

Syrto Kofto

Greece (Thessaly, Epiros, Peloponisos)

Syrto Kofto (seer-TOH koff-TOH) is a variation of Syrto, the most common dance in Greece. It is very old, identified in the works of ancient writers like Homer. Syrto is characterized by variations in rhythm, pattern, and style, both individual and regional. The form described here is popular in Thessaly, Epiros and the Peloponisos. The Kalamatiano rhythm has a distinctive leaping (*pidikto*) style, in contrast with the more common Syrto (dragging) with a sedate gliding. The kofto (cut) form is characterized by a short pause in the musical phrase. Both dramatic and playful, it encourages variations. The dance, with many variations, was taught by Athan Karras at Stockton Folk Dance Camp 2001.

Music: CD: Athan Karras - The Spirit of Greek Dance, Band 1
Cassette: John Pappas - Elliniki Hori, Side A/5.

Rhythm: meter = $7/8 = 3/8 + 2/8 + 2/8 = \text{SQQ}$; counted here as 1, 2, 3.

Formation: Mixed open circle facing center, hands joined in W-pos. Leader is on the right end.

Styling: Lively.

Measures	7/8 meter	PATTERN
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INTRODUCTION. Begin dance at the choice of the leader

I. BASIC SYRTO STEP

- 1 Moving in LOD, step on R to R (ct 1); step on L behind R (ct 2); step on R to R (ct 3).
- 2 Turning to face LOD, step fwd on L (ct 1); step fwd on R (ct 2); step fwd on L (ct 3).
- 3 Facing ctr, step on R to R (ct 1); step on L across in front of R (ct 2); step on R in place (ct 3).
- 4 Step on L to L (ct 1); step on R across in front of L (ct 2); step on L in place (ct 3).

II. KOFTO STEP.

- 1 Repeat Fig. I, meas 1-3.
- 4 Jump in RLOD onto both ft (ct 1); hold (cts 2-3).
Dancers indicate 'kofto' by raising arms slightly; they may shout "Yassou."

III. GYRISMA (turn to left - CCW)

- 1-3 Repeat Fig. I, meas 1-3.
- 4 Release hand hold and turn once CCW in place (L,R,L) (cts 1,2,3).

IV. GYRISMA DEXIA (double turn to right - CW)

- 1 Repeat Fig. I, meas 1.
- 2-3 Release hand hold and turn twice CW while moving in LOD (L,R,L,R,L,R) (cts 1,2,3,1,2,3).
- 4 Resume handhold and repeat Fig. I, meas 4.

IV. KATO (squat down)

- 1 Repeat Fig. I, meas 1.
- 2 Facing LOD, bring L to R, sharing wt, and squat (ct 1); rise and step fwd R, L (cts 2-3).
- 3 Turning to face ctr, close R beside L and squat (ct 1); rise and step on L across in front of R (ct 2); step on R in place (ct 3).
- 4 Repeat Fig. I, meas 4.

V. PSALIDI (scissors step)

- 1-2 Repeat Fig. I, meas 1-2.
- 3 Step on R to R, kicking straight L leg fwd across in front of R (ct 1); repeat ct 1 with opp ftwk and direction (ct 2); repeat ct 1 (ct 3).
- 4 Repeat meas 3 with opp ftwk and direction.

VI. PSALIDI PIDIMA (scissors leap step)

- 1-2 Repeat Fig. I, meas 1-2.
- 3 Facing ctr, leap onto R to R, kicking L across in front of R (ct 1); leap onto L to L, raising R leg fwd with knee bent (ct 2); leap onto R in front of L (ct 3).
- 4 Leap bkwd onto L, raising R leg fwd (ct 1); hop twice on L, R still raised fwd (cts 2-3).

SEQUENCE: The music includes 14 eight measure phrases ending in kofto. Karras danced the Syrto twice during each phrase - the first was Fig. I or a variation (Figs. III-VI); the second was always Fig. II. (Kofto); each pair was danced twice. His overall sequence was:

Fig. I, Fig. II, Fig. I, Fig. II, Fig. III, Fig. II, Fig. III, Fig. II, Fig. IV, Fig. II, Fig. IV, Fig. II, Fig. I, Fig. II, Fig. I, Fig. II, Fig. V, Fig. II, Fig. V, Fig. II, Fig. VI, Fig. II, Fig. VI, Fig. II, Fig. I, Fig. II, Fig. I, Fig. II. Finish CD music with Fig. I.