

Autumn Leaves Guide

Jazz Standards Volume 1

Your complete study guide to the
classic jazz standard

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Autumn Leaves Guide

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How to Use This eBook

Welcome to the Autumn Leaves guide!

Autumn Leaves is a perfect standard to start your jazz journey with.

Not only will you be learning one of the most commonly played jazz tunes.

You will also be learning the individual components that make up countless jazz standards.

By working with this book you will:

- Build confidence with Autumn Leaves
- Have a structured method to tackle **any jazz standard**.

I recommend pacing yourself through the eBook.

If you are a complete beginner be prepared to spend a few months working through the material.

If you are more advanced you might feel comfortable with the material in a matter of weeks.

I strongly recommend that you are comfortable with both:

- Beginner Jazz Chords
- Beginner Jazz Improvisation

Both of these eBooks are available on my website.

You can either work your way through this eBook chronologically.

Or you can mix up exercises from the different sections.

For example, practice one exercise from the comping section and one exercise from the improvisation chapter.

Harmonic Analysis

Let's begin by harmonically analyzing Autumn Leaves.

Harmonically analyzing a chord progression will help you memorize and understand the chords thoroughly.

You are going to learn how to analyze Autumn Leaves using the Roman numeral system.

By learning the progression this way you will see how 75% of the Autumn Leaves progression alternates between major and minor ii-V's.

Learning harmony in ii-V-I's and key centres is easier than learning progressions on a chord by chord basis.

Imagine if you learned the first three chords as separate entities.

You would memorize each of the chords like this:

Am7, D7 then G major 7.

Compare this to simply:

ii-V-I in G.

Which sounds easier to memorize?

The second.

You can also play the chord progression in different keys by thinking of Roman numerals.

Learning a chord progression this way initially requires more work.

But the extra work will pay off in the long term.

Autumn Leaves is a 32 bar song form like many other jazz standards such as Take The A Train and Misty.

The form is broken up into four, eight bar sequences.

The first two sets of eight bars are basically identical.

So, the letters given to first two sets of eight bars are "AA".

Note that the only difference between the first two sections is the last bar as referenced in the example below.

A

Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷ Cmaj⁷

F#m⁷b⁵ B⁷ Em⁷ (E⁷)

A2

Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷ Cmaj⁷

F#m⁷b⁵ B⁷ Em⁷ No V chord here

At first glance this progression might seem daunting.

Yes, there is a chord in every bar.

However, Autumn Leaves never really leaves the key of G.

Each of the chords are diatonic to the G major scale.

Let's look at chords I and VI from a harmonized G major scale.

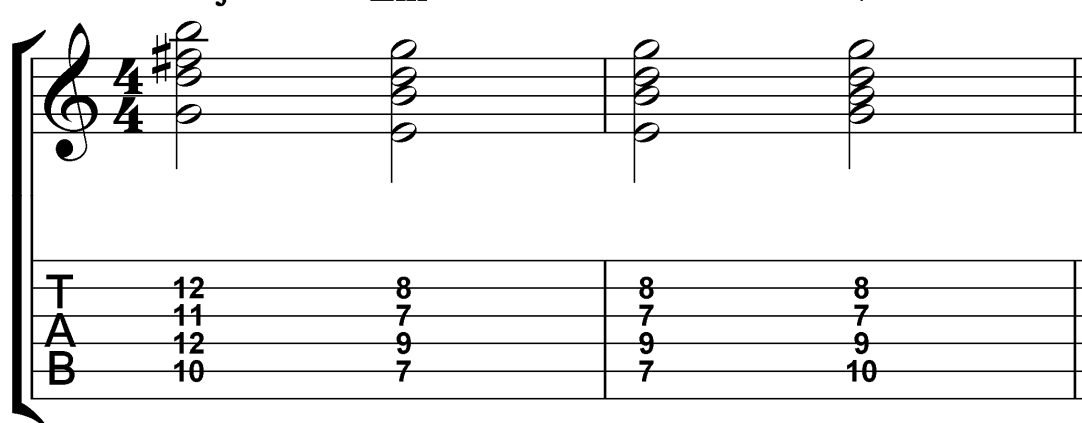
G major 7 and E minor 7.

Play both chords.

Then play the Em7 with a G bass note.

Audio Example 1

Gmaj⁷ Em⁷ Em⁷ Em/G



	Gmaj ⁷	Em ⁷	Em ⁷	Em/G
T	12	8	8	8
A	11	7	7	7
B	12	9	9	9
	10	7	7	10

Aurally and visually all of these chords are almost identical.

99% of the chords are from the harmonized G major scale.

The two key centres are the I and VI which are very similar.

G and Em are the same first two chords of Stand By Me.

The ii-V-I's in Autumn Leaves provide a more harmonically decorated destination between the key centres.

So, in short, you can memorize the first two A sections of Autumn Leaves by thinking:

Major ii-V-I with a passing IV chord followed by a ii-V-I into the relative minor x2

The B section or bridge of Autumn Leaves is a **harmonic reversal** of the A section.

For example, the progression starts with a minor ii-V-I which is then followed by a ii-V-I in the relative major.

Harmonic Reversal of the A Section

B

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff is labeled 'B' and contains three measures of chords: F#m^{7b5}, B⁷, and Em⁷. The second staff contains four measures of chords: Am⁷, D⁷, Gmaj⁷, and Cmaj⁷. Each measure is represented by a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a staff with diagonal lines indicating the chord.

Play through the first 24 bars looking at the chord sheet on page 10.

Then turn away and try to play the chords from memory.

You'll have 75% off the tune memorized in no time!

Let's take a look at the final set of eight bars; the C section.

The Autumn Leaves C section is the most harmonically cramped part of the tune.

Like the bridge, the C section starts out with a minor ii-V-I.

However, the E minor 7 now has a **double function**.

The chord acts as both a I chord in the minor ii-V-I and a ii in a ii-V.

The overall movement in these two bars is a turnaround to the IV chord.

You can analyze this as both a iii-VI-ii-V in the key of C or as two ii-V's that descend by a tone.


You'll still arrive at the same destination whichever way you see it.

The chord chart on the next page shows all the sections together.

Memorize these chords before moving onto the next section.

C **Minor ii-V-I** **Descending ii-V's**

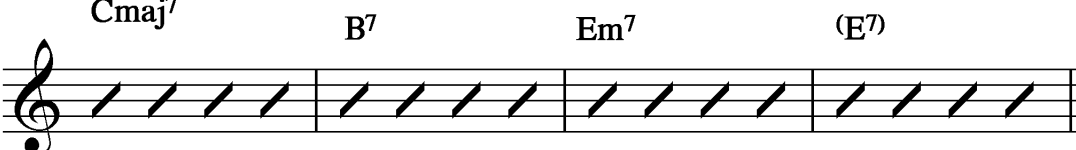
F#m^{7b5} B⁷ Em⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷



This is also a iii-VI-ii-V in C

Minor V-I **Turnaround to ii**

Cmaj⁷ B⁷ Em⁷ (E⁷)



Major ii-V-I

A **IV Chord**

Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷ Cmaj⁷

ii-V-I to Relative Minor

Turnaround to ii

F#m^{7b5} B⁷ Em⁷ (E⁷)

Harmonic Reversal of the A Section

B

F#m^{7b5} B⁷ Em⁷

Am⁷ D⁷ Gmaj⁷ Cmaj⁷

C

Minor ii-V-I

Descending ii-V's

F#m^{7b5} B⁷ Em⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

This is also a iii-VI-ii-V in C

Minor V-I

Cmaj⁷ B⁷ Em⁷ (E⁷)