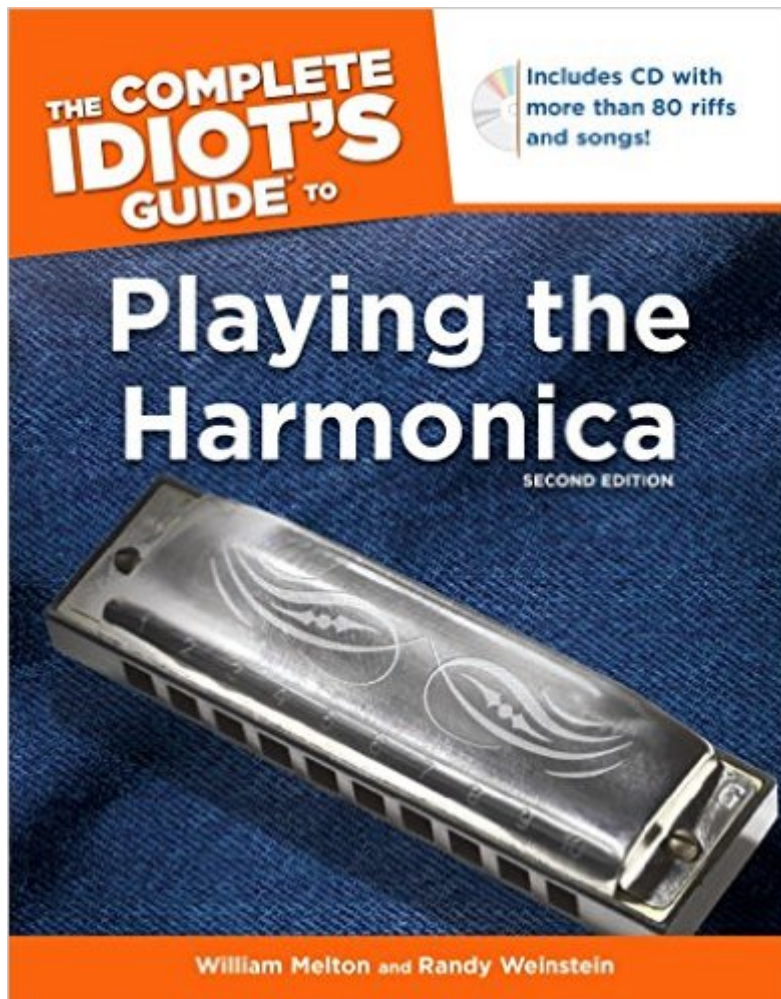


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# The Complete Idiot's Guide To Playing The Harmonica, 2nd Edition (Idiot's Guides)



## Synopsis

With photos, illustrations, and a new audio CD. The harmonica is one of the most traditional musical instruments in America. Millions are sold each year, but there are few high quality, comprehensive instructional manuals for new harmonica players. This bestselling book has been completely updated, with dozens of new songs and a professionally mastered audio CD. &#149; Over 100 songs, both traditional and original to this book &#149; Detailed instructions on playing, including photos to illustrate positions and techniques &#149; Buying tips and interesting historical facts about famous players &#149; Authors are professional musicians &#149; The most comprehensive music lists featuring nearly every style of playing and category of song &#149; Over 80 riffs and songs performed on the special audio CD &#149; Comprehensive resource guides

## Book Information

Series: Idiot's Guides

Paperback: 272 pages

Publisher: ALPHA; 2nd edition (October 3, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1592574653

ISBN-13: 978-1592574650

Product Dimensions: 8.6 x 0.5 x 10.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (84 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #115,355 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 inÂ Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Instruments > Woodwinds > Harmonicas #240 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Performing Arts > Music #1044 inÂ Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Theory, Composition & Performance > Instruction & Study

## Customer Reviews

If you tried Jon Gindick's harmonica technique (he wrote a simple method and bundled it with an inexpensive harmonica in the Klutz books series) you might find you are interested in learning more. There are a lot of books on harmonica method, and they range from too simple to too complicated. This book is surprisingly good. It covers what harmonicas to purchase (and the advice is good, the listing of brands fairly complete.) There is a section on bending notes, an essential technique for getting more notes out of a diatonic harmonica and for creating a bluesy sound. The best chapter, for me, was on the structure of 12-bar blues with an explanation of the

"call-and-response" structure. It's easy to understand and essential for structuring your blues riffs to make musical sense. There's also a fine chapter on the etiquette of jamming with harmonica when you join up with a guitarist, singer and other instrumentalists. The harmonica plays support, mostly, but does get to solo. When should you chime in and when do you fade to the background? This chapter tells you how not to make a fool of yourself. The only thing this book doesn't have is a CD with guitar or piano for jamming along with. If you are getting started in harmonica, especially blues harp, you will need some CD's, especially of the greats like Little Walter and Charles Musselwhite, to provide examples. You can't listen enough to get the ideas down. But this book is a really worthy text to go along with your practice.

This book is surprisingly good for a book written for "complete idiots". I expected something very basic but it covers just about every aspect of learning to play a harmonica up to a pretty high level. It goes way beyond simple techniques. One thing I found unique is that the authors treat the harmonica like a real musical instrument instead of just a toy. They explain concepts and techniques from the standpoint of real music but it doesn't get bogged down or complicated. They even give you the option of learning to play the harmonica by reading music or by the more standard tab system, and the chapter that teaches you how to read music is extremely easy to understand. It also includes some information not usually included in harmonica books such as the history of the harmonica, buying and repairing harmonicas and how to play in a band. There are other books that may be better on individual topics, but this is by far the most complete soup-to-nuts harmonica instruction book. I recommend this be the first harmonica book you buy and then you probably won't need to buy any others.

I've read music, sung, and played piano and violin, so your mileage may vary, but I was playing some simple songs the first and second day I had the book. I think it's organized well, and I was pleasantly surprised at how much is covered in the music theory chapter. Two things that would really help a lot: (1) A CD so you can hear the examples, and (2) Proof read the music! There are many mistakes, not only on the songs that are written out in tablature, but even in the samples that are written in standard music notation. Very frustrating to have to wonder on each example what I'm doing wrong, only to eventually experiment and find the RIGHT note (usually just the difference between a blow and draw on the tab versions) and correct the music. I also agree with a previous post that it would have been nice if they had continued supplying suggestions on which notes should have chords underlying the melody and which should not, but I'm not really bothered by that

omission. Here's the good news: the author/publisher could go a long way towards solving BOTH these problems without even issuing a new revision (although that would be ideal...I'd buy the book again if it was accurate and had a CD): they could post an errata page and post mp3 files for the sample music (I know, I know, copyright laws, mechanical licenses, etc., but many of these songs like Shenandoah are public domain, some are originals, and I'm not suggesting to post the original ARRANGEMENTS anyway...just files where you could listen to the melody). I still found this book valuable, but I'll definitely need another book of music for my practice sessions--preferably one with an accompanying CD.

This is the only Harmonica book I own so I don't have much to compare it with and I am only on chpt. 4 but I am definitely liking this book. It introduces you to the world of the harmonica in a way that doesn't make you feel like a COMPLETE idiot, and that it's ok to be totally ignorant about the subject. So far, I feel that all my questions and doubts are being addressed, and even those I hadn't thought of. It is an easy read and even makes me chuckle every so often, not at all tedious. A good buy, worth every cent...so far.

This was one three harmonica instruction books I bought, and clearly the best. For the best part is its organization, which is easy to follow even for a beginner. It has the usual Complete idiot's Guide structure which emphasizes making it easy to read and find things, like a complete index, easy to read format, and tips and tricks which are hi-lighted. The resource guide at the end is also useful and gives you additional instructional material, harmonica websites and organizations, magazines and places to purchase harmonicas, etc.

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