

## Music of the World

### Chordophones: Latin Lutes and Banjos, Ukuleles

The **Rajão** is Portuguese five stringed instrument, first documented in 1879, that was the predecessor of the Hawaiian Ukulele. It is a little over 2 feet in length and uses *reentrant tuning*, which means the strings don't ascend by pitch in order, but jump around. For example, 5-string rajão is tuned  $D_4-G_4-C_4-E_4-A_4$  with the 3rd string as the lowest pitch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxTIAF41UBo>



The **Cavaquinho** is a small Portuguese lute with four strings.

The *cavaquinho* is the name of a person who plays it.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyYpfjmm\\_Y0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dyYpfjmm_Y0)



The Brazilian **Cavaquinho** is larger resembling a classical guitar.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJuKXkC90l4>



The Brazilian **Samba Cavaco** is a version of the cavaquinho used for comping and playing rhythmic accompaniments.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWpPd9pBco4>



This family of Latin American string instruments is called the **Cuatro**. They were derived from the Spanish guitar which was probably adapted from European lutes or zithers. *Cuatro* meaning *four*, represents the number of strings on the instrument. It is the national instrument of Venezuela, shown right, and important



in many countries. The 10-string Puerto Rican version of the **Cuatro**, shown left, is shaped a bit like a jelly-bean. It comes in soprano, alto, tenor (traditional) and bass. The 10 strings are divided into 5 sets.



The **Samba Banjo**, which has four strings, is used mostly for jazz and is a hybrid banjo-ukulele.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsDjQ94Bc-Y>



The **Ukulele**, though immediately recognizable as the instrument of Hawaii, was developed in the islands as late as the 1880's based on the **Rajão**, the **Cavaquinho** and the **Machete** which were brought by immigrants from Portugal. The Ukulele (Uke) has four nylon strings and as the **Rajão**, uses *reentrant tuning*  $G_4-C_4-E_4-A_4$ , "My dog has fleas." It comes in many sizes: pocket, soprano, concert (alto), tenor, baritone, bass, and contrabass. This may change your mind about the Ukulele: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PB3RbO7updc>

