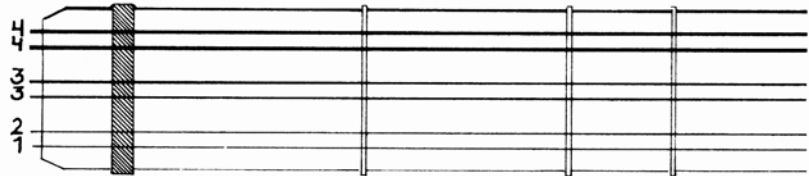


The six-string dulcimer, also known as the church dulcimer because of its fuller tone, and its use in small country churches, is found throughout Appalachia. The middle and bass strings are doubled. If you happen to have a six-string dulcimer, you can leave the additional strings on. In the beginning you will have more strings to tune correctly, and the increased “pick drag” caused by these additional strings makes it somewhat more difficult to explore fast tempos, but do what you will.

SIX-STRING ARRANGEMENT



Not very often, but sometimes, you will come across a six-string dulcimer strung like a twelve-string guitar. Instead of two identical middle and bass strings, it will have a lighter-gauge string strung to a pitch an octave higher than the string it is duplicating. This is more or less a customized sound—something you may want to get into later on.

If you have a lute dulcimer, the first three to six strings may be in any of the combinations mentioned previously. You’ll have to adjust accordingly. We suggest you remove the additional strings while learning to play because they tend to sustain the sound and hinder the development of a rhythmic playing style. Then again, for playing slower, more traditional music, the lute dulcimer is very rich and is the favorite of John Jacob Niles, a well-known dulcimer player and folk-song collector.

You can always return to stringing the dulcimer in whatever way you found it. If you want, and think it won’t play too many games with your head, you can keep it in its original stringing arrangement and adapt our instructions as you go along. But really, the extra grooves and standard stringing will not only make the book easier to follow, but will increase the versatility of your instrument.