

# Dorian Mode

## The Scale & Vibe

The Dorian scale begins on the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the scale, Re. This mode sounds minor. Dorian mode is frequently found in Celtic music. Dorian is often described as sounding sad but with hope. “Melancholy” might be a good description of Dorian mode. It’s an expressive mode and one of the most useful modes.

Re Me Fa So La Ti Do

D-Dorian scale: D E F G A B C  
A- Dorian scale: A B C D E F# G  
E-Dorian scale: E F# G A B C# D

## The Key Signature

The root tone of a Dorian scale is always the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the Ionian scale that sets the key signature.

A-Dorian: The tone A is the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the G-Ionian scale. So, the key signature of this mode has one sharp (F#)

E-Dorian: The tone E is the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the D-Ionian scale. So, the key signature of this mode has two sharps (F# and C#)

B-Dorian: The tone B is the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the A-Ionian scale. So, the key signature of this mode has three sharps (F# C# G#)

## Altered Tones

To create a Dorian scale from the Ionian scale using the same root tone, alter the scale tones in this way: lower the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> tones of the scale by a half step each.

Dorian	1	2	<b>b3</b>	4	5	6	<b>b7</b>
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A-Ionian scale: A B C# D E F# G#  
A- Dorian scale: A B C D E F# G

E-Ionian scale: E F# G# A B C# D#  
E- Dorian scale: E F G A B C D

D-Ionian scale: D E F# G A B C#  
D-Dorian scale: D E F G A B C

## Chords

The most prominent chords in the Dorian mode will be the tonic chord plus those chords which include the altered tones of the scale. These tones are the flatted 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> tones.

### A- Dorian prominent chords

A minor – A C E (tonic and b3)                      G major – G B D (b7)  
F major – FAC (b3 )                                      E minor – E G B (b7)  
C major – C E G (b3 and b7)

The strongest chord changes in A- Dorian move among A minor, F major, G major and E minor.

### **Jam track**

An A-Dorian jam track in 4|4 at moderate tempo using these chords:

**Am F G Am Am F G Am C Dm Em Am C Dm Em F Am F G Am Am F G Am**

### **Examples of Dorian Mode**

Pop Song – Eleanor Rigby – The Beatles

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuS5NuXRb5Y>

Folk Song – Scarborough Fair – Simon and Garfunkel

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BakWVXHsug&index=3&list=RDQMfita\\_t4NI30](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BakWVXHsug&index=3&list=RDQMfita_t4NI30)

Rock and Roll – We Will Rock You - Queen

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJYN-eG1zk&index=8&list=RDQMfita\\_t4NI30](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJYN-eG1zk&index=8&list=RDQMfita_t4NI30)

Tocatta and Fugue in Dminor – J. S. Bach

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho9rZjlsyYY>

### **More Resources**

How to write Dorian mode chord progressions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGE3g4xSVYg>

3 Ways to Play Dorian mode

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

Rick Beato on Dorian Mode

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tsb0oibEEqE>

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

Hack Music Theory always provides excellent advice. Here are some of their Youtubes on the modes:

What are Modes anyway??

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEEIzai3tlo>

How to get a mode to sound like a mode

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

Rick Beato again on modes. He moves VERY fast. But, the sounds are wonderful. It's a helpful YouTube that gives the sounds of the modes along with a great deal of theory.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8HJ5mBb9Pgo>

Bright to dark (chaotic)

Lydian - levitation

Ionia - is

Mixolydian - mostly

Dorian - done

Aeolian - against

Phrygian - physical

Locrian - laws