

## Bessie Smith "Backwater Blues" 12 Bar Blues Examples

Hello friends,

Welcome back to Swiftlessons for another blues guitar tutorial. One of the best ways to diversify your skills and make your playing sound more unique is to dig into obscure tracks or to adapt techniques employed by other instrumentalist. In today's session we will do both as we master lead and rhythm techniques performed by pianist James P. Johnson on the iconic 1927 recording of "Backwater Blues." Let's get started!

### Intro Riff

The Intro Riff is in 4/4 time. It features a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The guitar part consists of two staves: a treble staff with notes and a bass staff with fret numbers. Above the treble staff, there are two guitar chord diagrams: A5 (x0 xxx) and E7 (o2 02 0). The notation includes whole notes (H) and a half note (H) in the treble staff, and fret numbers (0, 2, 4, 2) in the bass staff. The riff is repeated twice.

### 12 Bar Example 1

The first 12-bar example is in 4/4 time. It features a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The guitar part consists of two staves: a treble staff with notes and a bass staff with fret numbers. Above the treble staff, there are four guitar chord diagrams: A5 (x0 xxx), D5 (xxo xx), E5 (o xxx), and A (xo). The notation includes eighth notes and chords in the treble staff, and fret numbers (2, 0, 2, 0, 4, 0, 2, 0, 4, 0, 2, 0) in the bass staff. The example is repeated twice.

The second 12-bar example is in 4/4 time. It features a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The guitar part consists of two staves: a treble staff with notes and a bass staff with fret numbers. Above the treble staff, there are four guitar chord diagrams: D5 (xxo xx), D7 (xxo), D#dim7 (xx), and A5 (xo xxx). The notation includes eighth notes and chords in the treble staff, and fret numbers (2, 0, 2, 0, 4, 0, 2, 0, 4, 0, 2, 0) in the bass staff. The example is repeated twice.

The third 12-bar example is in 4/4 time. It features a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The guitar part consists of two staves: a treble staff with notes and a bass staff with fret numbers. Above the treble staff, there are five guitar chord diagrams: E7 (o2 02 0), D7 (xxo), E7 (o2 02 0), A (xo), and E (o2 02 0). The notation includes eighth notes and chords in the treble staff, and fret numbers (0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 2, 2, 2, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0) in the bass staff. The example is repeated twice.



### 12 Bar Example #1

**A5** **D5** **E7** **A**

2 2 4 4 2 2 4 4 | 2 2 4 4 | 5 5 5 6 8 5 5 | 5 5 6 8 5 7 6 5

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 7 6 5

**D5** **D7** **D#dim7** **A**

2 2 4 4 2 2 4 4 | 2 2 2 2 2 2 5 | 6 7 4 5 9 4 7 | 5 5 4 2 5 2 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 2 0 2 1 4 5 | 0 6 7 4 5 9 4 7 | 0 6 5 2 5 2 1

**E7** **D7** **E7** **A** **E7**

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 0 0 0 0 | 5 5 5 | 5 0 0 0 0

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 | 1 1 1 1 3 3 3 3 | 3 3 3 | 3 0 0 0 0

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 | 0 2 0 2 1 1 1 1 | 0 0 5 5 4 4 3 3 | 0 0 1 3 1 3 1

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

**A7**