

Besides the Mixolydian mode, there are six other modern modes. We'll get into five of them in this section, and we'll take up the seventh one, the Locrian, later.

THE IONIAN MODE— TRADITIONAL FOLK TUNING

In our notation, the Ionian mode's tuning is like this:

(X)
(X+3)
X
X

The first note of the scale begins on the third fret of the unisons, where the mode's most major-sounding tonality is found. The Ionian mode originally began at the note C on the third fret. Its scheme is $1-1-1-\frac{1}{2}-1-1-1-\frac{1}{2}$.

Many folk songs use the Ionian tuning because it is the standard major scale. The mode contains eight "perfect to the ear" intervals, and a natural seventh tone replaces the Mixolydian's minor seventh. From the scheme of the Ionian and its eight perfect tones, the chromatic major scales took form. Over the course of many years, each of the modal fixed schemes underwent half-tone alterations to make it conform to the relative tonalities of the Ionian mode. The minor seventh of the Mixolydian was replaced with an F-sharp, thereby creating the G-major scale out of the G-mode.

You can play most major-sounding songs in the Ionian mode, and in many cases they will be the same ones you play in the Mixolydian. From our standpoint, the Ionian's only drawback is the loss of the open strum, but since you gain the natural seventh tone, things balance out. Because the Ionian is the traditional dulcimer major tuning, many players tune to its original keytone, C. In notation this tuning looks like this (given that X is G):