

Banjo Camp North Class List 2025

At registration on Friday, you can attend "Find Your Level" where instructors advise campers. You may have different levels for different skills- and your jam abilities may not be the same as your class level.

Novice/Beginner (N-B): At this level you're learning some basic techniques and how to tune your instrument. Beginner track is a series of 5 classes to help cover the basics and slow jams to try it out.

Advancing Beginners (AB): You've been playing for a little while, have an understanding of the instrument and its role, and you can tune it. You're learning songs and starting to find connections and similarities between them. You have started going to jams but may not be all that confident yet.

Intermediates (I): This is the largest demographic. You're interested in tone production, know some theory, and are trying out improvising. It feels like there's an endless amount to learn!

Advanced (A): You can play up to speed and improvise, play regularly in jams, or are in a band.

Clawhammer Banjo

Beginner Track: Lorraine Hammond

Banjos and Ballads (Demo) ALL with Howie Bursen, Lorraine Hammond, and Sara Grey
This all-star cast will bowl you over with their amazing story songs.

Clawhammer Beginner/Refresher Track (Five Sessions)

We'll be frailing in no time, then progress to chords, melodies, capos and ornaments.

Session 1 (N-B) Starting strong with G tuning and the rudiments of frailing. This class will include basic back-up chords, and an introduction to reading tablature.

Session 2 (N-B) We'll refine the right-hand frailing pattern to introduce melody, learn a simple song or two, and develop some jamming skills.

Session 3 (N-B) A review of the basics and the introduction of left-hand techniques – hammers and pulls - with songs to help integrate them.

Session 4 (N-B) Capos and keys, G tuning is a great place to start, and with the capo you'll learn to play in other keys for the jams.

Session 5 (N-B) Wrap up. This session starts with a full review. Bring your questions.

Matt Arcara

William Stepps' Rebel Raid

Back up Variations, Ideas and Techniques

How to Practice with a Metronome / Drum Machine (ALL)

Howie Bursen

Songs and Tunes of the Civil War (I-A) Like all disasters, the Civil War gave rise to some great music. We'll learn *The Year of Jubilo* - a famous anti slavery song from Henry Clay Work. If we have time, we'll take a quick look at *Marching Through Georgia* - another famous Civil War tune written by Henry Clay Work in 1865

Blue Banjo - Riley and Spencer (I-A) Clawhammer your way into the world of the blues. You'll learn the secret of how to play the blues banjo, and also how to play this killer song from Wade Ward, also from Tommy Jarrell.

Banjos and Ballads (Demo) \ (ALL) with Lorraine Hammond, and Sara Grey
This all-star cast will bowl you over with their amazing story songs.

Ghost Fingers (I-A) Getting the Most Expression from the Fewest Notes - We'll look at ways to play with feeling. We'll look at techniques like accenting phrases, finding key notes, leaving out notes, covering chords, and more! Being musical is our aim.

Drop Thumb (B-I) Make the jump to double thumbing. We'll get that steady rolling clawhammer, and then drop in those sweet notes which pop out when you learn to double thumb. It's easier than you think!

Wine Appreciation (B-A) Open to all 21 years and up

This is your chance to investigate some of the world's fine wines, up close and personal. Your guide will be a professional winemaker with 47 harvests under his belt - a veteran whose wines have been awarded more than 500 medals in national and international competitions.
note: There will be a separate charge of \$10 to cover the cost of, ahem, supplies.

Chris Coole (reduce to 5)

Finding Your Easy Way (I-A) Understanding Right and Left Hand Options for Melodic Problem Solving. Great players always find the easy way to do things. But their easy isn't necessarily yours. The fact is, there are always many ways of playing any phrase of music. The right way is the way you can execute that phrase with good rhythm and tone - and with confidence. The key is understanding your options and finding one that fits your ability, playing situation, and aesthetic.

Clawhammer Tune-up (AB-I) There are 3 basic right and left-hand clawhammer techniques. We'll look at how to execute them with good economy of motion and what they allow you to do insofar as making music.

Playing and Practicing for Tone, Timing, and Touch (ALL) Get off the treadmill of learning tune after tune, and start to focus on making what you already play sound better. We'll look at

developing the practice techniques and attention to detail that will nurture these three key elements of every note you play!

G out of D (Playing in the key of G out of double D tuning) (I-A) Want to cut down your on your re-tuning? Want a unique voice for the banjo in the key G? Do you already play G tunes out of FDGCD with a capo? You should check this out if the answer is yes to any of these questions.

Skip, Stop, and Alternate (A) Leaving space in clawhammer is actually sort of tricky. We'll look at how to add rests to your clawhammer playing and how that allows you to create some very cool alternate rhythms, not to mention some weird-sounding techniques such as "The Basic Thumb", "Ghost Thumbing" and "THULBAS".

An Introduction to Clawhammer Rolls (I-A) What I call "rolls" are clawhammer patterns that allow you to emulate 3 finger picking. I use these a lot in my playing and they are very versatile both as a backup technique and as a melodic device. I'll give you the skinny on these things.

Hillary Hawk (reduce to 5)

Making it All Work so You Can Play a Tune! (B) Exercises and simple melodies to get you going. We are talking about how to strike the string, how to get the claw hand feeling strong, and learning the pentatonic scale as well as simple tunes you will be able to play for someone and how to practice.

Country and Gospel Singing with the Banjo (AB) Singing all together with the group while accompanying yourself on the banjo. Rhythm patterns and strategies for playing while you're singing and great group songs.

Tune Time! (I) Let's play some of my favorite tunes in standard G tuning, or double C tuning. Bring a capo for the Key of A or D. Adding variations to the melody, and best strategies for getting up to speed.

Squirrely and Crooked (A) No, that's not the name of an old-time tune....yet! Learn a fun crooked tune by breaking it down into parts, and working through each section. We'll listen to a couple versions as well as talking about how to arrange a fiddle tune for banjo. Drop thumbs, alternate string pull-offs, ghost note techniques will be worked on as well.

Waltzes for Banjo (I) We'll work on the right hand technique for playing a waltz, and how to add chords and melody into the song while learning a popular waltz tune!

Beyond Old-Time, Songs from the American Songbook (A) Learn the chord shapes and how to get around the fingerboard to play the melodies of some familiar tunes while going beyond the I, IV, V chords. There is a whole world waiting for you that uses the minor 6, suspended, diminished, and other advanced chords. This class will give you the tools to play other jazz and american songbook songs in the future as well as learning one together in class.

Adam Hurt

Be the Banjo Player in the Old-Time Trio (ALL) Join Adam on fiddle and Beth on guitar to play an old-time tune of your choice (as long as we know it!) at your-referred tempo, with feedback to help set you up for greater success in such collaborative settings.

Understanding the Structure of Old-Time Tunes and How This Helps Your Playing (ALL)

Work with Adam and Beth to "chart" the structure of several common and lesser-known tunes on the dry-erase board as we have fun discovering patterns that will make your learning of new tunes more efficient and more accurate.

Fretless Banjo, Round Peak-style (I-A) Learn repertoire and technique associated with historical musicians from the Round Peak community that make the most of the fretless fingerboard--although the material and concepts transfer well to fretted banjos! Adam will teach the class using a standard-tuned fretless banjo; bring one of these if you have one, or come with your fretted banjo and learn ways to bring out surprisingly fretless-sounding qualities in it.

Review of Clawhammer Basics (AB-I) Brush up on the right- and left-hand fundamentals, from the basic clawhammer rhythm to drop-thumb, pull-offs, hammer-ons, and slides through a series of fun exercises.

Learn Adam's Popular Modal Medley (A) *John Riley the Shepherd* and *Brushy Fork of John's Creek*. Use the gEADE tuning as an alternate A-modal tuning (no special knowledge of this tuning required!) to play these spooky and fun tunes from Kentucky that go so well together.

Introduction to the Sandy River Belle Tuning (I-A) Learn how the gEADE tuning can be used as a beautiful and user-friendly way of playing in the key of G through a series of simple tune-based exercises.

Sara Grey

Two finger picking and frailing for Blues songs (I-A)

Two finger picking for songs in $\frac{3}{4}$ waltz rhythm (I-A)

Two finger picking for sustained songs (I-A) What to do when the banjo parallels the melody of the song.

Using different tunings (I) Give diversity to the song, both two finger style and frailing.

Phrasing and dynamics (I-A) Accompany songs, using two-finger and frailing.

Janie Rothfield

Let's "Fiddle" the Banjo! (I-A) How to play "notey" tunes emulating the fiddler's bowing, rhythm, phrasing and melody. We will explore tunes like *Little Billy Wilson* (A), *Et the Woodchuck* (D) and *Hell Broke Loose in Georgia* ©

Clawhammer Improvisation (I-A) We will take several well-known tunes and explore how to use changes in melody, harmony, rhythm, phrasing, chord structures to create new ways of playing an old favorite!

Jam Tips and Tunes (I-A) We will explore how to be in a jam, good tips (who chooses the tune, who starts and ends the tune, tuning tips), how to pick up a tune "on the fly", and how to use our basic skills (bum ditty, hammer on's, pull-offs, drop thumb techniques) to have more fun and participate in a jam.

D Tunes! (AB-I) Learn how to play jam favorite *Spotted Pony!*

INTRO TO DROP THUMB (AB-I) How to do it and when! It's easier than you think

Tim Rowell

Jam Survival Strategies For The Clawhammer Banjo Player (ALL) What do you do when you hear a tune in a jam for the first time? In this class we'll learn several layers of skills to help you make a clam-free contribution to the jam. Special guest fiddler and teacher Jane Rothfield and I will give you the chance to apply what you've learned live and in real time.

***Icy Mountain* (I)** Great tune from Ward Jarvis in the key of A. Ohio River Valley fiddler born in 1894. Great melody with a slightly crooked form in the "b" part. Ward's repertoire was influenced greatly by fiddlers from West Virginia.

***Crooked from Kentucky* (I)** *Stump Tailed Dolly* in the key of G from the playing of John Morgan Salyer. This G tune makes great use of the almighty E major chord which was a regional favorite flavor in Eastern Kentucky music. A real barn-burner of a tune.

***Double D Tune from Virginia* (AB)** Great tune from Napoleon Bonaparte *Uncle Nip* Chisholm from Virginia. A not-too-difficult tune with some really good fretting hand gymnastics to hopefully grow your clawhammer tool box.

The 3 Finger "up-picking" style of Dock Boggs (ALL) Think American Blues meets Appalachian storytelling. In this class we'll look at the individual elements that make his singing and performing style unique. We'll see how these techniques apply to *Oh, Death, Prodigal Son, Sugar Baby* and make for really effective and simple song accompaniment.

Maggie Shar

***Flexible and Fancy* (AB-I)** Learn to insert hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides and more into a clawhammer tune for endless variations on the fly. We will work with the tune *Ida Red* to get familiar with each tool.

***Clawhammer Strategies for Jamming* (ALL)** Approach the jam with more confidence using chords, rhythm, and melody hot spots.

***Rhythm Lab* (I-A)** Learn cool catchy rhythmic patterns to lock in with fiddlers on the rhythm train. We will work on ghost notes, syncopation, and polyrhythms.

***John Prine for Clawhammer* (AB-I)** Learn two hits, *Angels from Montgomery* and *Paradise* you can bring to any sing along. This class will also build skills for playing any folk song in the clawhammer style

***Elk River Blues* (I)** A beautiful West Virginia G tune from fiddler Ernie Carpenter

3- Finger Banjo

Beginner Track: Bruce Stockwell

Session 1: Getting Started (N-B) Essential listening, set-up, tuning, positioning, playing with others, our 3 “jobs” - rhythm, backup and soloing.

Session 2: The Basics (N-B) Tablature, the key of G, the Nashville Number System, major and minor chords, the basic rhythm pattern, “pinch” solos: *Shady Grove* and *I'll Fly Away*.

Session 3: Rolling Along (N-B) Rolls- Alternating Thumb and Forward 1 and 2 with roll specific tab examples, left hand ornaments.

Session 4: Backup and Rhythm (N-B) Explaining backup, performing all three duties- rhythm, backup, and solos, jamming skills, the F, D and Barre shapes. Tabs provided.

Session 5: Putting it All Together (N-B) Other important rolls- Reverse 1 and 2, *Foggy Mt Breakdown*, and Backwards 1 and 2 with roll specific tabs, mixed roll solos, using the capo, playing in C, D and F.

Dick Bowden

***Pike County Breakdown* (I-A)** Earl Scruggs' 1949 *Pike County Breakdown* every break all the way through. Bring a capo and sharp ears. There's a LOT going on with the banjo on this version and 9 out of 10 banjo players never even hear the finer points.

How to Jam in a Group, (All Instruments) (B-I) We will all play on two songs — *I'll Fly Away* in A and *Hand Me Down My Walking Cane* in G. Bring a capo. Practice these songs ahead of time so you can spend your time learning to jam rather than learning the song(s).

Gretchen Bowder

3-finger style for clawhammer players (B) Fingerpicks can be fun! In this no pressure workshop, you'll learn some basic rolls and bluegrass licks. Just bring your banjo and picks if you have them. (I'll also have some on hand.)

Using chord scales for improvisation (I) Fun and easy ways to get the most out of the whole neck of your banjo. The picking patterns are for 3-finger players, but anyone will benefit from knowing these chord patterns.

Essential Scrugg's licks for up the neck (I) Learn the building blocks of that ultra-cool up the neck stuff that Scrugg's style players often do under a sung verse. This is essential vocabulary!

Drop D tuning (I-A) Lowering the 4th string to C delivers a rich warm tone, yet it's easy to keep your bearings on the upper 3 strings. Learn *Farewell Blues* (C) and my arrangement of John Reischman's *Horses of Dorrigo* (D).

John Hartford fiddle Tunes for Banjo (A) John Hartford left thousands of unrecorded tunes in various notebooks when he died. In 2020, The John Hartford Fiddle Tune Project Vol. 1 recording was released. With Vol 2 set for release this spring, it's time to get these tunes into regular jam rotation. *Learn Calhoun County (G)* and *Tennessee Politics (D)*.

Matt Flinner- TBA

Gina Furtado

Get to Know the Fretboard (AB) Easy tricks to get the most out of the entire fretboard.

The Art of Backup (I) How to tastefully, respectfully support the other musicians when it's not your turn to solo (and yes... a few flashy backup licks to make sure nobody forgets that the banjo is still the coolest!)

De-Mystifying Tough Keys (I) Say goodbye to that surge of dread we banjo picker's often get when someone calls a tune in keys like D, F or E!

Up Your Modal Game(A) Learn some dark, driving licks for those songs that need a little extra bite (like *Wild Bill Jones* and *Clinch Mountain Backstep*)

Absolute Basics of Improvising (AB) Lay the foundation to creating your own solos.

Eli Gilbert- TBA

Gabe Hirshfeld -more to come

Banjo setup tips (with Rich Stillman) (All) At some time, almost every player gets the urge to make their banjo sound better. Would you like to be able to tweak it with confidence? We can't make your Goodtime sound like Earl's Granada, but there's a great deal you can do with wrenches and a screwdriver that will improve the sound of just about any banjo. Bring your banjo, whether it's a Harmony or a Mastertone, and we'll give you tips on how to recognize what it needs and make it sing.

Scott Hopkins

Chord Inversions & Triad Shifting (B) Sometimes called "F" or "D" or "Bar" shapes, we will instead view chord shapes as inversions - "Root Position", "First Inversion" and "Second Inversion" - for both major and minor throughout the entire neck.

Going from "G" to "C" (B) We'll explore notes, patterns, licks and more to make interesting transitions from G to C chords that work for both lead and backup playing.

Follow the Leader (I) We'll learn this great Don Reno tune - one of the first to use single-string technique within the 3-finger picking style.

Tony Rice Licks on the Banjo (I) The title says it all!

Melodic Cells (A) We'll learn what 4-note "melodic cells" are and how to use them for enhanced playing.

Alan Munde

The Phonetics of Bluegrass Banjo (AB-I) The rolls and how they are used, the maneuvers and gestures (licks) that make the basic language of bluegrass banjo.

Texas Style Guitar Backup for Banjo (I) Texas is not only known for a style of contest fiddling, but also for the guitar accompaniment that goes with the fiddling. In this class we combine the bass line of the guitar with the chord positions of the banjo to create an attractive moving line to accompany not only fiddle tunes, but also to enhance accompaniment of songs.

Back-Up Banjo for Slow Songs (I) The high art of backing slow songs with basic, extended, and altered chords.

You Need to Know Who Allen Shelton Is (I-A) An analysis of the playing style of the really great playing of Allen Shelton during his years with Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys. Explore Shelton's playing on *Blue Bonnet Lane*, *Standing on a Mountain*, *Company's Coming*, and *Congratulations Anyway*.

Playing in Other Keys Than G Without a Capo (A) What you need to know to play in many keys without the use of a capo in the roll style.

Glenn Nelson

Banjo Care and Maintenance Advice on setting up your instrument, diagnosing problems, evaluating an instrument before buying

Music Theory/Music Fact and Chord Study

Trevin Nelson

The Skeleton (I) Play As Crazy As You Want While Still Keeping the Melody

Yoga for Banjo Players (ALL) Bring a yoga mat.

Rich Stillman

3-finger things you can't play in 3-finger style (I-A) Playing bluegrass in 3-finger style is cool and all, but did you ever feel like breaking into a little clawhammer in the middle of a bluegrass break? Maybe adding some pedal steel effect? In this class, we'll go over at least five techniques that will make your fingerpicked banjo sound like something completely different.

Shortcuts to improvising (AB-I) Improvising bluegrass banjo is important for many reasons. In a jam session, you want to be able to invent something to play on tunes you haven't learned yet, but even more critically, you'll need improv skills to play yourself out of situations where you've made a mistake in a memorized break. In this class, we'll cover approaches to analyze musical phrases and develop ways to express those phrases in banjo language – in real time. Learn how to play yourself out of – and into – any reasonable musical situation. You'll relax and enjoy your playing more, and sound better.

Playing the syllables (I) Earl Scruggs would often tell interviewers that his playing strategy was to "play the syllables". His recordings and live performances show an amazing ability to develop breaks based on the playing and singing of the musicians around him. We'll analyze what he

meant by playing the syllables, using real world examples from his career, and show how you can use the same approach to make your lead playing more interesting and expressive.

Deep dive: Sonny Osborne's playing on Bluegrass Collection (I-A) In 1978, the Osborne Brothers released a double LP with their versions of twenty-four classic bluegrass songs. The album is a banjo showcase and a demonstration of the versatility of Sonny's eclectic but traditional banjo style. We'll look at several tunes from this album in detail, from slow tunes and waltzes to barn-burners, trademark lead breaks to backup, and analyze many of Sonny's techniques that you can apply to your own playing.

Banjo setup tips (with Gabe Hirschfeld) (All) At some time, almost every player gets the urge to make their banjo sound better. Would you like to be able to tweak it with confidence? We can't make your Goodtime sound like Earl's Granada, but there's a great deal you can do with wrenches and a screwdriver that will improve the sound of just about any banjo. Bring your banjo, whether it's a Harmony or a Mastertone, and we'll give you tips on how to recognize what it needs and make it sing.

Ken Thomas

So You want to Record Your Band? (All) Fundamentals of recording acoustic & bluegrass music in a Recording Studio.

Old-Time Fiddle

Natalie Padilla

Fiddle Playing Workout! I'll share some of my favorite stretches, warmups, tone and intonation exercises, talk about the importance of routines, and learn how to befriend the metronome. At any level and age the fiddle is a difficult and unforgiving instrument but so beautiful and rewarding. Let's get to work!

Standard Tuning Learn a tune or two in standard tuning (keys G or C). This will be taught in phrases by ear, we'll also go over the chords.

Cross Tuning Learn a tune or two in a cross tuning (to be determined in class!). Also taught by ear with focus on the chords. We will also cover fiddle backup - what to do when you're not playing the melody.

Fiddle Master Class I'll need a handful of volunteers! The brave fiddlers will go one at a time, playing for the class something they have performance ready. I'll give a mini lesson in front of the class and aim to spend 15 min. per student.

Fiddle / Banjo! Bring a fiddle and or a banjo and let's jam! Come with a few tunes you can lead, other instruments welcome too but the main focus is fiddle / banjo. We may go over old time jamming etiquette.

Brian Slattery

The ABCs of Fiddle Rhythms Learn three bowing patterns that are the basic building blocks of Appalachian fiddle rhythms, and get more rhythm into all the tunes you play.

Seconding More and more, when fiddlers jam together they don't play in unison; they take turns backing one another up. We'll go over the basics of seconding, of suggesting chords while also following the shape of the tune.

Check Your Pulse Have you been looking to explore when and how to add pulses to your bows for deeper groove? We'll go over the mechanics of pulsing and how they fit into different bowing patterns for a simple tune.

Slow and Groovy We think of getting better at fiddle music as also getting faster. That isn't necessarily true. We'll go over ways that playing slow can give us a chance to make space to create even more rhythm, and help develop techniques that improve our playing when playing fast.

The Big Drone Looking for ways to vary up the tunes you play? We'll go over some basic strategies for varying the tunes you know and playing things other than the tune, and then play two simple tunes for a long time to give you a chance to explore.

John Showman

Fiddle Groove and Tone (ALL) In this class, John will help beginners and more advanced players to unlock their best tone and rhythm with the help of a few simple technical tools that will make playing in time, and with confidence, much easier.

Scoops, Slurs and Shuffles- Bringing Old-Time Bowing to Life (I) In this class, John will help players with a couple years or more of playing under their belts to get inside some fundamental Old-Time fiddle grooves. With the help of a cool tune or two and a few exercises, players will learn how to turn a sequence of notes into pulses of rhythm that will carry them and the people they are playing with through the tunes with loads of energy and joy.

Playing In Time With A Metronome ALL Instruments (ALL) This class is not only for fiddle players, but for anyone who has struggled to play in time and to really feel a rhythmic connection with the evil metronome! By breaking down the process into a few simple steps, John will help turn your worst enemy into your most faithful jamming buddy.

Adding Depth and Variations to Old-time Tunes (I) This class is for those who want to find a few different ways to play the same tune without confusing or irritating the people you are jamming with. John will show you some alternate note choices and bowings with which you can really shape the dynamics and energy of a tune that you are playing over and over

How to Play Bluegrass as an Old-time Fiddle Player (ALL) Hey, if Chubby Wise and Art Stamper can do it, so can you! Bluegrass may seem intimidating, but at its core, it's still mostly fiddle tunes. Solos? Easy, just learn to play the vocal line simply and beautifully (i.e. turn it into a fiddle tune). Double stops? No problem! Just an extra finger down on a drone string. With a few tricks, you'll be able to hang in there when your banjo and guitar buddies start singing Larry Sparks and Ralph Stanley songs and looking at you expectantly.