La Cachucha
(United States)

La Cachucha (lah kah-CHOO-chah) was danced in the early 1800s in Alta California as a solo or a couple dance - not as a general social dance. It was an exhibition dance performed by trained dancers at a baile or some other special occasion. Castanets were usually used for the dance but some early Californians remembered dancers waving a little cap (cachucha) above the head instead of playing castanets.

Lucille K. Czarnowski's original research on this dance is recorded in her book Dances of Early California Days. Information about other patterns and formations not used in the following routine can be found in her book. Subsequently, Virgil Morton did additional research using the records of various historical societies and interviews with several old-time families of Spanish ancestry. The result was the version of the dance described here. Madelynn Greene taught it at the 1953 College of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp.

RECORDS: Folkraft F-1047 (78 rpm) "Spanish Circle Waltz"; Folkraft 1047 x 45 "Spanish Dance" 3/8 meter


FORMATION: Cpls in a line, one behind the other, W to R of ptr, all facing head of hall. When much room is available, each cpl may dance by itself, still facing the head of the hall.

STEPS and STYLING:

Spanish Draw Step (L): With L arm curved high overhead and R arm curved in front of the body about chest level, step sdwd L on L ft (ct 1); with R toe turned out, draw R heel twd L instep (ct 2); put wt onto R (ct 3). Step repeats exactly. Avoid swinging or twisting the hips.

Spanish Draw Step (R): Same as Spanish Draw Step (L) but with opp ftwk, arm pos and direction.

Pas de Bourrée Change (L): With L arm curved high overhead and R arm curved in front of body, step sdwd L on L ft (ct 1); step on R in front (or in back) of L ft (ct 2); step on L across in front of R (ct 3). On cts 2,3 reverse the arm pos (R arm high and L curved in front).

Pas de Bourrée Change (R): Same as Pas de Bourrée Change (L) but with opp ftwk, arm pos and direction.

Step-Swing: Step fwd on designated ft (ct 1); swing free ft diag fwd in front of supporting leg, raising and lowering heel of supporting ft (cts 2,3). Step alternates.

Waltz: May be danced in any direction or while turning. Step on R (ct 1); step on L (ct 2); step on R beside or near L (ct 3). Step alternates.
Throughout dance maintain eye contact with ptr.

Except of Fig IV, M and W use opp ftwk.

MUSIC 3/8 PATTERN

Measure

4 meas

INTRODUCTION No action.

I. SPANISH DRAW STEPS AND PAS DE BOURRÉE CHANGE

1-3
Move diag fwd away from ptr (M to L, W to R). Beg with outside ft (ML, WR) dance 3 Spanish Draw steps (move sdwd on the diag).

4
Beg ML, WR dance 1 Pas de Bourrée Change reversing arm pos.

5-8
Beg with inside ft (MR, WL), repeat meas 1-4 moving sdwd on the diag back to ptr and "home" place.

9-16
Repeat meas 1-8.
II. THREE STEPS AND POINT

If not playing castanets, W hold sides of skirt in a fan-shaped pos; M hold hands loosely behind back about waist level. If playing castanets, hands may be held either in front or in back at waist level, elbows curved.

1. Move fwd side-by-side with ptr twd head of hall. Beg with outside ft (ML,WR) walk fwd 3 steps (1 to a ct).

2. Keeping wt on fwd ft (ML, WR) make 1/2 turn twd ptr to face "home" and point free ft in that direction (ct 1); hold (cts 2,3).

3. Shifting wt onto pointing ft, make 1/2 turn twd ptr to face head of hall and point free ft (ML,WR) fwd (ct 1); hold (cts 2,3).

4. Shifting wt onto pointing ft (ML, WR) repeat meas 2.

5-8. Repeat meas 1-4 with opp ftwk and direction.


Note: Each turn is a half turn, always made twd ptr. Free ft points either twd head of hall or twd "home" place. The 3 fwd stepd always begin with the outside ft.

III. STEP-SWING AND SPANISH DRAW STEPS

1-2. Face fwd on the same diag as in Fig 1. Beg ML, WR dance 2 Step-Swings. Both arms are curved overhead.

3-4. Turning 1/4 (M CW, W CCW) repeat Fig II, meas 1 2. Do not transfer wt on meas 4, ct 3 so as to end with MR, NL ft free. Turning 1/4 (M CW, W CCW) repeat Fig I, meas 1-2.

5-8. Repeat meas 1-4 with opp ftwk and direction, returning to "home" place.

9-16. Repeat meas 1-8. End facing ptr one or two ft apart.

IV. WALTZ IN A CIRCLE

1-8. With arms curved overhead and both beg R ft, circle CCW around ptr with 8 Waltz steps. On every 2 Waltz steps make one individual CW turn. Keep the circle rounded. On meas 8, ct 3 end facing ptr with L ft free.

9-16. Beg L ft circle CW around ptr with 8 Waltz steps while turning CCW individually. End side-by-side with ptr ready to repeat dance.

Repeat dance from the beginning.

CASTANET RHYTHMS

BASIC PATTERN: Both (ct 1); Left (ct 2); Roll (ct 3).

Introduction No castanets

Figure I Meas 1-15 Basic Pattern

16 Both (ct 1); hold (cts 2,3).

Figure II Meas 1 Basic Pattern

2 Both (ct 1); hold (cts 2,3).

3-4 Repeat meas 2 twice.

5-16 Repeat meas 1-4 three times.

Figure III Meas 1-16 Basic Pattern

Figure IV Meas 1-16 Basic Pattern

Description written July 1986
ERRATA

TEX-MEX MIXER - Let's Dance September 1986
Fig II, meas 5-6: Should be deleted completely.

- meas 7: Change to "meas 5-6."
- meas 8: Change to "meas 7-8."

LA CACHUCHA - Let's Dance September 1986
Fig III, meas 3-4: Change to read:

Turning 1/4 (M CW, W CCW) repeat Fig I, meas 1-2.

the Goralski, a dance of the Tatra mountain people, and Trojak, a dance for three from the coal mining district of Slask (Silesia) in southwestern Poland.

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MAKING A POLISH BODICE

Article and Drawings by Eleanor Bacon

Was originally printed in the November, 1977 issue of Let's Dance, and is being reprinted for those of you who saved it but misplaced it, and for those of you who missed it the first time. (See page 6)

...since this issue is sadly short of material, this editor thought perhaps you might also enjoy reading again, or for the first time, the very informative articles written by Vi Duxheimer and Miriam Lidster on Polish Folk Arts and Polish Folk Dance.

... Editor

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WELCOME TO
THE TREASURER'S BALL
EDITH & WES TAKARA