

Some Notes on the Hammered Dulcimer

For a virtual hammered dulcimer, go to

<http://appcordions.com/dulcimers/>

The hammered dulcimer produces some lovely sounds – in a limited number of keys, though.

It has a long, ancient pedigree, coming to Europe from the middle east in about the 9th century. It comes in a variety of different styles, and names. Check out [Wikipedia](#). In Hungary it is known as the [Cimbalon](#) and has some magnificent exponents and virtuosi. (see [Gypsy Devils](#)) In Germany, it is known as the [Hackbrett](#), or chopping board.

To get an idea of the layout of a hammered dulcimer, check out this roadmap from Chris [Peterson](#). A lot of learning the hammered dulcimer involves recognising the shape of the various chords and this a good intro.



Timothy Seaman is a top artist on the hammered dulcimer and he has a range of excellent videos, including this starting [video](#).

I bought my hammered dulcimer about 6 years ago from the US. Dusty [Springs](#) do retail instruments in Australia, but expect a fair mark up as there's much less competition here. Mine is a Jake's Cabin [Traveler](#) model, selling for several hundred dollars. It's a 14/13 instrument – i.e. 14 course (a pair of strings) on the treble bridge and 13 on the bass bridge. In all there are 51 strings to tune!

You can also buy kits which make it easier to build your own.

Or, as mentioned at the top, you can simply try a virtual hammered dulcimer which is a great starting point. It's generally a free App for an iPad or Android machine. Good to try out before buying a real one.

Happy hammering

Ken McGregor – Sept 2020