele has a modern look that nevertheless recalls the Hawaiian origins of the instrument beautifully.

But how does it sound? Well, the Luna offers a sweet, mellow sound with no annoying buzzing from the strings. The sustain is impressive, too.

To be clear, this is not a ukulele that can compete in sound quality with a concert model. But for a fun and cool-looking uke you can bring to the beach with you, this is a great option.

The Luna doesn't come in a beginner's bundle, but it does arrive pre-stringed. All you need to do is tune it and start playing.

Pros:

- Unique design.
- Affordable when compared to higher-end models.
- A sweet sound that should be good enough for most users.

Cons:

- No added extras, such as a strap or carrying case.

- Expert players will be disappointed by the sound quality.

Factors to Consider Before Buying A Tenor Ukulele

As you can see, there is no end to choices out there when you're looking to buy a ukulele. Tenor ukuleles offer an excellent option for beginners, thanks to their larger size which makes it easier to get your fingering right.

But there's more to choosing a ukulele than just size. Read on for a guide to all the factors you need to consider before you spend your money.

Price

Of course, price is always going to be a significant factor in any purchasing decision. Ukuleles vary widely in price, from beginner models that are more like children's toys all the way up to custom instruments made solely for professionals.

When buying a ukulele, it helps to have a budget in mind. But beware of being too cheap. That \$25 uke might seem like a good deal, but if it's horrible to play, it will only prove to be a waste of money. As a general guide, \$50 and above should be where you start looking.

Type of wood

The kind of wood your ukulele is made out of will have a significant effect on the way it looks. But more than that, different woods vibrate differently, which will affect the sound of your uke.

Spend some time familiarizing yourself with the musical properties of the different woods that are used to manufacture ukuleles. Traditional koa wood gives a balanced tone, for instance, while spruce gives bright, loud sounds. Cedar, on the other hand, gives a much more mellow tone to notes.

Don't be afraid to try a few different instruments so that you can learn to appreciate these differences in sound.

Electric or Acoustic

Part of the appeal of the ukulele is its portability. Even larger tenor ukuleles are easy to carry and make a great musical companion for a trip to the beach or the park. The acoustic nature of the ukulele has always been part of its charm.

But if you intend to perform with your instrument, you might want to consider a ukulele that can be plugged into an amp. Generally, electric ukuleles can also be played acoustically, offering the best of both worlds. However, the construction of these ukuleles means that they won't compare acoustically to the very best acoustic-only instruments. It all depends on what you intend to do with the ukulele you buy.

Added extras

Many ukuleles, aiming squarely for the beginner market, come as part of kits, with extras like carrying cases and tuners. These can be handy if you want to get started right away. They may cost a little more, but you'll have everything you need to get started right away.

If you choose not to purchase a kit, be aware that you'll have to buy what you need separately. If you're starting out on the uke, a tuner is a must-have. So be prepared to spend some extra cash on the things you need.

Our Final Take

Learning to play an instrument comes with all sorts of added benefits, such as stress relief and improved brain function. And there are few sounds in the world more soothing than the mellow strains of a ukulele drifting on a warm breeze.

Tenor ukuleles offer a great way to get started with this popular and versatile instrument. But when taking up a new hobby, it's essential to start with the right equipment. Otherwise, you risk getting frustrated and discouraged before you even get started.

Buying a tenor ukulele doesn't have to break the bank. There are options to suit all budgets, and instruments to fit all tastes. Just be sure to keep in mind the factors listed above as you browse for your first, or your next, ukulele.

A ukulele can turn even the dreariest winter's day into summer. Happy playing!