

# A Complete listing of Dance Styles in Ballroom and Latin Dance

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Thursday, 06 April 2006  
Last Updated Monday, 09 April 2007

**ARGENTINE TANGO:** Originated in the West Indies where it was danced only by the lowest classes. The name is from the African Tanganya. The dance found its way into Argentina and then to France and finally into the United States in a modified form about 1914. Latin American ballroom Tango is danced in 4/4 time. NOTE: See also Continental Tango, English Tango, and Tango.

**BACHATA:** The Bachata named after, a guitar-based trio (guitar, bongo, maraca), from the Dominican Republic, shares with it's audience a country/peasant/barrio sentimentality marked by bawdy humor that connects the celebration of food, love and a macho delight in elaborating upon the ability of women to overpower men. It emerged mostly in male public spaces (colmados/corner grocers and bars) rather than family spaces, thus explaining the gender distinctiveness of this musical form. It is sung by mostly male performers, crooning about love and the women who caused them pain and wronged them, often because of unrequited or relinquished love.

**BOLERO:** Originally a Spanish dance in 3/4 time, it was changed in Cuba initially into 2/4 time then eventually into 4/4. It is now present as a very slow type of Rumba rhythm. The music is frequently arranged with Spanish vocals and a subtle percussion effect, usually implemented with Conga or Bongos.

**CASINO RUEDA:** Rueda (as it is commonly called in Cuba) is a form of Casino danced in a round with 2 or more couples exchanging partners when one person calls out the turn names. The calls are in Spanish, but you don't have to speak Spanish to understand the movements and participate. And you can dance this out at the clubs! ("Rueda" is Spanish for "Wheel" and "Casino" is known outside Cuba as "Salsa")

**CHA CHA:** From the less inhibited night clubs and dance halls the Mambo underwent subtle changes. It was triple mambo, and then peculiar scraping and shuffling sounds during the "tripling" produced the imitative sound of Cha Cha Cha. This then became a dance in itself. Mambo or triple Mambo or Cha Cha as it is now called, is but an advanced stage in interpretive social dancing born of the fusion of progressive American and Latin music.

**CUMBIA:** Coming soon

**FOX TROT:** Said by some to have been originated by Harry Fox (1913). It is now a standard ballroom dance the world over and serves as a good foundation for social dances in 2/4 or 4/4 time. NOTE: See also Two Step.

**FREESTYLE:** Ad lib dance movements with no fixed structure. Danced without touching partner to a variety of music styles including Rock 'n Roll, and discotheque beats.

**HUSTLE:** A number of similar style disco dances which had its beginning in the mid-70's and enjoys some continuing popularity as a swing style today. The record "Do The Hustle" was followed by the movie "Saturday Night Fever." The movie portrayal of partner dancing by John Travolta to the popular beat of top selling music from the Bee Gees and the introduction to America of the Discotheque setting, popular for some years in Europe, took America by storm. Flashing lights, mirrors everywhere, loud throbbing beat, and high fashion were in. Large numbers of popular Discos sprang up in every city and everyone was waiting in line to dance.

**JIVE:** International competitive Swing dance with elements of the Lindy Hop and Jitterbug. Characterized by uptempo single time music danced with triple steps done primarily on the toes with very lively movement.

**MAMBO:** The fusion of Swing and Cuban music produced this fascinating rhythm and in turn created a new sensational dance. The Mambo could not have been conceived earlier since up until that time Cuba and the American Jazz were still not wedded. The Victor records of Anselmo Sacaras entitled "Mambo" in 1944 were probably the beginning and since then other Latin American bandleaders such as Tito Rodriguez, Pupi Campo, Tito Puente, Perez Prado, Machito and Xavier Cugat have achieved styling of their own and furthered the Mambo craze. The Mambo was originally played as any Rumba with a riff ending. It may be described as a riff or a Rumba with emphasis on the fourth beat 4/4' time. Originally played by some musicians in 2/4 time with a break or emphasis on 2 and 4. Native Cubans or dancers, without any training would break on any beat.

**MERENGUE:** The dance of the Dominican Republic is 2/4 time with syncopation of the first beat interpreted by the dancers as a slight limp. It became popular in 1957.

**PASO DOBLE:** The Spanish March or One Step. It makes an especially good exhibition routine when the man styles his body movements to look like a bullfighter's and leads his partner in and out of the patterns as if she were a cape. It is usually in 2/4 time.

**PEABODY:** The Peabody resembles a fast Foxtrot. Considered a very New York dance in the Ragtime era in which it was born, legend has it that the Peabody was created by a portly police or fire chief - Captain Peabody - who was so overweight that he had to dance to the side of his partner, creating the style which is so characteristic of the Peabody. It's primarily a walking-type dance with long, gliding steps. Because of the great speed of the music and the size of the steps, a huge dance floor is required (this is true, however, of International Style Foxtrot and Quickstep, too).

**POLKA:** This dance was introduced to society in 1844. Every now and then it is revived because of its boisterous charm. It was supposed to have been originally created by a Bohemian girl. The basic step consists of a preparatory hop followed by a chase done first to the left then to the right. Curiously enough, it reappeared in the 1940's in the Cha Cha as one of the more popular steps. Still danced quite often throughout the country.

**QUICKSTEP:** The English version of the Fast Fox Trot, which has quick hopping steps set in with the smoother gliding figures. It is very popular in Europe as a competition dance. It ranks among the "Big Five," the other three being the Slow Fox Trot, the Waltz, the Tango and the Viennese Waltz.

**RUMBA:** Originally, the Rumba was a lively, peppy dance similar to Mambo in its feel. Over the years it has changed, and is now the name of a slow and romantic Latin dance. Inspired by African rhythms and Latin melodies, the Americanized version of the Cuban Rumba is the basis for the Mambo and Cha Cha. It became a popular ballroom dance and was introduced in the United States about 1933. It was the Americanized version for the Cuban Son and Danzon. It is in 4/4 time.

**SALSA:** This is a favored name for a type of Latin music which, for the most part, has its roots in Cuban culture and is enhanced by jazz textures. The word, Salsa, means sauce denoting a "hot" flavor and is best distinguished from other Latin music styles by defining it as the New York sound developed by Puerto Rican musicians in New York. The dance structure is largely associated with mambo type patterns and has a particular feeling that is associated mainly with the Clave and the Montuno. See Also CASINO RUEDA

**SAMBA:** This Brazilian dance was first introduced in 1917 but was finally adopted by Brazilian society in 1930 as a ballroom dance. It is sometimes referred to as a Samba, Carioca, a Baion or a Batucado. The difference is mostly in the tempo played since the steps in all three dance are very similar. The style is to bounce steadily and smoothly in 2/4 meter. They say that the Samba was introduced in the United States in 1939 by the late Carmen Miranda.

**SWING:** An ever popular blend of several African American dances, which include Lindy and Ragtime Jazz and Blues, as well as all the other dance music to accompanying dances of the past ninety years. Today it generally refers to the ballroom and night club version which is based on two slow and two quick counts or the slow and two quick counts of rhythm dances.

**TANGO:** Continental/English - There are essentially three types of Tango - Argentine, American and International Style. Argentine Tango: (arrabalero) A dance created by the Gauchos in Buenos Aires. It was actually an attempt on their part to imitate the Spanish dance except that they danced it in a closed ballroom position. The Tango caused a sensation and was soon to be seen the world over in a more subdued version. American Tango: Unlike the Argentine Tango, in which the dancer interprets the music spontaneously without any predetermined slow or quick steps, the American Tango features a structure which is correlated to the musical phrasing. The dance is executed both in closed position and in various types of extravagant dance relationships which incorporate a particular freedom of expression that is not present in the International style. International Tango: This is a highly disciplined and distinctively structured form of the Tango which is accepted worldwide as the format for dancesport events. The dancers remain in traditional closed position throughout and expresses both legato and staccato aspects of the type of music appropriate to this style.

**EVOLUTION OF THE TANGO:** The history of the Tango can be traced surprisingly enough to a country dance of 17th Century England. The English country dance became the CONTREDANSE in France, and this in turn was called the CONTRADANZA in Spain or later simply DANZA. When imported by the Spaniards into Cuba, it became the DANZAHABANERA. During the Spanish American War, a popular dance called the Habanera del Cafe appeared which was the prototype of the Tango. The whole genealogy is presented in the following chronological table:

**TWO-STEP:** The Two-Step is a simple dance, more or less double quick march with a skip in each step done as rapidly as a couple can go forward, backward and turning. Still quite popular in many areas of the country. NOTE: See also Country Western Two-Step.

**VIENNESE WALTZ:** With such wonderful composers as Johann Strauss and others, the Waltz became more and more refined. The steps became smaller with the turns smoother and more compact. Adding the graceful lilt of the flowing skirts we have today's Viennese Waltz.

**WALTZ:** The real origin of the Waltz is rather obscure, but a dance of turns and glides, leaping and stomping appeared in various parts of Europe at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century. In Italy it was the Volta, France has its Volte, Germany the Weller and Austria had its Landler. These were round dances but at the end of the dance itself there was a short period in which the circle would break up into couples who would whirl madly round and round and finish with a jump in the air. In the Landler the hopping gave way more to a gliding motion and that is why it is considered the forerunner of the Waltz. The Waltz can be traced back as far as 400+ years. The Waltz regained its real popularity in the 20th century. The Waltz blossomed out as the Hesitation Waltz in 1913. Until the development of the hesitation, couples had waltzed in one direction until dizzy and then reversed until ready to drop. The Waltz had degenerated into an endurance contest. The Hesitation resulted in the Waltz it is done today. The slow Waltz was once known as the Boston Waltz. Today the slow Waltz is the American Waltz, English Waltz or just Waltz, and the faster is the Viennese Waltz.

**WEST COAST SWING:** A stylized Swing dance popular west of the Mississippi from Kansas to California. Danced in a slot to medium to slow Swing or Disco music and characterized by slot movements, taps and shuffles, coaster steps, and push and pull action of the dancers.