

## Pariserpolka

(Norway)

Pariserpolka (pah-REE-sehr POHL-kah) is a large family of dances with variants in all the Scandinavian countries, including Finland and Iceland. The name means Parisian Polka. The dance described here is the standardized five-figure version that is commonly danced in Norway. Sometimes it is spelled "Parisarpolka." Other names used for various variants include Wienerkryss, Pariser, Rheinländer-Polka (Denmark), and Kreutzpolka (Finland). In California, a dance very similar to Figure 2 as described here is called Scandinavian Polka. It was described in 1946 in a publication of the Folk Dance Federation of California with the comments that it "has been danced by local groups for a number of years" and "the origin is unknown." A subsequent publication by the Federation in 1964 claimed that it was thought to have been introduced into California by a Scandinavian group performing at the 1939 World's Fair in San Francisco. It continues to be in the repertoire of a number of recreational folk dance groups. In many places in Norway, a simple version consisting only of Figure 1 is danced, sometimes with handholds varying in measures 5-6. The dance was described by Klara Semb in 1952 with three figures and in 1956 with five figures. See also: Klara Semb, 1991 *Norske Folkdansar Turdansar*, Noregs Boklag, Oslo (ISBN 82-521-3657-5). A summary of this dance by a group of leading Scandinavian dance researchers published in 1988 concludes that a recognizable form of this dance first appeared in Norway in the 1850's (*Nordisk Forening for Folkedansforskning, Gammaldans i Norden*, ISBN 82-9991732-0-5). In Denmark, the oldest description is from 1873 (Balling, Vilhelm, *Anvisning til at danse ...*; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1891), and the dance was in widespread usage before 1880. Norwegian researchers believe that this dance spread through Norway in two waves. In the first there were only walking steps, and in the second wave it was mostly two-steps (as in Wienerkryss).

The music for this dance is always in a polka rhythm, although where polka steps occur they are flat polkas (no lifts) or two-steps (step, close, step). In California, Pariserpolka was introduced at Stockton Folk Dance Camp (Univ. of the Pacific) in 1962 by Gordon Tracie with a three-figure version (Figs. 1,2,3 of this description). It was also taught at Stockton in 1973 by Bruce Taylor. Wienerkryss was presented at Stockton by Bruce Taylor in 1973 and by Alix Cordray in 1985. The single figure Scandinavian Polka was taught at Stockton in 1948 by Lawton Harris.

**Music:** 2/4 meter, Norwegian polkas, preferably arranged in 4 or 8 measure phrases, played at a moderate speed, and with a springy style. Among the records suggested in older descriptions are: Aqua Viking V301B; Aage Grundstad, *Norwegian Folk and Figure Dances*, EMI 0054-37340; Bjame Liens Kvartett, *Svingom på Gamle Måten (Pariser-Polka)*; Noregs Ungdomslag, *Turdansar fra Vestlandet*, 1998 (Heilo HCD 7142).

**Formation:** In Figures 1, 2, and 5 cpls are arranged in a circle, facing CCW (LOD), M on the inside; M's R and W's L hand joined. An alternative is to face partially toward ptr. For Figures 3 and 4, ptrs join both hands. It is also possible to do Figure 1 (meas 1-6) with ptrs partially facing and joining both hands.

**Steps:** Two-step: Step (ct 1), close with opp ft (ct &), step (ct 2); done starting with either ft and in any direction.

**Pivots:** The pivots in measures 7-8 in all of the following figures are done in closed couple hold but with L hands on partner's upper R arm, and R hands under L arms and on ptr's back. A regular ballroom hold is also acceptable. The steps have a small bounce.

**Styling:** The walking steps are traditionally done with a slight bounce (sviktgongssteg), but in recent years this springy walk seems to be diminishing.

Measures	2/4 meter	Pattern
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**Figure 1. BASIC PATTERN-WALKS, TWO-STEPS, PIVOTS**

- 1-2 Beginning with outside ft, walk 3 steps in LOD (cts 1, 2, 1); touch ball of free foot beside or slightly fwd on meas 2, ct. 2 (no wt).
- 3-4 Turning twd ptr, while keeping same handhold, repeat meas 1-2 in opp direction (RLOD), and with opp ftwk. Changing handhold is also acceptable.
- 5-6 Turning again twd ptr, keeping inside hands joined, dance in LOD with 2 **Two-steps**, starting with outside ft. On last step, M moves in front of ptr. Four walks instead of 2 **Two-steps** is also acceptable.
- 7-8 **Pivot** with 4 steps making 2 complete turns CW, while moving as a cpl in LOD.
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8, opening out on meas 16, ct 2 to face LOD.

**Figure 2. INDIVIDUAL TURNS.**

- 1-2 Moving in LOD and starting with outside ft, M and W make a 3-step turn away from each other (cts 1,2,1); touch fwd on 4<sup>th</sup> step (no wt), and clap (ct 2).
- 3-4 Turning twd ptr, face RLOD, and repeat meas 1-2 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 5-6 Turn twd ptr to face in LOD; without handholds, dance fwd with 2 **Two-steps**, starting with outside ft. On last step, M moves in front of W.
- 7-8 Repeat Fig 1, meas 7-8 (**Pivots**).
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8, but end facing ptr with both hands held.

**Figure 3. DISH-RAG ("PANCAKE") TURNS.**

- 1-2 Moving in LOD with both hands joined with ptr and arms held high, turn under arms with 3 walking steps; M turns to his L, W to her R. On meas 2, ct 2, touch ball of inside foot slightly fwd as in Fig 1, meas 2.
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2, in RLOD and with opp ft wk (M turns to R, W to L).
- 5-8 Turn twd ptr to face LOD; retain both hands joined (but not raised) and repeat 2 **Two-steps** and **Pivots** as in Fig 2, meas 5-8. Alternative handholds are to take inside hands or join L hands placing M's R hand on W's R waist, or there can be no handhold. W's R hand can be down or on R waist.
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.

**Figure 4. BANJO HOLD, WOMAN TURNS.**

- 1-2 Assume "banjo position" (R hips adjacent, M facing LOD, W backing up) holding both hands. Walk 4 steps in LOD. A variant is to have ptrs facing as in the banjo orientation, but shifted a step backwards away from each other.
- 3-4 Without changing orientation, walk 4 steps in RLOD, M backing up; drop M's L and W's R handhold as W turns ½ to her L under M's R arm. M may turn somewhat twd ptr to make W's turn more comfortable. End with ptrs facing, M's R and W's L hands joined.
- 5-6 Turning to face LOD without changing handholds, move in LOD with 4 walking steps (M dances slightly behind W), M turns W twice to her R with his R hand and her L. A variation for the M is to use 2 **Two-steps** instead of 4 walks.
- 7-8 Repeat Fig 1, meas 7-8 (**Pivots**).
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.

**Figure 5. WOMAN TURNS.**

- 1-2 Moving in LOD with inside hands joined, M partially faces ptr and walks 3 steps (L,R,L) and touches fwd with L (no wt), while W turns to R under M's R hand with the opp ftwk.
- 3-4 Moving in RLOD with 4 walks, M facing only slightly fwd (LOD) turns W to L under M's R hand (as in Fig 4, meas 3-4) while staying slightly behind her.
- 5-8 Repeat Fig 4, meas 5-8.
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.

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Art by Susan Gregory



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