

The Melodic Minor

Music

The scale that changes on the way down — and the jazz version that does not.

Classical melodic minor

- Ascending: raise the 6th and 7th
- A B C D E F[♯] G[♯] A
- Descending: revert to natural minor
- A G F E D C B A
- Smooths the awkward leap in harmonic minor

Jazz melodic minor

- Raised 6th and 7th in both directions
- A B C D E F[♯] G[♯] A, up and down
- Treated as a scale in its own right
- Source of the altered and Lydian dominant modes
- The default in modern practice

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Same notes ascending. The only difference is what happens on the way back down.

A major scale with a flattened third is the fastest way to find it on any instrument.