

# (IF YOU AIN'T GOT THE) DO RE MI

(Woody Guthrie) (1937)

[Soundclip #1](#) (194KB; 25 sec.) and [Soundclip #2](#) (247KB; 32 sec.)  
available on David Arkush's [The Woody Guthrie Pages](#)



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...Woody Guthrie shows the paradoxical nature of opportunity for the working person in his "Do Re Mi." In that song he talks of California being "a garden of Eden," a virtual "paradise," a harshly ironic concept considering that no one will be able to reap the harvest of Eden unless he/she has the "do re mi" (i.e., dough)

Timothy E. Scheurer, *Born in the U.S.A.*, Jackson, Mississippi, 1991, p. 154.

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Lyrics as recorded by Woody Guthrie, RCA Studios, Camden, NJ, Apr 26, 1940, released on "[Dust Bowl Ballads](#)," transcribed by Manfred Helfert.  
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Lots of folks back East, they say, is leavin' home every day,  
Beatin' the hot old dusty way to the California line.  
'Cross the desert sands they roll, gettin' out of that old dust bowl,  
They think they're goin' to a sugar bowl, but here's what they find --  
Now, the police at the port of entry say,  
"You're number fourteen thousand for today."

CHORUS:

Oh, if you ain't got the do re mi, folks, you ain't got the do re mi,  
Why, you better go back to beautiful Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Georgia,  
Tennessee.  
California is a garden of Eden, a paradise to live in or see;  
But believe it or not, you won't find it so hot  
If you ain't got the do re mi.

You want to buy you a home or a farm, that can't deal nobody harm,  
Or take your vacation by the mountains or sea.  
Don't swap your old cow for a car, you better stay right where you are,  
Better take this little tip from me.  
'Cause I look through the want ads every day  
But the headlines on the papers always say:

If you ain't got the do re mi, boys, you ain't got the do re mi,  
Why, you better go back to beautiful Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Georgia,  
Tennessee.  
California is a garden of Eden, a paradise to live in or see;  
But believe it or not, you won't find it so hot  
If you ain't got the do re mi.

