

## Salsa (Pan-Latino)

Salsa (SAHL-sah) is a Latin couple dance whose origins in music and dance are the Cuban son. The Cubans and Puerto Ricans living in New York simplified the rhythmic structure, added new melodies and harmonies, to create a new sound. The basic step is taken from what used to be the New York mambo. In mambo the step begins on ct 2; in salsa, ct 1 or 2 (Here it's ct 1). The present description is based on the presentations by Susan Cashion at Mendocino Folklore Camp 1996 and Stockton Folk Dance Camp 2000.

Music: CD: Salsa Dance (The Rough Guide), World Music Network, 1999; Best of Salsa, EUCD-1319; 20 Best of Tropical Dance Music, EUCD 1243; Salsa Picante, Laserlight 15 156.  
Salsa Artists: Oscar d'Leon (Venezuela), Celia Cruz (Cuba), Willie Colón (Puerto Rico),  
Ruben Blades (Panama). 2/4 meter

Formation: Couples are scattered at random on dance floor; partners face with hips aligned.

Position: Closed Position: Join hands (ML, WR) with palms fwd at M's eye level . MR hand is under WL shldr blade. WL arm rests on MR shoulder.  
Double Hand Hold Position: Join hands at chest height - ML hold WR, MR hold WL.

Styling: Feet are flat, remaining close to floor with knees bent. Arms are held steady. Feeling is smooth and suave, but also heavy, down, and sensual. M leads into the dance by shifting his lead L hand from in front of body out to side at eye level. He can embellish, for example, by circling hands CW down, then CCW up and out. He can also use small foot and body movements to augment the rhythm. Figures are initiated and repeated at the will of the man and comfort of the woman.

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Measures 2/4 meter

### PATTERN

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#### I. BASIC STEP

(closed or double hand hold pos; description is for M; W: opp ftwk and direction)

- 1 Leaving R ft on floor, step fwd onto full L ft, bending knees as L hip drops (ct 1); leaving L ft on floor, shift wt back onto full R ft, as hips move back (ct &); step on L beside R (ct 2).
- 2 Leaving L ft on floor, step back on full R ft, bending knees as R hip drops (ct 1); leaving R ft on floor, shift wt fwd onto full L ft, as hips move fwd (ct &); step on R beside L (ct 2).

#### II. SIDE STEP

(closed or double hand hold pos; description is for M; W: opp ftwk and direction)

- 1 Dance Fig. I, meas 1, but step on L to L on ct 1 and return to original pos on cts &,2.
- 2 Dance Fig. I, meas 2, but step on R to R on ct 1 and return to original pos on cts &,2.

III. BACK STEP - OPEN TO LEFT AND RIGHT

(closed pos; description is for M; W: opp ftwk and direction)

- 1 Leading W by pushing off with L hand and using R hand to twist W CW, M step on L across behind R and turn 1/4 CCW (ct 1); step fwd on R with R hip beside WL hip (ct &); step fwd on L, turning 1/2 CW and releasing R arm from W back (ct 2); put L arm on W back, as W rests R hand on ML shldr (ct &).
- 2 Omitting the initial push off, dance meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.

IV. OUTSIDE (CW) TURN FOR WOMAN

(closed or double hand hold pos)

- 1 Dance Fig. I, meas 1.
- 2 Releasing R hand, M dance Fig. I, meas 2, raising L hand (WR) to lead W (L,R,L) in a CW turn. W: step on L across in front of R (ct 1), continuing R, L to complete turn (cts &,2). During the turn, M keep W close.

V. INSIDE (CCW) TURN FOR WOMAN

(closed or double hand hold pos)

- 1 Dance Fig. I, meas 1.
- 2 Releasing R hand and raising L hand in front of face to lead W in a CCW turn (L, R, L), M dance Fig. I, meas 2, while traveling CW, so that W makes less than a full turn. If both ptrs are comfortable, the turn in Fig. IV or Fig. V may be repeated (ftwk alternates). M keeps L hand raised to continue turning, lowering L hand and placing R hand on W back to stop the figure.

VI. CROSS BODY LEAD

(closed or double hand hold pos)

- 1 M step fwd on L (W bkwd on R) (ct 1); M step bkwd on R, pivoting 1/4 CCW (W step fwd on L) (ct &); leading W across in front of him with a strong R arm lead, M step on L to L (W step fwd on R) (ct 2).
- 2 Pivoting 1/4 CCW, M step back on R (W step fwd on L, pivoting 1/2 CW to face M) (ct 1). Now facing in direction opposite to original, ptrs dance cts &,2 of Fig. I, meas 2 (cts &,2).

VII. OPEN BREAK WITH CW COUPLE TURN

(closed pos)

- 1 Releasing R hand from W back, M step bkwd on L, pulling with elbows slightly bent to create tension through ML arm and WR arm (W step bkwd on R) (ct 1); M step fwd on R (W step fwd on L) (ct &); M step fwd on L, bringing W into closed pos slightly to his R side (W step fwd on R, positioning ft between his and her bodies) (ct 2).
- 2 Pivoting CW, M step on R across behind L (W step to L) as cpl turns CW as a unit (ct 1); M step sideways to L (W step on R across in front of L) (ct &); M step on R across behind L (W step sideways to L) (ct 2). The total amount of turn is optional.

VIII. OPEN BREAK WITH ARM-PUSH

(During this figure M and W change places.)

- 1 Dance Fig. VII, meas 1, cts (1, &); M step fwd on L (W on R) and bring W to MR side, stretching WR arm to side in front of M chest, and placing MR hand on inside above elbow of WR arm (ct 2).
- 2 M: Releasing L hand, push on WR arm with MR hand, and step fwd R,L,R, turning 1/2 CW. W: step L,R,L, spinning 1 1/2 CW to end facing M.

IX. COMBINATION 1 - WOMAN TURN, MAN TURN, WOMAN TURN

(closed or double hand hold pos)

- 1-2 Dance Fig. IV, M turning W once CW (L,R,L) under raised (ML WR) hands.
- 3 W dance Fig. I, meas 1, as M turns once CW (L,R,L), changing WR hand from ML to MR, behind M back.
- 4 M dance Fig. I, meas 2, turning W once CW (L,R,L) under raised R hands.

X. COMBINATION 2 - DOUBLE HAND TURN, WOMAN HANDS BEHIND MAN NECK

(double hand hold pos)

- 1 Dance Fig. I, meas 1. M swing joined hands up and together.
- 2 M dance Fig. I, meas 2. W turn once (L,R,L) CW under joined hands, which become crossed.
- 3 Dance Fig. I, meas 1. M lower and then raise crossed hands.
- 4 Dance Fig. I, meas 2. M raise W arms over his head, placing W hands on back of his neck.
- 5 Dance Fig. I, meas 1. M release W hands and lower his arms.
- 6 Dance Fig. I, meas 2. M bring his hands up to insides of W elbows, pushing her arms out so that they release from his shldr. Ptrs return to double hand hold or closed pos.

XI. WINDOW

(double hand hold pos)

- 1-2 Dance Fig. I. M increase separation of ptrs slightly, releasing R (WL) hand, taking WR hand in his R, and joining L hands underneath.
- 3 Dance Fig. I, meas 1, with R hands at head level, L at chest level, forming Window at eye level.
- 4 M dance Fig. I meas 2, raising hands and turning W once CW (L,R,L). L hands end on top of R.
- 5 Repeat meas 3, enjoying Window with L hands on top.
- 6 Repeat meas 4, but W turns once CCW (L,R,L), ending with R hands on top.
- 7-8 With MR hands lassoing his head and L hands following, M leads W CCW around his back. As W moves to R behind M, she continues to face him, returning to original Window position with L hands on top.
- 9-14 Repeat meas 3-8, reversing arms and directions. Repeat meas 3-14 as desired.
- 15-16 To return to closed or double hand hold pos, Dance Fig. I, as M repositions hands.

XII. WALK AROUND

(double hand hold pos)

- 1-2 With R hands joined (L free), M pull W gently to the R in a CW circuit around behind him, placing and holding WR hand on MR shoulder.
- 3-4 As W moves to left behind him, M extend L hand to L, offering it to W, who is embracing his upper back with her R arm. W place her L hand in ML hand, and together they wheel turn CW.
- 5 To end figure, M releases R hand of W, who moves in front of him.
- 6 M turn W once CW (L,R,L) under his L arm. To return to closed pos M place and release WL hand behind his neck.

XIII. PRETZEL

(double hand hold pos)

- 1 Dance Fig. I, meas 1. Keep both hands joined (ML with WR, MR with WL).
- 2 M turn 1/2 CCW (R,L,R) under his raised L (WR) arm, ending with L hand over head and R hand behind his back. W turn 1/2 CW (L,R,L) under her R arm, ending with R hand over head and L hand at waist. Ptrs look at each other, roughly back to back with L sides together.
- 3 M step to L (L,R,L), gently pulling W (R,L,R) behind back to MR (WL), ending with R hips together, MR (WL) arm above head, ML hand at waist, and WR arm behind M back.
- 4 M turn 1/2 CCW (R,L,R) under his R hand; W turn 1/2 CW (L,R,L) under her L hand. Ptrs end facing in normal double hand hold pos.

XIV. WOMAN TURNS THRICE (double hand hold pos)

- 1 Dance Fig.I, meas 1
- 2 Releasing R hand (WL), M turn W once CCW (L,R,L) under his L hand. Retaining ML (WR) hand hold, M lower joined hands to waist level and lead W to his R.
- 3 Pulling W firm R arm to his L and then releasing, M lead W into a CW spin turn (R,L,R).
- 4 Catching WR hand in his R hand, M lead W in a CCW turn (L,R,L) under his R arm.

