

THE ONE-BAR PATTERN

The basic bossa nova comping pattern is a one-bar figure that alternates between a bass note played by the thumb and a chord played by the fingers. Coordination between the thumb and fingers is essential to getting the feel of this pattern down—as well as to being able to move on to the other bossa nova patterns.

◀ [AUDIO-BossaNova1.mp3](#)

Your first goal is to become comfortable with this rhythm. Practice the pattern a lot, until you can play any set of chord changes with it. Use any chord voicing you like; the important thing is to keep a steady rhythm feel and to supply the “bass note and chord” type of accompaniment. If you change bass notes, it is usually the root and 5th of the chord that alternate. If you do not have an available 5th in your voicing at the moment, then don’t worry about it; just use the root twice.

Here are some progressions for practicing the pattern with an alternating bass. These are each “two measures per chord,” which allows you to concentrate on the rhythm. These should also give you some ideas for appropriate chord voicings in this style.

◀ [AUDIO-BossaNova2.mp3](#)

FENDER PLAYERS CLUB BOSSA NOVA

T **A** **B**

T **A** **B**

◀ [AUDIO-BossaNova3.mp3](#)

Now we're cranking! In these next progressions, you have only half a measure, or one bass note, to establish the chord change, so you'll want to stick with just the root in the bass. Notice how active the bass line becomes.

T **A** **B**

T **A** **B**

Emi9 A13 D⁶ G13

TAB: 7 7 5 | 5 7 5 | 5 5 4 | 5 4 3

◀ [AUDIO-BossaNova4.mp3](#)

ONE-BAR VARIATION

The variation here is the addition of a chord attack on the upbeat of beat 4. This becomes important later as we'll use it for rhythmic and harmonic anticipation—for now, however, just play the same chord through the whole measure.

Ami7 play 4 times

TAB: 5 0 | 5 0 5 5 | 5 0 5 5 | 5 0 5 5

◀ [AUDIO-BossaNova5.mp3](#)

Ami7 D9

TAB: 5 0 | 5 4 5 5 | 5 4 5 5 | 5 4 5 5

Ami9 E7(9)

TAB: 5 0 | 5 0 5 5 | 7 8 7 8 | 7 8 7 8

FENDER PLAYERS CLUB BOSSA NOVA

Ama7

Fma7

T
A
B

5 6 0 6 6 5

8 7 8 7 7

◀ [AUDIO-BossaNova6.mp3](#)



This lesson is from:

[Latin Guitar: The Essential Guide to Brazilian and Afro-Cuban Rhythms](#) (Musicians Institute Press)
by Bruce Buckingham.

Pro musician and G.I.T. instructor Bruce Buckingham covers all the basics guitarists need to know in this book/CD pack designed from MI elective courses.

Rhythms covered include: bossa nova, samba, partido alto, baião, bolero, cha cha, mambo, nanigo 6/8 and more.

The accompanying CD includes 79 demo tracks.

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