

What Is The Best Guitar For A Beginner?

This is my opinion based on my personal knowledge and experience. As with any opinion, others may offer their own but I will try to be as impartial as I can and offer what I believe to be the consensus among the guitar population. No single guitar fits all player's styles and requirement but these selections would make a reasonable first guitar.

Acoustic:

Contrary to what music shops try to sell you, an acoustic guitar is not necessarily the "best" guitar for beginners. They are slightly harder to play than an electric guitar of comparable price due to the heavier string gauge and the height of the strings above the fretboard (action). Thinner strings can be installed but they generally don't sound very good on acoustics.

I suspect the reason that music shops suggest this is because an acoustic guitar doesn't require an amplifier. It is a "pick-up-and-play" option but it could be difficult for any beginner to get used to it. The only way around this is to get a much more expensive guitar and by then any guitarist would think it was easy to play.

An acoustic guitar also comes with what might be an uncomfortable bulk due to the necessary size of the acoustic body. You get used to it but at first it might be a handful.

If an acoustic guitar fits your requirements, then almost any guitar made by Yamaha will look good, sound good, play well and fit most peoples' budget. However, the Chinese company Cort also makes some impressive low-cost guitars. Washburn is also a good choice.

In more expensive brands, Taylor, Takamine, Seagull, Martin and Maton are very good.

Be careful about being sold a classical guitar, distinguishable by the nylon strings. These are not necessarily gentler on fingers than steel strings and unless classical is the preferred style, may not sound right for the purpose.

Electric:

Electric guitars require an amplifier but a practice amp can be obtained for a reasonable price. These also come in a range of styles but in general a modern 15W amplifier is pretty impressive.

In general, Epiphone guitars look great, sound great and play well. Epiphone is the lower-cost version of the guitar giant, Gibson. They come in a range of

styles copying the more expensive Gibson models but are easier on the wallet.

Fender is the next favourite by a very narrow margin and falls into the same category as Gibson for general purpose guitars. While Fender Stratocasters and Telecasters can cost quite a bit, they do come in a low-cost version under the name of Squier. As with Epiphone, the Squier is made of a cheaper body wood. Only experience will expose the difference in sound and playability from the more expensive Fenders.

If the preference leans toward heavy metal, then Ibanez and ESP would be the favourites. Low-cost ESP guitars come with the prominent LTD logo although ESP will be displayed on the guitar somewhere.

Ibanez makes a low-cost version with the same Ibanez logo but in what they call their RG series. They sound great and play well.

Jackson, B.C.Rich and Paul Reed Smith may also be on offer at the music shop.

Disclaimer:

I didn't want to go into an exhaustive list of all the guitars that are available and some would be offended that I left certain brand names out of this list. However, I am quite sure you would be happy with any of these for a first guitar.

There is no doubt that you will outgrow your first guitar and another guitar will tempt you. Don't worry, that is the norm for almost every guitarist I know. I own 7 guitars and even that is considered a small number among guitar enthusiasts. You will always have a favourite but it is nice to have a choice.