A black silhouette of a person playing a guitar, set against a solid red background. The person is shown from the side, leaning forward with their right foot on the ground and their left leg raised. The guitar is held in their right hand, and the neck of the guitar extends towards the right side of the frame. The text 'THE SUPER MINI SONGBOOK' is written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font across the person's torso.

THE
SUPER MINI
SONGBOOK

Beat Your Guitar
Playing Demons
With Three Classic
Songs Taught Like
Never Before

DAN THORPE

The Super Mini Songbook

Beat Your Guitar Playing Demons With Three
Classic Songs Taught Like Never Before

Dan Thorpe

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More Resources

[Access and Download Your eBooks](#)—Don't forget you can also get my free eBook... *The Guitar Doctor* featuring 35 powerful technique-building tips. That eBook makes for a great companion to this guide and will help you fix many bad habits. It's a must-read if you suffer from any sort of arthritis, pain, or soreness when you play.

[Dan Thorpe's Backstage Area](#)—To get more help from Dan, you can check out his "Backstage" resources page where you will find a series of free, inexpensive, and premium lessons from Dan... All of which will take what you learn in this guide and help you make even bigger progress on the guitar!

[Join Me on Social Media](#)—Every day I share highly motivating tips, videos, and mini lessons that will help you get the most out of this eBook and your playing!

... And don't forget to check your [email inbox](#) for highly motivating, inspiring emails from me. All of my emails tie in nicely with this guide, so don't miss out on them!

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INTRODUCTION:

A NEW WAY OF PLAYING SONGS

Welcome! In this short guide, you will find three classic songs all taught in ways you've probably never learnt before! The songs are "House of the Rising Sun", "Amazing Grace", and "When the Saints Go Marching In".

Before we dive into the songs, first, let me tell you about the title of this book.

This guide is all about showing you how to play these timeless songs in unique ways so you can beat your guitar-playing demons. I use the word "demon" in a rather light-hearted way...

... But the truth is, there are many demons in the guitar world.

Some of these demons may be in your head. For example, the demon might be a negative voice telling you you're not good enough or you "lack talent" (which is sadly common with adult learners).

... Or it might be the "demon" songs you are trying to learn... You probably know the type. These are the songs taught all over YouTube that can be **brutally hard to play** (especially if you're a beginner or you struggle with arthritis).

The "demon" in question can also be the way the guitar is taught, where there's rarely ever any mention of proper technique. (Speaking of technique, don't forget to get the companion guide to this eBook, [***The Guitar Doctor***](#) which features 35 simple technique-building tips).

If you're past the beginner stage, you might have forgotten about the countless hours of blood, sweat, and tears you put in when learning guitar in the early days... But no matter what your skill level, this guide will help you beat those demons!

Before we begin learning the songs, let me tell you about the three main ways I teach songs:

1. **“No Chord Fingerstyle”**—If you ever want to play melody and chords at the same time, this is for you. We take the core melody of a song and combine it with a few simple bass notes. This style takes all the essentials but strips away all the unnecessary fluff. Like any song, they take a little practice, but they sound great.
2. **“Jam-along”**—These are perfect for beginners or those looking to have more fun. You can play the easy one-note melodies OR strum the chords. The choice is yours. Then jam the song with someone else or the backing tracks (which I provide). This style of arrangement is designed to replicate how beginner students and I often jam songs in our lessons, and you can too, no matter where you are in the world!
3. **“One-Man Band”**—These are chord-based songs, but not as you know them! You do NOT strum the chords. Instead, we pick the chords... AND we play the melody too! They are the trickiest out of the three types of arrangements I teach, but they are the most impressive, giving us that elusive “one-man/woman band” sound that audiences and musicians alike love!

These three types of arrangements are how I’ve taught songs for years. Now you can learn one classic song from “House of the Rising Sun”, “Amazing Grace”, and “When the Saints Go Marching In”, in one of these styles giving you a taste of each.

Listen to the audio for each of the tracks [HERE](#). Use them to jam with as you learn the songs. **Start by playing along with the slower tracks** (that will help you to focus on using good technique!). As you build up your skills and confidence, you can then move on to the full-speed audio tracks.

Big credit to the likes of Chet Atkins, Paul Simon, Tommy Emmanuel, J. S. Bach, Ferdinando Carulli, Fernando Sor, Mark Knopfler, James Taylor, Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page, and Eric Clapton for their influence on me and these songs!

I wish you many hours of joy with these songs!

HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN

A “NO CHORD FINGERSTYLE” ARRANGEMENT

“House of the Rising Sun” is a legendary and iconic song that has stood the test of time. In fact, when I asked the students in my membership group (the *Dan Thorpe Acoustic Academy*) what they wanted to learn, this was one of the most popular requests I’ve ever had! The version you will learn here has been incredibly popular with students of mine and is a real joy to play.

When thinking of this song, it’s hard not to think of *The Animals*’ powerful version with its electric guitar arpeggios and soaring vocals. It’s ironic how the song was a huge hit for the band in 1964, but it caused massive tension and contributed to their break-up, lawyer action, and lifelong friends never speaking again!

The song goes back way further than *The Animals*’ version though. Although there are a lot of myths about the origins of the song, most people agree on just how wonderful it is.

... And today I’m going to show you how to play a fun, simple “No Chord Fingerstyle” version that, with a little practice, all guitarists can play.

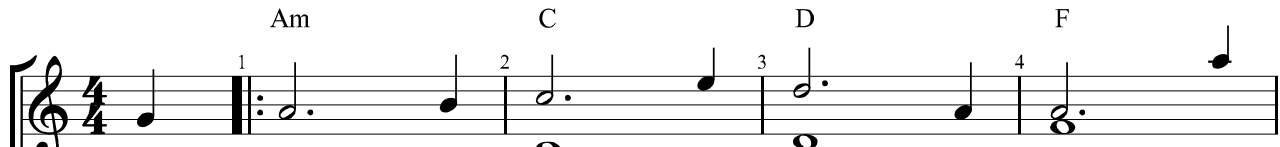
On the next page, you will see the full arrangement. Don’t forget to listen to the audio tracks [HERE](#), go slowly when learning it, and apply the tips on the following pages.

DAN THORPE: THE SUPER MINI SONGBOOK

[Listen to the audio here](#)

130 bpm

Am C D F



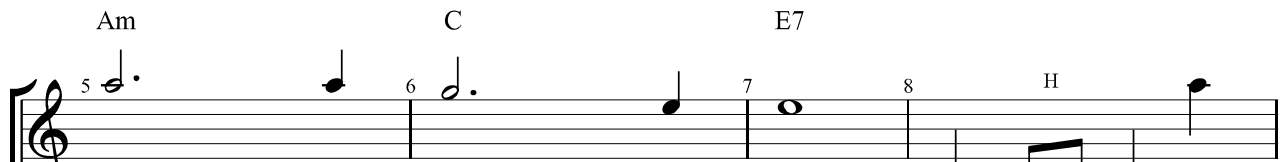
1 2 3 4

There is a house in New Orleans. They

Moth-er was a tai-lor, She

TAB: 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5

Am C E7 H



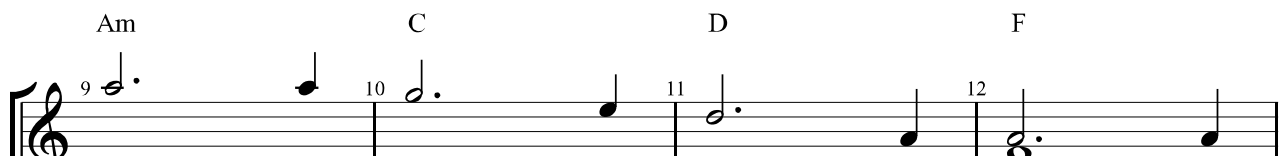
5 6 7 8

call Sewed the my Ri Le- sing vi Sun jeans It's My

TAB: 5 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 | H | 5

TAB: 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 0

Am C D F




9 10 11 12

been fa- ther was of a many gam- poor blin' boy man, And

TAB: 5 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2

TAB: 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2

Am E Am Am



13 14 15 16

God Down, I in know New I'm Or- one My leans

TAB: 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2

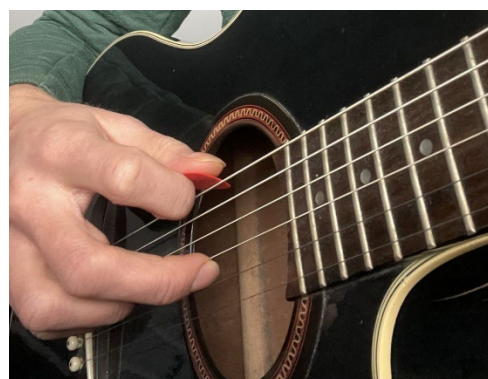
TAB: 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0

1. 2.

Tips on Playing This Arrangement

This is one of my unique “No Chord Fingerstyle” arrangements. The core concept behind this type of arrangement is that we are playing both the melody and bass without needing full chords. Here are some tips on playing it:

- **Melody!** Make sure the tune of the song is clear. Each note should sound smooth, and you should be able to hear the tune as you play it.
- **Bass!** To add depth, we play a bass note on beat 1 of each bar. Try to ensure the bass notes ring out throughout the bar and watch out for the optional bass “fill” in bar 8.
- **Use a capo**—If you have small hands or you can’t reach certain notes, try playing the song with a capo on fret 5. There are tracks on the audio page where I play this arrangement both with and without a capo. Playing it with a capo can help reduce the need for big stretches.
- **Fretting hand only**—Run through the fretting hand movements without plucking. This can help you spot any awkward areas.
- **Fingerpicking?**—If you are fingerpicking the piece, pluck the bass strings (Low E, A, D) with the thumb, and the treble strings (G, B, and high E) with your index and middle fingers.
- **Using a pick?**—Use a pick to pluck each note. For notes where you need to “pinch” two strings at the same time (e.g. bar 1), use the pick to play the bass string, and a spare finger such as the middle, to pluck the treble string.



AMAZING GRACE

A “JAM-ALONG” MELODY AND STRUMMING ARRANGEMENT

“Amazing Grace” is a stunning song that has been a staple in my own repertoire for many years. It has a wonderful melody, inspiring lyrics, and is a real joy to play. Many legends of music have performed and recorded this song over the years, including Elvis Presley, Aretha Franklin, and Johnny Cash.

One of my online students told me how 40 years ago he was an alcoholic. This song helped him beat his demons and end the booze before the booze ended him. Recently, he emailed me to say how he had tears of joy playing this arrangement and thinking about how far in life he has come since then. It’s a truly special song.

Our version is a fun, stripped-back, and easy-to-play “jam-along” arrangement that’s great if you’re a beginner or you want some jamming fun! Even my more advanced students get pleasure from this.

For these “jam-along” style arrangements, we split the songs up into two parts:

- **Part 1: The Melody**—Simple, fun, and requires no chords or big stretches.
- **Part 2: The Rhythm**—Strum the chords of *A*, *D*, *E* with a simple pattern.

The idea behind this “jam-along” style arrangement is that you **pick ONE part to play while someone else plays the other part**. For instance, you can play the melody while a friend plays the rhythm part... Or vice versa.

You might not know any other musicians, and that’s why I have created the backing tracks—so you can jam with me—like my students do! Simply choose the part you want to learn and play along with the audio tracks! Access them [HERE](#).

Part 1—The Melody

[Listen to the audio here](#)

90 bpm

1. A-maz-ing that grace, brought me sweet the sound That
 0 10 9 10 9 7 10 7 0 0

5. saved a wretch like me I
 grace my fears re-lied How
 10 9 10 9 7 12 (6) (4) (7) (6) 9

9. once was lost, but now I am found Was
 pre-cious did that grave ap-pear The
 12 9 12 9 10 0 7 10 10 7 0 0

13. blind bu- t now I see Was
 hour l- first be- lieved
 10 9 10 9 7 10 0 10

1. [1. 2.]

Part 2—The Rhythm

[Listen to the audio here](#)

90 bpm

1 A 2 D 3 A 4

A- maz- grace ing that grace, how sweet the sound That
 grace that brought me safe thus far And
 d d d u

TAB

0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	2	2	2 2	0	0	0 0
2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2	3	3	3 3	2	2	2 2
2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2
0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0

5 E 6 7 8

saved grace a my wretch like me I
 grace my fears re- lieved How

TAB

0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0
2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2	0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0
2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2	1	1	1 1	1	1	1 1
0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2
0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0

9 A 10 D 11 A 12

once was cious lost, but now I am found Was
 pre- cious did that grave ap- pear The

TAB

0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	2	2	2 2	0	0	0 0
2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2	3	3	3 3	2	2	2 2
2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2	2	2	2 2
0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0	0	0	0 0

The musical score is written for guitar and voice. It consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features a melody with lyrics: "blind hour bu- t now first I be- see Was lied". The melody includes a double bar line with repeat dots and two first endings. The first ending leads to a measure with the word "A", and the second ending leads to another measure with the word "A". The middle staff is a guitar accompaniment in treble clef, showing chords and melodic fragments. The bottom staff is a guitar TAB in standard notation, with fret numbers (0, 1, 2) for each string. The lyrics are positioned below the vocal staff, and the guitar accompaniment is positioned below the TAB.

1. A 2. A

blind hour bu- t now first I be- see Was lied

TAB

Tips on Playing This Arrangement

Okay, now that you've seen the notation for both the melody and strumming parts for "Amazing Grace", here are some tips on playing the parts...

- **Using a pick for the melody?** It's fairly slow, so if you like, you can pluck all the notes using downpicks.
- **Using your fingers for the melody?** Ideally, you will alternate picking between the index and middle fingers when fingerpicking this.
- **The rhythm track**—For the strumming version, make sure the chords are crystal clear and work on the chord changes on their own at first.
- **3/4 time signature**—There are three beats to the bar and the strumming pattern I'm using is a simple D D DU pattern.
- **Harsh strumming**—I find many guitarists grip their picks too tightly and use a pick that's too thick. If your strumming tone is harsh, try gripping the pick a little softer and consider using a lighter gauge (about 0.5-0.7).

The melody version is fun but can sound "thin" when played on its own. The strumming can sound boring without the melody (unless you are singing along)... but together, they can sound like dynamite! Remember, this style of arrangement is designed to be played with either a backing track or someone else. Get the audio tracks from [HERE](#) and get jamming along with me in a variety of ways!

WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

A WONDERFUL TRAVIS PICKING ARRANGEMENT

Get ready to swing, sway, and let the good times roll as we dive into the toe-tapping, soul-lifting world of “When the Saints Go Marching In”. This song has been performed by legendary artists such as Elvis Presley, Judy Garland, Woody Guthrie, Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong, and many more.

My arrangement of this tune is a super fun but challenging Travis-picking piece. The arrangement has been inspired by Chet Atkins, Tommy Emmanuel, and, of course, Merle Travis himself.

I love this song!

It’s a timeless and jubilant celebration of music and life that never loses its charm. Picture yourself strolling down the lively streets of New Orleans, with brass bands on the sidewalks playing infectious rhythms and melodies. My first memory of this song was on a cold, damp day in northern England watching the St Helens Rugby League team. The team’s nickname is the “Saints”, and everyone was singing this tune! That just goes to show how this wonderful song is loved all around the world—from New Orleans to the north of England!

On the next page, you’ll see the notation. A word of warning, though:

This is **a tough arrangement and takes patience and practice**. Some students find it easier to play it using a capo (usually on fret 5). Anyway, give it a go. Following the notation are some important tips on playing the piece that you don’t want to miss...

[Listen to the audio here](#)

204 bpm

Oh, when the saints sun go march- ing in Oh, when the
 sun re- fused to shine, Oh, when the

TAB

saints go march- ing in Oh Lord, I
 sun re- fused to shine, Oh, Lord, I

TAB

want to be in that num- ber When the
 want to be in in that num- ber When the

TAB

saints go march- ing in Oh, when the
 sun re- fused to in Oh, when the
 shine.

TAB

Tips on Playing This Arrangement

Our arrangement of “When the Saints Go Marching In” is challenging but fun. It’s a Travis-picking piece where our thumb keeps a steady bassline going throughout while our fingers pick the melody.

Easy? No.

Stunning? Yes!

Whatever you think of this arrangement, be sure to use the following tips...

- **Travis Picking Essentials**—Your picking hand’s thumb should play all the notes on the bass strings (Low E, A, D) throughout.
- **Consistent fingers**—Your fingers play the melody on the treble strings (G, B, and high E strings). I use my index and middle to pluck these notes, but whichever fingers you use, be consistent! Don’t chop and change which fingers you use.
- **Hum the tune**—The more you hum, sing, and listen to any song, the more you will get to know the song and therefore likely play it better. (Do this even when you don’t have the guitar with you—yep, you might drive your loved ones a little mad!)
- **One bar at a time**—Don’t try to learn any more than one bar at once. That is a recipe for getting overwhelmed! Don’t let the song demons win!
- **Plan your route!**—This is a challenge for the fretting hand. Think about which fretting hand fingers to use for which notes.

The full-speed recording is a fast 204 bpm, but this piece still sounds wonderful at the slower tempos (listen to the recordings and play along). Please do make sure you practise with the slower tempo tracks, especially at first.

This arrangement is a challenge for anyone, but it sounds wonderful I hope you agree. Don’t forget, you are combining the melody, bass, and chord tones! That is not easy. Always work on songs like this in very, very small chunks. Get the audio tracks [HERE](#)

FINAL THOUGHTS AND A TIP TO BEAT THE DEMONS

Here's a deadly demon error I see a lot. I call it "Head Jerking". This happens when a student frequently looks back and forth at each hand as they play.

When you are learning a song, you will no doubt need to look at each hand quite often at first. What I'm talking about here is avoiding the constant need to do this once you have learnt the song. Avoid that like the plague!

"Jerking" your head left and right is usually done because a student lacks confidence in their technique. Be aware of this because even momentary glances back and forth between your hands can cause small pauses in your music. These small pauses ruin the flow like someone pulling the plug of a jukebox!

The solution I like to get students to do is this **3-step process**:

1. Play a piece of music while only looking at the fretting hand.
2. Play the piece again, but this time only look at the picking hand.
3. Play the piece once again, but this time with your eyes closed.

Of course, it's okay to look at each hand occasionally, and sometimes you need to do this... but be aware of this bad habit. If you find that you are falling foul of this demon habit, keep trying the above process.



KEEP AT IT!

Thank you for reading this guide. I hope you enjoyed it and you found all three songs and the types of arrangements to be good fun to learn. Be patient, practise the songs slowly and enjoy the process.

I've mentioned the demons of guitar playing a few times... One of the biggest hurdles to being a successful guitarist is the demon of self-doubt. It often rears its ugly head when mistakes occur. It feeds and grows off those moments when you struggle.

So, remember, you are good enough to succeed on the guitar.

One way to keep improving is to follow my #1 rule of learning guitar. That is:

“Every day try to improve one tiny thing AND play something fun”

You can do it. Always use good “Core Fundamental Technique” and believe in yourself! Do that and you will be on the path to enjoying your playing more and making more progress... and that, my friend, is what we all crave.

If you enjoyed this guide, you might like to check out [The Dan Thorpe Acoustic Academy](#). It takes everything we've covered here, but so much more. You'll get a clear plan with the “5-Star” Award, new monthly lessons, support, my *Breakthrough Beginner* course, free gifts posted to your door, and so much more.

Once again, thank you!

Dan Thorpe

P.S. To get more help, both free and inexpensive, check out the “Backstage” area here—[Dan Thorpe's Backstage Area](#)