



# Larry's Corner

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## Dances Listed Alphabetically

### BOSSA NOVA.

BOSSA NOVA Slow samba like. jazzy. hip action.

Latin Cha Cha

### CHACHA

Latin Cha Cha: The character of Latin Cha Cha is "cheeky". Originated in Cuba, the music is heavy with syncopated drum beats at 30-34 bpm. The secret of doing a good Cha Cha is to focus on the hip action, and stretch your toes on the foot your weight is not resting on. Good body form is absolutely essential. This is a set of routines for basic and intermediate dancers.

Social cha cha: a very simple dance that can be learned by anyone in 10 minutes. The music is always 4/4 with the characteristic "cha-cha-cha" drum beat at 3&4 of the bar. This social dance can be executed with or without holding. There is no fixed routine, and dancers can perform any step that comes to mind.

Off-beat cha cha: an interesting variation that is usually danced to Chinese pop songs.

### DISCO ROCK

Disco rock: danced usually to 4/4 disco music, this dance is a good social dance as it lets the couple carry out a conversation as they dance. The steps are very simple, and gives ample opportunity for the man to show off his leading ability. No fixed routine. Can also be mixed with Jazz for more complicated variations.

### FOXTROT



Do you have any likes or dislikes, stories, or helpful hints for dancing? If so, write it down and give to Larry Ablin or Barb Johnson. We will add it to one of the future News letters.

If you would like to tell us how you became interested in dancing, write it down and give to Larry or Barb, we will add your picture with it and put it in one of the future Newsletters

If you have anything you would like to write for us, just write it up and give to Barb or Larry.

I enjoy writing something for you. LARRY

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Slow Foxtrot: also known as the "get acquainted" dance, as it is frequently the first dance a couple who has not danced with each other before would do. A traveling English progressive dance done to slow to moderate 4/4 beat, so can be danced only in halls.

Social foxtrot. Crush. rhythm. 4/4. 30 mpm. stationary.

### JAZZ

Jazz: strangely, Jazz is usually done to the latest top 40 dance music and not jazz. Jazz requires a very flexible body, "isolated" joints that can be moved independently, and an ability on the dancer's part to perform exaggerated movement stylishly. Good Jazz dancers take at 2 years to get their body into shape. They also wear leotards and dance bare feet or with aerobic shoes. If you don't do it to perform, then do it for the exercise. It's great!

### JIVE

Jive: A dance that began in the US but took root in war-time Europe. Also known as the Lindy, swing, or jitterbug. Jive music is usually the "big band" swing music, with a lot of brass and woodwind. Essentially a non-progressive dance, but competition styles can be progressive and very very athletic.

### LAMBADA

The association of Lambada and Dirty Dancing/Forbidden Dance became quite extensive, mostly due to the 1990 movie Lambada, although the people who dance this rhythm in Brazil and everywhere else prefer to define it as a sensual and romantic dance rather than erotic.

### MAMBO

Mambo: Exciting to watch, the Cuban Mambo looks like a faster Rumba, but it has a more staccato character, caused by the dancers' slight pause at the end of each step. Moderate to fast 4/4 music at 36 mpm. This is a routines for basic dancers.

### MERENGUE

Merengue: Captivating dance from Haiti. National dance of the Dominican Republic. Music is 2/4, 55 - 60 mpm. Looks like a slow Bolero. Anyone knows more about this dance??

### Nightclub 2 step

Nightclub 2 step: Can be danced to any music. And in place of other dances. Usually done on a crowded floor so less room to move around.

### PASO DOBLE

Paso Doble: The "matador's" dance. The man is the matador (bull fighter), and the lady his cape. Lively. Surprisingly, this is not a Spanish dance, but originated from the nightclubs of Paris, where it is a performance dance. Done progressively to 2/4 music at 60-82 mpm (very fast!). This dance shows off the control of the man and the subservience of the woman. The only dance where lady gets to kneel before man. To do this dance well, the man must be able to get into the "Spanish" line posture, puff his chest out, and look "proud"! This is a routine for basic dancers.

### QUICKSTEP

Quickstep: Developed from the Charleston and One step, but formalized into an international dance by the English. Done to 4/4 music at 50 mpm. Lots of gliding and back-lock steps, plus rise and falls. Good dancers look as if they are "floating" as they move around. Advanced steps include a lot of kicking and toe snapping.

Quick rhythm. Social quickstep. 4/4. 52 mpm.

### ROCK'N'ROLL

Rock'n'Roll: Began in US Harlem, this Black dance became popular with the young people particularly in the 50's, and spread to the rest of the world. Energetic dance done to 4/4 music but with 6 steps. A social dance that two dancers of different skills can easily do together. Strong leading by the man is important, and if done well, can make the lady do new tricks without prior practice.

Kicking Rock: The more advanced Rock'n'Roll dancers do the kicking version where instead of

the toe taps. Competitive dancers almost always do the kicking rock.

## RUMBA

Rumba: Who can ignore the sensual Rumba! Of Cuban, African and Spanish origin. Music at 4/4, 27-31 mpm. Fairly quick, but sometimes also done to slower music, in which case it is more of a Bolero or Son. Rumba is truly a lady's dance, as the focus is on her hands and postures. Good dancers are very flexible and able to appear "slow" and in control, when in actual fact they are moving quickly. A set of routines for basic and intermediate dancers.

## SALSA

Salsa – intoxicating. Mambo without the hold step.

## SAMBA

Samba: Brazil's national dance, with millions of dancers performing every Fiesta. Lively. A progressive dance that moves around the hall. Done to 2/4, 50 mpm music with heavy syncopated drums. Secret of Samba is to do the knee action correctly. A set of routines for basic and intermediate dancers.

## SWING

East Coast Danced with man in center and lady moving out like spokes on a wheel.

West Coast Danced with lady going up and down a slot, and man getting out of her way.

## TANGO

Tango: It began in the West Indies and found its way to Argentina where it was stylized by the Gauchos to its present form. Tango is a very dramatic, exciting dance and is known as the "Dancer's Dance". Most people recognize Tango from the days of Valentino to the "Tango Argentina". Tango is still very popular today as movies like "Scent of a Woman" & "True Lies" demonstrate. Tango is passionate, aggressive, and fiery. Tango greatly improves a man's lead and a woman's ability to follow (respond), and develops a strong feeling for music. Tango is

one of the most beautiful of all the dances.

Argentine Tango: Done to a less strict rhythm than International Tango. Move with toe-leads instead of heel-leads. Hold the lady much closer, and the man is expected to look at the lady. Great for couples!

Taiwan Tango:

## TAP

Tap Danced with cleats on toes and heels

## WALTZ

American Waltz Slower waltz can be done in open position for underarm turns

Old time Waltz Medium speed Waltz with bouncy polka style motion.

Viennese Waltz Viennese Waltz. German. High speed Waltz, Couple stays connected with no Underarm turns.

Latin -- Cha Cha (C), Samba (S), Rumba (R), Paso Doble (PD), Jive (J)

## Dances Styles

There are two main styles of ballroom dancing -- American and International. American style is danced primarily in, you guessed it, America. :) It's also not as standardized as International style, which is danced just about everywhere else in the world (and in the US, too). In the US, American style tends to be used more often for social dancing while International style tends to be used primarily in competitions. This doesn't mean that you can't compete in American style or dance International style socially. People will dance either American or International style socially, as they choose, and competitions normally include both styles as well, so it's good to know both styles in the US.

As for the dances themselves, they are grouped into two categories for each style. In American style, the categories are called Smooth and Rhythm and in International style they are called Standard and Latin. For the most part, the Standard and Smooth categories contain the same dances and the Latin and Rhythm categories contain basically the same dances. Here's the breakdown of the dances (at least the ones used in competitions) by style and category followed by the usual abbreviations used for each. There placed in the order that they are danced in competitions.

- American Style ([the ISTD's syllabus](#))
  - o Smooth -- Waltz (W), Tango (T), Foxtrot (F), Viennese Waltz (VW)
  - o Rhythm -- Cha Cha (C), Rumba (R), East Coast Swing (Sw), Bolero (B), Mambo (Ma)
  - o International Style
    - o Standard -- Waltz (W), Tango (T), Viennese Waltz (VW), Foxtrot (F), Quickstep (Q)

- The revisions to the ISTD latin syllabus are made as needed. I expect that the old syllabus will still be used in competitions for a while, but at least you'll know some of the changes to expect later. If you're having some trouble recognizing what dance you can do to the songs being played, check out this nice basic article called [What Kind of Dance Are They Playing?](#) by Will Adams.

If you're watching ballroom dancing and wondering how to distinguish between International and American styles, here are two points to look out for that may help. What dance positions are used is probably the easiest way to tell apart the Standard and Smooth dances. International Standard is danced almost exclusively in closed dance positions while American Smooth allows more open work where the partners can separate from each other and dance in open positions. The Latin and Rhythm dances tend to be a bit harder to tell apart. The dancers' leg action is probably the best clue as to which style they're dancing here. In American Rhythm, the dancers will use a bent leg action allowing them to delay their change of weight on the step, so you will frequently see them with bent legs. However, in International Latin, the dancers usually have the look of two straight legs which comes from the faster change of weight on the step. There are of course differences in the moves/steps/figures allowed as well as other things, but it can get complicated and I don't know all the differences myself anyway.

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