

cigar box guitars for sale

Cigar box guitars for sale are increasingly becoming popular among musicians and enthusiasts alike, thanks to their unique sound, affordability, and the DIY culture surrounding them. Originally, these instruments were crafted from empty cigar boxes and simple materials, making them accessible to anyone interested in creating music. Today, cigar box guitars are not only a testament to creativity and craftsmanship but also a viable option for musicians seeking a distinct sound that stands out from traditional guitars. In this article, we will explore what cigar box guitars are, their history, the benefits of owning one, where to find them, and tips for buying the perfect cigar box guitar.

What is a Cigar Box Guitar?

A cigar box guitar is a simple stringed instrument that is typically made from an empty cigar box, a neck, and a few strings. These guitars can have anywhere from one to six strings, with three-string versions being particularly popular in blues music. The instrument is played like a regular guitar, but its unique design and materials contribute to a sound that is often described as raw, resonant, and full of character.

The Anatomy of a Cigar Box Guitar

To understand cigar box guitars better, let's break down their key components:

1. **Cigar Box:** The body of the guitar, usually made from wood or cardboard, contributes significantly to the instrument's tone. The resonance of the box affects the overall sound produced.
2. **Neck:** Typically made from wood, the neck is attached to the box and holds the frets and strings. The length and material of the neck can influence playability and sound.
3. **Strings:** Cigar box guitars can be strung with traditional guitar strings, banjo strings, or even fishing line. The type of strings used can dramatically alter the tone.
4. **Bridge and Nut:** These components help maintain string height and spacing, impacting the instrument's action and playability.

The History of Cigar Box Guitars

Cigar box guitars have a rich history that dates back to the 19th century. They were initially created by resourceful individuals who wanted to make music with limited materials. Here's a brief overview of their evolution:

- **19th Century Beginnings:** The first cigar box guitars were crafted by African American musicians in the southern United States. They used empty cigar boxes, found wood, and whatever materials they could scavenge to build instruments.
- **Blues and Folk Music:** Cigar box guitars became synonymous with the blues genre, as musicians utilized these instruments to express their emotions and stories. Its simplicity made it an ideal

choice for traveling musicians.

- **Revival in Popularity:** In recent years, there has been a resurgence in interest in cigar box guitars, fueled by the DIY movement and the desire for unique musical instruments. Many contemporary musicians have embraced them for their distinct sound and aesthetic.

Benefits of Owning a Cigar Box Guitar

There are several reasons why you might consider adding a cigar box guitar to your collection, including:

- **Affordability:** Cigar box guitars are often more affordable than traditional guitars, making them accessible to beginners and budget-conscious musicians.
- **Unique Sound:** The materials used in cigar box guitars produce a sound that is often described as rustic, warm, and full of character. This makes them a great choice for blues, folk, and country music.
- **Customizability:** Many musicians enjoy the DIY aspect of cigar box guitars. You can personalize the design, materials, and setup to suit your playing style.
- **Easy to Play:** Cigar box guitars are generally easier to play than traditional guitars, especially for beginners. Their simple construction and fewer strings make them an excellent choice for learning the basics.

Where to Find Cigar Box Guitars for Sale

If you're interested in purchasing a cigar box guitar, there are various options available to you:

Online Retailers

- **Etsy:** A popular platform for handmade and vintage items, Etsy features many artisans who craft and sell custom cigar box guitars.
- **eBay:** eBay offers a wide selection of new and used cigar box guitars. You can find everything from beginner models to high-end custom builds.
- **Amazon:** While more standardized, Amazon does carry cigar box guitars from various brands, making it a convenient option for buyers.

Local Music Stores

- **Specialty Guitar Shops:** Some local music stores may have a selection of cigar box guitars or can order them for you.
- **Flea Markets and Craft Fairs:** You might find local artisans selling their handmade cigar box guitars at flea markets or craft fairs, providing a unique opportunity to support local craftsmen.

Custom Builders

- Local Luthiers: Many skilled luthiers specialize in building custom cigar box guitars. Commissioning a custom build can lead to a one-of-a-kind instrument tailored to your specifications.

Tips for Buying a Cigar Box Guitar

When purchasing a cigar box guitar, there are several factors to consider to ensure you make the right choice:

1. **Sound Quality:** If possible, play the guitar before purchasing to evaluate its sound. Different boxes and materials can produce varying tones.
2. **Playability:** Consider the action (string height) and neck width. Ensure that the guitar feels comfortable in your hands.
3. **Build Quality:** Check the craftsmanship of the instrument, including the quality of the materials used and how well the components are assembled.
4. **Design and Aesthetic:** Choose a design that resonates with you. Cigar box guitars come in various styles, from rustic to modern.
5. **Price Point:** Set a budget before shopping. While some cigar box guitars are affordable, custom builds can be more expensive.

Conclusion

Cigar box guitars for sale offer a unique and enjoyable way to explore music, whether you're a seasoned musician or a beginner looking to start your musical journey. With their rich history, affordability, and the potential for customization, these instruments are a fantastic addition to any musician's collection. Whether you choose to purchase from an online retailer, a local music store, or commission a custom build, you'll find that cigar box guitars not only bring a unique sound but also a creative outlet for self-expression. Happy strumming!

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a cigar box guitar?

A cigar box guitar is a simple stringed instrument made from a cigar box, typically featuring three or four strings and often played with a slide.

Where can I find cigar box guitars for sale?

Cigar box guitars can be found for sale at specialty music stores, online marketplaces like Etsy and eBay, and through dedicated cigar box guitar builders' websites.

How much do cigar box guitars typically cost?

Prices for cigar box guitars can vary widely, typically ranging from \$50 for basic models to over \$500 for handcrafted, custom designs.

What should I look for when buying a cigar box guitar?

Look for quality craftsmanship, the type of wood used, the type of strings, the playability, and whether it comes with any additional features like pickups or tuning pegs.

Are there cigar box guitars suitable for beginners?

Yes, many cigar box guitars are designed specifically for beginners, often featuring simpler designs and fewer strings, making them easier to play.

Can I build my own cigar box guitar?

Absolutely! Many enthusiasts enjoy building their own cigar box guitars using kits or tutorials available online, making it a fun DIY project.

What styles of music can be played on a cigar box guitar?

Cigar box guitars are versatile and can be used to play various styles, including blues, folk, rock, and country music.

Do cigar box guitars require special maintenance?

Cigar box guitars require basic maintenance like regular string changes, keeping the body clean, and ensuring the neck is straight, but generally, they are low-maintenance instruments.

Are there any famous musicians who play cigar box guitars?

Yes, several musicians are known for using cigar box guitars, including blues artists like Seasick Steve and handmade instrument enthusiasts who showcase their talents in live performances.

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