



Latin SALSA Workshop

With Carmen Leardi



Five Things You Didn't Know About Salsa Dancing February 4, 2019 | Company News

Salsa dancing has been around for nearly 100 years and today it's enjoyed by people around the world. From salsa dancing competitions to salsa festivals and salsa classes in dance studios like Fred Astaire, we think it's safe to say salsa isn't going anywhere anytime soon!

Despite it being so popular, most people don't know a lot about it. Here are five things you probably didn't know about salsa dancing:

- 1.) **Salsa Originated in the 1920s in Eastern Cuba** - While salsa music had been popular since the 1910s, the dance didn't come about until the 1920s. In the 1970s, salsa dancing got a big boost in popularity from Cuban & Puerto Rican musicians in New York, where it spread to the rest of the US.
- 2.) **It Has African and Caribbean Roots** - Salsa dancing is a mixture of several Latin dances, including tango, mambo, and flamenco, with each region adding its own flavor to the dance. Because of this, there are several styles of salsa, including Cuban, Miami style, Afro-Latino, and Colombian salsa.

3.) **The Origin of the Name “Salsa” is a Mystery** - The dance was named after the style of music but no one quite knows why it was named “salsa.” Some suggest the name comes from the food since it has elements from many cultures much like salsa has many ingredients. Others say it’s because the dance’s movements are hot and spicy, like salsa.



4.) **Salsa is All in the Lower Body** - During the entire dance, the upper body is level, all movement takes place in your lower body. This leads to the swinging hip movements salsa is known for.

5.) **Salsa is an Excellent Workout** - In addition to being an effective and fun form of cardio, the movements being concentrated in the lower body make it a great workout for your hips, legs, and glutes.



What are the Different Latin Dances for Beginners?

Posted by [Sarah Stanila](#) on January 16, 2020

Latin dance is an umbrella term for several different styles of dancing including ballroom dance, **social dance**, and competition dance. If you are just getting introduced to Latin dance, it can be overwhelming knowing **which dances** you should learn first. Let's walk through some of the most popular Latin dances and which ones are best for the beginner (and intermediate) dancers.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF LATIN DANCES



CHA CHA An upbeat dance that is derived from the Rumba and the Mamba. People love the **Cha Cha** because it's energetic and saucy. You use triple steps and Cuban Motion to do this popular dance. The Cha-Cha is a great beginner dance, because anyone can learn it!

SALSA **Salsa dancing** is one of the most popular Latin dances in the world! Salsa is great for beginners, because it's a simple dance to learn but very impressive to watch. The word "Salsa" means spicy or hot in Spanish, giving this dance its heat!

RUMBA Often referred to as the grandfather of Latin dance, the easy-to-learn Rumba is the most sensual of the Latin dances. You'll work up a sweat with the Latin styling and relaxed hip motions of this popular and fun dance.

BACHATA Known for being intimate and romantic, the Bachata is a slower dance with strong hip movements. It includes simple footwork and sensual body movements. Get close with your partner with the Bachata.

PASO DOBLE Using the same small steps and big theatrics makes the **Paso Doble** an easy dance to learn. Dancers focus on tall, straight posture and a marching movement in this lively Spanish dance.

MERENGUE The Merengue is first learned as a marching dance and can be turned into something rhythmical. It's fun and feisty and fairly easy to master.

The above Latin dances are at a **Beginner** Level of Difficulty and all are taught at the Arthur Murray.



MAMBO Upbeat and a lot of fun to dance and watch, the Mambo includes dance steps and foot movements like kicks and flicks. Mambo means “shake it” and dancers do as they energetically move their hips and flick and kick in this fun dance.

Level of Difficulty: Intermediate

Taught at Arthur Murray: Yes

SAMBA Good dancers make the Samba look effortless, but it can be a difficult dance to master. It’s very fast and includes quick steps, vertical bounce action, knee action, body swaying, and “pendulum motion”. It’s a very lively and upbeat dance that is fun to watch.

Level of Difficulty: Difficult / Advanced

Taught at Arthur Murray: Yes



We hope this list helps you decide which Latin dances to start learning first. With our dance lessons you can easily start to pick up a few Latin dances and gain confidence in your dancing skills. The more dances you learn, the easier it will be to master some of the intermediate and advanced dances!

History of Salsa Dancing

From BellaBallroom.com

Salsa dancing has an intricate and debated history that very much mirrors the development of its counterpart, salsa music. The term “salsa” was created in New York in the 1960’s and is now used to describe both the popular style of music and it’s matching dance.

Salsa, meaning “sauce,” conveys feelings of spicing things up and enlivening the moment. The nickname once referred to an assortment of different music including ***Charanga, Cumbia, Plena, Bomba, Guaracha, Mambo, Festejo, Merengue, Rhumba, Són Montuno, Cha cha cha, Danzón, Són, Guguanco, Cubop, Guajira***, and others.

Some of the styles of music have maintained their distinctive individuality while others were mixed, creating salsa. As musicians from Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico and South America came to New York to perform, they collaborated their native musical styles. They also incorporated in American Jazz influences. These musicians traveled back and forth between their home countries and New York with their newfound musical fusion hence generating different styles of salsa music in different places. Even today, Cuban, New York, Colombian, and Puerto Rican salsa all have their own distinctive sounds.



During the 1940s and 50s, Cuban musicians played a big role on the development of music in New York. They heavily shaped the sound of salsa music until Fidel came to power. When diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States fell out, the U.S. prohibited Cubans from traveling to the United States and banned Cuban recordings from receiving airtime in the States. As Cubans became shut out of the U.S., Puerto Ricans and NuYoricans (New Yorkers of Puerto Rican descent) took on the New York music scene. Puerto Ricans embodied a classic polished sound following jazz structure and showcasing lengthy instrumental solos.

Much like salsa music, salsa dancing developed through various collaborations and cultural influences. It too has grown and taken on distinctive styles that vary by region. Born of Latin and Afro-Caribbean roots, the dance is now celebrated all over the world and has varied defining characteristics most notably in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and New York.

While salsa dancing did not stem from a specific person or region, a significant part of the dance originated in Cuba. The French who came to Cuba fleeing Haiti brought their country dance, Danzón to Cuba. This dance mixed with African rumbas like the Guaguanco, Yambú, and Colombia as well as a Cuban dance called the Són which blended Spanish guitar and African rhythms. This hybridizing phenomenon also happened in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico on a smaller scale. Some will claim that salsa is Puerto Rican. Others say the dance is Cuban. Some suggest that it's a New York creation. While the detailed history of salsa dancing is often debated, most will agree that salsa dancing is a North American interpretation of a dance based in Afro-Latin roots.

Salsa Dancing Today

Today it's possible to see the many different styles of dancing and music that merged to create modern salsa dancing in Orange County and the rest of the world. Salsa dancing socials are commonly held in nightclubs, bars, restaurants, ballrooms, and festivals. The dance is so popular that it can be found in metropolitan cities on an international scale.

In recent years, salsa festivals have become very prevalent in the dance scene. Festivals can include Salsa competitions, instructional dance workshops, live salsa music, and open dance socials. They also often feature neighboring social Latin dances such as ***Cha cha cha, Bachata, Kizomba, and Merengue.*** Annual festivals, called Salsa Congresses, are hosted every year in large cities and aim to attract a plethora of salsa dancers from other cities and countries. Salsa Congresses give Salseros the opportunity to grow as dancers, share their passion for the dance, exchange moves and tips, network, and build the salsa dance community.



Today within the United States, New York and Los Angeles are considered the top cities for salsa dancing. Both sides of the nation host large salsa dance communities, and each has developed its own unique characteristics.

New York Salsa dancing is largely influenced by residing NuYoricans and the fast flash footwork of Puerto Rico. New Yorkers' dance movements emphasize efficiency, elegance, control, precision of timing, and body isolation technique. Dancers enjoy complex tightly woven patterns and also showcase the Latin Hustle influence left over from the disco craze of the 70s and early 80s. New York dancers dance on the 2, which means that their starting step and their breaking step start on the second count of the measure. It's synchronized with the accented slap of the pattern played on the conga drums known as the tumbao.

Los Angeles, Salsa dancing is noted for its emphasized sensuousness, theatricality, acrobatics, dips, tricks, and spins. The dance aims to impress and dazzle. LA dancers often dance "suelto" or perform "shines" within a dance. "Shining" is when a couple breaks away from each other in the middle of a song and gets their solo dancing on. Unlike New York Salsa, LA dancers move on the one. They are also known for using cross-body leads, a movement where partners exchange positions in a counter-clockwise direction. This lends to the circular nature of Los Angeles dancers where movement keeps its momentum. Orange County (and New York) salseros adopt "slot" dance etiquette where dancing pairs avoid traveling and stay in a more compact position.

Salsa Music

- “El Tu Tun de Tu Corazon” Orquesta la palabra
- “Lloraras” Oscar D’Leon
- “Vivir Lo Nuestro” Marc Anthony and La India
- “El Gran Varon” Willie Colon
- “Celebracion” Eddie Santiago
- “Ando Por Las Nubes” Victor Manuelle
- “Ella Lo Que Quiere Es Salsa” Victor Manuelle
- “Me Libere” El Gran Combo
- “Ran Kan Kan” Tito Puente
- “Si Tu Me Besas” Victor Manuelle
- “Sin Salsa Nay Hay Paraiso” El Gran Combo
- “Valio La Pena” Marc Anthony
- “La Vida es un Carnival” Celia Cruz
- “Lluvia” Eddie Santiag
- “Acuyuye” DLG
- “Thinking of You” Lenny Kravitz
- “Mi Cali” Alberto Garcia
- “Dance City” Eddie Torres
- “Fragile” StingHector Lavoe
- “Vivir Mi Vida” Marc Anthony
- “La Comay” Sonora Carruseles
- “No es Fácil, que No que No” Los Van Van (Songo)
- “Descarga de Hoy” Cubanismo
- “Aqui el que Baila Gana” Los Van Van (Songo)



Salsa Dancing Events (Canada)Latin Dance Calendar 2021

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