

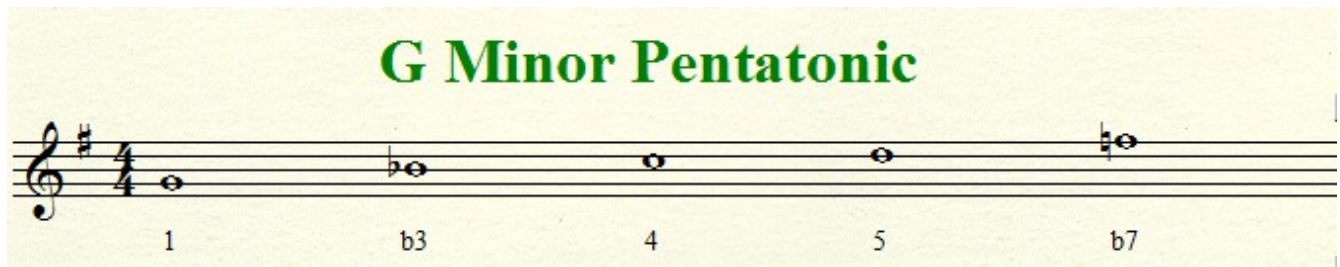
Chord Scales

This is hardly an original idea but an effective one for thinking about what notes to play when looking at blues tunes with unfamiliar chords. Most 12 bar blues with just I, IV, and V chords can use the minor pentatonic scale very effectively. However this can break down when some of the chords are not I, IV, or V chords.

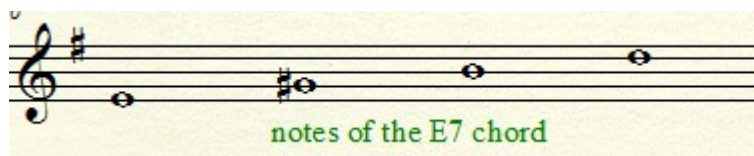
Let's take a tune like "Ask Me Know Questions" which we will look at in the key of G. The opening introduction has the following chords:



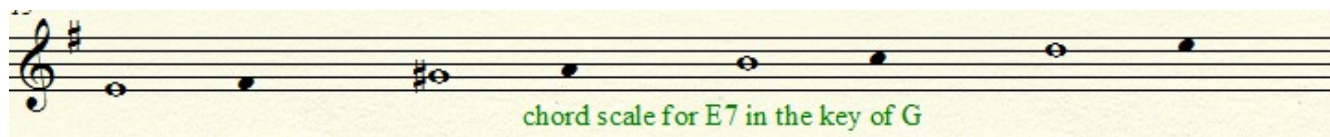
Surprisingly the minor pentatonic works rather well.



But we can create a more sophisticated palette of pitches if we employ the following technique. Start with the chord pitches. E7 is the first chord we see outside of the I IV V chords we often see in more 'normal' blues.



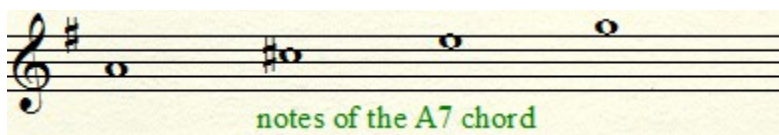
Using those chord tones as a start simply fill in the 'holes'. And voila.



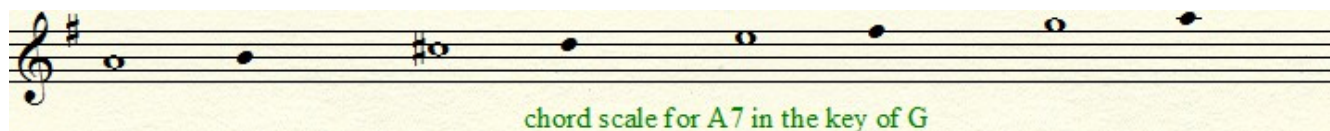
We need a note between E and G# so we added F#.
We need a note between G# and B so we added A.
We need a note between B and D so we added C.
We topped it off with another E.

ALL the notes we added are from the key of G (in the key signature).

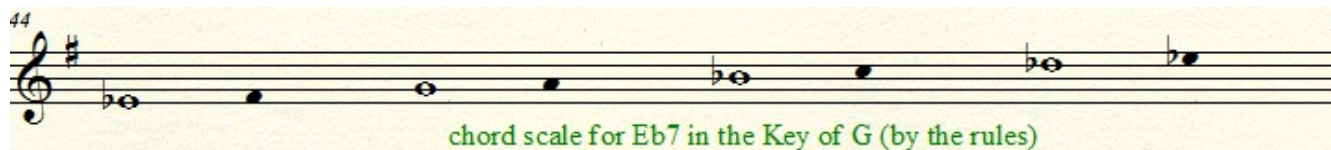
Let's do the same for the next chord A7
Start with the chord tones.



Fill in the notes.



The only other chord in “Ask Me No Questions” outside of the I IV V chord is Eb7. And here is the scale.



You might find this scale a little funky. There is an augmented 2nd between Eb and the next note F#. Then again you might like it. If you choose to 'smooth' it out simply lower the F# to an F natural.

