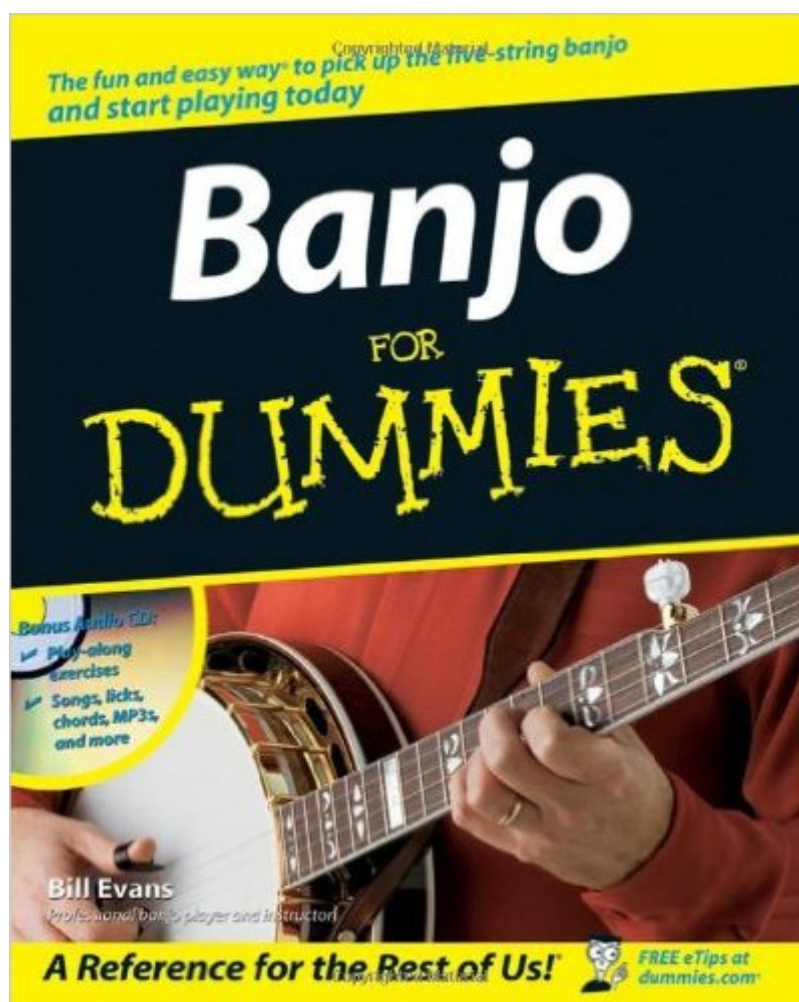


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# Banjo For Dummies



## Synopsis

A complete guide to the world of the five-string banjo written for both beginners and more experienced players. Packed with over 120 how-to photos and 130 musical examples. 94 track CD included - hear and play along with every exercise and song. The only book to offer instruction in clawhammer, bluegrass, melodic, single-string, minstrel and classic styles. From Earl Scruggs's driving bluegrass picking to the genre-busting jazz fusion of Béla Fleck and the multi-million selling movie soundtrack "O Brother Where Are Thou?", the five-string banjo can be heard just about everywhere in American music these days. Banjo For Dummies is the most complete guide to the five-string banjo ever written. It covers everything you need to get into the banjo: including how to choose, tune and care for your instrument, developing a good playing posture, fretting your first chords and getting comfortable with the left and right hand picking patterns used for clawhammer and bluegrass playing techniques. You'll then add the left hand, spicing up your playing with slides, hammer-ons, pull-offs, and chokes for an authentic five-string banjo sound. From there, you'll move on to play 19th century minstrel style, early 20th century classic style as well as try your hand at more advanced examples of bluegrass style. An in-depth chapter on bluegrass music explores Scruggs licks and techniques as well as melodic and single-string styles, with song examples. Also included is a banjo buyer's guide, a section on music theory as applied to bluegrass and old-time music, an accessories guide (advice on cases, picks, straps, metronomes, computer aids and much more), information on how to find a good teacher, banjo camp or festival, chord charts, bios of twelve influential players, practice tips and much, much more! Banjo For Dummies is accessible and fun to read and it's easy to locate just what you're interested in playing. Included are 20 songs including several new compositions written by the author just for this book, including Reno Rag (single-string style), "Winston's Jig" (Irish three-finger), and "Everyday Breakdown" (Scruggs style). All musical examples are played slowly on the accompanying CD, many with guitar and mandolin accompaniment. Bill Evans is one of the world's most celebrated banjo players and teachers. He has taught thousands of people to play the five-string banjo in private lessons and group workshops literally all over the world. In addition to leading the Bill Evans String Summit, Bill has performed with Dry Branch Fire Squad, David Grisman, Peter Rowan, Tony Trischka and many others and he hosts his own acclaimed banjo camp, the NashCamp Fall Banjo Retreat in the Nashville area. As an American music historian, he has taught at San Francisco State University, the University of Virginia and Duke University. He has written a popular instructional column for Banjo Newsletter magazine for the last fifteen years and hosts three popular instructional DVDs for AcuTab Publications. To learn more about Bill, visit his

homepage at [www.nativeandfine.com](http://www.nativeandfine.com). Note: A CD-ROM/DVD and other supplementary materials are not included as part of the e-book file, but are available for download after purchase.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A little personal background: I've been playing the 5-string banjo since 1979. Started with Scruggs-style Bluegrass, dabbled with Melodics, discovered the joy of Clawhammer (and antique banjos) and then found my 'calling' in Classic style (1870-1920). Lately I've been playing a lot of the very earliest ("Minstrel") style. Yes, I also play some Tenor...I bought this book because I'm an inveterate banjo-tutor collector; part of this is because I just love all things banjo and part is that I've always wanted to find the "perfect" banjo tutor. I've been reading thru it for a week now, playing some of the examples, etc. (esp. the Minstrel and Classic stuff, as that's what I've been playing mostly of late). I'm very impressed! I guess I can't really say what I expected of this book. I've had a couple of the computer related ones over the years and, quite frankly, they didn't help me out much. A lot of that was pure 'lack of interest' in the subject matter (boss sez, you gotta learn Mickysoft XXXX but we're not going to really use it...). Of course, there's the negative cachet of "For Dummies"...even though I qualify when it comes to the computer. Still, I expect great things from great banjoists and the track record is a tough one to live up to. Tony T. has all those great banjo books out there, Sonny O. builds awesome banjos, Bill K. makes them tuner things, Alan M. teaches college for gawd sakes. What will poor Bill E. come up with? I can tell you in quite succinct terms: he's come up with a great book. The really scary part is that he's come up with a great book

that deals with 5-string playing across the board...Minstrel, Classic, Clawhammer, Scruggs, Melodic, Single-string...its all there, clearly and cleanly discussed, excellent examples and well thought out progressions from simple to complex...and there's a CD included that is jam-packed with slowly and clearly played examples. To cap that, he covers choosing a banjo (and then upgrading later on), setting it up, buying strings, bridges, tuners. travelling with a banjo, etc, etc,...all up to date, web links included. How cool is that? No, it ain't the alpha/omega of banjo books and it doesn't cover everything you ever wanted to know about XXX style. However, it provides an awesome introduction into the world of the 5-string banjo. Quirks: interestingly, he has chosen to interlace the clawhammer and three-finger basic instruction. It was disconcerting at first for me to be playing thru the CH tab for "Red River Valley" and then look at the next page where it starts again...to find out it is bluegrass tab (after I'd tried to CH it). Well, that's really my fault for not READING along and just grabbing tab out of the book. Once I had figured that out, I found it really interesting to play the two versions back to back. Makes you think about how the styles are laid around the same framework. Another quirk (for the OFs like myself) is that the tab is quite small. This is not to say that I couldn't read it with my glasses on...just that I'm getting to where I appreciate large print more and more...Outstanding things (the whole book qualifies, but these are just things that jumped out at me): page 88. What a great picture of how to bend your fingerpicks! The chapter on networking is worth the price of admission all by itself. The 'gear guide' is awesome...and who ever thought of teaching somebody how to use an electronic tuner? It is one of the first questions that I get from beginners...Great work Bill! I think this one will be a huge success. I know I will be using it as a teaching aide for years to come.

I'm a beginner and found this book very helpful. It covers everything you could want to know about banjos, from tips on purchasing one to playing every thing. I am delighted with this purchase and would recommend it to anyone who wants to learn to play this instrument.

For someone coming out of the 4- string banjo styles (Jazz Tenor and plectrum banjos) with quite some knowledge of setting up and playing the banjo, it is hard to find fault with anything written in this book. What I already knew is stated clearly and simply, and the stuff I didn't know is accessible and of direct benefit for playing the five-string banjo... You even get to understand where the different styles tie in together. Good stuff!!

This book is an excellent beginner book. Hohwald has you go through steps which break down each

lesson into easy manageable parts when combined, give you a complete song containing phrases which can and will be used later on more advanced songs. This is a must have for a beginner.

I bought this book when I bought my first banjo. It is a good introduction to the instrument and contains alot of information. As a learning tool it is limited. It contains a cd but I find DVDs to be more helpful as you can see the the instructor plucking and fingering the chords.

I was really looking forward to receiving this book and was very pleasedwhen it arrived a day early.However, looking through the book just now I see a major problem. All of thephotos are dark and hard to see. The smaller photos, the ones showing the postionsof holding the banjo, etc are especailly bad. It may just be the particular copy that I havethat has this issue. If I am dependent on these photos for information, this will bea big hindrance.I can only give it 2 stars at this time because of this.I am truly disappointed.It is too soon for me to rate the book as far as the information contained and how well it will help mewith my lessons.

Banjo for Dummies is a very good do it yourself book. Most of the directions are easily followed and implemented. The CD is helpful, but could be improved by looping each track, or by instructing the reader how to loop the sound track. A DVD would have been helpful also.

I am about in the middle of this book. When I was in college, I tried to learn the banjo. I had a book, it didn't work for me. I had an instructor, it didn't work for me. I sold my banjo. That worked for me because I never learned. I bought this book. It works for me. Bill lays it out, step by step. After getting through all the right hand rolls and techniques for three finger picking, which is my interest, hey --- I can do it. I actually hear what sounds like music coming from my banjo when I play. I learned enough from the start to buy a decent learning banjo and keep it in playing condition as well as in tune. The book is layed out to encourage a new learner. I read the review from the guy who had a minor criticism that the tab was small and hard to read for us OFs. I solved that by enlarging scans and using them to get the techniques down pat. For me it was mostly reading which finger to use when doing the rolls. All in all its a great book and I will add or write another review when I finish the left hand techniques and melodic playing. In the mean time ---- THANKS BILL!!!!

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