

Secondary Dominants

Usually, the “2” chord, the “3” chord, and the “6” chord in any key are **minor** chords, as the chart below indicates.

Chord Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chord Quality	M	m (-)	m (-)	M	M	m (-)	∅
In the key of C:	C	D-	E-	F	G	A-	B [∅]
In the key of D ^b :	D ^b	E ^{b-}	F-	G ^b	A ^b	B ^{b-}	C [∅]
In the key of D:	D	E-	F#-	G	A	B-	C# [∅]
In the key of E ^b :	E ^b	F-	G-	A ^b	B ^b	C-	D [∅]
In the key of E:	E	F#-	G#-	A	B	C#-	D# [∅]
In the key of F:	F	G-	A-	B ^b	C	D-	E [∅]
In the key of G ^b :	G ^b	A ^{b-}	B ^{b-}	C ^b	D ^b	E ^{b-}	F [∅]
In the key of G:	G	A-	B-	C	D	E-	F# [∅]
In the key of A ^b :	A ^b	B ^{b-}	C-	D ^b	E ^b	F-	G [∅]
In the key of A:	A	B-	C#-	D	E	F#-	G# [∅]
In the key of B ^b :	B ^b	C-	D-	E ^b	F	G-	A [∅]
In the key of B:	B	C#-	D#-	E	F#	G#-	A# [∅]

Occasionally, those chords will be **major** chords or even **dominant** chords! These out-of-place major chords are called “secondary dominants”.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	M	M			M	
	D	E			A	
	E ^b	F			B ^b	
	E	F#			B	
	F	G			C	
	F#	G#			C#	
	G	A			D	
	A ^b	B ^b			E ^b	
	A	B			E	
	B ^b	C			F	
	B	C#			F#	
	C	D			G	
	C#	D#			G#	

In most cases, the chord immediately after the secondary dominant is the one three chords up. In other words:

a major 2 chord usually moves to a 5 chord,
 a major 3 chord usually moves to a 6 chord, and
 a major 6 chord usually moves to a 2 chord.

