

Intermediate Flute Buying Guide by Betty Douglas

Thank you for asking for information about a flute purchase. Asking your band director and private teacher are important steps to take when making this investment. The step-up flutes I've listed here range from \$1150-\$2500.

What You are Looking for:

1) The more Solid Silver, the better-

- Silver Headjoint- the segment you blow into- most common at this price point
- Silver Headjoint and Silver Body ("Tube")- 1 flute at this price point
- All Silver (including Keywork, Tube, Headjoint)- unusual at this price point

2) Open Holes (all flutes listed below have open holes, you can buy plugs to cover if necess.)

3) B Foot (all flutes listed have a B foot, 3 keys on the foot joint)

4) Other terms:

- **Off-set or Inline G-** Refers to placement of Left Hand Ring Finger Key
 - This key is offset on most beginner flutes
 - If student has long fingers, Inline should be considered
 - Offset is very Ergonomic, however, and will not affect sound
 - Try out an inline flute from a friend or music store before deciding. It will feel different, but shouldn't be uncomfortable
- **Riser-** Metal chimney that connects lip plate to headjoint tube; integral to sound
- **C# trill-** a wonderful feature, but eases the playing of 2 trills and adds considerable weight. A Useful feature, but shouldn't determine purchase (uncommon feature on intermediate flutes)
- **Split E-** assists playing High Es without cracking. A Useful feature, but shouldn't determine purchase
- **D# roller-** my favorite add-on feature. Acquire if possible, but shouldn't determine purchase; unusual at this price point
- **Gold Lip-** Pretty, but shouldn't determine purchase unless student is sensitive to silver and experiences frequent irritation under lip
- **Gizmo key-** standard with B foot

I highly recommend you or your child tries them out. I have played 3 of the same instrument model and one was a dog, one ok, and one was amazing. Instruments can be like jeans- you need to try them to insure a good fit. If you buy new, most stores will allow an exchange within a certain amount of time. Ask about terms.

Names of Good Flute Brands:

Altus, Amadeus, Azumi, Burkhart, Gemeinhardt, Haynes, North Bridge, Pearl, Powell, Resona, Sankyo, Sonare, Trevor James, Yamaha. Jupiter is OK, but usually lower durability than others. Within brands, model numbers indicate level. For instance, A Yamaha 462 is a step above a 362. If you find one of these brands with a different model number it will have different features and a different price (like trim packages on cars).

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Recommendations: (prices as of 3/2023, gathered from Carolyn Nussbaum Flutes, www.flute4u.com)

😊 = top recommendations

	Price (NEW)	Headjoint	Body	Offset or inline G	Split E	Other options
Amadeus AF580	\$1360	Silver-plated	Silver-plated	either	Option +135	
Amadeus AF680	\$1895	Silver	Silver-plated	either	+135	C# trill+135, Headjoint upgrade
Azumi AZ-1	\$1614	Handmade silver-plated	Silver-plated	Offset	+\$165	
Azumi AZ-2	\$2000			Offset	+\$170	Rose gold lip +150
Gemeinhardt 3SHB 😊	\$1249	Silver	Silver-plated	either	no	
Gemeinhardt Crusader	\$1795	Silver with gold/ platinum riser & lip	Silver plated	either	+\$105	D# roller +\$126 C# trill +\$210
North BridgeNB500	\$1599	Silver Handcut	Silver-plated	Offset	+\$50	
Pearl Flute 525 Quantz	\$1150	Silver-plated	Silver-plated	Either	Incl. on off-set model	
Pearl 665 Quantz	\$1600	Silver	Silver-plated	Either	Incl. on offset model	
Resona R100	\$1785	Silver-plated Sterling Lip & Riser	Silver-plated	Offset	available	C# trill available
Sonare PS 501	\$2471	Handmade silver	Silver-plated	Either	available	
Trevor James 12XB	\$1500	Silver-plated	Silver-plated	Offset	no	
Yamaha 362 😊	\$1615	Silver	Silver-plated	Offset		Gold lip plate +\$90
Yamaha 382	\$1615	Silver	Silver-plated	Inline		Gold lip +\$90

Special Consideration:

Gemeinhardt Artisan Model AFL31-OSBNG- available in storefronts only (not online). Silver Head & Tube. It is more expensive, but I was recently blown away by one of these flutes. Willis can order in. **USED**- you can often get very good deals on used flutes in this category. Factor in Repair costs when purchasing (\$300-\$500 for substantial work, less for touch-ups)

Trusted Retailers:

Local: Wert Music, Willis Music, Buddy Rogers Music (local prices will be \$300-500 more)
 Woodwind and Brasswind www.wwbw.com (limited selection)
 Carolyn Nussbaum flutes www.Flute4u.com (doesn't sell Gemeinhardt)
 Fluteworld www.fluteworld.com
 FluteFinder <https://www.theflutefinder.com> (reliable used instruments only with warranty)

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Headjoints- If you are trying flutes locally, try several different headjoints. Bring someone musically-inclined to listen to you. If you are buying the flute locally as a surprise gift, ask if the student can come in and try out headjoints after receiving the flute (as long as it is in new condition)

Online vs Local

Online- You might be able to get a better deal online. Ask if you can have 2-3 on Trial (will probably require a credit card). Ask about Warranty/ shipping costs for repairs/ if cost includes one touch up repair during the first year.

Local- You are able to try out different instruments and take back to the store for a repair if anything goes wrong. Also, you might already have a rental credit which will bring down the price

NOTE: If marching is in your present or future, consider keeping current flute as a marching flute. Marching is pretty brutal on flutes between accidents (being dropped, stepped on, etc...) and the weather (wind, rain, dust, temperature changes), flutes tend to need more repairs. If you can, keep one flute for marching and one for concert band.

Trying out flutes:

1. Warm up a little
2. Play each flute to get a feel for it
3. Choose your favorite 2-3 and play the same music on each one.
4. Using a tuner, play from low to high. Look for sudden, wide changes between neighboring pitches or extreme flat in low register/ sharp in high register. More than +/- 15 is a problem.
5. Play a piece you know well. Play loud and soft in both the low and in the high registers
6. Play something tongued, as staccato/short as possible.
7. You are always listening for clear tone, a flute that is easy to play, but that has a full, generous tone in all registers.
8. Ask yourself- is there one flute that is more fun to play? That you like to play?
9. Ask others- On which you sound best/ clearest?
10. If the pitch on one flute is good, but sound or response isn't great, ask if there are any other headjoints to try with that model. The Headjoint is 90% responsible for tone and articulation. Some are much better than others.

Insurance: Consult your agent to see if you need a special rider on your policy for your new acquisition.

Upkeep: A yearly COA [Clean, Oil, and Adjust] is a great idea to stay ahead of repairs (like servicing your furnace or changing car's oil). COAs cost from \$200-300.

Questions? Feel free to email me! Happy Fluting!

-Betty

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