

ROOTS OF ROCK

FROM THE BLUES TO TODAY

12 CHAPTERS · 13 PLAYLISTS · 450 RECORDINGS

A HISTORY AND LISTENING GUIDE BY JIM LITTLE

HOW THIS STARTED



It started in Chicago, with two nights at the Chicago Theatre (October 23 and 24, 2026) watching the Tedeschi Trucks Band. Their sets mixed their own songs, like "Midnight in Harlem," with songs reaching back decades: Louis Jordan's "Let the Good Times Roll," "Got My Mojo Working" and a run of Derek and the Dominos. Back home, I watched The Blues Brothers again, where Jake and Elwood share the screen with Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, James Brown, Cab Calloway and John Lee Hooker. It got me thinking: I wanted to take a deep dive into the evolution of the music I love. So, follow it backward and you land in the Mississippi Delta, among field hollers and spirituals. Follow it forward and it leads right back to that Chicago stage.

WHAT WE BUILT

- **This guide:** 12 chapters tracing rock's family tree from West African roots to blues rock today, a map of where it happened, the clubs and studios, sections on women in the blues, the gear and song family trees, and artist and song indexes.
- **13 Spotify playlists:** one per chapter, 367 tracks in all, plus Playlist 13, which plays the song family trees: 450 different recordings across the 13 playlists, original recordings wherever possible. Every song title in this guide opens its track.
- **A song list sheet:** every track with its year, why it matters and its Spotify link.

WHY

Learning, and learning by listening. Each chapter tells the story, then hands you the records. Play an original next to the version it inspired and you hear the history instead of just reading it. Chapter 12 closes the loop with the film that sent us looking.

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Scan the code to open the website. Every song in this guide plays right in the page, and each chapter opens with a code like this one.

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Rock and roll did not appear out of nowhere in 1954. It is the grandchild of the blues, and the blues grew from West African musical traditions carried to America by enslaved people. Gospel, jazz, country and rhythm and blues all fed into it along the way. This guide follows that family tree across 12 chapters, from field hollers recorded in Mississippi prisons to the blues rock bands filling arenas today.

How to use this guide

Each chapter has a matching Spotify playlist, named "Roots of Rock 01" through "Roots of Rock 12" so they sort in order. Every chapter follows the same pattern:

- **The story:** what happened, where, and why it mattered
- **The playlists:** every song on the chapter's playlist, in order, all hyperlinked directly to Spotify
- ★ **The essentials:** the starred songs are the ones to play in class, with **what to listen for** on every track
- **Key takeaways:** three points to remember

The playlists use original recordings wherever possible, so some early tracks sound rough. That is part of the lesson: these were often made on portable equipment in prisons, hotel rooms and makeshift studios.

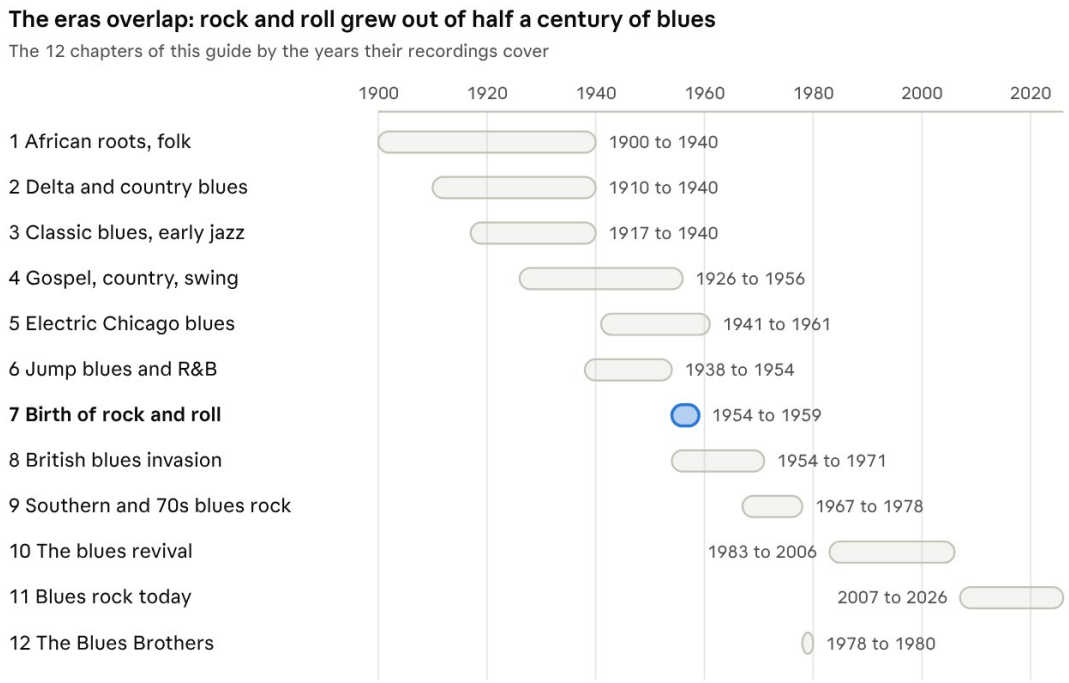
Six ideas that run through the whole story

1. **Call and response.** A leader sings a line and a group answers. It started in West African music and work songs. You can hear it in gospel choirs, in a blues singer answering their own guitar, and in a rock band's singer trading lines with the lead guitar.
2. **Blue notes and bent strings.** Blues singers slide between the notes of the Western scale. Guitarists copied that by bending strings and using slides. That sound is the core of rock guitar.
3. **The 12-bar blues.** A simple three-chord pattern repeated over 12 measures. It became the backbone of early rock and roll, from "Johnny B. Goode" to "Rock Around the Clock."
4. **The music moved with the people.** The Great Migration took millions of Black Southerners to Chicago, Detroit and other cities. The blues went with them and plugged into amplifiers.
5. **Crossing over.** Again and again, white artists recorded Black music and reached a wider audience, from Elvis to the Rolling Stones. Those covers sent listeners back to

the originals, and that tension of influence, credit and money runs through every chapter.

6. **Women in the blues.** Women made the first blues records, and from Bessie Smith to Susan Tedeschi they have shaped the music as singers, songwriters and guitarists, often with less credit and less pay than the men who covered their songs. The Women in the Blues section tells that story.

The eras at a glance



The 12 eras of this guide, 1900 to today

The eras overlap rather than replace each other. Rock and roll (Chapter 7) arrived only after the blues, gospel, jazz and R&B had been developing side by side for decades. Chapter 1's traditions are far older than 1900; the bar shows when they were recorded.

Map of the Blues: Where It Happened

The music in this guide was made in particular places, and most of it moved up the Mississippi River, along the highways and railroads, and across the Atlantic. This map follows it, roughly in the order the story reaches each place. Every place has at least one song in the playlists.

THE SOUTH

Place	Years	What happened there	Hear it
New Orleans, Louisiana	1817 on	Congo Square; Storyville and the birth of jazz; Cosimo Matassa's studio and the New Orleans backbeat; Mardi Gras Indians, brass bands and funk; Tipitina's (1977), named for Professor Longhair's song, and the Maple Leaf keep it going	"The Fat Man," "Tipitina," "Cissy Strut"
Mississippi Delta: Dockery Plantation and Clarksdale	1910s on	Charley Patton's home base; Highway 61 and the crossroads legend; today the Ground Zero club	"Pony Blues," "Cross Road Blues," "Fresh Out"
North Mississippi hill country	1950s on	Fife and drum bands and one-chord trance blues; the Fat Possum label; the root of the Black Keys	"Shimmy She Wobble," "Old Black Mattie"
Helena, Arkansas	1941 on	KFFA's *King Biscuit Time*, with Sonny Boy Williamson II and Robert Lockwood Jr., first aired on November 21, 1941	"Don't Start Me Talkin'"
Memphis, Tennessee	1920s on	Jug bands; Beale Street; WDIA radio; Sun Records; Stax	"Stealin', Stealin'," "Rocket 88," "Green Onions"
Muscle Shoals and Sheffield, Alabama	1959 on	FAME Studios and Muscle Shoals Sound: the Swampers behind Aretha, Pickett and the Stones	"I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)," "Brown Sugar"

Place	Years	What happened there	Hear it
Nashville, Tennessee	1940s on	WLAC's 50,000-watt late-night R&B shows reached across the South and beyond; the Excello label released Louisiana swamp blues	"I'm a King Bee"
South Louisiana	1950s on	Swamp blues cut by J.D. Miller in Crowley; Clifton Chenier's zydeco	"Rooster Blues," "Ay-Tete Fee"
Atlanta and the Carolinas	1920s on	Piedmont blues: ragtime-style fingerpicking and 12-string guitar	"Statesboro Blues," "John Henry"
Dallas, Texas (Deep Ellum)	1910s on	Blind Lemon Jefferson and Lead Belly played the streets	"Matchbox Blues"
Houston, Texas	1940s on	Lightnin' Hopkins; Don Robey's Duke and Peacock labels	"Mojo Hand," "Hound Dog"
Austin, Texas	1975 on	Antone's club, home base for Stevie Ray Vaughan and the Fabulous Thunderbirds	"Pride and Joy," "Tuff Enuff"
Macon, Georgia, and Jacksonville, Florida	1969 on	Capricorn Records and the Allman Brothers Band; Lynyrd Skynyrd; Derek Trucks's hometown	"Statesboro Blues (Live at Fillmore East)," "Free Bird"

NORTH, WEST AND EAST

Place	Years	What happened there	Hear it
Chicago, Illinois	1920s on	The Great Migration's main destination: Maxwell Street, Chess Records, the South and West Side clubs, Alligator Records	"Hoochie Coochie Man," "Juke," "Destination"
Detroit, Michigan	1940s on	John Lee Hooker on Hastings Street; Motown; later the White Stripes	"Boogie Chillen'," "Death Letter"
St. Louis, Missouri	1910s on	W.C. Handy's most famous song; Chuck Berry and pianist Johnnie Johnson; Ike Turner's band across the river in East St. Louis	"St. Louis Blues," "Maybellene"

Place	Years	What happened there	Hear it
Kansas City, Missouri	1930s	The 18th and Vine district: Count Basie and the blues shouters	"One O'Clock Jump," "Roll 'Em Pete"
Cleveland and Akron, Ohio	1950s on	Alan Freed named rock and roll on Cleveland radio; the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; the Black Keys from Akron	"Lonely Boy"
New York City	1920 on	Mamie Smith recorded "Crazy Blues" there; Harlem's Apollo; Atlantic Records; the Greenwich Village folk blues revival; Hendrix at Cafe Wha? and Electric Lady Studios; the Fillmore East and the Beacon Theatre	"Crazy Blues," "One Mint Julep," "Cult of Personality"
Los Angeles, California	1940s on	Central Avenue clubs; T-Bone Walker; the Specialty, Modern and Aladdin labels	"Driftin' Blues," "Call It Stormy Monday (But Tuesday Is Just as Bad)"
San Francisco, California	1960s	The Fillmore; Janis Joplin with Big Brother; Santana	"Ball and Chain," "Black Magic Woman / Gypsy Queen"
Seattle, Washington	1942 on	Jimi Hendrix's hometown	"Voodoo Child (Slight Return)"

ABROAD

Place	Years	What happened there	Hear it
West Africa: Mali and the Sahara	Centuries old	Griot traditions and the desert blues of Ali Farka Touré and Tinariwen, which closes the circle back to Chapter 1	"Diaraby," "Cler Achel"
London and Manchester, England	1950s on	Skiffle; the American Folk Blues Festival tours; the Ealing Club and the Marquee	"Little Red Rooster," "Hideaway"
Newcastle, Belfast and Cork	1960s and 1970s	The Animals, Van Morrison's Them and Rory Gallagher	"The House of the Rising Sun," "Gloria," "Bullfrog Blues (Live)"

Place	Years	What happened there	Hear it
Paris and continental Europe	1950s on	Big Bill Broonzy toured Europe from 1951; Memphis Slim moved to Paris in 1962 and Champion Jack Dupree also settled in Europe; German promoters ran the Folk Blues Festival	"Key to the Highway," "Mother Earth"
Canada	1960s on	The Band, who started out backing rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins; Toronto's Jeff Healey	"The Weight," "See the Light"
Australia	1970s on	AC/DC's blues-based hard rock	"The Jack"
Iceland	2010s	Kaleo's gospel and Delta blues sound	"Way Down We Go"

Clubs, Studios and Stages

The map shows the cities; these are the rooms. Some are gone, some are museums, and a few are still open, so you can stand where it happened.

WHERE IT STARTED

Place	City	Years	Why it matters
Congo Square	New Orleans	1817 to the 1850s	Sunday gatherings of enslaved Africans: the drums, dances and call and response at the root of everything here
Second lines and the Mardi Gras Indians	New Orleans	Late 1800s on	Neighborhood social aid and pleasure clubs parade behind brass bands, and the "second line" of dancers follows; the Black Mardi Gras Indians' chants became R&B in "Jock-A-Mo" and "Big Chief"
Dockery Plantation	Near Cleveland, Mississippi	1900s to 1930s	Charley Patton's home base; Howlin' Wolf and Pops Staples heard him there
Parchman Farm (Mississippi State Penitentiary)	Parchman, Mississippi	1901 on	The prison farm where John and Alan Lomax recorded work songs from 1933; "Rosie" (Chapter 1) was sung there, and Bukka White, who served time there, recorded "Parchman Farm Blues"
Juke joints	Across the rural South	1900s on	Small country dance halls where the Delta blues was played for dancing on weekends
The Crossroads	Clarksdale, Mississippi	1930s legend	Highways 61 and 49, marked today by a sign of crossed guitars; the legend of Robert Johnson selling his soul grew up around "Cross Road Blues"
Maxwell Street	Chicago	1910s to 1990s	An open-air market where newcomers from the South played for tips on Sundays; John Lee Hooker plays there in *The Blues Brothers*

WHERE THE RECORDS WERE MADE

Studio	City	Years	Why it matters
J&M Recording Studio (Cosimo Matassa)	New Orleans	1945 on	Fats Domino, Lloyd Price and Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti"; a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame landmark
Sun Studio	Memphis	1950 on	Sam Phillips recorded "Rocket 88," Howlin' Wolf, B.B. King and Elvis Presley; open for tours today
Vee-Jay Records	Chicago (founded in Gary, Indiana)	1953 to 1966	Founded by Vivian Carter and James Bracken, one of the biggest Black-owned labels of its day: Jimmy Reed's "Baby What You Want Me to Do" and John Lee Hooker's "Boom Boom"
Chess Records, 2120 South Michigan Avenue	Chicago	1957 to 1967 at this address	Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, Chuck Berry; the Rolling Stones recorded there in 1964 and named an instrumental after the address
Stax Records	Memphis	1960 on	Booker T. & the M.G.'s, Otis Redding and Albert King; rebuilt as the Stax Museum of American Soul Music
FAME Studios	Muscle Shoals, Alabama	1959 on	Wilson Pickett, Etta James and Aretha Franklin's breakthrough
Muscle Shoals Sound Studio	Sheffield, Alabama	1969 on	The Swampers' own studio: the Rolling Stones, the Staple Singers, Paul Simon and Bob Seger
Electric Lady Studios	New York	1970 on	Built by Jimi Hendrix in Greenwich Village; still in use
Alligator Records	Chicago	1971 on	Bruce Iglauer started it to record Hound Dog Taylor ("Give Me Back My Wig"); later Koko Taylor, Albert Collins and Toronzo Cannon ("The Chicago Way")

THEATERS AND CLUBS, 1920S TO 1960S

Venue	City	Years	Why it matters
Howard Theatre	Washington, D.C.	1910 on	The oldest of the big Chitlin' Circuit theaters
Regal Theater	Chicago	1928 to 1968	Where B.B. King recorded *Live at the Regal* in 1964 ("Every Day I Have the Blues")
Apollo Theater	Harlem, New York	1934 on (as a Black venue)	Amateur Night launched careers; every R&B and soul star played there
Beale Street	Memphis	1900s on	The street of clubs where W.C. Handy worked and B.B. King got his name as the "Beale Street Blues Boy"
Dew Drop Inn	New Orleans	1939 on	The city's top Black nightclub and hotel; Little Richard, Ray Charles and Guitar Slim played there
Louisiana Hayride	Shreveport, Louisiana	1948 to 1960	KWKH radio's Saturday night show at the Municipal Auditorium; Elvis Presley first appeared on October 16, 1954, three months after "That's All Right"
Theresa's Lounge	Chicago	1949 to 1986	A small South Side bar on Indiana Avenue where Junior Wells and Buddy Guy were the house band; Joanna Connor named her album *4801 South Indiana Avenue* for it ("Destination")
The Ealing Club and the Marquee	London	1962	Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated jam nights; the Rolling Stones played their first show at the Marquee on July 12, 1962
Crawdaddy Club	Richmond, near London	1963	The Rolling Stones' first residency, then the Yardbirds with Eric Clapton ("I'm a Man")
Cafe Wha?	Greenwich Village, New York	1966	Jimi Hendrix played there as Jimmy James before he left for London

THE 1960S AND 1970S

Venue	City	Years	Why it matters
Newport Folk Festival	Newport, Rhode Island	1959 on	The 1960s rediscoveries and Dylan's electric set (Chapter 2)
Preservation Hall	New Orleans	1961 on	A small French Quarter hall opened to keep traditional New Orleans jazz alive, played by the older musicians who made it
Kingston Mines	Chicago	1968 on	Billed as Chicago's oldest continuously operating blues club; bands alternate on two stages late into the night
Fillmore West and Fillmore East	San Francisco and New York	1968 to 1971	Bill Graham's rock halls; the Allman Brothers recorded *At Fillmore East* in March 1971
New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival	New Orleans	1970 on	"Jazz Fest" began beside Congo Square and now puts blues, gospel, zydeco, brass bands and Mardi Gras Indians on the same grounds every spring
Checkerboard Lounge	Chicago	1972 on	Co-owned by Buddy Guy; Muddy Waters and the Rolling Stones jammed there in 1981
Antone's	Austin, Texas	1975 on	Clifford Antone's "Home of the Blues" opened with Clifton Chenier; home base for Stevie Ray Vaughan and the Fabulous Thunderbirds
Tipitina's	New Orleans	1977 on	Named for Professor Longhair's song; he played there until his death in 1980
B.L.U.E.S.	Chicago	1979 on	A narrow North Side club on Halsted Street that brought South Side players to new crowds

TODAY

Venue	City	Opened	Why it matters
Maple Leaf Bar	New Orleans	1974	Rebirth Brass Band ("Do Whatcha Wanna") has played its Tuesday night residency there for decades
Frenchmen Street	New Orleans	1980s on	A few blocks of small clubs, from Snug Harbor to the Spotted Cat, where locals go to hear jazz and brass bands
Chicago Blues Festival	Chicago	1984 on	Started the year after Muddy Waters died; the largest free blues festival in the world
Beacon Theatre	New York	Allman Brothers from 1989; Tedeschi Trucks Band from 2011	The Allmans' March runs became a New York tradition, and the Tedeschi Trucks Band carried it on, passing 60 Beacon shows in 2025
Buddy Guy's Legends	Chicago	1989	Buddy Guy's own club, where he still plays every January
House of Blues	Started in Cambridge, Massachusetts	1992	Founded by Isaac Tigrett with help from Dan Aykroyd, a link back to *The Blues Brothers*
Ground Zero Blues Club	Clarksdale, Mississippi	2001	Co-owned by actor Morgan Freeman, near the crossroads of Highways 61 and 49
Chicago Theatre	Chicago	1921	Where this guide began: two Tedeschi Trucks Band nights in October 2026

Chapter 1: African Roots and Early Folk Traditions



Day laborers picking cotton near Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1939. Photo: Marion Post Wolcott, FSA, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 1 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1600s to early 1900s (recorded 1909 to 1960s) · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 01: African Roots and Early Folk Traditions

The blues began as a blend of West African musical habits and life in the American South: field hollers, work songs and spirituals sung by enslaved people and their descendants.

THE STORY

West African music shaped what came later in specific ways: call and response, rhythms layered over each other, a voice that slides and bends, and instruments like the banjo, descended from West African lutes. Under slavery, drums were often banned, so rhythm moved into voices, hand claps and work tools.

After emancipation, these traditions lived on in three main forms. **Field hollers** were solo cries sung while working alone. **Work songs** kept a crew's axes or hammers in time, with a leader calling and the group answering. **Spirituals** set Bible stories to these melodies and became the first Black music to reach a national audience, through touring groups like the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

By the 1890s, traveling "songsters" like Henry Thomas and Lead Belly played everything: ballads, dance tunes, rags and early blues. Much of this music survives only because folklorists John and Alan Lomax hauled recording machines into Southern prisons and farms in the 1930s to 1950s. Prisons kept old traditions alive because the work, and the songs that paced it, had changed little since slavery.

Congo Square, New Orleans. The most direct link between African music and American music is a patch of ground in New Orleans. Under French and Spanish rule, enslaved Africans usually had Sundays off, and from 1817 the city limited their gatherings to an open field at the edge of town, Congo Square. On Sunday afternoons crowds gathered there to trade, sing and dance the bamboula and the calinda to drums, gourds, banjo-like instruments and fiddles. The gatherings faded before the Civil War, but their rhythms survive in New Orleans second-line parades, jazz funerals and the Mardi Gras Indians. The square is now part of Louis Armstrong Park.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

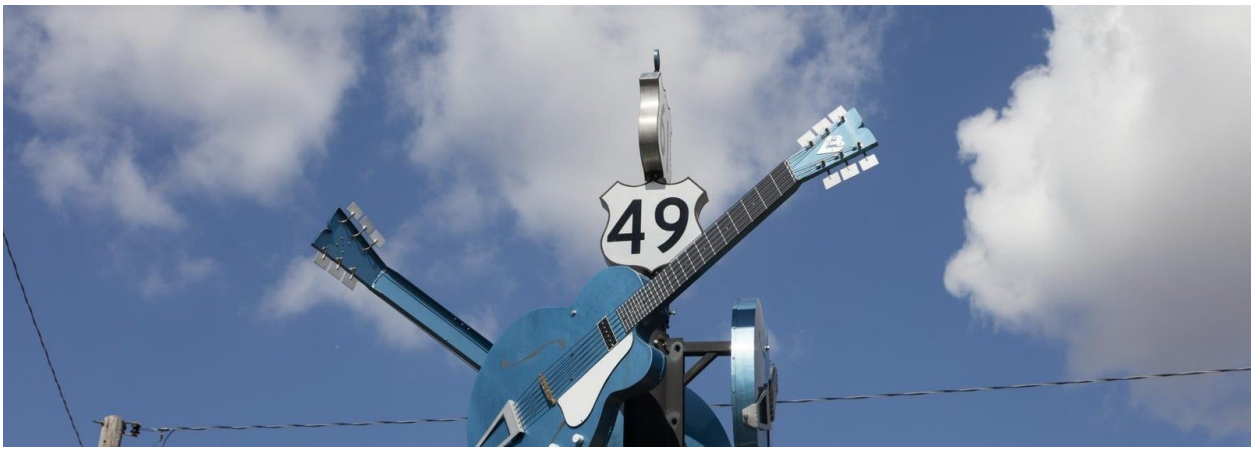
#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	★ Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	Fisk Jubilee Singers	1909	A spiritual in concert harmony, one of the oldest recordings here
2	★ Bull Doze Blues	Henry Thomas	1928	Panpipes, an African-rooted instrument, on a blues record
3	Spike Driver Blues	Mississippi John Hurt	1928	Songster take on the John Henry legend, a work-song hero
4	Kassie Jones	Furry Lewis	1928	Ballad tradition (Casey Jones) told from the Black songster perspective
5	★ Black Betty	James "Iron Head" Baker	1933	Work song rhythm built for swinging an axe; later a rock hit for Ram Jam
6	The Midnight Special	Lead Belly	1948	The great songster; this prison song traveled to Creedence and beyond (from his 1948 Last Sessions)
7	Trouble So Hard	Vera Hall	1937	Lomax field recording of a spiritual; Moby sampled it in Natural Blues, the next track
8	Natural Blues	Moby	1999	Vera Hall's 1937 voice, sampled into a worldwide electronic hit: the field recording on dance floors

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
9	★ Arwhoolie (Cornfield Holler)	Thomas J. Marshall	1939	A field holler: one voice, no instruments, sliding notes
10	Rosie	C.B. Cook and prisoners at Parchman Farm	1947	Group work song: leader and chorus keep time to the labor, pure call and response
11	Freight Train	Elizabeth Cotten	1958	Written around 1906; shows the pre-blues folk fingerpicking tradition
12	John Henry	Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee	1958	Harmonica whoops and guitar on the work-song hero from "Spike Driver Blues"; this duo carried Piedmont blues into the folk revival
13	★ Ain't No More Cane on the Brazos	Ernest "Mexico" Williams and group	1933	Leader and chorus in time with the work; later covered by The Band
14	Prisoner's Talking Blues	Robert Pete Williams	1959	Recorded at Angola prison; free-form, deeply personal blues close to the holler tradition
15	Write Me a Few of Your Lines	Mississippi Fred McDowell	1959	Hill country slide guitar recorded by Alan Lomax; taught Bonnie Raitt and inspired the Stones' "You Gotta Move"
16	★ Diaraby	Ali Farka Touré with Ry Cooder	1994	Modern Malian music that sounds strikingly like Mississippi blues
17	Shimmy She Wobble	Othar Turner and the Rising Star Fife and Drum Band	1998	Mississippi fife and drum music: a living link to African drum ensembles

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The blues has deep West African roots: call and response, bent notes and layered rhythm.
- Work songs and spirituals were the first places those roots took American form.
- Field recordings by the Lomaxes preserved music that would otherwise be lost.

Chapter 2: Delta and Country Blues



The Crossroads sign, Clarksdale, Mississippi. Photo: Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 2 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: about 1900 to 1940 · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 02: Delta and Country Blues

In the Mississippi Delta, a flat cotton region between Memphis and Vicksburg, the blues took the form that rock musicians would study most closely: one person, one acoustic guitar, and a raw, personal voice.

THE STORY

The Delta was a world of sharecropping, poverty and Jim Crow laws. On weekends, musicians played juke joints and house parties for dancing. Charley Patton, based at Dockery Plantation, became the region's first star around 1910 to 1930. His pounding rhythms and rough voice influenced almost everyone who followed, including Son House and Howlin' Wolf.

Record companies discovered in the 1920s that Black audiences would buy blues records. Scouts recorded hundreds of country blues players, from Blind Lemon Jefferson in Texas to Blind Willie McTell in Georgia. Each region had its own sound: Delta players were intense and rhythmic, while East Coast "Piedmont" players like Blind Blake used lighter, ragtime fingerpicking.

Robert Johnson recorded just 29 songs in 1936 and 1937 and died in 1938 at age 27. A legend grew that he sold his soul to the devil at a crossroads for his skill. His records sold poorly in his lifetime. But when they were reissued in 1961 as *King of the Delta Blues Singers*, they became a bible for Eric Clapton, Keith Richards and a generation of British players.

A second life: the 1960s rediscoveries. By the early 1960s, young record collectors went looking for the people behind the old 78s. In 1963, Tom Hoskins followed a clue on a 1928 Mississippi John Hurt record to Avalon, Mississippi, and found Hurt still playing; he was on stage at the Newport Folk Festival that summer. In June 1964, Dick Waterman, Phil Spiro and Nick Perls found Son House living in Rochester, New York, and John Fahey and two friends found Skip James in a hospital in Tunica, Mississippi. That July, James opened his Newport set with "Devil Got My Woman" for a crowd of about 15,000.

Newport became the place where old blues met young rock. On July 25, 1965, Bob Dylan played an electric set there backed by members of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, drawing boos from part of the crowd. The rediscovered players spent their last years on college and festival stages, and their old songs became raw material for rock: Cream recorded a Skip James song, and the White Stripes' "Death Letter" is a Son House song.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	★ Matchbox Blues	Blind Lemon Jefferson	1927	Texas blues; later recorded by Carl Perkins and The Beatles
2	Canned Heat Blues	Tommy Johnson	1928	Source of the crossroads legend and of the band name Canned Heat
3	See That My Grave Is Kept Clean	Blind Lemon Jefferson	1928	Covered by Bob Dylan on his first album
4	Statesboro Blues	Blind Willie McTell	1928	Georgia 12-string blues; became an Allman Brothers signature
5	Stealin', Stealin'	Memphis Jug Band	1928	A jug band at full strength: harmonica, kazoo, jug and guitars; the Memphis street sound of the 1920s
6	★ Pony Blues	Charley Patton	1929	Guitar played like a drum; the Delta sound at its source
7	High Water Everywhere, Pt. 1	Charley Patton	1929	Blues as news: the 1927 Mississippi flood

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
8	Diddie Wa Diddie	Blind Blake	1929	Ragtime-style Piedmont fingerpicking, a different branch of the tree
9	★ When the Levee Breaks	Kansas Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie	1929	A flood song Led Zeppelin turned into an epic in 1971
10	That's No Way to Get Along	Robert Wilkins	1929	Recast as "Prodigal Son" by the Rolling Stones
11	Future Blues	Willie Brown	1930	Patton's partner and Robert Johnson's mentor, name-checked in "Cross Road Blues"
12	★ Preachin' the Blues, Pt. 1	Son House	1930	Slide guitar and a preacher's fervor
13	Sitting on Top of the World	Mississippi Sheiks	1930	String band blues; covered by Howlin' Wolf, Cream and the Grateful Dead
14	Devil Got My Woman	Skip James	1931	Eerie falsetto and open D minor tuning from Bentonia, Mississippi
15	★ Old Original Kokomo Blues	Kokomo Arnold	1934	Compare with Sweet Home Chicago: Johnson reshaped it
16	Someday Baby Blues	Sleepy John Estes	1935	Tennessee blues; its melody lives on in "Trouble No More" and Allman Brothers versions
17	Baby Please Don't Go	Big Joe Williams	1935	A standard covered by Them, AC/DC and many more
18	★ Cross Road Blues	Robert Johnson	1936	The most famous blues recording; became Cream's "Crossroads"
19	★ Sweet Home Chicago	Robert Johnson	1936	Points north, where the blues was headed
20	Hellhound on My Trail	Robert Johnson	1937	Haunted, sophisticated guitar and lyric; peak of the Delta style

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
21	Parchman Farm Blues	Bukka White	1940	Slide blues from inside the prison system; cousin of B.B. King

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Delta blues was dance music for juke joints, not just sad songs.
- Each region had its own style, but the Delta's raw sound most shaped rock.
- Robert Johnson's reissued records in 1961 became the textbook for 1960s rock guitarists.

Chapter 3: Classic Blues and Early Jazz



A movie house entrance on Beale Street, Memphis, 1939. Photo: Marion Post Wolcott, FSA, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 3 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1917 to 1940 · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 03: Classic Blues and Early Jazz

The first blues hits on record were not by Delta guitarists but by women singers backed by jazz bands, and their success created the record business for Black music.

THE STORY

In 1920, Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues" sold hundreds of thousands of copies, mostly to Black buyers. Record labels rushed to sign blues singers and created a category called "race records." The stars of this "classic blues" era were women from vaudeville and tent shows: Ma Rainey, the "Mother of the Blues," and her protégée Bessie Smith, the "Empress of the Blues," the best-selling Black artist of the 1920s.

Jazz grew up alongside the blues in New Orleans and moved north to Chicago and New York. Louis Armstrong turned the improvised solo into an art form, and nearly every rock guitar solo descends from that idea. Big bands like Count Basie's built whole arrangements on short repeated blues phrases called riffs, the same tool rock bands later used.

Meanwhile, piano players in barrelhouses and rent parties developed boogie-woogie: a rolling, eight-to-the-bar left-hand pattern. Pine Top Smith's 1928 record gave the style its name. That driving rhythm is the direct ancestor of rock and roll piano and of Chuck Berry's guitar.

New Orleans: Storyville and the birth of jazz. Jazz grew up in New Orleans, where African rhythms from Congo Square met brass bands, Caribbean music, the blues and ragtime. From 1897 to 1917 the city's legal red-light district, Storyville, gave musicians steady work in its

dance halls and parlors; Jelly Roll Morton played piano there. When the Navy forced the district to close in 1917, many players headed north. King Oliver went to Chicago, and in 1922 he sent for a young Louis Armstrong. Their Creole Jazz Band's "Dipper Mouth Blues" (1923) is in this chapter's playlist, and Armstrong's "West End Blues" (1928) shows how far one New Orleans trumpet player carried the blues.

Jazz crosses the ocean. American records reached Europe fast, and in Paris a Romani guitarist named Django Reinhardt built a new style on them. In 1928 a fire in his caravan badly burned his left hand, leaving two fingers he could barely use, so he taught himself to play fast single-note lines with the other two. With violinist Stéphane Grappelli he formed the Quintette du Hot Club de France in 1934, an all-string band with no horns or drums, and their "Minor Swing" (1937) is still the tune every Gypsy jazz player learns first. He showed that the guitar could carry the lead in a band, and his story later inspired Black Sabbath's Tony Iommi to keep playing after a factory accident took the tips of two of his fingers.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	Livery Stable Blues	Original Dixieland Jass Band	1917	The first jazz record ever issued
2	★ Crazy Blues	Mamie Smith	1920	The record that started the blues record industry
3	St. Louis Blues	W.C. Handy's Memphis Blues Band	1922	The "Father of the Blues" leads his own band on the song he wrote and published in 1914
4	Dipper Mouth Blues	King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band	1923	New Orleans jazz with a young Louis Armstrong on cornet
5	Downhearted Blues	Bessie Smith	1923	Debut of the Empress of the Blues; sold hundreds of thousands of copies
6	★ See See Rider Blues	Ma Rainey	1924	Became a rock and roll hit 40 years later
7	Wild Women Don't Have the Blues	Ida Cox	1924	An early declaration of independence in song

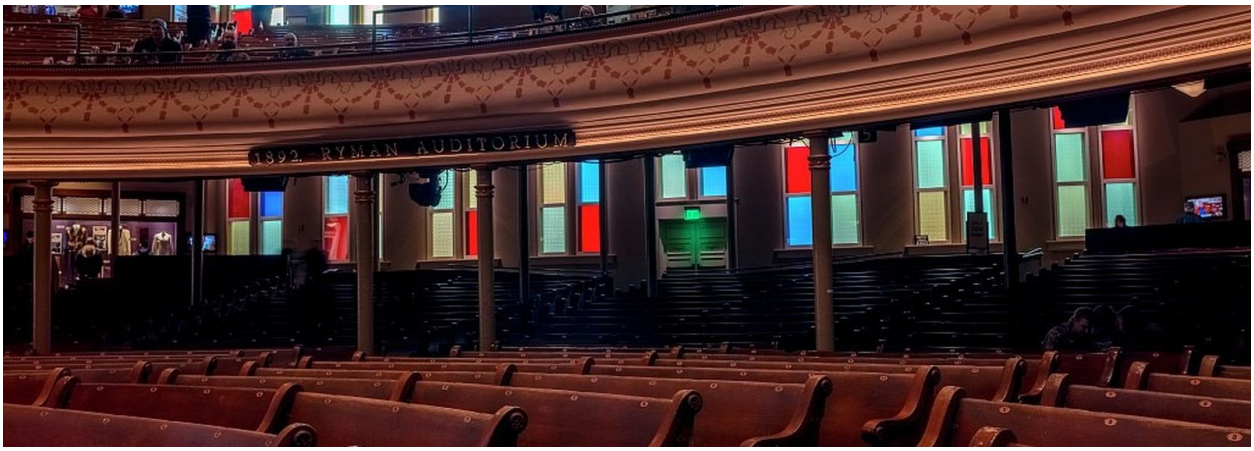
#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
8	★ St. Louis Blues	Bessie Smith with Louis Armstrong	1925	Voice and cornet answering each other, call and response
9	I'm a Mighty Tight Woman	Sippie Wallace	1929	Texas blues singer later championed by Bonnie Raitt (her "Women Be Wise" is not on Spotify)
10	Black Bottom Stomp	Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers	1926	Composed, arranged New Orleans jazz
11	East St. Louis Toodle-Oo	Duke Ellington and His Orchestra	1927	Blues tonality inside big band orchestration
12	Ma Rainey's Black Bottom	Ma Rainey	1927	Vaudeville blues at its showiest
13	Honky Tonk Train Blues	Meade Lux Lewis	1927	Boogie-woogie piano: the rolling left hand that became rock and roll rhythm
14	★ West End Blues	Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five	1928	The opening solo: the birth of the improvised solo as a showpiece
15	★ Pine Top's Boogie Woogie	Pine Top Smith	1928	The rolling left hand that became rock and roll rhythm
16	How Long, How Long Blues	Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell	1928	Leroy Carr's piano and Scrapper Blackwell's guitar: a smooth city blues that sold widely and shaped Robert Johnson
17	Hot Fingers	Lonnie Johnson	1929	Single-string lead guitar pioneer; influenced Robert Johnson and B.B. King
18	Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out	Bessie Smith	1929	Depression-era classic; later recorded by Eric Clapton

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
19	Minnie the Moocher	Cab Calloway and His Orchestra	1931	Call and response showmanship on a national stage
20	Boogie Woogie Stomp	Albert Ammons	1936	Boogie-woogie heads to the big time
21	★ One O'Clock Jump	Count Basie and His Orchestra	1937	Riffs stacked on a blues pattern, the blueprint for jump blues
22	Minor Swing	Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli with the Quintette du Hot Club de France	1937	Jazz guitar from Europe: Reinhardt played these lines with two fretting fingers after a fire burned his hand
23	Fine and Mellow	Billie Holiday	1939	Holiday's own blues composition

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Women singers were the first blues stars and proved there was a market.
- Jazz gave rock the improvised solo and the repeated riff.
- Boogie-woogie piano supplied the rhythm that rock and roll would run on.

Chapter 4: Gospel, Country and Western Swing



The Ryman Auditorium, Nashville, built as the Union Gospel Tabernacle. Photo: Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 4 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1926 to 1956 · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 04: Gospel, Country and Western Swing

Rock and roll had more than one parent: gospel gave it its fervor and its singers, and white Southern country music gave it rockabilly.

THE STORY

In Black churches, especially the Pentecostal "Sanctified" churches, music was loud, rhythmic and physical. Blind Willie Johnson played slide guitar on sacred songs as intensely as any Delta bluesman. Sister Rosetta Tharpe took an electric guitar onto gospel records and into nightclubs in the late 1930s. Her playing and showmanship inspired Elvis, Little Richard, Johnny Cash and Chuck Berry, and she is now often called the "Godmother of Rock and Roll." Gospel quartets also trained a generation of singers, including Sam Cooke, who left the Soul Stirrers for pop and helped invent soul music.

White and Black Southerners shared more music than the segregated record bins suggested. Jimmie Rodgers, the "Father of Country Music," sang blues and yodeled over them. In Texas, Bob Wills and Milton Brown mixed fiddle band music with jazz and blues to create western swing. After World War II, "hillbilly boogie" records like the Delmore Brothers' "Freight Train Boogie" brought boogie-woogie into country.

Hank Williams learned guitar from a Black street musician, Rufus "Tee-Tot" Payne, and his "Move It On Over" is a 12-bar blues. When Elvis recorded Bill Monroe's bluegrass song "Blue Moon of Kentucky" as the B-side of his first single in 1954, these streams met.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	My Soul's a Witness for My Lord	Arizona Dranes	1926	Barrelhouse piano in church; Sanctified music's rhythmic drive
2	★ Dark Was the Night, Cold Was the Ground	Blind Willie Johnson	1927	Wordless slide guitar and moaning; sent into space on the Voyager probes
3	What Are They Doing in Heaven Today?	Washington Phillips	1927	Gentle gospel on a homemade zither
4	★ Blue Yodel (T for Texas)	Jimmie Rodgers	1927	Country's founder singing a blues
5	Wildwood Flower	The Carter Family	1928	Maybelle Carter's "Carter scratch" guitar became a foundation of country picking
6	John the Revelator	Blind Willie Johnson	1930	Gospel blues call and response; covered by Son House, Tedeschi Trucks and more
7	Can the Circle Be Unbroken (Bye and Bye)	The Carter Family	1935	Hymn turned country standard
8	Taking Off	Milton Brown and His Brownies	1936	Western swing pioneer: jazz and blues played by a Texas string band
9	★ Steel Guitar Rag	Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys	1936	Electric steel guitar out front, years before rock
10	Rock Me	Sister Rosetta Tharpe	1938	The Godmother of Rock and Roll: electric guitar gospel that swung
11	New San Antonio Rose	Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys	1940	Western swing at its commercial peak

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
12	★ Strange Things Happening Every Day	Sister Rosetta Tharpe	1944	Electric guitar and swing: a contender for first rock and roll record
13	Guitar Boogie	Arthur Smith	1945	Boogie-woogie on guitar; a hit that inspired a generation of pickers
14	★ Freight Train Boogie	The Delmore Brothers	1946	Country plus boogie: rockabilly in the making
15	Blue Moon of Kentucky	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	1946	Bluegrass; Elvis flipped it into rockabilly on his first single
16	★ Move It On Over	Hank Williams	1947	A country song built on the 12-bar blues
17	Move On Up a Little Higher	Mahalia Jackson	1947	Gospel's biggest seller; the voice that shaped soul singing
18	Lovesick Blues	Hank Williams	1949	The hit that made Hank a star
19	Shotgun Boogie	Tennessee Ernie Ford	1950	Country boogie crosses toward pop and rock
20	Our Father	The Five Blind Boys of Mississippi	1950	Hard gospel shouting that soul and rock singers borrowed
21	Your Cheatin' Heart	Hank Williams	1953	His best-known song, released weeks after he died at 29: pure honky-tonk, showing where country went once it split from the blues
22	★ Touch the Hem of His Garment	The Soul Stirrers	1956	Sam Cooke's gospel voice, just before soul

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Gospel supplied rock's energy, its showmanship and many of its singers.
- Sister Rosetta Tharpe was playing electric rock-style guitar in the 1940s.
- Country and blues borrowed from each other constantly, which made rockabilly possible.

Chapter 5: Electric Chicago and Memphis Blues



47th Street on Chicago's South Side, 1941. Photo: Russell Lee, FSA, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 5 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1941 to 1961 · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 05: Electric Chicago and Memphis Blues

When Delta musicians moved to Chicago and plugged in, they created the band format of rock: electric guitar, harmonica, bass, drums and piano, played loud.

THE STORY

Between about 1916 and 1970, the Great Migration took roughly six million Black Southerners to Northern and Western cities. Chicago, at the end of the Illinois Central railroad line from Mississippi, became the new capital of the blues. In noisy South Side clubs, an acoustic guitar could not be heard, so musicians switched to electric guitars and amplified harmonicas.

Muddy Waters arrived from Mississippi in 1943. At Chess Records he recorded the electric Chicago blues sound, with Little Walter's amplified harmonica and songs by bassist and writer Willie Dixon. Howlin' Wolf, first recorded by Sam Phillips in Memphis, brought a huge voice and hypnotic one-chord grooves. Elmore James electrified Robert Johnson's slide riff in "Dust My Broom."

Elsewhere, Texan T-Bone Walker pioneered the single-note electric guitar solo in the 1940s. Memphis produced B.B. King, whose singing, vibrato-rich lead guitar shaped nearly every rock soloist. By 1960, younger Chicago players like Buddy Guy and Freddie King were playing louder and wilder, pointing straight at Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	Key to the Highway	Big Bill Broonzy	1941	Pre-war Chicago blues; the bridge from country blues to the city
2	★ Call It Stormy Monday (But Tuesday Is Just as Bad)	T-Bone Walker	1947	Smooth, jazzy electric guitar solos
3	I Can't Be Satisfied	Muddy Waters	1948	The Delta goes electric in Chicago
4	Boogie Chillen'	John Lee Hooker	1948	Hypnotic one-chord boogie out of Detroit
5	★ Rollin' Stone	Muddy Waters	1950	The song that named a band and a magazine
6	3 O'Clock Blues	B.B. King	1951	B.B.'s first No. 1 R&B hit, recorded in Memphis
7	★ Dust My Broom	Elmore James	1951	The most copied slide guitar riff in rock
8	Moanin' at Midnight	Howlin' Wolf	1951	Recorded by Sam Phillips in Memphis, who said he had found where the soul of man never dies
9	Mother Earth	Memphis Slim	1951	Chicago blues piano and a lyric about humility; Slim later carried the blues to Europe
10	I'm in the Mood	John Lee Hooker	1951	Hooker's biggest R&B hit, his voice overdubbed into a ghostly chorus
11	★ Juke	Little Walter	1952	Amplified harmonica played like a saxophone
12	★ Hoochie Coochie Man	Muddy Waters	1954	Willie Dixon's stop-time riff; pure swagger
13	All Your Love	Magic Sam	1957	The West Side Chicago sound: tremolo guitar and a soaring vocal
14	Messin' with the Kid	Junior Wells	1960	Chicago harmonica with a funky, danceable groove

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
15	Frosty	Albert Collins	1962	The "Master of the Telecaster": icy, stinging Texas guitar
16	Every Day I Have the Blues	B.B. King	1964	B.B.'s signature opener, here from the classic Live at the Regal album (the 1955 single is not on Spotify)
17	Mannish Boy	Muddy Waters	1955	Answer to Bo Diddley's "I'm a Man"; pure blues bravado
18	Don't Start Me Talkin'	Sonny Boy Williamson II	1955	Harmonica master; later toured and recorded with the Yardbirds and Animals
19	My Babe	Little Walter	1955	Willie Dixon's gospel tune turned into a harmonica blues hit
20	★ Smokestack Lightnin'	Howlin' Wolf	1956	A one-chord drone; listen to that voice
21	I Can't Quit You Baby	Otis Rush	1956	West Side Chicago sound; covered by Led Zeppelin
22	Dimples	John Lee Hooker	1956	A Vee-Jay single that became a British hit in 1964 and a British blues club favorite
23	Sweet Little Angel	B.B. King	1956	Slow blues built on B.B.'s singing single-string lines
24	Farther Up the Road	Bobby "Blue" Bland	1957	Memphis soul-blues; later a Clapton concert staple
25	I'm a King Bee	Slim Harpo	1957	Louisiana swamp blues; the Rolling Stones covered it on their first album
26	Rooster Blues	Lightnin' Slim	1959	Louisiana swamp blues, cut by producer J.D. Miller in Crowley: slow, echoey and lazy-sounding on purpose
27	Baby What You Want Me to Do	Jimmy Reed	1959	Lazy shuffle that crossed over to white audiences

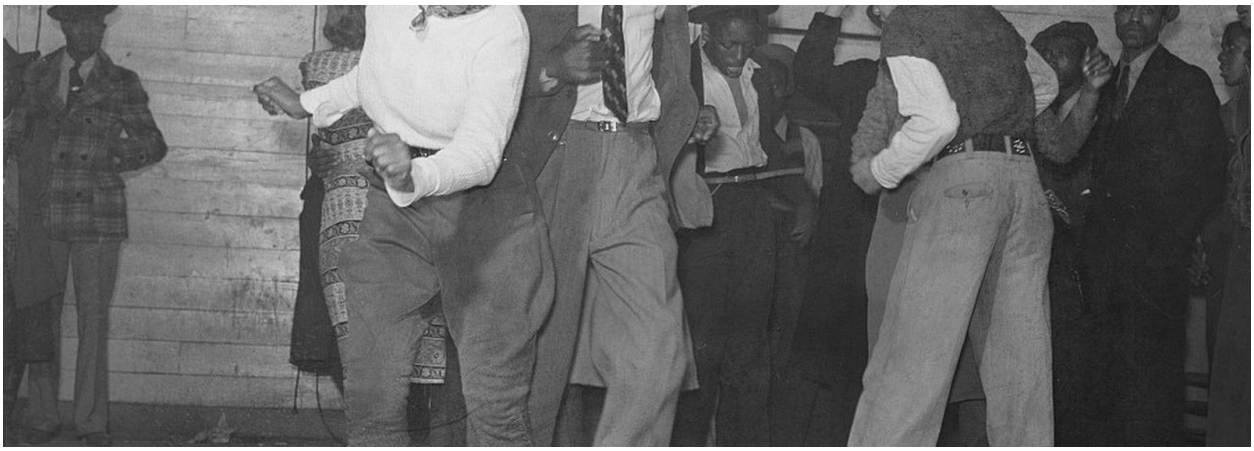
#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
28	The Sky Is Crying	Elmore James	1959	Slow slide blues later recorded by Stevie Ray Vaughan
29	Spoonful	Howlin' Wolf	1960	Willie Dixon song; became a Cream showcase
30	Mojo Hand	Lightnin' Hopkins	1960	Texas country blues legend, revived in the folk boom
31	First Time I Met the Blues	Buddy Guy	1960	Wild, stinging guitar that inspired Hendrix and Clapton
32	Have You Ever Loved a Woman	Freddie King	1960	The slow blues Clapton recut on the Layla album
33	★ Hide Away	Freddie King	1961	Instrumental every British blues guitarist learned
34	Shake Your Moneymaker	Elmore James	1961	A boogie that Fleetwood Mac and the Allman Brothers took on the road
35	The Stumble	Freddie King	1961	A fast instrumental that Peter Green recorded with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers
36	Big Boss Man	Jimmy Reed	1961	Reed's lazy shuffle, covered by Elvis and the Grateful Dead
37	Bright Lights, Big City	Jimmy Reed	1961	A country boy's warning about Chicago, sung over Reed's easy boogie
38	Help Me	Sonny Boy Williamson II	1963	Built on the "Green Onions" groove; later recut by Van Morrison and Ten Years After
39	Rock Me Baby	B.B. King	1964	His biggest pop hit before "The Thrill Is Gone"

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
40	Ay-Tete Fee	Clifton Chenier	1965	The king of zydeco: piano accordion, French Creole lyrics and a blues shuffle from southwest Louisiana (his 1965 recording; the 1955 original is not on Spotify)
41	Wang Dang Doodle	Koko Taylor	1966	The Queen of the Blues on a Willie Dixon party song for Chess
42	One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer	John Lee Hooker	1966	A barroom talking blues that George Thorogood made his signature song
43	I'd Rather Go Blind	Etta James	1967	Chess's great soul-blues voice at her most aching
44	I Just Want to Make Love to You	Willie Dixon	1973	Chess's songwriter and bassist sings one of his own; Muddy Waters cut it first in 1954

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Great Migration moved the blues to cities, where it went electric.
- Chicago blues created the lineup of the rock band.
- Chess Records and Willie Dixon's songs became the core repertoire of 1960s British bands.

Chapter 6: Jump Blues and R&B



Jitterbugging in a juke joint outside Clarksdale, Mississippi, 1939. Photo: Marion Post Wolcott, FSA, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 6 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1938 to 1954 · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 06: Jump Blues and R&B

In the 1940s, small, hard-swinging bands took the blues to the dance floor, and by 1951 their records were rock and roll in everything but name.

THE STORY

World War II made big bands expensive, so leaders like Louis Jordan cut down to a small group of five to seven players. Jordan's "jump blues" mixed boogie-woogie rhythm, honking saxophone, humor and showmanship, and he topped the Black charts for years. Chuck Berry later said he modeled his style on Jordan. Big Joe Turner, a Kansas City shouter, had already shown the formula with "Roll 'Em Pete" in 1938.

In 1949, Billboard magazine renamed its "race records" chart "Rhythm and Blues." Song titles were already full of the words "rock" and "roll," which were Black slang for both dancing and sex: "Good Rocking Tonight," "Rock the Joint," "We're Gonna Rock, We're Gonna Roll." Cleveland disc jockey Alan Freed began calling the music "rock and roll" on the air around 1951, to sell it to white teenagers.

Many historians point to "Rocket 88" (1951) as a strong candidate for the first rock and roll record. It was cut at Sam Phillips's Memphis studio by Ike Turner's band, credited to singer Jackie Brenston, with a distorted guitar amp that had been damaged on the drive north. R&B labels like Atlantic in New York and Specialty in Los Angeles built a catalog that white artists would soon cover.

The Chitlin' Circuit. Segregation shut Black performers out of most white venues, so from the 1930s through the 1960s they worked a network of theaters, clubs and dance halls across the South, the East and the Midwest that welcomed Black artists and audiences. The name comes from chitterlings, a soul food staple. Indianapolis brothers Denver and Sea Ferguson did much to build it, and their Ferguson Brothers agency became the most powerful Black-owned booking agency in the country.

The top rung was a chain of big-city theaters: the Apollo in Harlem, the Howard in Washington, the Regal in Chicago and the Uptown in Philadelphia. Ruth Brown said an artist had to play all four to prove they had made it. Below them were hundreds of small clubs and juke joints, where B.B. King, Little Richard, James Brown, Ike & Tina Turner and Ray Charles learned to win over a room night after night. B.B. King's "Every Day I Have the Blues" in Chapter 5 was recorded live at the Regal in 1964.

New Orleans: the studio behind the sound. In 1945, 18-year-old Cosimo Matassa opened J&M Recording Studio in a back room of his family's shop on North Rampart Street, across from Congo Square. Bandleader and producer Dave Bartholomew built a house band there, with Earl Palmer on drums and Lee Allen on saxophone, and it played on a remarkable run of records: Fats Domino's "The Fat Man" (1949), Lloyd Price's "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" (1952), Smiley Lewis, and later Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti" (1955). Professor Longhair ("Tipitina") gave the city its rumba-rolling piano style. In 2010 the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame named the J&M building a Historic Rock and Roll Landmark.

New Orleans also kept its own traditions on the street. The Mardi Gras Indians, Black social clubs who sew elaborate suits and chant in call and response, gave R&B songs like Sugar Boy Crawford's "Jock-A-Mo" (1953), later a hit as "Iko Iko." The brass band second line, a parade the whole neighborhood joins, still runs through the city every Sunday in season.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	★ Roll 'Em Pete	Big Joe Turner and Pete Johnson	1938	Boogie piano plus a shouting singer: rock and roll 16 years early
2	Flying Home	Lionel Hampton and His Orchestra	1942	Illinois Jacquet's honking sax solo set the R&B sax template
3	Evil Gal Blues	Dinah Washington	1943	Her first record, with Lionel Hampton's band; she was soon billed as the "Queen of the Blues"

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
4	★ Caldonia	Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five	1945	Small band jump blues with humor and drive
5	Driftin' Blues	Johnny Moore's Three Blazers with Charles Brown	1945	Los Angeles club blues: soft piano and a cool, quiet vocal, the opposite of jump blues
6	Choo Choo Ch'Boogie	Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five	1946	Chuck Berry said he copied Jordan's style
7	★ Good Rocking Tonight	Roy Brown	1947	"Rocking" as a party word; Elvis covered it
8	We're Gonna Rock, We're Gonna Roll	Wild Bill Moore	1947	"Rock" and "roll" in a 1940s title
9	Chicken Shack Boogie	Amos Milburn	1948	Piano boogie R&B hit
10	All She Wants to Do Is Rock	Wynonie Harris	1949	Rowdy jump blues shouter; Elvis studied his moves
11	Rock Awhile	Goree Carter	1949	Distorted electric guitar intro that anticipates Chuck Berry
12	Rock the Joint	Jimmy Preston	1949	Covered by Bill Haley before "Rock Around the Clock"
13	Saturday Night Fish Fry	Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five	1949	Distorted guitar and "rocking" lyric; a contender for first rock record
14	★ The Fat Man	Fats Domino	1949	Recorded at Cosimo Matassa's New Orleans studio with Dave Bartholomew's band; rolling piano triplets and a million sales
15	Mardi Gras in New Orleans	Professor Longhair	1949	His Carnival anthem, still played every Mardi Gras; rumba rhythm on the piano

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
16	Bald Head	Roy Byrd and His Blues Jumpers	1950	Professor Longhair under another name; his only national R&B chart hit
17	★ Rocket 88	Jackie Brenston and His Delta Cats	1951	The fuzzy guitar and the sax: an early rock record
18	Sixty Minute Man	The Dominoes	1951	R&B vocal group hit that crossed to the pop charts
19	Lawdy Miss Clawdy	Lloyd Price	1952	New Orleans R&B with Fats Domino on piano
20	One Mint Julep	The Clovers	1952	Atlantic Records R&B vocal group sound
21	★ Hound Dog	Big Mama Thornton	1952	The original of the Elvis hit; compare the two
22	(Mama) He Treats Your Daughter Mean	Ruth Brown	1953	The hit that made Atlantic "the house that Ruth built"
23	The Things That I Used to Do	Guitar Slim	1953	Distorted, flamboyant guitar; huge influence on Hendrix and SRV
24	Tipitina	Professor Longhair	1953	The rolling New Orleans piano that Fats Domino and Dr. John learned from
25	Jock-A-Mo	Sugar Boy Crawford	1953	A Mardi Gras Indian chant turned into R&B; the Dixie Cups later made it a hit as "Iko Iko"
26	★ Shake, Rattle and Roll	Big Joe Turner	1954	Compare with Bill Haley's cleaned-up version the same year
27	Work With Me, Annie	Hank Ballard and the Midnighters	1954	Raunchy R&B hit that radio tried to ban
28	★ I Got a Woman	Ray Charles	1954	A gospel song turned secular: the birth of soul

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
29	Reconsider Baby	Lowell Fulson	1954	West Coast blues later recorded by Elvis and Eric Clapton
30	Space Guitar	Johnny "Guitar" Watson	1954	Reverb and feedback years before rock guitarists found them
31	I Hear You Knockin'	Smiley Lewis	1955	Dave Bartholomew's band and Huey "Piano" Smith's piano behind a big New Orleans voice
32	The Wallflower (Dance with Me, Henry)	Etta James	1955	Etta's first hit, recorded at 17 as an answer to "Work With Me, Annie"
33	Please, Please, Please	James Brown & The Famous Flames	1956	James Brown's first hit, gospel pleading turned into rhythm and blues
34	★ What'd I Say, Pts. 1 & 2	Ray Charles	1959	Gospel call and response, Latin rhythm and electric piano in one rock and roll standard

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Jump blues shrank the big band into the small combo rock would use.
- "Rock" and "roll" were already in R&B song titles by the late 1940s.
- The line between R&B and rock and roll was mostly about who was buying the record.

Chapter 7: The Birth of Rock and Roll



Sun Studio, 706 Union Avenue, Memphis. Photo: Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 7 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1954 to 1959 · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 07: The Birth of Rock and Roll

Between 1954 and 1958, rhythm and blues, country and gospel fused into rock and roll, and teenagers of every race made it a national craze.

THE STORY

Sam Phillips of Sun Records in Memphis reportedly said that if he could find a white singer with the Black sound and feel, he could make a fortune. In July 1954, 19-year-old Elvis Presley, goofing around between takes, launched into Arthur Crudup's 1946 blues "That's All Right." Phillips recorded it, and the B-side was a sped-up bluegrass song. Sun went on to record Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and Johnny Cash, a mix of country and blues called rockabilly.

At the same time, Black artists crossed onto the pop charts. Chuck Berry, recording for Chess in Chicago, turned a country fiddle tune into "Maybellene" (1955) and wrote witty songs about cars, school and teenage life. His guitar intros became the most copied in rock. Little Richard's screaming, gospel-charged "Tutti Frutti" and Fats Domino's New Orleans piano reached white audiences too. Bo Diddley brought a rhythm, the "Bo Diddley beat," with clear African roots.

Rock and roll's first wave crashed quickly. By 1959 Elvis was in the Army, Little Richard had left for the ministry, Jerry Lee Lewis was in scandal, Chuck Berry faced legal trouble, and Buddy Holly and Ritchie Valens died in a plane crash. But the records had already crossed the Atlantic.

Radio, segregation and the cover record. Radio carried the music across the color line before audiences could mix in person. WDIA, a white-owned Memphis station that went on the air in 1948, turned its schedule over to Black hosts and music after teacher and columnist Nat D. Williams's show took off. It became known as the "Mother Station of the Negroes." A young B.B. King worked there as a deejay and sang its jingles, and Rufus Thomas joined the staff in 1950.

The record business was slower to change. White singers often rushed out smoother cover versions of R&B hits, and many pop stations played those instead of the originals. Pat Boone's 1955 cover of Fats Domino's "Ain't That a Shame" went to No. 1 on the pop chart, and he also covered Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti" and "Long Tall Sally." Teenagers soon went looking for the real thing, and Domino, Little Richard and Chuck Berry outlasted their imitators.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	★ That's All Right	Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup	1946	Play this first, then the Elvis version
2	★ That's All Right	Elvis Presley	1954	The Sun Records sound: slapback echo, guitar, bass, no drums
3	Mystery Train	Little Junior's Blue Flames	1953	Junior Parker's train blues at Sun, recut by Elvis two years later
4	Rock Around the Clock	Bill Haley and His Comets	1954	The song that took rock and roll worldwide via Blackboard Jungle
5	★ Maybellene	Chuck Berry	1955	Country rhythm plus blues guitar plus teen lyrics
6	★ Tutti Frutti	Little Richard	1955	Gospel shouting and pounding piano
7	Ain't That a Shame	Fats Domino	1955	New Orleans rock and roll crossing to the pop chart
8	Ain't Got No Home	Clarence "Frogman" Henry	1956	New Orleans R&B with three voices: his own, a high girl's voice and a frog croak
9	★ Bo Diddley	Bo Diddley	1955	The "shave and a haircut" beat with African roots

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
10	Blue Suede Shoes	Carl Perkins	1955	Rockabilly anthem: country and blues fused at Sun
11	Folsom Prison Blues	Johnny Cash and the Tennessee Two	1955	Country blues from the Sun stable
12	Heartbreak Hotel	Elvis Presley	1956	Elvis's first RCA single and first No. 1
13	Long Tall Sally	Little Richard	1956	Covered by The Beatles; pure rock and roll energy
14	Be-Bop-A-Lula	Gene Vincent and His Blue Caps	1956	Rockabilly with a menacing edge; Cliff Gallup's guitar
15	Hound Dog	Elvis Presley	1956	Elvis's version of the Big Mama Thornton hit
16	Jim Dandy	LaVern Baker	1956	One of Atlantic's biggest stars; a woman's rock and roll hit about a hero who comes to the rescue
17	Ooby Dooby	Roy Orbison	1956	Roy Orbison's first hit, cut at Sun Records before the big ballads
18	Matchbox	Carl Perkins	1957	Rockabilly version of the Blind Lemon Jefferson blues
19	★ Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On	Big Maybelle	1955	Her 1955 version came two years before Jerry Lee Lewis's; play them back to back
20	Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On	Jerry Lee Lewis	1957	Pounding piano rock from Sun
21	Wee Wee Hours	Chuck Berry	1955	The slow blues on the back of "Maybellene," where Berry came from
22	Rip It Up	Little Richard	1956	Cut at Cosimo Matassa's New Orleans studio with the same band as "Tutti Frutti"

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
23	Who Do You Love?	Bo Diddley	1956	Bo Diddley's boast over his jungle beat
24	Blueberry Hill	Fats Domino	1956	An old pop song turned into New Orleans rhythm and blues
25	Rockin' Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu	Huey "Piano" Smith & the Clowns	1957	New Orleans piano rock and roll with a goofy group vocal; Smith was also a top New Orleans session pianist
26	That'll Be the Day	Buddy Holly and the Crickets	1957	The guitar, bass, drums band model that The Beatles copied
27	Bye Bye Love	The Everly Brothers	1957	Country harmony meets rock and roll
28	You Send Me	Sam Cooke	1957	The Soul Stirrers' singer crosses from gospel to pop and helps invent soul
29	Lucille	Little Richard	1957	A pounding piano riff that the Beatles played on stage
30	Rock and Roll Music	Chuck Berry	1957	A manifesto for the new music, later covered by the Beatles
31	Mona (I Need You Baby)	Bo Diddley	1957	Tremolo guitar and tom toms; the Rolling Stones covered it
32	Not Fade Away	Buddy Holly and the Crickets	1957	Buddy Holly on the Bo Diddley beat
33	Great Balls of Fire	Jerry Lee Lewis	1957	Sun Records piano and pure abandon
34	★ Johnny B. Goode	Chuck Berry	1958	The intro every rock guitarist learns
35	Summertime Blues	Eddie Cochran	1958	Teen rebellion anthem; covered by The Who
36	★ Rumble	Link Wray	1958	Distorted power chords, the seed of hard rock

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
37	La Bamba	Ritchie Valens	1958	Mexican folk song turned rock and roll
38	Let's Have a Party	Wanda Jackson	1958	The Queen of Rockabilly
39	Good Golly, Miss Molly	Little Richard	1958	His last big Specialty hit before he left rock and roll for the church
40	Sweet Little Sixteen	Chuck Berry	1958	The Beach Boys borrowed it for "Surfin' U.S.A."
41	Kansas City	Wilbert Harrison	1959	A Leiber and Stoller blues that went to No. 1
42	Shout, Pts. 1 & 2	The Isley Brothers	1959	A church shout turned into a party record

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rock and roll was a fusion of R&B, country and gospel, centered in Memphis, Chicago and New Orleans.
- Black and white artists were both essential, though white artists often earned more from the same music.
- Chuck Berry's guitar style is the direct link between the blues and 1960s rock.

Chapter 8: The British Blues Invasion

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Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1954 to 1971 · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 08: The British Blues Invasion

Young British musicians fell in love with American blues records, played them back to America louder and harder, and in the process introduced millions of white American fans to the original artists.

THE STORY

In 1950s Britain, skiffle, a homemade folk-blues craze led by Lonnie Donegan's version of Lead Belly's "Rock Island Line," got thousands of teenagers to pick up cheap guitars. John Lennon, Jimmy Page and many others started in skiffle groups. Imported Chess records, and tours by Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson and others, turned some of those teenagers into blues devotees.

The Rolling Stones named themselves after a Muddy Waters song and took Willie Dixon's "Little Red Rooster" to No. 1 in Britain in 1964. The Yardbirds produced three guitar heroes: Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page. John Mayall's Bluesbreakers album with Clapton in 1966 set the template for the loud, sustaining blues rock guitar tone. American players were part of this revival too, including the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Canned Heat, Taj Mahal and Janis Joplin.

Jimi Hendrix, an American who found fame in London in 1966, pushed electric blues further than anyone. Cream turned Robert Johnson's "Cross Road Blues" into a live showpiece. Led Zeppelin built heavy rock on blues songs, sometimes without credit; Willie Dixon later won a settlement over "Whole Lotta Love." When the Stones appeared on the TV show Shindig! in 1965, they insisted that Howlin' Wolf perform too, putting him in front of a huge American audience.

The American Folk Blues Festival. Many of the tours that hooked British teenagers were organized by two German promoters, Horst Lippmann and Fritz Rau. Starting in 1962, their American Folk Blues Festival brought blues players to Europe almost every year, and across the 1960s the lineups included Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, John Lee Hooker and Sonny Boy Williamson. In Europe these musicians played concert halls to audiences who treated them as serious artists.

The festival's first British stop, at Manchester's Free Trade Hall in October 1962, had Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Brian Jones and Jimmy Page in the audience. Sonny Boy Williamson stayed on after the 1963 tour and spent a year in Europe, recording with the Yardbirds and the

Animals. In May 1964, Granada Television filmed Muddy Waters, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee performing at a disused Manchester railway station for *The Blues and Gospel Train*.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	★ Rock Island Line	Lonnie Donegan	1954	Skiffle: the spark for a generation of British bands
2	Roll Over Beethoven	The Beatles	1963	The Beatles paying homage to Chuck Berry
3	★ Little Red Rooster	The Rolling Stones	1964	A Chicago blues taken to No. 1 in the UK
4	The House of the Rising Sun	The Animals	1964	Folk blues turned electric worldwide No. 1
5	You Really Got Me	The Kinks	1964	Distorted riff rock, ancestor of hard rock and metal
6	Gloria	Them	1964	Van Morrison's garage rock blues staple
7	Time Is on My Side	Irma Thomas	1964	The Soul Queen of New Orleans; the Rolling Stones based their hit on her version the same year
8	Born in Chicago	The Paul Butterfield Blues Band	1965	American young players learning from Chicago masters; Mike Bloomfield on guitar
9	I'm a Man	The Yardbirds	1965	Bo Diddley cover turned into a rave-up; the band of Clapton, Beck and Page
10	(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction	The Rolling Stones	1965	Fuzz guitar riff that defined the decade
11	Like a Rolling Stone	Bob Dylan	1965	Dylan goes electric, with Mike Bloomfield of the Butterfield Band on guitar

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
12	★ Hideaway	John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton	1966	The guitar tone that defined British blues rock; compare with Freddie King
13	Hey Joe	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1966	Hendrix's first single, recorded in London
14	★ Red House	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1967	A traditional slow blues, reimagined
15	Sunshine of Your Love	Cream	1967	Blues riff plus psychedelia
16	Back Door Man	The Doors	1967	A Willie Dixon song first cut by Howlin' Wolf, turned into psychedelic blues
17	★ Purple Haze	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1967	Fuzz, feedback and a new guitar language
18	Little Wing	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1967	A soul ballad that Stevie Ray Vaughan later made a guitar standard
19	★ Crossroads	Cream	1968	Robert Johnson's 1936 song as a 1968 live jam
20	Statesboro Blues	Taj Mahal	1968	The version that taught Duane Allman the song
21	Voodoo Child (Slight Return)	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1968	Electric blues pushed to its limit
22	Black Magic Woman	Fleetwood Mac	1968	Peter Green's original, before Santana's hit
23	On the Road Again	Canned Heat	1968	Built on Floyd Jones and Tommy Johnson; blues boogie revival
24	Ball and Chain	Big Brother and the Holding Company	1968	Janis Joplin's take on a Big Mama Thornton song

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
25	Shapes of Things	The Jeff Beck Group	1968	Beck reworks his Yardbirds hit with Rod Stewart singing: heavy blues rock arrives
26	Piece of My Heart	Big Brother and the Holding Company	1968	Janis Joplin tears into an Erma Franklin soul song
27	Going Up the Country	Canned Heat	1968	Henry Thomas's 1928 melody, played as a Woodstock era anthem
28	Love in Vain	The Rolling Stones	1969	Robert Johnson, Stones style
29	★ Whole Lotta Love	Led Zeppelin	1969	Heavy rock built on Willie Dixon's "You Need Love"
30	I'm Going Home (Live at Woodstock)	Ten Years After	1969	Alvin Lee's high speed blues guitar at Woodstock
31	All Right Now	Free	1970	Blues-based British hard rock
32	Summertime Blues (Live at Leeds)	The Who	1970	Eddie Cochran's 1958 song (Chapter 7) played as hard rock
33	Brown Sugar	The Rolling Stones	1971	Recorded in Alabama at Muscle Shoals Sound in December 1969: the British band going to the source
34	Wild Horses	The Rolling Stones	1971	Cut at the same Muscle Shoals sessions; a country-soul ballad
35	★ When the Levee Breaks	Led Zeppelin	1971	Compare with Memphis Minnie's 1929 original

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- British musicians learned rock from American blues records, then sold it back to America.
- The British bands brought new attention, and new income, to many original blues artists.
- The same story raised lasting questions about credit and songwriting royalties.

Chapter 9: Southern Rock and 70s Blues Rock



Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, Sheffield, Alabama. Photo: Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 9 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1967 to 1978 · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 09: Southern Rock and 70s Blues Rock

In the 1970s the blues came home to the American South, where bands like the Allman Brothers mixed it with jazz, country and soul to create Southern rock.

THE STORY

The blues masters themselves found new rock audiences. B.B. King's "The Thrill Is Gone" (1969) crossed over to the pop charts, and he opened for the Rolling Stones that year. Albert King, recording for Stax in Memphis, bent strings in a way that Stevie Ray Vaughan and Eric Clapton copied note for note.

The Allman Brothers Band formed in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1969, with Black and white members together on stage in the Deep South. Duane Allman and Dickey Betts played twin lead guitars, and the band stretched blues songs into long, jazz-influenced jams. Their 1971 *At Fillmore East* is often ranked among the greatest live albums. Duane also played slide on Derek and the Dominos' "Layla" with Clapton before he died in a motorcycle crash in October 1971, at age 24.

Others followed: Lynyrd Skynyrd from Jacksonville, the Marshall Tucker Band from South Carolina, and ZZ Top from Texas, who built "La Grange" on a John Lee Hooker boogie. Elsewhere, Johnny Winter produced Muddy Waters's late comeback albums, Bonnie Raitt championed older bluesmen like Sippie Wallace and Mississippi Fred McDowell, and Aerosmith and the J. Geils Band brought blues into arena rock.

The festival era. Big outdoor festivals put blues rock in front of mass audiences. At the Monterey Pop Festival in California, June 16 to 18, 1967, Canned Heat and the Paul Butterfield Blues Band played Saturday afternoon. Janis Joplin, with Big Brother and the Holding Company, sang Big Mama Thornton's "Ball and Chain" and brought the crowd to its feet for the first time that weekend; Columbia Records signed the band. Otis Redding, backed by Booker T. & the M.G.'s, won over the rock crowd, and Jimi Hendrix ended his set by setting his guitar on fire.

In August 1969, Woodstock drew about 400,000 people to a farm in Bethel, New York. Canned Heat, Butterfield, Johnny Winter, Santana, Janis Joplin and Ten Years After all played, and Hendrix closed the festival on Monday morning with a solo version of the national anthem. The festival film and soundtrack carried those performances around the world.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	Crosscut Saw	Albert King	1966	Albert King's Stax blues with the Memphis horns and Booker T. and the M.G.'s
2	★ Born Under a Bad Sign	Albert King	1967	Stax soul rhythm under huge string bends
3	Oh, Pretty Woman	Albert King	1967	Upside down left-handed bends that shaped Clapton and Stevie Ray Vaughan
4	The Weight	The Band	1968	Gospel, country and blues blended into Americana
5	Hey Jude	Wilson Pickett	1968	Recorded at FAME; the guitar is Duane Allman, still a session player, months before the Allman Brothers Band
6	★ The Thrill Is Gone	B.B. King	1969	Strings, minor key and B.B.'s vibrato; his biggest crossover hit
7	Whipping Post	The Allman Brothers Band	1969	Southern rock begins: twin guitars and jazz-like jams

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
8	Cissy Strut	The Meters	1969	New Orleans funk: drums, bass, guitar and organ locked together around parade-street rhythms
9	Proud Mary	Creedence Clearwater Revival	1969	California band, Southern swamp sound: blues and country on a river boat
10	Proud Mary	Ike & Tina Turner	1971	Play right after Creedence: Ike Turner (of "Rocket 88") and Tina turn it into a soul revue
11	★ Layla	Derek and the Dominos	1970	Clapton and Duane Allman trading lines
12	Black Magic Woman / Gypsy Queen	Santana	1970	Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac song (Chapter 8) with a Latin rock groove
13	Paranoid	Black Sabbath	1970	Started as a blues band; slowed, darkened blues riffs became heavy metal
14	★ Statesboro Blues (Live at Fillmore East)	The Allman Brothers Band	1971	Duane's slide on Blind Willie McTell's 1928 song
15	Give Me Back My Wig	Hound Dog Taylor and the HouseRockers	1971	Raw, distorted slide guitar; Alligator Records was founded to record him
16	Love Me Like a Man	Bonnie Raitt	1972	Slide guitar and blues from a new generation
17	Bullfrog Blues (Live)	Rory Gallagher	1972	Irish blues rock guitar hero
18	Whammer Jammer (Live)	The J. Geils Band	1972	Magic Dick's harp: Little Walter's legacy in arena rock
19	Jessica	The Allman Brothers Band	1973	Instrumental showcase of the post-Duane band
20	Free Bird	Lynyrd Skynyrd	1973	Southern rock anthem

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
21	★ La Grange	ZZ Top	1973	John Lee Hooker's boogie, Texas style
22	Can't You See	The Marshall Tucker Band	1973	Southern rock with country flavor
23	Dixie Chicken	Little Feat	1973	New Orleans groove plus slide guitar
24	Still Alive and Well	Johnny Winter	1973	Texas blues guitar slinger; later produced Muddy Waters
25	Right Place Wrong Time	Dr. John	1973	Produced by Allen Toussaint with the Meters behind him; New Orleans voodoo funk
26	Kodachrome	Paul Simon	1973	The Swampers, the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, playing behind a New York songwriter
27	★ Sweet Home Alabama	Lynyrd Skynyrd	1974	Southern rock's best-known anthem; the line "Muscle Shoals has got the Swampers" salutes the studio band
28	Train Kept A-Rollin'	Aerosmith	1974	Tiny Bradshaw jump blues via the Yardbirds to arena rock
29	Tush	ZZ Top	1975	Lowdown Texas boogie
30	The Jack	AC/DC	1975	A slow 12-bar blues from Australia, with an old-style blues double meaning in the lyric
31	★ Move It On Over	George Thorogood and the Destroyers	1978	Hank Williams's 1947 song as slide guitar blues rock
32	Old Time Rock and Roll	Bob Seger	1978	Recorded with the Swampers at Muscle Shoals Sound; their rhythm section on a song everyone knows

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1970s rock audiences discovered the living blues masters, especially B.B. King and Albert King.
- The Allman Brothers fused blues with jazz and country into Southern rock.
- The Allman line runs directly to Derek Trucks and Tedeschi Trucks Band today (Chapter 11).

Chapter 10: The Blues Revival



Memphis Music neon sign, Beale Street. Photo: Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 10 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1983 to 2006 · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 10: The Blues Revival

After disco, punk and synthesizers pushed blues aside, Stevie Ray Vaughan's 1983 debut sparked a revival that carried the music through the 1980s, 1990s and into the garage rock of the 2000s.

THE STORY

Stevie Ray Vaughan, a Texan steeped in Albert King, Jimi Hendrix and his older brother Jimmie Vaughan of the Fabulous Thunderbirds, played on David Bowie's "Let's Dance" and released *Texas Flood* in 1983. His playing made blues guitar exciting to a new generation. He died in a helicopter crash in 1990 at age 35, but the revival he started kept going. Robert Cray won Grammys with soul-blues, Bonnie Raitt swept the 1990 Grammys with *Nick of Time*, and Buddy Guy, now in his 50s, made a celebrated comeback in 1991.

In the 1990s, the Black Crowes revived the Stones and Faces sound, and Warren Haynes, a guitarist in the reunited Allman Brothers, formed Gov't Mule. Fat Possum Records in Oxford, Mississippi, recorded older hill country bluesmen like R.L. Burnside and Junior Kimbrough, whose hypnotic grooves became an underground influence.

That influence surfaced in the early 2000s garage rock boom. The White Stripes covered Son House's "Death Letter," and the Black Keys from Akron, Ohio, recorded an EP of Junior Kimbrough songs. Susan Tedeschi, a Boston singer and guitarist, broke through in 1998 and married Allman Brothers guitarist Derek Trucks in 2001.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	★ Pride and Joy	Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble	1983	Texas shuffle with a huge guitar tone
2	Texas Flood	Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble	1983	Slow blues tour de force
3	My Feet Can't Fail Me Now	Dirty Dozen Brass Band	1984	The New Orleans street brass band turned into a funk band
4	★ Smoking Gun	Robert Cray	1986	Soul-blues on MTV
5	Tuff Enuff	The Fabulous Thunderbirds	1986	Jimmie Vaughan's band reaches the pop charts
6	I Ain't Drunk	Albert Collins	1986	The "Master of the Telecaster" on Alligator Records, with horns, turning a 1950s Jimmy Liggins jump blues into a party
7	Old Oak Tree	Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials	1986	Chicago slide guitar in the Hound Dog Taylor line; Lil' Ed is the nephew of bluesman J.B. Hutto
8	Cult of Personality	Living Colour	1988	A Black New York band reclaiming hard rock; the song won a Grammy
9	See the Light	Jeff Healey	1988	A blind Toronto guitarist who played with the guitar flat across his lap
10	When Love Comes to Town	U2 with B.B. King	1988	B.B. King at 63 crossing into arena rock with U2
11	Thing Called Love	Bonnie Raitt	1989	Nick of Time era: blues roots win Grammys

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
12	Yellow Moon	The Neville Brothers	1989	Aaron, Art, Charles and Cyril Neville: New Orleans rhythm and soul harmony, produced by Daniel Lanois
13	Do Whatcha Wanna	Rebirth Brass Band	1989	Second-line street brass, still played every week in New Orleans
14	The Healer	John Lee Hooker with Carlos Santana	1989	The title song of Hooker's comeback album at 72
15	Still Got the Blues	Gary Moore	1990	An Irish hard rocker comes home to the blues and scores a worldwide hit
16	★ Damn Right, I've Got the Blues	Buddy Guy	1991	A 1950s Chicago legend's comeback
17	Remedy	The Black Crowes	1992	Southern rock revival
18	Are You Gonna Go My Way	Lenny Kravitz	1993	A New York-born guitarist with a Hendrix-style riff
19	★ Old Black Mattie	R.L. Burnside	1994	Hill country blues: one-chord trance grooves
20	Am I Wrong	Keb' Mo'	1994	Acoustic Delta blues revived for a modern audience
21	Run-Around	Blues Traveler	1994	John Popper's harmonica on a top-ten pop hit
22	Bellbottoms	The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion	1994	Downtown New York punk-blues, loud and stripped down
23	Soulshine	Gov't Mule	1995	Warren Haynes, Allman Brothers guitarist, carrying the torch
24	★ It Hurt So Bad	Susan Tedeschi	1998	Before Tedeschi Trucks

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
25	It's 2 A.M.	Shemekia Copeland	2000	Born in Harlem, daughter of Texas bluesman Johnny Copeland; a big classic blues voice
26	★ Death Letter	The White Stripes	2000	Son House's 1960s song for a 2000s audience
27	Thickfreakness	The Black Keys	2003	Garage blues duo steeped in hill country blues

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Stevie Ray Vaughan sparked a blues guitar revival in the 1980s.
- Older blues masters enjoyed late-career success thanks to younger fans.
- Hill country blues from Mississippi quietly shaped 2000s garage rock.

Chapter 11: Blues Rock Today



Ground Zero Blues Club, Clarksdale, Mississippi. Photo: Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

HEAR CHAPTER 11 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 2007 to now · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 11: Blues Rock Today

Since 2007 the blues has been everywhere and nowhere: rarely labeled "blues" on the charts, but underneath hit songs by the Black Keys, Hozier and Chris Stapleton, and alive in a new generation of guitar players.

THE STORY

The Black Keys went from a basement duo to arena headliners with "Tighten Up" (2010) and "Lonely Boy" (2011), proving that raw blues-based rock could still top the charts. Jack White, Royal Blood and Rival Sons kept the riff-driven sound going, and Greta Van Fleet brought back the Led Zeppelin template for listeners born decades after Zeppelin ended.

The gospel and soul side of the family showed up in pop hits. Hozier's "Take Me to Church," Rag'n'Bone Man's "Human" and Kaleo's "Way Down We Go" all draw on gospel and blues singing. Chris Stapleton's "Tennessee Whiskey," a country song sung like soul, echoes the old crossing between country and blues from Chapter 4. Alabama Shakes and Black Pumas revived Southern soul.

The guitar line continues too. Tedeschi Trucks Band, formed in 2010, won a Grammy for its debut album *Revelator* and carries the Allman Brothers tradition with a 12-piece band. Gary Clark Jr. from Austin, Marcus King from South Carolina, Christone "Kingfish" Ingram from Clarksdale, Mississippi, and players like Samantha Fish and Larkin Poe show that the blues still produces new voices. Kingfish grew up just miles from the crossroads of the Robert Johnson legend.

THE PLAYLIST

Every song on the chapter's playlist, in playlist order. ★ marks the essentials to play in class.

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
1	Sloe Gin	Joe Bonamassa	2007	Modern blues rock guitar star
2	Cler Achel	Tinariwen	2007	Tuareg desert blues from the Sahara; electric guitars over trance-like rhythms
3	How You Like Me Now?	The Heavy	2009	Horn-driven soul and blues stomp that became a movie and ad staple
4	★ Tighten Up	The Black Keys	2010	Garage blues as a Grammy-winning hit
5	Paris (Ooh La La)	Grace Potter and the Nocturnals	2010	Vermont band's swaggering blues rock anthem
6	Hurricane Season	Trombone Shorty	2010	New Orleans brass with rock and funk; Troy Andrews grew up in the Treme
7	★ Midnight in Harlem	Tedeschi Trucks Band	2011	Derek Trucks's slide guitar: Duane Allman's legacy
8	Bound for Glory	Tedeschi Trucks Band	2011	From the Grammy-winning debut, Revelator
9	Bright Lights	Gary Clark Jr.	2011	Austin guitarist mixing blues, rock and soul
10	Lonely Boy	The Black Keys	2011	Rockabilly-flavored blues rock hit; one of the biggest rock songs of the decade
11	Pressure and Time	Rival Sons	2011	Led Zeppelin-style heavy blues revived for a new generation
12	★ Hold On	Alabama Shakes	2012	Brittany Howard's gospel-soul voice
13	Sixteen Saltines	Jack White	2012	White's solo career, still built on Son House and Delta riffs

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
14	★ Ain't Messin 'Round	Gary Clark Jr.	2012	Horns and fuzz guitar over a soul groove
15	★ Take Me to Church	Hozier	2013	Gospel chords and a blues-trained voice in a global hit
16	Figure It Out	Royal Blood	2014	Bass and drums duo with heavy blues riffs, in the White Stripes tradition
17	★ Tennessee Whiskey	Chris Stapleton	2015	Country song, soul delivery
18	Way Down We Go	Kaleo	2015	Icelandic band channeling gospel and Delta blues; a streaming smash
19	Don't Wanna Fight	Alabama Shakes	2015	Grammy-winning Southern soul and blues rock
20	Human	Rag'n'Bone Man	2016	Gospel-blues voice and work song feel in a global No. 1
21	Highway Tune	Greta Van Fleet	2017	Young band reviving the Zeppelin blues rock sound
22	Goodbye Carolina	The Marcus King Band	2018	Young Southern guitarist in the Allman tradition
23	Bad Spell	Larkin Poe	2022	Sisters playing roots blues rock
24	★ Fresh Out	Christone "Kingfish" Ingram feat. Buddy Guy	2019	A 20-year-old from Clarksdale and an 82-year-old legend trading guitar lines
25	Bulletproof	Samantha Fish	2019	Modern blues rock guitarist and singer
26	The Chicago Way	Toronzo Cannon	2019	A Chicago bus driver turned Alligator Records bluesman
27	Colors	Black Pumas	2019	Austin soul revival with gospel roots; Grammy nominated

#	Song	Artist	Year	Listen for
28	Freedom	Jon Batiste	2021	New Orleans joy from the album that won Grammy Album of the Year
29	Destination	Joanna Connor	2021	Chicago slide guitar; her album is named for the address of Theresa's Lounge, a South Side blues club
30	I Want My Crown	Eric Gales feat. Joe Bonamassa	2022	Two of today's top blues guitarists trading solos

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Blues rock still reaches the mainstream, often without the blues label.
- Gospel and soul singing are as present in today's hits as blues guitar.
- Tedeschi Trucks and Kingfish Ingram show the tradition passing to new generations.

Chapter 12: The Blues Brothers Soundtrack Inspiration



The Chicago Theatre marquee, October 2026. Photo: Jim Little

HEAR CHAPTER 12 AT FROMBLUESTOROCK.COM

Scan to open this chapter on the website, with every song ready to play.

Era: 1978 to 1980 (songs from 1931 to 1980) · **Playlist:** Roots of Rock 12: The Blues Brothers Soundtrack Inspiration

In 1980 a comedy about two ex-convict brothers "on a mission from God" became, for millions of viewers, a first lesson in blues, soul and R&B. It is also the spark for this guide.

THE STORY

Dan Aykroyd was a serious blues fan who had sat in with the Downchild Blues Band in Canada, and he brought John Belushi into the music. As Jake and Elwood Blues, in black suits and sunglasses, they debuted on *Saturday Night Live* on April 22, 1978. Their live album *Briefcase Full of Blues*, recorded while opening for Steve Martin, went to No. 1 on the Billboard chart.

The band behind them was real. Steve Cropper and Donald "Duck" Dunn had been half of Booker T. & the M.G.'s, the Stax house band behind Otis Redding and Sam & Dave. Guitarist Matt "Guitar" Murphy had played with Memphis Slim and Howlin' Wolf. The horns came from the *SNL* band, including Lou Marini, Tom Malone and Alan Rubin.

The film, directed by John Landis and released on June 20, 1980, put living legends on screen: Aretha Franklin singing "Think" in a soul-food diner, Ray Charles in a music store, James Brown preaching, Cab Calloway in a white tuxedo and John Lee Hooker on Chicago's Maxwell Street. Several of them were in a quiet stretch of their careers, and the film introduced them to a new, young audience.

The Blues Brothers did what the British bands did in the 1960s: they covered this music with obvious love and pointed fans back to the originals. Their sources reach into almost every chapter of this guide, from Cab Calloway and Robert Johnson to Elvis and Taj Mahal.

Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Much of the Southern soul the Blues Brothers loved was cut in a small town on the Tennessee River. Rick Hall started FAME Studios in 1959 and moved it to Muscle Shoals in 1960; its first hit was a 1961 single by Arthur Alexander, a singer the Beatles and the Rolling Stones both later covered. Wilson Pickett came down to cut "Land of 1000 Dances" and "Mustang Sally" (1966), and Etta James recorded "Tell Mama" (1967) there.

In January 1967, Atlantic's Jerry Wexler brought Aretha Franklin to FAME. The session fell apart after one day in an argument, but it produced "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)," the record that made her a star. The house band behind these records was a group of local white session players who became known as the Swampers: keyboardist Barry Beckett, drummer Roger Hawkins, bassist David Hood and guitarist Jimmy Johnson. Many listeners assumed the band was Black. A young Duane Allman camped in FAME's parking lot in 1968 to get session work, and his guitar on Wilson Pickett's "Hey Jude" (Chapter 9) got him noticed.

In 1969 the Swampers left FAME and opened Muscle Shoals Sound Studio at 3614 Jackson Highway in nearby Sheffield, with backing from Wexler. The Rolling Stones cut "Brown Sugar" and "Wild Horses" there in December 1969, followed by the Staple Singers' "I'll Take You There" (1972), Paul Simon's "Kodachrome" (1973) and Bob Seger's "Old Time Rock and Roll" (1978). Lynyrd Skynyrd saluted the band in "Sweet Home Alabama": "Muscle Shoals has got the Swampers." W.C. Handy, the "Father of the Blues" in Chapter 3, was born in Florence, just across the river.

THE PLAYLIST

Each original plays first, followed by the version from the film or soundtrack. Tracks 24 to 40 trace the Southern soul studios behind the band's sound: Stax in Memphis, FAME and Muscle Shoals Sound in Alabama, and New Orleans. Song titles open the track in Spotify.

Tracks	Original	Original artist	Blues Brothers version or connection	Listen for
1-2	She Caught the Katy	Taj Mahal, 1968	She Caught the Katy	The opening credits: Taj Mahal's easygoing country blues becomes a horn-driven shuffle
3-4	Peter Gunn	Henry Mancini, 1958	Peter Gunn Theme	A TV crime-jazz riff that works as a blues-rock guitar line

Tracks	Original	Original artist	Blues Brothers version or connection	Listen for
5-6	Gimme Some Lovin'	The Spencer Davis Group, 1966	Gimme Some Lovin'	British R&B, with Steve Winwood's organ riff, played back by Stax veterans
7	Boom Boom	John Lee Hooker, 1962	Performed in the film on Chicago's Maxwell Street (not on the soundtrack album)	Hooker's stop-time boogie, straight from Chapter 5
8-9	Shake a Tail Feather	The Five Du-Tones, 1963	Shake a Tail Feather, with Ray Charles	A dance-craze roll call; Ray Charles leads it from behind a music-store counter
10-11	Everybody Needs Somebody to Love	Solomon Burke, 1964	Everybody Needs Somebody to Love	Burke's preacher-style soul, turned into the band's big rave-up
12-13	Old Landmark	A gospel standard; Aretha Franklin with Rev. James Cleveland, 1972	The Old Landmark, with James Brown and the Rev. James Cleveland Choir	Church call and response from Chapter 4, with the same choir leader in both versions
14-15	Think	Aretha Franklin, 1968	Think, Aretha Franklin	The same singer 12 years apart: compare the 1968 hit with her 1980 film version
16-17	Rawhide	Frankie Laine, 1959	Theme from Rawhide	A TV western theme; country and blues crossing again, as in Chapter 4

Tracks	Original	Original artist	Blues Brothers version or connection	Listen for
18-19	Minnie the Moocher	Cab Calloway, 1931	Minnie the Moocher, Cab Calloway	Calloway sings his own hit 49 years later; call and response with the audience (Chapter 3)
20-21	Sweet Home Chicago	Robert Johnson, 1936	Sweet Home Chicago	Johnson's Delta song becomes a Chicago blues anthem (Chapter 2)
22-23	Jailhouse Rock	Elvis Presley, 1957	Jailhouse Rock	Leiber and Stoller's rock and roll, sung in a prison as the film's finale (Chapter 7)
24	Green Onions	Booker T. & the M.G.'s, 1962	Steve Cropper and Duck Dunn of this Stax house band became the Blues Brothers' guitarist and bassist	The Stax groove the Blues Brothers band was built on
25	Something's Got a Hold on Me	Etta James, 1962	Chicago, Chess	Gospel turning into soul
26	Big Chief	Professor Longhair, 1964	New Orleans	Written by Earl King, who sings on it; built on Mardi Gras Indian chants
27	In the Midnight Hour	Wilson Pickett, 1965	Co-written by Steve Cropper	Recorded at Stax, with Cropper and the M.G.'s backing Pickett
28	Papa's Got a Brand New Bag	James Brown, 1965	James Brown preaches in the film	Soul turning into funk
29	Respect	Otis Redding, 1965	Stax, Memphis	Otis's own song, before Aretha made it hers

Tracks	Original	Original artist	Blues Brothers version or connection	Listen for
30	Land of 1000 Dances	Wilson Pickett, 1966	FAME Studios, Muscle Shoals	Pickett's biggest hit from his Muscle Shoals sessions
31	Mustang Sally	Wilson Pickett, 1966	FAME Studios, Muscle Shoals	A bar band standard ever since
32	Working in the Coal Mine	Lee Dorsey, 1966	New Orleans	Written and produced by Allen Toussaint
33	Tell It Like It Is	Aaron Neville, 1966	New Orleans	Aaron Neville's falsetto took it to No. 1 on the R&B chart
34	Try a Little Tenderness	Otis Redding, 1966	Stax, Memphis	An old pop ballad that Otis builds from a whisper to a shout, with Booker T. and the M.G.'s
35	★ I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)	Aretha Franklin, 1967	FAME Studios, Muscle Shoals	Cut in one day in January 1967 before the session fell apart; the record that made her a star
36	Tell Mama	Etta James, 1967	FAME Studios, Muscle Shoals	Etta's comeback, with the FAME house band behind her
37	Respect	Aretha Franklin, 1967	Aretha, with Muscle Shoals players	Aretha adds "R-E-S-P-E-C-T" and makes Otis's song an anthem
38	Piece of My Heart	Erma Franklin, 1967	Aretha's sister	Aretha's older sister's original, a year before Janis Joplin
39	(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay	Otis Redding, 1968	Co-written by Steve Cropper	Otis's only No. 1, released after his death in 1967

Tracks	Original	Original artist	Blues Brothers version or connection	Listen for
40	I'll Take You There	The Staple Singers, 1972	Muscle Shoals Sound	Gospel turned into a No. 1 hit; the Swampers play the groove

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Blues Brothers band was built from real Stax and Chicago blues veterans, not session players for a comedy act.
- The film put Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, James Brown, Cab Calloway and John Lee Hooker in front of a new generation.
- Like the British bands before them, the Blues Brothers sent fans back to the originals, which is exactly how this guide began.

The Gear: From Diddley Bow to Marshall Stack

Every era in this guide has its own sound, and much of that sound came from the instruments players could afford and the amplifiers they could plug into. This section follows the gear from homemade instruments and mail-order guitars to the Stratocaster, the Marshall stack, the effects pedal and today's digital amp modelers, and it covers the rest of the band too: harmonica, piano and organ, bass, drums and horns.



THE FIRST INSTRUMENTS

The **banjo** came first. It was developed by enslaved Africans in the Caribbean and North American colonies, modeled on West African gourd lutes such as the akonting, and at first it was played only by the enslaved. From the 1830s, white performers in blackface took it over in minstrel shows, and the ridicule that came with minstrelsy pushed many Black musicians toward the guitar. The **fiddle** was the other dance instrument of the plantation South and survived in early string bands and the Mississippi Sheiks.

For many children in the Delta, the first instrument was a **diddley bow**: one wire stretched along a board or the side of a house, plucked with one hand while the other slid a bottle or piece of metal along the string. Similar one-string instruments came from West Africa, and that sliding technique carried straight into blues slide guitar. Bo Diddley may have taken his stage name from it.

The **harmonica** was cheap enough to carry in a pocket. Hohner's Marine Band, introduced in 1896, became the standard blues harp, and players learned to bend its reeds with breath and

tongue to reach the "blue" notes between the ones it was built to play. Sonny Terry's whoops on "John Henry" show what one could do with no amplifier at all.

Jug bands made music from household objects: a whiskey jug blown like a tuba, a washboard for rhythm, a washtub bass, spoons and bones. They grew out of vaudeville and medicine shows around 1900; Louisville bands recorded first, in 1923, and in Memphis the Memphis Jug Band and Gus Cannon's Jug Stompers recorded from 1927. The **piano** ruled the barrelhouses and rent parties, where boogie-woogie players like Pine Top Smith ("Pine Top's Boogie Woogie") turned the left hand into a rhythm section.

ACOUSTIC GUITARS: FROM STELLA TO MARTIN

Mail order put real guitars within reach. Sears listed guitars in its catalog from 1894 and sold steel-string models for $1.89 by 1908, and Muddy Waters started on a used Sears Stella he bought in 1930. Steel strings were louder than gut, and louder mattered at a dance or on a street corner. Players moved up to better guitars when they could, and by the 1940s many of the best-known bluesmen owned a Gibson or a Martin.

Maker	Known for	Blues players
Stella (Oscar Schmidt, New Jersey), with Harmony, Kay and Regal	Cheap birch guitars sold by mail order, many of them 12-strings; a Stella averaged about $1.50	Lead Belly (Stella 12-strings), Blind Willie McTell (Stella, Regal and Harmony 12-strings), Charley Patton, early Muddy Waters, Lightnin' Hopkins (Kay and Harmony)
National, and the Dobro	Metal-bodied resonator guitars from the late 1920s, about four times louder than a wooden guitar	Tampa Red (first blues records on one, 1928), Son House, Bukka White, Memphis Minnie
Gibson (Kalamazoo, Michigan)	Small-bodied L-1 and Kalamazoo KG-14 in the 1920s and 1930s; the J-45 and the big J-200 later	Robert Johnson (photographed with an L-1 and a KG-14), Lightnin' Hopkins and Mississippi John Hurt (J-45s), Rev. Gary Davis (J-200s)
Martin (Nazareth, Pennsylvania, since 1833)	X-bracing strong enough for steel strings; the 14-fret OM in 1929 and the big-bodied dreadnought in 1931	Lonnie Johnson (00-21), Big Bill Broonzy (000-28), Brownie McGhee (D-18), Lead Belly (000-18, 1949), Eric Clapton (a 1939 000-42 on *MTV Unplugged*, 1992)

Tampa Red, Son House and Bukka White all played Nationals: the design John Dopyera and his partners built in Los Angeles threw sound forward like a horn, and the metal body sang under a slide. **Slide** players used whatever was at hand, a bottleneck snapped off and worn

on a finger, a pocketknife or a length of pipe. Blind Willie Johnson's "Dark Was the Night, Cold Was the Ground" is the high point of the acoustic slide era; four decades later Duane Allman played slide with a glass medicine bottle on "Statesboro Blues (Live at Fillmore East)."

PLUGGING IN

The electric guitar started as a lap steel. The Rickenbacker "Frying Pan," invented in 1931, used a magnetic pickup to turn string vibrations into a signal for an amplifier. Gibson's hollow-body ES-150 followed in 1936, and in 1939 Charlie Christian used one in Benny Goodman's band to play long solos like a horn. T-Bone Walker was recording on his own electric guitar by 1942 and brought that single-note lead style to the blues; hear it on "Call It Stormy Monday (But Tuesday Is Just as Bad)" (1947).

In Chicago, plugging in was a matter of survival. An acoustic guitar could not be heard in a loud, crowded club, so Muddy Waters and the players who followed him north went electric (Chapter 5). The harmonica followed: Little Walter cupped a small microphone against his harp, plugged it into a guitar amplifier and pushed it past its limits for a thick, distorted tone no harmonica had made before. His instrumental "Juke" spent eight weeks at No. 1 on the R&B chart in 1952.

THE BIG NAMES: TELE, STRAT, LES PAUL AND THE 335

In the 1950s, Leo Fender, a radio repairman in Fullerton, California, and Gibson in Kalamazoo, Michigan, built the guitars that still dominate blues and rock. A solid body could be played loud without the howling feedback of a hollow guitar, and it was simpler to build and repair.

Guitar	Year	Maker	What made it different	Players in this guide
Telecaster	1950	Fender	Fender's first solid body, sold as the Broadcaster until 1951: a plain slab body, a bolt-on neck and a bright, cutting tone	Muddy Waters; Albert Collins ("Frosty"); Steve Cropper ("Green Onions"); Keith Richards; Jimmy Page in the Yardbirds
Stratocaster	1954	Fender	Contoured body, three pickups and a tremolo arm	Buddy Holly ("That'll Be the Day"); Buddy Guy; Otis Rush; Jimi Hendrix ("Voodoo Child (Slight Return)"); Eric Clapton; Stevie Ray Vaughan ("Pride and Joy")

Guitar	Year	Maker	What made it different	Players in this guide
Les Paul	1952	Gibson, with guitarist Les Paul	Heavy mahogany body with a carved maple top; humbucking pickups from 1957 gave a thick, sustaining tone. Gibson dropped the design in 1961 and brought it back in 1968 because blues rock players had made it famous	Freddie King; Eric Clapton on the Bluesbreakers album ("Hideaway"); Mike Bloomfield; Peter Green; Jimmy Page ("Whole Lotta Love"); Duane Allman; Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top; Joe Bonamassa
ES-335 family	1958	Gibson	Semi-hollow body with a solid center block: the warmth of a hollow guitar with less feedback	B.B. King, whose "Lucille" guitars were ES-355s ("The Thrill Is Gone"); Chuck Berry; Freddie King in later years

A few other guitars became trademarks: Bo Diddley's homemade-looking rectangular Gretsch, Albert King's Gibson Flying V, and the Gibson SG that Derek Trucks plays slide on in the Tedeschi Trucks Band.

THE REST OF THE BAND

Piano and organ. The barrelhouse piano moved north with the Great Migration and into the bands: Otis Spann played with Muddy Waters, Johnnie Johnson with Chuck Berry, and in New Orleans Professor Longhair ("Tipitina") mixed blues with rumba rhythms. Laurens Hammond's electric organ arrived in 1935, built to replace pipe organs in churches; the B-3 model followed in 1955, and Don Leslie's rotating speaker gave it its swirling sound. It carried gospel into soul and blues rock: Booker T. Jones on "Green Onions," Steve Winwood on "Gimme Some Lovin'" and Gregg Allman with the Allman Brothers Band.

Bass. Early bands used a washtub bass or a tuba, then the upright string bass; Willie Dixon played upright on many Chess sessions while also writing the songs. Fender's Precision Bass, introduced in 1951, put frets on a solid-body bass with its own amplifier, so the player could hit exact notes, be heard over electric guitars and move around the stage. By the mid-1960s the electric bass was standard in blues, soul and rock.

Drums. Many early blues records had no drummer at all: rhythm came from a washboard, a jug or a stomping foot. In Chicago, jazz-trained Fred Below built much of the backbeat of the Chess sound, playing behind Little Walter, Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Chuck Berry on "Johnny B. Goode." In New Orleans, Earl Palmer's backbeat drove Fats Domino, Professor Longhair and Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti." The Allman Brothers Band and the Tedeschi Trucks Band both play with two drummers.

Horns. In the 1940s the saxophone moved to the front. Jump blues bands were small combos built around one or more saxophones, and Illinois Jacquet's screaming tenor solo on Lionel Hampton's "Flying Home" (1942) launched the honking R&B sax. Louis Jordan led his Tympany Five on alto sax ("Caldonia"), and early rock and roll records kept a sax solo where a guitar solo would later go. In the 1960s, Stax and Atlantic records put tight horn sections behind Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett ("In the Midnight Hour"). The Blues Brothers band carried a full horn section (Chapter 12), and the Tedeschi Trucks Band tours with one today.

AMPLIFIERS, OLD TO NEW

Early amplifiers were small and meant to sound clean, and distortion arrived by accident. On "Rocket 88" (1951), a guitar amp damaged on the drive to Memphis was stuffed with paper, and Sam Phillips liked the fuzzy sound enough to keep it (Chapter 6). Link Wray punched holes in his speakers for the raw tone of "Rumble" (1958). From then on, players wanted amplifiers that could get both louder and dirtier on purpose.

Era	Landmark amps	What changed	Who used them
1930s and 1940s	Small amps sold with the first electric guitars, such as Gibson's EH-150 alongside the ES-150 (1936)	Volume for the first time, a few clean watts	Charlie Christian, T-Bone Walker
1950s	Fender "tweed" amps: the Champ, the Deluxe and the Bassman (1952; the classic 4×10 version 1958 to 1960)	Cheap and portable; turned up, they broke into a warm growl	Chicago guitar players; harmonica players adopted the Bassman
1960s	Fender "blackface" Twin Reverb, Super Reverb and Vibroverb; Vox AC30 (about 1960); Marshall JTM45 (1963) and the Marshall stack	Fender went louder and cleaner, with reverb built in from 1963; the British amps were built to roar	The Shadows and the British beat groups (Vox), Eric Clapton, Pete Townshend and Jimi Hendrix (Marshall)
1970s	Mesa/Boogie, from Randall Smith's repair shop (1969; high-gain Boogie 1972); Howard Dumble's hand-built amps	Extra gain stages gave distortion at any volume; the first boutique amps	Carlos Santana, who named the Boogie; Keith Richards; Stevie Ray Vaughan's Dumble "Steel String Singer" (1984)

Era	Landmark amps	What changed	Who used them
1980s and 1990s	Reissues of 1950s and 1960s classics; solid-state and rack gear; Tech 21 SansAmp (1989)	Players went back to vintage tube designs; the first analog copies of tube tone	Stevie Ray Vaughan (1964 Vibroverb, Super Reverbs, then '59 Bassman reissues in 1990)
1998 to today	Line 6 POD (1998), Fractal Axe-Fx (2006), Kemper Profiler (2011), Neural DSP Quad Cortex (2020)	Digital models of famous amps; "profiling" copies a player's own amp	Common on stages and in home studios: in 2025 Reverb reported traditional amps outsold modelers four to one, but the five best-selling amp models were digital

The Marshall story shows how the sound got so big. In London, drum shop owner Jim Marshall had his team copy the Fender Bassman circuit, and the JTM45 went on sale in 1963; Eric Clapton used the combo version with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. Pete Townshend of the Who pushed Marshall for 100 watts and bigger cabinets, which led to the Marshall stack, an amplifier head on two 4×12 speaker cabinets, and Hendrix bought three stacks in 1966. A Les Paul or a Strat turned all the way up through a Marshall became the sound of late-1960s blues rock, from Cream to Led Zeppelin.

EFFECTS, THEN AND NOW

The first effects were built into amplifiers or sold as add-on boxes; the transistor made the foot pedal possible in the 1960s, and the 1970s brought small, cheap stompboxes. Today a player can carry a board of boutique pedals or have every effect inside one digital unit.

Effect	Arrived	What it does	Hear it, or who used it
Tremolo	About 1941 (DeArmond add-on), later built into amps	Pulses the volume up and down	Muddy Waters and Bo Diddley in the 1950s
Slapback echo	Early 1950s: Les Paul's tape tricks, then Ray Butts's EchoSonic amp	One quick repeat of each note	Scotty Moore behind Elvis Presley
Spring reverb	Fender Reverb Unit (1961); built into Fender amps from 1963	The sound of a bigger room	Almost every blues guitarist since

Effect	Arrived	What it does	Hear it, or who used it
Fuzz	Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz-Tone (1962); Fuzz Face (1966) and Tone Bender	Clips the signal into a thick buzz	"(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction"; Jimi Hendrix
Wah-wah	Vox Wah-Wah (1967), Cry Baby (1968)	A foot-swept, voice-like "wah"	"Voodoo Child (Slight Return)"; Eric Clapton in Cream
Rotating speaker and Uni-Vibe	Leslie speaker (late 1930s, built for the Hammond organ); Uni-Vibe pedal (1969)	A swirling, throbbing sound	The organ on "Gimme Some Lovin'"; Hendrix; Stevie Ray Vaughan's Fender Vibratone
Octave fuzz	Roger Mayer's Octavia (about 1967)	Adds a note an octave above	Jimi Hendrix; Stevie Ray Vaughan
Overdrive	Boss OD-1 (1977), Ibanez Tube Screamer (about 1980), Klon Centaur (1994), Boss Blues Driver (1995)	Pushes a tube amp into smooth distortion	Stevie Ray Vaughan's Tube Screamer ("Pride and Joy")
Delay	Tape Echoplex (1960s); Boss DD-2 (1983), the first digital delay pedal	Repeats that fade away	Lead guitarists in every style
Pitch shifting	DigiTech Whammy (1989)	Bends or shifts the pitch by foot	Jack White, who played the White Stripes' best-known riff an octave down
Looper and all-in-one	Boss RC-20 Loop Station (2001); digital modelers with every effect built in	Records and repeats a part live; one box replaces a pedalboard	Solo performers; today's touring and home players

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Blues players have always used what they could get and found ways to make it louder: the diddley bow, the mail-order Stella, the National, then the electric guitar.
- Amplification changed the music itself. Chicago blues, the amplified harmonica, the electric bass, the backbeat and distortion all came from plugging in.

- The Telecaster, Stratocaster, Les Paul, Hammond B-3, Precision Bass and Marshall stack were all built between 1950 and the mid-1960s, and they are still standard gear today, now often alongside digital amps and pedals.

Women in the Blues

Women made the first blues records, were the biggest blues stars of the 1920s and have shaped every era since, often while men who covered their songs earned more of the money and the credit. The playlists include 51 songs led by women.

Era	Women	Their story	Hear it
1920s: the classic blues queens	Mamie Smith, Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, Sippie Wallace, Alberta Hunter	Mamie Smith's 1920 record opened the blues market. Ma Rainey, the "Mother of the Blues," and Bessie Smith, the "Empress of the Blues," were the decade's biggest stars. Bessie's first hit was written by Alberta Hunter with pianist Lovie Austin.	"Crazy Blues", "Downhearted Blues", "See See Rider Blues"
1920s to 1940s: guitar and gospel pioneers	Memphis Minnie, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Mahalia Jackson, Maybelle Carter, Elizabeth Cotten	Memphis Minnie played guitar as hard as any man; Big Bill Broonzy said she beat him in a cutting contest. Sister Rosetta Tharpe played electric guitar in the 1940s and inspired Chuck Berry, Little Richard and Johnny Cash. Maybelle Carter's guitar style shaped country music, and Elizabeth Cotten wrote a folk standard as a girl.	"When the Levee Breaks", "Strange Things Happening Every Day", "Freight Train"
1940s and 1950s: the R&B queens	Dinah Washington, Big Mama Thornton, Ruth Brown, LaVern Baker, Big Maybelle, Wanda Jackson	Big Mama Thornton cut "Hound Dog" four years before Elvis and wrote "Ball and Chain" before Janis Joplin sang it. Ruth Brown's hits built Atlantic Records, yet she fought for years for unpaid royalties, a fight that helped create the Rhythm and Blues Foundation in 1988. Big Maybelle recorded "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" two years before Jerry Lee Lewis.	"Evil Gal Blues", "(Mama) He Treats Your Daughter Mean", "Jim Dandy"

Era	Women	Their story	Hear it
1960s: soul, Chicago and rock	Koko Taylor, Etta James, Irma Thomas, Aretha Franklin, Mavis Staples, Janis Joplin, Tina Turner	Koko Taylor became the Queen of Chicago blues at Chess. Etta James and Aretha Franklin both found their sound with the FAME house band in Muscle Shoals. Janis Joplin carried Big Mama Thornton's song to a mass audience at Monterey, and Tina Turner turned "Proud Mary" into a soul revue.	"Wang Dang Doodle", "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)", "I'll Take You There"
1970s to 2000s: carrying it forward	Bonnie Raitt, Susan Tedeschi, Shemekia Copeland	Bonnie Raitt played slide guitar, toured with older blues singers and helped bring Sippie Wallace back to the stage. Susan Tedeschi and Shemekia Copeland brought big classic blues voices to a new generation.	"Love Me Like a Man", "It Hurt So Bad", "It's 2 A.M."
Today	Susan Tedeschi, Brittany Howard, Samantha Fish, Larkin Poe, Joanna Connor, Grace Potter	Women now lead some of the biggest bands in blues rock: Susan Tedeschi fronts the Tedeschi Trucks Band, Brittany Howard led Alabama Shakes, and Larkin Poe's Rebecca and Megan Lovell play slide and roots blues.	"Midnight in Harlem", "Hold On", "Bad Spell"

PLAY THEM AS A SET

Every song in the playlists led by a woman, chapter by chapter:

- **Chapter 1:** "Trouble So Hard" (Vera Hall, 1937); "Freight Train" (Elizabeth Cotten, 1958)
- **Chapter 2:** "When the Levee Breaks" (Kansas Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie, 1929)
- **Chapter 3:** "Crazy Blues" (Mamie Smith, 1920); "Downhearted Blues" (Bessie Smith, 1923); "See See Rider Blues" (Ma Rainey, 1924); "Wild Women Don't Have the Blues" (Ida Cox, 1924); "St. Louis Blues" (Bessie Smith with Louis Armstrong, 1925); "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" (Ma Rainey, 1927); "I'm a Mighty Tight Woman" (Sippie Wallace, 1929); "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out" (Bessie Smith, 1929); "Fine and Mellow" (Billie Holiday, 1939)
- **Chapter 4:** "Wildwood Flower" (The Carter Family, 1928); "Can the Circle Be Unbroken (Bye and Bye)" (The Carter Family, 1935); "Rock Me" (Sister Rosetta Tharpe, 1938); "Strange Things Happening Every Day" (Sister Rosetta Tharpe, 1944); "Move On Up a Little Higher" (Mahalia Jackson, 1947)
- **Chapter 5:** "Wang Dang Doodle" (Koko Taylor, 1966); "I'd Rather Go Blind" (Etta James, 1967)

- **Chapter 6:** "Evil Gal Blues" (Dinah Washington, 1943); "Hound Dog" (Big Mama Thornton, 1952); "(Mama) He Treats Your Daughter Mean" (Ruth Brown, 1953); "The Wallflower (Dance with Me, Henry)" (Etta James, 1955)
- **Chapter 7:** "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" (Big Maybelle, 1955); "Jim Dandy" (LaVern Baker, 1956); "Let's Have a Party" (Wanda Jackson, 1958)
- **Chapter 8:** "Time Is on My Side" (Irma Thomas, 1964); "Ball and Chain" (Big Brother and the Holding Company, 1968); "Piece of My Heart" (Big Brother and the Holding Company, 1968)
- **Chapter 9:** "Proud Mary" (Ike & Tina Turner, 1971); "Love Me Like a Man" (Bonnie Raitt, 1972)
- **Chapter 10:** "Thing Called Love" (Bonnie Raitt, 1989); "It Hurt So Bad" (Susan Tedeschi, 1998); "It's 2 A.M." (Shemekia Copeland, 2000)
- **Chapter 11:** "Paris (Ooh La La)" (Grace Potter and the Nocturnals, 2010); "Bound for Glory" (Tedeschi Trucks Band, 2011); "Midnight in Harlem" (Tedeschi Trucks Band, 2011); "Hold On" (Alabama Shakes, 2012); "Don't Wanna Fight" (Alabama Shakes, 2015); "Bulletproof" (Samantha Fish, 2019); "Destination" (Joanna Connor, 2021); "Bad Spell" (Larkin Poe, 2022)
- **Chapter 12:** "Something's Got a Hold on Me" (Etta James, 1962); "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)" (Aretha Franklin, 1967); "Respect" (Aretha Franklin, 1967); "Piece of My Heart" (Erma Franklin, 1967); "Tell Mama" (Etta James, 1967); "Think" (Aretha Franklin, 1968); "Old Landmark" (Aretha Franklin with Rev. James Cleveland, 1972); "I'll Take You There" (The Staple Singers, 1972); "Think" (Aretha Franklin with the Blues Brothers, 1980)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The blues began as a woman's art on record: the 1920s stars were Mamie Smith, Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith.
- Women wrote and first recorded songs that men later made famous, from "Hound Dog" to "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On."
- Today women lead many of the bands carrying the blues forward, including the Tedeschi Trucks Band that started this guide.

Song Family Trees

Playlist: Roots of Rock 13: Song Family Trees

Same song, different hands. The blues was built on borrowing: a verse, a riff or a whole song passed from one singer to the next, and each one changed it. This section follows 86 songs from the first recording to the versions that came after. Playlist 13 plays every family in order, oldest version first, with the families arranged by the date of the original: 183 tracks, 98 of them also in the chapter playlists.

A few stories are missing a link. B.B. King's "The Thrill Is Gone" (1969) remade a 1951 record by Roy Hawkins that is not on Spotify. And credit did not always follow the song: Willie Dixon and Howlin' Wolf were added to the credits of Led Zeppelin songs only after they went to court.

OUT OF THE DELTA AND THE CHURCH: ORIGINALS FROM 1922 TO 1941

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"St. Louis Blues"	W.C. Handy's Memphis Blues Band, 1922, then Bessie Smith with Louis Armstrong, 1925	W.C. Handy's band plays it as a dance tune. Three years later Bessie Smith sings it slow, with Louis Armstrong's cornet answering each line.
"It's Nobody's Fault but Mine"	Blind Willie Johnson, 1927, then Led Zeppelin, 1976	Blind Willie Johnson moans a gospel song over slide guitar. Led Zeppelin keep the slide line and turn it into stop and start hard rock, with Jimmy Page's guitar echoing Robert Plant's voice.
"Jesus Make Up My Dying Bed" / "In My Time of Dying"	Blind Willie Johnson, 1927, then Led Zeppelin, 1975	A gospel prayer for a peaceful death becomes an 11 minute slide guitar epic on Physical Graffiti, the longest studio track Zeppelin released.
"Matchbox Blues" / "Matchbox"	Blind Lemon Jefferson, 1927, then Carl Perkins, 1957, then The Beatles, 1964	Blind Lemon Jefferson's lines become Carl Perkins's rockabilly at Sun, and the Beatles cut Perkins's version with Ringo Starr singing.

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Statesboro Blues"	Blind Willie McTell, 1928, then Taj Mahal, 1968, then The Allman Brothers Band, 1971	Blind Willie McTell's 12 string ragtime blues. Taj Mahal electrifies it with Jesse Ed Davis on slide, and the Allman Brothers build their version on Taj's, with Duane Allman on slide.
"Bull Doze Blues" / "Going Up the Country"	Henry Thomas, 1928, then Canned Heat, 1968	Henry Thomas plays panpipes and guitar in 1928. Canned Heat borrow his melody, played on flute, for a Woodstock era hit.
"That's No Way to Get Along" / "Prodigal Son"	Robert Wilkins, 1929, then The Rolling Stones, 1968	Robert Wilkins later became a minister and reworked this tune as a gospel parable about the prodigal son. The Rolling Stones follow that version closely on Beggars Banquet.
"When the Levee Breaks"	Kansas Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie, 1929, then Led Zeppelin, 1971	Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe's acoustic duet about the 1927 Mississippi flood. Zeppelin slow it to a crawl, with John Bonham's drums recorded in a stairwell at Headley Grange.
"Preachin' the Blues, Pt. 1" / "Preachin' Blues"	Son House, 1930, then Larkin Poe, 2017	Son House shouts and pounds his guitar. Larkin Poe's Rebecca and Megan Lovell rebuild it with lap steel, stomp and sister harmonies.
"Minnie the Moocher"	Cab Calloway and His Orchestra, 1931, then Cab Calloway with the Blues Brothers, 1980	Cab Calloway's hi de ho call and response, then the same call 49 years later in The Blues Brothers, with Calloway in a white tuxedo leading the band.
"Black Betty"	James "Iron Head" Baker, 1933, then Ram Jam, 1977	A prison work song sung without instruments, recorded by John Lomax. Ram Jam turn it into a 1977 hard rock hit with a stomping guitar riff.
"Baby Please Don't Go"	Big Joe Williams, 1935, then AC/DC, 1975	Big Joe Williams's Delta blues becomes a high speed hard rock opener on AC/DC's first Australian album.
"Cross Road Blues" / "Crossroads"	Robert Johnson, 1936, then Cream, 1968	Robert Johnson alone with his guitar. Cream play it live at Winterland, and Eric Clapton's solos turn a prayer at the crossroads into a guitar showcase.

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Sweet Home Chicago"	Robert Johnson, 1936, then The Blues Brothers, 1980	Johnson's song about heading north became the anthem of Chicago blues, and the Blues Brothers made it a party song.
"Trouble So Hard" / "Natural Blues"	Vera Hall, 1937, then Moby, 1999	Vera Hall's unaccompanied spiritual, recorded by Alan Lomax. Moby samples her voice over a dance beat, and his album Play sold millions.
"Hellhound on My Trail"	Robert Johnson, 1937, then Eric Clapton, 2004	Johnson's most haunted song. Clapton plays it straight and respectful on his tribute album Me and Mr. Johnson.
"Love in Vain"	Robert Johnson, 1937, then The Rolling Stones, 1969	Johnson's goodbye at a train station. The Stones slow it into a country blues with Ry Cooder on mandolin.
"Stop Breakin' Down Blues"	Robert Johnson, 1937, then The Rolling Stones, 1972	Johnson's fast boogie. The Stones cut it raw on Exile on Main St., with Mick Taylor on slide.
"Traveling Riverside Blues"	Robert Johnson, 1937, then Led Zeppelin, 1969	Johnson's slide blues, cut by Zeppelin for a BBC radio session in 1969 with Page on slide; it was first released in 1990.
"The Gallis Pole" / "Gallows Pole"	Lead Belly, 1939, then Led Zeppelin, 1970	Lead Belly's 12 string folk song about a condemned man begging his family to save him. Zeppelin build it from acoustic guitar, banjo and mandolin into a driving folk rock song.
"It Hurts Me Too"	Tampa Red, 1940, then Elmore James, 1957	Tampa Red's 1940 Chicago blues. Elmore James makes it his own with a crying slide guitar, and it became one of his best known records.
"Key to the Highway"	Big Bill Broonzy, 1941, then Derek and the Dominos, 1970	Big Bill Broonzy's road song. Derek and the Dominos catch a jam already under way, with Clapton and Duane Allman trading lines.

RHYTHM AND BLUES TO ROCK AND ROLL: ORIGINALS FROM 1946 TO 1959

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"That's All Right"	Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup, 1946, then Elvis Presley, 1954	Arthur Crudup's 1946 blues. At Sun, Elvis speeds it up with Scotty Moore and Bill Black, and it becomes his first single.
"Call It Stormy Monday (But Tuesday Is Just as Bad)"	T-Bone Walker, 1947, then The Allman Brothers Band, 1971	T-Bone Walker's jazzy electric blues. The Allmans stretch it out at the Fillmore East, with Duane Allman and Dickey Betts taking long solos over Gregg Allman's organ.
"Move It On Over"	Hank Williams, 1947, then George Thorogood and the Destroyers, 1978	Hank Williams's 12 bar song about sleeping in the dog house. George Thorogood turns it into a slide guitar boogie.
"Crawlin' King Snake"	John Lee Hooker, 1949, then The Black Keys, 2021	John Lee Hooker's 1949 hit on an old Delta theme. The Black Keys cut it on Delta Kream with players from R.L. Burnside's band.
"Dust My Broom"	Elmore James, 1951, then ZZ Top, 1979	Elmore James's slide riff, first heard in a 1936 Robert Johnson song. Brian Jones played it the night Mick Jagger and Keith Richards met him at the Ealing Club. ZZ Top recut it in 1979. Mick Jagger sang it at Basil's Bar on Mustique in 2005.
"The Train Kept A-Rollin'"	Tiny Bradshaw, 1951, then Aerosmith, 1974	Tiny Bradshaw's jump blues. Rockabillies sped it up in the 1950s, the Yardbirds made it a rave up, and Aerosmith made it a hard rock staple.
"Hound Dog"	Big Mama Thornton, 1952, then Elvis Presley, 1956	Big Mama Thornton growls a song Leiber and Stoller wrote for her. Elvis changes the words and turns it into a rock and roll shout.
"Mystery Train"	Little Junior's Blue Flames, 1953, then Elvis Presley, 1955	Junior Parker's train blues at Sun. Elvis turns it into a rockabilly charge on his last Sun single.
"I Just Want to Make Love to You"	Muddy Waters, 1954, then Etta James, 1961, then The Rolling Stones, 1964, then Foghat, 1972, then Willie Dixon, 1973	Willie Dixon wrote it for Muddy Waters, who sings it slow and slinky. Etta James turns it into a big band soul number, the Stones speed it up on their first album, Foghat stretch it into a long boogie, and Dixon cuts his own version in 1973.

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Reconsider Baby"	Lowell Fulson, 1954, then Elvis Presley, 1960	Lowell Fulson's West Coast blues. Elvis cuts it in 1960, just out of the Army, as a loose late night blues with a honking saxophone.
"I'm a Man"	Bo Diddley, 1955, then The Yardbirds, 1965	Bo Diddley's stop time riff. Muddy Waters answered it with "Mannish Boy," and the Yardbirds turn it into a fast rave up.
"Mannish Boy"	Muddy Waters, 1955, then Muddy Waters, 1977	Muddy's answer to Bo Diddley. In 1977 Johnny Winter produced Hard Again, and Muddy recut it with the band whooping behind him.
"I Hear You Knockin'"	Smiley Lewis, 1955, then Dave Edmunds, 1970	Smiley Lewis's New Orleans rhythm and blues. Dave Edmunds gives it a rockabilly beat and takes it to No. 1 in Britain in 1970.
"Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On"	Big Maybelle, 1955, then Jerry Lee Lewis, 1957	Big Maybelle's version, produced by a young Quincy Jones. Jerry Lee Lewis pounds it out at Sun two years later.
"I Can't Quit You Baby"	Otis Rush, 1956, then Led Zeppelin, 1969, then The Rolling Stones, 2016	Willie Dixon wrote it and Otis Rush sang it on his first record. Led Zeppelin put it on their first album, and the Stones recut it in 2016 with Eric Clapton on guitar.
"Roll Over Beethoven"	Chuck Berry, 1956, then The Beatles, 1963	Chuck Berry's declaration that rock and roll has arrived. The Beatles cover it with George Harrison singing.
"Long Tall Sally"	Little Richard, 1956, then The Beatles, 1964	Little Richard's scream became Paul McCartney's showcase and the Beatles' closing song in concert.
"Honey Don't"	Carl Perkins, 1956, then The Beatles, 1964	Carl Perkins's B side to "Blue Suede Shoes." The Beatles cut it with Ringo Starr singing.
"Jailhouse Rock"	Elvis Presley, 1957, then The Blues Brothers, 1980	Elvis's prison dance number, written by Leiber and Stoller. The Blues Brothers play it to close the film, from inside a prison.
"All Your Love"	Magic Sam, 1957, then The Rolling Stones, 2016	Magic Sam's West Side Chicago sound, with tremolo guitar. The Stones recut it on Blue & Lonesome.

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"I'm a King Bee"	Slim Harpo, 1957, then The Rolling Stones, 1964	Slim Harpo's swampy Louisiana blues on Excello. The Stones cut it on their first album.
"Rock and Roll Music"	Chuck Berry, 1957, then The Beatles, 1964	Chuck Berry's manifesto for the new music. The Beatles cut it with John Lennon singing on Beatles for Sale.
"Not Fade Away"	Buddy Holly and the Crickets, 1957, then The Rolling Stones, 1964	Buddy Holly puts the Bo Diddley beat on a Texas rock and roll song. The Stones make it harder and add harmonica, and it became their first Top 10 hit in Britain.
"Texas Flood"	Larry Davis, 1958, then Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble, 1983	Larry Davis's slow Texas blues on Duke. Stevie Ray Vaughan made it the title song of his first album.
"Summertime Blues"	Eddie Cochran, 1958, then The Who, 1970	Eddie Cochran's teenage complaint, with handclaps. The Who turn it into a wall of power chords at Leeds.
"La Bamba"	Ritchie Valens, 1958, then Los Lobos, 1987	Ritchie Valens rocks a Mexican folk song. Los Lobos record it for the 1987 film about his life and end with a traditional acoustic coda; it went to No. 1.
"Peter Gunn"	Henry Mancini, 1958, then The Blues Brothers, 1980	Henry Mancini's television detective theme rides one prowling bass line. The Blues Brothers band turns it into a horn showcase.
"Rawhide"	Frankie Laine, 1959, then The Blues Brothers, 1980	Frankie Laine's cowboy television theme. In the film the Blues Brothers play it to win over a hostile country crowd at Bob's Country Bunker.

CHICAGO, SOUL AND THE BRITISH BLUES BOOM: ORIGINALS FROM 1960 TO 1965

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Messin' with the Kid"	Junior Wells, 1960, then Rory Gallagher, 1972	Junior Wells's Chicago party song. Rory Gallagher plays it fast and loud on his live album from Europe.

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Have You Ever Loved a Woman"	Freddie King, 1960, then Derek and the Dominos, 1970	Freddie King's slow blues about loving a friend's wife. On the Layla album Clapton sings it like a confession, with Duane Allman on slide.
"Little Red Rooster"	Howlin' Wolf, 1961, then The Rolling Stones, 1964	Willie Dixon wrote it for Howlin' Wolf, who plays the slide. The Stones' version went to No. 1 in Britain in 1964, a rare straight blues to top the charts.
"Hide Away"	Freddie King, 1961, then John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton, 1966	Freddie King's instrumental hit. Eric Clapton's version on the Beano album helped make him a guitar hero in Britain.
"You Need Love" / "Whole Lotta Love"	Muddy Waters, 1962, then Led Zeppelin, 1969	Willie Dixon wrote it for Muddy Waters. Zeppelin's song borrowed its words, and Dixon sued and settled in 1985; he is now credited.
"You Shook Me"	Muddy Waters, 1962, then Led Zeppelin, 1969	Muddy Waters's slow blues, written by Willie Dixon and J.B. Lenoir. Zeppelin stretch it out on their first album, with Plant's voice following Page's guitar.
"Twist and Shout"	The Isley Brothers, 1962, then The Beatles, 1963	The Isley Brothers' gospel flavored party record. The Beatles cut it at the end of a marathon day of recording, John Lennon's voice almost gone.
"Shake a Tail Feather"	The Five Du-Tones, 1963, then The Blues Brothers with Ray Charles, 1980	A 1963 dance record. In the film Ray Charles sings it in his music store while the band plays and the street dances.
"Bring It On Home"	Sonny Boy Williamson II, 1963, then Led Zeppelin, 1969	Sonny Boy Williamson's harmonica blues, written by Willie Dixon. Zeppelin open and close their version with a nod to Sonny Boy, with a hard rock riff in the middle; Dixon later won a credit.
"Everybody Needs Somebody to Love"	Solomon Burke, 1964, then The Rolling Stones, 1965, then The Blues Brothers, 1980	Solomon Burke preaches like a soul minister. The Stones cut it in 1965, and the Blues Brothers make it the film's big concert number.

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Gloria"	Them, 1964, then Patti Smith, 1975	Van Morrison's garage rock with Them. Patti Smith opens her first album with it, framed by her own poem.
"You Really Got Me"	The Kinks, 1964, then Van Halen, 1978	The Kinks' distorted riff, made with a slashed speaker. Van Halen's first single, with Eddie Van Halen's tapping and squeals.
"Killing Floor" / "The Lemon Song"	Howlin' Wolf, 1964, then Led Zeppelin, 1969	Howlin' Wolf's song, built on Hubert Sumlin's guitar riff. Zeppelin borrowed its riff and lines, and Wolf's publisher settled with them in 1972.
"Time Is on My Side"	Irma Thomas, 1964, then The Rolling Stones, 1964	Irma Thomas's New Orleans soul version. The Stones' cover became their first Top 10 hit in America.
"Death Letter Blues" / "Death Letter"	Son House, 1965, then The White Stripes, 2000	Son House's 1965 recording after he was found again in Rochester, New York. The White Stripes make it a two piece garage blues with Jack White on slide.
"You Gotta Move"	Mississippi Fred McDowell, 1965, then The Rolling Stones, 1971	Fred McDowell's slide guitar spiritual. The Stones cut it on Sticky Fingers as a slow acoustic blues.
"Respect"	Otis Redding, 1965, then Aretha Franklin, 1967	Otis Redding's plea from a working man. Aretha Franklin turns it into a demand, adds the spelled out chorus, and makes it an anthem.

SOUL, ROCK AND THE BLUES BROTHERS: ORIGINALS FROM 1966 TO 1983

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Gimme Some Lovin'"	The Spencer Davis Group, 1966, then The Blues Brothers, 1980	The Spencer Davis Group, with 18 year old Steve Winwood on organ and vocals. The Blues Brothers revive it on the film's soundtrack.
"Mustang Sally"	Wilson Pickett, 1966, then Buddy Guy with Jeff Beck, 1991	Wilson Pickett's FAME hit, a song Mack Rice wrote. Buddy Guy cuts it with Jeff Beck on his 1991 comeback album.

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Shake Your Hips"	Slim Harpo, 1966, then The Rolling Stones, 1972	Slim Harpo's hip shaking boogie. The Stones cut it on Exile on Main St. with a half whispered vocal.
"One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer"	John Lee Hooker, 1966, then George Thorogood and the Destroyers, 1977	John Lee Hooker's barroom talking blues. George Thorogood makes it a slide guitar showcase and his signature song.
"I'd Rather Go Blind"	Etta James, 1967, then Beth Hart and Joe Bonamassa, 2011	Etta James's ballad from her FAME sessions. Beth Hart and Joe Bonamassa bring it back on their 2011 album Don't Explain.
"Piece of My Heart"	Erma Franklin, 1967, then Big Brother and the Holding Company, 1968	Aretha Franklin's older sister sings the soul original. Janis Joplin turns it into a raw rock scream with Big Brother.
"Voodoo Child (Slight Return)"	The Jimi Hendrix Experience, 1968, then Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble, 1984	Jimi Hendrix's wah wah blues. Stevie Ray Vaughan recut it in 1984 and carried Hendrix's sound to a new generation.
"Think"	Aretha Franklin, 1968, then Aretha Franklin with the Blues Brothers, 1980	Aretha Franklin's demand for respect. In the film she sings it in her diner, trying to keep her husband out of the band.
"The Weight"	The Band, 1968, then The Band with the Staple Singers, 1978	The Band's song about a traveler doing favors in Nazareth. For The Last Waltz the Staple Singers take verses, with Mavis and Pops Staples trading lines.
"She Caught the Katy and Left Me a Mule to Ride" / "She Caught the Katy"	Taj Mahal, 1968, then The Blues Brothers, 1980	Taj Mahal's update of an old blues. The Blues Brothers play it over the film's opening scene.

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Black Magic Woman" / "Black Magic Woman / Gypsy Queen"	Fleetwood Mac, 1968, then Santana, 1970	Peter Green wrote it for Fleetwood Mac. Santana add Latin percussion and run it straight into Gábor Szabó's "Gypsy Queen."
"Hey Jude"	The Beatles, 1968, then Wilson Pickett, 1968	The Beatles' ballad. Months later Wilson Pickett cuts it at FAME with Duane Allman's guitar, a session that helped launch Duane's career.
"Proud Mary"	Creedence Clearwater Revival, 1969, then Ike & Tina Turner, 1971	Creedence Clearwater Revival's river song. Ike and Tina Turner start it slow and easy, then take off.
"Going Down"	Moloch, 1969, then Freddie King, 1971, then the Jeff Beck Group, 1972, then the Rolling Stones with John Mayer and Gary Clark Jr., 2012	Don Nix wrote it for Moloch, a Memphis band, in 1969. Nix then produced Freddie King's version, which made it a blues-rock standard, and Steve Cropper produced the Jeff Beck Group's in Memphis. The Rolling Stones played it with John Mayer and Gary Clark Jr. in 2012. Mick Jagger also sang it at Basil's Bar during the 2005 Mustique Blues Festival (watch the fan video).
"Layla"	Derek and the Dominos, 1970, then Eric Clapton, 1992	An electric love song with Duane Allman's slide and a long piano coda. On Unplugged, Clapton slows it into an acoustic shuffle.
"Angel from Montgomery"	John Prine, 1971, then Bonnie Raitt, 1974, then Susan Tedeschi, 1998	John Prine's folk song in the voice of a tired, middle-aged woman who dreams of escape. Bonnie Raitt slows it into a blues ballad and makes it her signature song, and Susan Tedeschi carries it to a new generation.
"Hello in There"	John Prine, 1971, then Bette Midler, 1972, then Emmylou Harris, 2021	Prine's song about an old couple left lonely after their children move away, from the same 1971 debut. Bette Midler sings it on her first album, and Emmylou Harris records it in 2021, a year after his death.

Song	The versions, oldest first	What changed
"Old Landmark"	Aretha Franklin with Rev. James Cleveland, 1972, then The Blues Brothers with James Brown and the Rev. James Cleveland Choir, 1980	Aretha Franklin's live gospel from her album Amazing Grace, with the Rev. James Cleveland. In the film James Brown preaches it with Cleveland's choir.
"Tennessee Whiskey"	George Jones, 1983, then Chris Stapleton, 2015	George Jones's country ballad. Chris Stapleton turns it into a slow soul blues, and his version became a much bigger hit than the original. His groove follows Etta James's "I'd Rather Go Blind": the same two chords and slow triplet sway.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Much of early rock's repertoire was borrowed straight from blues and rhythm and blues records, often within a few years of the original.
- The redo usually changes the beat and the sound more than the words: acoustic to electric, slow to fast, one voice to a full band.
- The songs keep moving. Originals from the 1920s and 1930s are still being recut today by Larkin Poe, the Black Keys and the Rolling Stones.

Conclusion: One Family Tree

From a field holler in 1939 to a Black Keys hit in 2011, the same musical DNA keeps showing up: call and response, bent notes, the 12-bar form and the riff. Each generation learned from the records of the one before, often across lines of race, region and nation.

FOUR PATTERNS ACROSS A CENTURY

Borrowing is the engine. Nearly every landmark in this guide reworks an earlier record. Robert Johnson reshaped Kokomo Arnold, Elvis reshaped Arthur Crudup, Cream reshaped Robert Johnson, and the White Stripes reshaped Son House. The blues treated songs as shared material, and rock inherited that habit.

Technology changed the sound at every step. Portable recorders preserved prison work songs. Cheap 78s spread Delta blues across the South. Amplifiers turned Muddy Waters's Delta style into Chicago blues, and a damaged amp gave "Rocket 88" its fuzz. LP reissues taught British teenagers, and streaming now puts a 1928 recording next to a 2019 one, as these playlists do.

Crossing over came with a cost. White artists often reached bigger audiences and bigger paychecks with Black music, from Elvis's "Hound Dog" to Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love." Those same covers sent listeners back to the originals. Lawsuits like Willie Dixon's in the 1980s began to restore credit and royalties.

The sacred and the secular keep trading places. Gospel fervor fed Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Little Richard and Ray Charles. It still drives hits like "Take Me to Church" and "Hold On." The blues was once called the devil's music, yet many of its singers learned in church.

THREADS TO FOLLOW ACROSS CHAPTERS

Follow one thread from start to finish to hear how a song or a sound changed hands. Arrows show the path through the playlists.

Thread	Where it starts	Where it goes
Boogie-woogie piano	Pine Top Smith, Pine Top's Boogie Woogie, 1928 (Ch. 3)	Big Joe Turner and Pete Johnson, Roll 'Em Pete, 1938 (Ch. 6) → Jerry Lee Lewis, Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On, 1957 (Ch. 7)
Statesboro Blues	Blind Willie McTell, Statesboro Blues, 1928 (Ch. 2)	Taj Mahal, Statesboro Blues, 1968 (Ch. 8) → The Allman Brothers Band, Statesboro Blues, 1971 (Ch. 9)

Thread	Where it starts	Where it goes
When the Levee Breaks	Memphis Minnie, When the Levee Breaks, 1929 (Ch. 2)	Led Zeppelin, When the Levee Breaks, 1971 (Ch. 8)
The slide guitar line	Charley Patton, Pony Blues, 1929 (Ch. 2) ▮ Elmore James, Dust My Broom, 1951 (Ch. 5)	Duane Allman, Statesboro Blues, 1971 (Ch. 9) ▮ Derek Trucks, Midnight in Harlem, 2011 (Ch. 11)
Son House's legacy	Son House, Preachin' the Blues, Pt. 1, 1930 (Ch. 2)	The White Stripes, Death Letter, a Son House song, 2000 (Ch. 10)
Kokomo to Chicago	Kokomo Arnold, Old Original Kokomo Blues, 1934 (Ch. 2)	Robert Johnson, Sweet Home Chicago, 1936 (Ch. 2)
The crossroads	Robert Johnson, Cross Road Blues, 1936 (Ch. 2)	Cream, Crossroads, 1968 (Ch. 8)
Gospel guitar becomes rock	Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Strange Things Happening Every Day, 1944 (Ch. 4)	Chuck Berry, Maybellene, 1955 (Ch. 7)
Jump blues to Chuck Berry	Louis Jordan, Choo Choo Ch'Boogie, 1946 (Ch. 6)	Chuck Berry, Johnny B. Goode, 1958 (Ch. 7) ▮ The Beatles, Roll Over Beethoven, 1963 (Ch. 8)
That's All Right	Arthur Crudup, That's All Right, 1946 (Ch. 7)	Elvis Presley, That's All Right, 1954 (Ch. 7)
Move It On Over	Hank Williams, Move It On Over, 1947 (Ch. 4)	George Thorogood, Move It On Over, 1978 (Ch. 9)
The electric lead guitar	T-Bone Walker, Call It Stormy Monday, 1947 (Ch. 5)	B.B. King, 3 O'Clock Blues, 1951 (Ch. 5) ▮ The Thrill Is Gone, 1969 (Ch. 9)
Gospel becomes soul	Mahalia Jackson, Move On Up a Little Higher, 1947 (Ch. 4)	Ray Charles, I Got a Woman, 1954 (Ch. 6) ▮ Alabama Shakes, Hold On, 2012 (Ch. 11)
Lead Belly's songbook	Lead Belly, The Midnight Special, 1948 (Ch. 1)	Lonnie Donegan's skiffle hit of Lead Belly's Rock Island Line, 1954 (Ch. 8)

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Hound Dog and Big Mama Thornton	Big Mama Thornton, Hound Dog, 1952 (Ch. 6)	Elvis Presley, Hound Dog, 1956 (Ch. 7) ▮ Janis Joplin sings Thornton's Ball and Chain, 1968 (Ch. 8)
Guitar Slim's distortion	Guitar Slim, The Things That I Used to Do, 1953 (Ch. 6)	Jimi Hendrix, Voodoo Child (Slight Return), 1968 (Ch. 8) ▮ Stevie Ray Vaughan, Pride and Joy, 1983 (Ch. 10)
Willie Dixon's songbook	Muddy Waters, Hoochie Coochie Man, 1954 (Ch. 5)	The Rolling Stones, Little Red Rooster, 1964 (Ch. 8) ▮ Led Zeppelin, Whole Lotta Love, 1969 (Ch. 8)
Bo Diddley's beat	Bo Diddley, Bo Diddley, 1955 (Ch. 7)	The Yardbirds, I'm a Man, a Bo Diddley song, 1965 (Ch. 8)
Hill country blues	Mississippi Fred McDowell, Write Me a Few of Your Lines, 1959 (Ch. 1)	R.L. Burnside, Old Black Mattie, 1994 (Ch. 10) ▮ The Black Keys, Thickfreakness, 2003 (Ch. 10)

Index of Artists

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Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
3 O'Clock Blues	B.B. King	1951	5

A

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Ain't Got No Home	Clarence "Frogman" Henry	1956	7
Ain't Messin 'Round	Gary Clark Jr.	2012	11
Ain't No More Cane on the Brazos	Ernest "Mexico" Williams and group	1933	1
Ain't That a Shame	Fats Domino	1955	7
All Right Now	Free	1970	8
All She Wants to Do Is Rock	Wynonie Harris	1949	6
All Your Love	Magic Sam	1957	5
All Your Love	The Rolling Stones	2016	13
Am I Wrong	Keb' Mo'	1994	10
Angel from Montgomery	John Prine	1971	13
Angel from Montgomery	Bonnie Raitt	1974	13
Angel from Montgomery	Susan Tedeschi	1998	13
Are You Gonna Go My Way	Lenny Kravitz	1993	10
Arwhoolie (Cornfield Holler)	Thomas J. Marshall	1939	1

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Ay-Tete Fee	Clifton Chenier	1965	5

B

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Baby Please Don't Go	Big Joe Williams	1935	2
Baby Please Don't Go	AC/DC	1975	13
Baby What You Want Me to Do	Jimmy Reed	1959	5
Back Door Man	The Doors	1967	8
Bad Spell	Larkin Poe	2022	11
Bald Head	Roy Byrd and His Blues Jumpers	1950	6
Ball and Chain	Big Brother and the Holding Company	1968	8
Be-Bop-A-Lula	Gene Vincent and His Blue Caps	1956	7
Bellbottoms	The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion	1994	10
Big Boss Man	Jimmy Reed	1961	5
Big Chief	Professor Longhair	1964	12
Black Betty	James "Iron Head" Baker	1933	1
Black Betty	Ram Jam	1977	13
Black Bottom Stomp	Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers	1926	3
Black Magic Woman	Fleetwood Mac	1968	8
Black Magic Woman / Gypsy Queen	Santana	1970	9
Blue Moon of Kentucky	Bill Monroe and His Blue Grass Boys	1946	4
Blue Suede Shoes	Carl Perkins	1955	7

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Blue Yodel (T for Texas)	Jimmie Rodgers	1927	4
Blueberry Hill	Fats Domino	1956	7
Bo Diddley	Bo Diddley	1955	7
Boogie Chillen'	John Lee Hooker	1948	5
Boogie Woogie Stomp	Albert Ammons	1936	3
Boom Boom	John Lee Hooker	1962	12
Born in Chicago	The Paul Butterfield Blues Band	1965	8
Born Under a Bad Sign	Albert King	1967	9
Bound for Glory	Tedeschi Trucks Band	2011	11
Bright Lights	Gary Clark Jr.	2011	11
Bright Lights, Big City	Jimmy Reed	1961	5
Bring It On Home	Sonny Boy Williamson II	1963	13
Bring It On Home	Led Zeppelin	1969	13
Brown Sugar	The Rolling Stones	1971	8
Bull Doze Blues	Henry Thomas	1928	1
Bulletproof	Samantha Fish	2019	11
Bullfrog Blues (Live)	Rory Gallagher	1972	9
Bye Bye Love	The Everly Brothers	1957	7

C

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Caldonia	Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five	1945	6
Call It Stormy Monday (But Tuesday Is Just as Bad)	T-Bone Walker	1947	5

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Can the Circle Be Unbroken (Bye and Bye)	The Carter Family	1935	4
Can't You See	The Marshall Tucker Band	1973	9
Canned Heat Blues	Tommy Johnson	1928	2
The Chicago Way	Toronzo Cannon	2019	11
Chicken Shack Boogie	Amos Milburn	1948	6
Choo Choo Ch'Boogie	Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five	1946	6
Cissy Strut	The Meters	1969	9
Cler Achel	Tinariwen	2007	11
Colors	Black Pumas	2019	11
Crawlin' King Snake	John Lee Hooker	1949	13
Crawlin' King Snake	The Black Keys	2021	13
Crazy Blues	Mamie Smith	1920	3
Cross Road Blues	Robert Johnson	1936	2
Crosscut Saw	Albert King	1966	9
Crossroads	Cream	1968	8
Cult of Personality	Living Colour	1988	10

D

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Damn Right, I've Got the Blues	Buddy Guy	1991	10
Dark Was the Night, Cold Was the Ground	Blind Willie Johnson	1927	4
Death Letter	Son House	1965	13

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Death Letter	The White Stripes	2000	10
Destination	Joanna Connor	2021	11
Devil Got My Woman	Skip James	1931	2
Diaraby	Ali Farka Touré with Ry Cooder	1994	1
Diddie Wa Diddie	Blind Blake	1929	2
Dimples	John Lee Hooker	1956	5
Dipper Mouth Blues	King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band	1923	3
Dixie Chicken	Little Feat	1973	9
Do Whatcha Wanna	Rebirth Brass Band	1989	10
Don't Start Me Talkin'	Sonny Boy Williamson II	1955	5
Don't Wanna Fight	Alabama Shakes	2015	11
Downhearted Blues	Bessie Smith	1923	3
Driftin' Blues	Johnny Moore's Three Blazers with Charles Brown	1945	6
Dust My Broom	Elmore James	1951	5
Dust My Broom	ZZ Top	1979	13

E

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
East St. Louis Toodle-Oo	Duke Ellington and His Orchestra	1927	3
Every Day I Have the Blues	B.B. King	1964	5
Everybody Needs Somebody to Love	Solomon Burke	1964	12
Everybody Needs Somebody to Love	The Rolling Stones	1965	13

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Everybody Needs Somebody to Love	The Blues Brothers	1980	12
Evil Gal Blues	Dinah Washington	1943	6

F

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Farther Up the Road	Bobby "Blue" Bland	1957	5
The Fat Man	Fats Domino	1949	6
Figure It Out	Royal Blood	2014	11
Fine and Mellow	Billie Holiday	1939	3
First Time I Met the Blues	Buddy Guy	1960	5
Flying Home	Lionel Hampton and His Orchestra	1942	6
Folsom Prison Blues	Johnny Cash and the Tennessee Two	1955	7
Free Bird	Lynyrd Skynyrd	1973	9
Freedom	Jon Batiste	2021	11
Freight Train	Elizabeth Cotten	1958	1
Freight Train Boogie	The Delmore Brothers	1946	4
Fresh Out	Christone "Kingfish" Ingram feat. Buddy Guy	2019	11
Frosty	Albert Collins	1962	5
Future Blues	Willie Brown	1930	2

G

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
The Gallis Pole	Lead Belly	1939	13
Gallows Pole	Led Zeppelin	1970	13
Gimme Some Lovin'	The Spencer Davis Group	1966	12
Gimme Some Lovin'	The Blues Brothers	1980	12
Give Me Back My Wig	Hound Dog Taylor and the HouseRockers	1971	9
Gloria	Them	1964	8
Gloria	Patti Smith	1975	13
Going Down	Moloch	1969	13
Going Down	Freddie King	1971	13
Going Down	The Jeff Beck Group	1972	13
Going Down	The Rolling Stones with John Mayer and Gary Clark Jr.	2012	13
Going Up the Country	Canned Heat	1968	8
Good Golly, Miss Molly	Little Richard	1958	7
Good Rocking Tonight	Roy Brown	1947	6
Goodbye Carolina	The Marcus King Band	2018	11
Great Balls of Fire	Jerry Lee Lewis	1957	7
Green Onions	Booker T. & the M.G.'s	1962	12
Guitar Boogie	Arthur Smith	1945	4

H

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Have You Ever Loved a Woman	Freddie King	1960	5

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Have You Ever Loved a Woman	Derek and the Dominos	1970	13
The Healer	John Lee Hooker with Carlos Santana	1989	10
Heartbreak Hotel	Elvis Presley	1956	7
Hellhound on My Trail	Robert Johnson	1937	2
Hellhound on My Trail	Eric Clapton	2004	13
Hello in There	John Prine	1971	13
Hello in There	Bette Midler	1972	13
Hello in There	Emmylou Harris	2021	13
Help Me	Sonny Boy Williamson II	1963	5
Hey Joe	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1966	8
Hey Jude	Wilson Pickett	1968	9
Hey Jude	The Beatles	1968	13
Hide Away	Freddie King	1961	5
Hideaway	John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers with Eric Clapton	1966	8
High Water Everywhere, Pt. 1	Charley Patton	1929	2
Highway Tune	Greta Van Fleet	2017	11
Hold On	Alabama Shakes	2012	11
Honey Don't	Carl Perkins	1956	13
Honey Don't	The Beatles	1964	13
Honky Tonk Train Blues	Meade Lux Lewis	1927	3
Hoochie Coochie Man	Muddy Waters	1954	5
Hot Fingers	Lonnie Johnson	1929	3

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Hound Dog	Big Mama Thornton	1952	6
Hound Dog	Elvis Presley	1956	7
The House of the Rising Sun	The Animals	1964	8
How Long, How Long Blues	Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell	1928	3
How You Like Me Now?	The Heavy	2009	11
Human	Rag'n'Bone Man	2016	11
Hurricane Season	Trombone Shorty	2010	11

I

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
I Ain't Drunk	Albert Collins	1986	10
I Can't Be Satisfied	Muddy Waters	1948	5
(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction	The Rolling Stones	1965	8
I Can't Quit You Baby	Otis Rush	1956	5
I Can't Quit You Baby	Led Zeppelin	1969	13
I Can't Quit You Baby	The Rolling Stones	2016	13
I Got a Woman	Ray Charles	1954	6
I Hear You Knockin'	Smiley Lewis	1955	6
I Hear You Knockin'	Dave Edmunds	1970	13
I Just Want to Make Love to You	Muddy Waters	1954	13
I Just Want to Make Love to You	Etta James	1961	13
I Just Want to Make Love to You	The Rolling Stones	1964	13
I Just Want to Make Love to You	Foghat	1972	13

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
I Just Want to Make Love to You	Willie Dixon	1973	5
I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)	Aretha Franklin	1967	12
I Want My Crown	Eric Gales feat. Joe Bonamassa	2022	11
I'd Rather Go Blind	Etta James	1967	5
I'd Rather Go Blind	Beth Hart and Joe Bonamassa	2011	13
I'll Take You There	The Staple Singers	1972	12
I'm a King Bee	Slim Harpo	1957	5
I'm a King Bee	The Rolling Stones	1964	13
I'm a Man	Bo Diddley	1955	13
I'm a Man	The Yardbirds	1965	8
I'm a Mighty Tight Woman	Sippie Wallace	1929	3
I'm Going Home (Live at Woodstock)	Ten Years After	1969	8
I'm in the Mood	John Lee Hooker	1951	5
In My Time of Dying	Led Zeppelin	1975	13
In the Midnight Hour	Wilson Pickett	1965	12
It Hurt So Bad	Susan Tedeschi	1998	10
It Hurts Me Too	Tampa Red	1940	13
It Hurts Me Too	Elmore James	1957	13
It's 2 A.M.	Shemekia Copeland	2000	10
It's Nobody's Fault but Mine	Blind Willie Johnson	1927	13

J

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
The Jack	AC/DC	1975	9
Jailhouse Rock	Elvis Presley	1957	12
Jailhouse Rock	The Blues Brothers	1980	12
Jessica	The Allman Brothers Band	1973	9
Jesus Make Up My Dying Bed	Blind Willie Johnson	1927	13
Jim Dandy	LaVern Baker	1956	7
Jock-A-Mo	Sugar Boy Crawford	1953	6
John Henry	Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee	1958	1
John the Revelator	Blind Willie Johnson	1930	4
Johnny B. Goode	Chuck Berry	1958	7
Juke	Little Walter	1952	5

K

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Kansas City	Wilbert Harrison	1959	7
Kassie Jones	Furry Lewis	1928	1
Key to the Highway	Big Bill Broonzy	1941	5
Key to the Highway	Derek and the Dominos	1970	13
Killing Floor	Howlin' Wolf	1964	13
Kodachrome	Paul Simon	1973	9

L

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
La Bamba	Ritchie Valens	1958	7
La Bamba	Los Lobos	1987	13
La Grange	ZZ Top	1973	9
Land of 1000 Dances	Wilson Pickett	1966	12
Lawdy Miss Clawdy	Lloyd Price	1952	6
Layla	Derek and the Dominos	1970	9
Layla	Eric Clapton	1992	13
The Lemon Song	Led Zeppelin	1969	13
Let's Have a Party	Wanda Jackson	1958	7
Like a Rolling Stone	Bob Dylan	1965	8
Little Red Rooster	Howlin' Wolf	1961	13
Little Red Rooster	The Rolling Stones	1964	8
Little Wing	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1967	8
Livery Stable Blues	Original Dixieland Jass Band	1917	3
Lonely Boy	The Black Keys	2011	11
Long Tall Sally	Little Richard	1956	7
Long Tall Sally	The Beatles	1964	13
Love in Vain	Robert Johnson	1937	13
Love in Vain	The Rolling Stones	1969	8
Love Me Like a Man	Bonnie Raitt	1972	9
Lovesick Blues	Hank Williams	1949	4
Lucille	Little Richard	1957	7

M

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Ma Rainey's Black Bottom	Ma Rainey	1927	3
(Mama) He Treats Your Daughter Mean	Ruth Brown	1953	6
Mannish Boy	Muddy Waters	1955	5
Mannish Boy	Muddy Waters	1977	13
Mardi Gras in New Orleans	Professor Longhair	1949	6
Matchbox	Carl Perkins	1957	7
Matchbox	The Beatles	1964	13
Matchbox Blues	Blind Lemon Jefferson	1927	2
Maybellene	Chuck Berry	1955	7
Messin' with the Kid	Junior Wells	1960	5
Messin' with the Kid	Rory Gallagher	1972	13
Midnight in Harlem	Tedeschi Trucks Band	2011	11
The Midnight Special	Lead Belly	1948	1
Minnie the Moocher	Cab Calloway and His Orchestra	1931	3, 12
Minnie the Moocher	Cab Calloway with the Blues Brothers	1980	12
Minor Swing	Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli with the Quintette du Hot Club de France	1937	3
Moanin' at Midnight	Howlin' Wolf	1951	5
Mojo Hand	Lightnin' Hopkins	1960	5
Mona (I Need You Baby)	Bo Diddley	1957	7
Mother Earth	Memphis Slim	1951	5

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Move It On Over	Hank Williams	1947	4
Move It On Over	George Thorogood and the Destroyers	1978	9
Move On Up a Little Higher	Mahalia Jackson	1947	4
Mustang Sally	Wilson Pickett	1966	12
Mustang Sally	Buddy Guy with Jeff Beck	1991	13
My Babe	Little Walter	1955	5
My Feet Can't Fail Me Now	Dirty Dozen Brass Band	1984	10
My Soul's a Witness for My Lord	Arizona Dranes	1926	4
Mystery Train	Little Junior's Blue Flames	1953	7
Mystery Train	Elvis Presley	1955	13

N

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Natural Blues	Moby	1999	1
New San Antonio Rose	Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys	1940	4
Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out	Bessie Smith	1929	3
Nobody's Fault but Mine	Led Zeppelin	1976	13
Not Fade Away	Buddy Holly and the Crickets	1957	7
Not Fade Away	The Rolling Stones	1964	13

O

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Oh, Pretty Woman	Albert King	1967	9

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Old Black Mattie	R.L. Burnside	1994	10
Old Landmark	Aretha Franklin with Rev. James Cleveland	1972	12
The Old Landmark	The Blues Brothers with James Brown and the Rev. James Cleveland Choir	1980	12
Old Oak Tree	Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials	1986	10
Old Original Kokomo Blues	Kokomo Arnold	1934	2
Old Time Rock and Roll	Bob Seger	1978	9
On the Road Again	Canned Heat	1968	8
One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer	John Lee Hooker	1966	5
One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer	George Thorogood and the Destroyers	1977	13
One Mint Julep	The Clovers	1952	6
One O'Clock Jump	Count Basie and His Orchestra	1937	3
Ooby Dooby	Roy Orbison	1956	7
Our Father	The Five Blind Boys of Mississippi	1950	4

P

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Papa's Got a Brand New Bag	James Brown	1965	12
Paranoid	Black Sabbath	1970	9
Parchman Farm Blues	Bukka White	1940	2
Paris (Ooh La La)	Grace Potter and the Nocturnals	2010	11
Peter Gunn	Henry Mancini	1958	12

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Peter Gunn Theme	The Blues Brothers	1980	12
Piece of My Heart	Erma Franklin	1967	12
Piece of My Heart	Big Brother and the Holding Company	1968	8
Pine Top's Boogie Woogie	Pine Top Smith	1928	3
Please, Please, Please	James Brown & The Famous Flames	1956	6
Pony Blues	Charley Patton	1929	2
Preachin' Blues	Larkin Poe	2017	13
Preachin' the Blues, Pt. 1	Son House	1930	2
Pressure and Time	Rival Sons	2011	11
Pride and Joy	Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble	1983	10
Prisoner's Talking Blues	Robert Pete Williams	1959	1
Prodigal Son	The Rolling Stones	1968	13
Proud Mary	Creedence Clearwater Revival	1969	9
Proud Mary	Ike & Tina Turner	1971	9
Purple Haze	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1967	8

R

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Rawhide	Frankie Laine	1959	12
Reconsider Baby	Lowell Fulson	1954	6
Reconsider Baby	Elvis Presley	1960	13
Red House	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1967	8

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Remedy	The Black Crowes	1992	10
Respect	Otis Redding	1965	12
Respect	Aretha Franklin	1967	12
Right Place Wrong Time	Dr. John	1973	9
Rip It Up	Little Richard	1956	7
Rock and Roll Music	Chuck Berry	1957	7
Rock and Roll Music	The Beatles	1964	13
Rock Around the Clock	Bill Haley and His Comets	1954	7
Rock Awhile	Goree Carter	1949	6
Rock Island Line	Lonnie Donegan	1954	8
Rock Me	Sister Rosetta Tharpe	1938	4
Rock Me Baby	B.B. King	1964	5
Rock the Joint	Jimmy Preston	1949	6
Rocket 88	Jackie Brenston and His Delta Cats	1951	6
Rockin' Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu	Huey "Piano" Smith & the Clowns	1957	7
Roll 'Em Pete	Big Joe Turner and Pete Johnson	1938	6
Roll Over Beethoven	Chuck Berry	1956	13
Roll Over Beethoven	The Beatles	1963	8
Rollin' Stone	Muddy Waters	1950	5
Rooster Blues	Lightnin' Slim	1959	5
Rosie	C.B. Cook and prisoners at Parchman Farm	1947	1
Rumble	Link Wray	1958	7

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Run-Around	Blues Traveler	1994	10

S

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Saturday Night Fish Fry	Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five	1949	6
See See Rider Blues	Ma Rainey	1924	3
See That My Grave Is Kept Clean	Blind Lemon Jefferson	1928	2
See the Light	Jeff Healey	1988	10
Shake a Tail Feather	The Five Du-Tones	1963	12
Shake a Tail Feather	The Blues Brothers with Ray Charles	1980	12
Shake Your Hips	Slim Harpo	1966	13
Shake Your Hips	The Rolling Stones	1972	13
Shake Your Moneymaker	Elmore James	1961	5
Shake, Rattle and Roll	Big Joe Turner	1954	6
Shapes of Things	The Jeff Beck Group	1968	8
She Caught the Katy	The Blues Brothers	1980	12
She Caught the Katy and Left Me a Mule to Ride	Taj Mahal	1968	12
Shimmy She Wobble	Othar Turner and the Rising Star Fife and Drum Band	1998	1
Shotgun Boogie	Tennessee Ernie Ford	1950	4
Shout, Pts. 1 & 2	The Isley Brothers	1959	7
(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay	Otis Redding	1968	12
Sitting on Top of the World	Mississippi Sheiks	1930	2

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Sixteen Saltines	Jack White	2012	11
Sixty Minute Man	The Dominoes	1951	6
The Sky Is Crying	Elmore James	1959	5
Sloe Gin	Joe Bonamassa	2007	11
Smokestack Lightnin'	Howlin' Wolf	1956	5
Smoking Gun	Robert Cray	1986	10
Someday Baby Blues	Sleepy John Estes	1935	2
Something's Got a Hold on Me	Etta James	1962	12
Soulshine	Gov't Mule	1995	10
Space Guitar	Johnny "Guitar" Watson	1954	6
Spike Driver Blues	Mississippi John Hurt	1928	1
Spoonful	Howlin' Wolf	1960	5
St. Louis Blues	W.C. Handy's Memphis Blues Band	1922	3
St. Louis Blues	Bessie Smith with Louis Armstrong	1925	3
Statesboro Blues	Blind Willie McTell	1928	2
Statesboro Blues	Taj Mahal	1968	8
Statesboro Blues (Live at Fillmore East)	The Allman Brothers Band	1971	9
Stealin', Stealin'	Memphis Jug Band	1928	2
Steel Guitar Rag	Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys	1936	4
Still Alive and Well	Johnny Winter	1973	9
Still Got the Blues	Gary Moore	1990	10
Stop Breakin' Down Blues	Robert Johnson	1937	13

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Stop Breaking Down	The Rolling Stones	1972	13
Stormy Monday	The Allman Brothers Band	1971	13
Strange Things Happening Every Day	Sister Rosetta Tharpe	1944	4
The Stumble	Freddie King	1961	5
Summertime Blues	Eddie Cochran	1958	7
Summertime Blues (Live at Leeds)	The Who	1970	8
Sunshine of Your Love	Cream	1967	8
Sweet Home Alabama	Lynyrd Skynyrd	1974	9
Sweet Home Chicago	Robert Johnson	1936	2, 12
Sweet Home Chicago	The Blues Brothers	1980	12
Sweet Little Angel	B.B. King	1956	5
Sweet Little Sixteen	Chuck Berry	1958	7
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	Fisk Jubilee Singers	1909	1

T

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Take Me to Church	Hozier	2013	11
Taking Off	Milton Brown and His Brownies	1936	4
Tell It Like It Is	Aaron Neville	1966	12
Tell Mama	Etta James	1967	12
Tennessee Whiskey	George Jones	1983	13
Tennessee Whiskey	Chris Stapleton	2015	11
Texas Flood	Larry Davis	1958	13

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Texas Flood	Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble	1983	10
That'll Be the Day	Buddy Holly and the Crickets	1957	7
That's All Right	Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup	1946	7
That's All Right	Elvis Presley	1954	7
That's No Way to Get Along	Robert Wilkins	1929	2
Theme from Rawhide	The Blues Brothers	1980	12
Thickfreakness	The Black Keys	2003	10
Thing Called Love	Bonnie Raitt	1989	10
The Things That I Used to Do	Guitar Slim	1953	6
Think	Aretha Franklin	1968	12
Think	Aretha Franklin with the Blues Brothers	1980	12
The Thrill Is Gone	B.B. King	1969	9
Tighten Up	The Black Keys	2010	11
Time Is on My Side	Irma Thomas	1964	8
Time Is on My Side	The Rolling Stones	1964	13
Tipitina	Professor Longhair	1953	6
Touch the Hem of His Garment	The Soul Stirrers	1956	4
The Train Kept A-Rollin'	Tiny Bradshaw	1951	13
Train Kept A-Rollin'	Aerosmith	1974	9
Traveling Riverside Blues	Robert Johnson	1937	13
Travelling Riverside Blues	Led Zeppelin	1969	13
Trouble So Hard	Vera Hall	1937	1

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Try a Little Tenderness	Otis Redding	1966	12
Tuff Enuff	The Fabulous Thunderbirds	1986	10
Tush	ZZ Top	1975	9
Tutti Frutti	Little Richard	1955	7
Twist and Shout	The Isley Brothers	1962	13
Twist and Shout	The Beatles	1963	13

V

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Voodoo Child (Slight Return)	The Jimi Hendrix Experience	1968	8
Voodoo Child (Slight Return)	Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble	1984	13

W

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
The Wallflower (Dance with Me, Henry)	Etta James	1955	6
Wang Dang Doodle	Koko Taylor	1966	5
Way Down We Go	Kaleo	2015	11
We're Gonna Rock, We're Gonna Roll	Wild Bill Moore	1947	6
Wee Wee Hours	Chuck Berry	1955	7
The Weight	The Band	1968	9
The Weight	The Band with the Staple Singers	1978	13
West End Blues	Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five	1928	3
Whammer Jammer (Live)	The J. Geils Band	1972	9

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
What Are They Doing in Heaven Today?	Washington Phillips	1927	4
What'd I Say, Pts. 1 & 2	Ray Charles	1959	6
When Love Comes to Town	U2 with B.B. King	1988	10
When the Levee Breaks	Kansas Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie	1929	2
When the Levee Breaks	Led Zeppelin	1971	8
Whipping Post	The Allman Brothers Band	1969	9
Who Do You Love?	Bo Diddley	1956	7
Whole Lotta Love	Led Zeppelin	1969	8
Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On	Big Maybelle	1955	7
Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On	Jerry Lee Lewis	1957	7
Wild Horses	The Rolling Stones	1971	8
Wild Women Don't Have the Blues	Ida Cox	1924	3
Wildwood Flower	The Carter Family	1928	4
Work With Me, Annie	Hank Ballard and the Midnighters	1954	6
Working in the Coal Mine	Lee Dorsey	1966	12
Write Me a Few of Your Lines	Mississippi Fred McDowell	1959	1

Y

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
Yellow Moon	The Neville Brothers	1989	10
You Gotta Move	Mississippi Fred McDowell	1965	13
You Gotta Move	The Rolling Stones	1971	13

Song	Artist	Year	Chapter
You Need Love	Muddy Waters	1962	13
You Really Got Me	The Kinks	1964	8
You Really Got Me	Van Halen	1978	13
You Send Me	Sam Cooke	1957	7
You Shook Me	Muddy Waters	1962	13
You Shook Me	Led Zeppelin	1969	13
Your Cheatin' Heart	Hank Williams	1953	4

Sources

Key facts in this guide were checked against the pages below. Song and playlist links go to Spotify's web player; the full track list with links is also in the Roots of Rock: Song Lists sheet.

Credits. Written and curated by Jim Little. Research, fact checking, the playlists, this guide's layout and the website at FromBluesToRock.com were built with help from Claude, an AI assistant made by Anthropic.

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NOTES ON THE RECORDINGS

- The playlists use original recordings wherever Spotify has them. A few could not be found and were replaced: Ain't No More Cane on the Brazos (1933) stands in for Po' Lazarus in Chapter 1, and Sippie Wallace's I'm a Mighty Tight Woman (1929) stands in for Women Be Wise in Chapter 3.
- B.B. King's Every Day I Have the Blues is the 1964 Live at the Regal version, and Lead Belly's The Midnight Special is from his 1948 Last Sessions, because the earlier recordings are not on Spotify.
- Chapter 12 pairs each original with its Blues Brothers version. John Lee Hooker's Boom Boom has no pair because his performance in the film is not on the soundtrack album, and the Rawhide original is Frankie Laine's 1959 TV theme recording.
- Recording years are the original release or recording year as best confirmed; some early field recordings vary by a year between sources.