

TSAMIKOS Greece

Tsamikos (TSAH-mee-kohs) or Čamikos (CHAH-mee-kohs) possibly originated in Epiros among the Čams, a Muslim people of Tsamouria. It was danced by the Klephts, Greeks who waged guerilla warfare against Turko-Albanians in the 19th century war of independence; in Greece the name is usually identified with the kilted Klepht costume, the tsamika, characterized by the foustanella skirt. The dance is known also as Arvanitikos (from Albania) and Kleftikos. Originally, Tsamikos, like Kleftes, was danced only by men, with the leader expressing strength and courage through acrobatic movements. There are regional variations. Women's versions, emphasizing footwork rather than acrobatics, are danced in western Thessaly and Macedonia and in Metsovan, a center of Vlach culture in Epiros.

Although an eight measure (sixteen step) dance has been taught in the schools, and a five measure (ten step) dance is common in northern Greece, the six measure (twelve step) dance described below is by far the most widely danced in Greece and elsewhere. Usually danced in a mixed line, it is common throughout the mainland and is especially identified with Roumeli and the Peloponnesos. This Pan-Hellenic version is very popular among Greek-Americans. At a Greek social event only the leader improvises with turns, leaps, slaps of the feet, etc. The second dancer, often joined to the leader by a towel or handkerchief, has the important role of providing firm but flexible support. When an improvisation interrupts the flow, most commonly after the fourth or sixth measure, the other dancers simply wait in place.

The character of the music ranges from relatively gentle to dramatic and powerful, and the songs often describe heroic deeds. The dance is discussed by T. and E. Petrides (*Folk Dances of the Greeks*, New York, 1961), T. Petrides (*Greek Dances*, Lycabettus Press, 1975; revised, 1980), Vouras and Holden (*Greek Folk Dances*, New Jersey, 1965). Dance descriptions have been provided by many, including Sonny Newman (Stockton Camp, '63), Joe Graziosi (Mendocino Folklore Camp, '86) and John Pappas (Kolo Festival, '84, '85, '87; Stockton Camp, '67-'69; Mendocino Folklore Camp, '93). A large library of both popular and folk music is available.

Cassettes: J. Pappas: Elliniki Hori & Elliniki Hori #2; Ziyia; 3/4 (6/4) meter
J. Graziosi: Mendocino FL '86, Summer '88, '92 Tape I.

Records: Festival F-3502; Folkraft LP-8, Vol III; Tikva T-131; Silver Strings, Bay 201; Songs and Dances of Greece, AIR 206; Songs of Western Macedonia, SDNM 109; Songs of Roumeli, SDNM 119; Songs of Thessaly, SDNM 120, Folk Music of Epirus, Peters, PLD 5587; Songs and Dances of Epirus, Passos Halkias; Authentic Greek Dances, Eurotone Greek 129; Soul Dances of the Greeks, PI-LPS-33.

Formation: Line of dancers with leader on right, hands joined with arms in W-pos.

Measures	3/4 (or 6/4) meter	PATTERN
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INTRODUCTION Action begins at choice of leader.

I. BASIC

- 1 Facing slightly right of ctr, step on R in LOD, hold (cts 1,2); step on L across in front of R (ct 3)
- 2-3 Repeat meas 1 twice.
- 4 Step on R in LOD, hold (cts 1,2); hopping on ball of R ft, pivot to face ctr and raise L across in front of and near R shin (or behind and near calf) (ct 3).
- 5 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 6 Repeat meas 4 with opp ftwk and direction.

II. VARIATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

Unlike the turns and acrobatic moves danced only by the leader, individual variations which do not interfere with neighbors may be performed by others in the line. Many dancers choose one pattern; it is unusual to combine more than two or three.

A. The following stylistic variations may be danced during meas 1,2,3, and/or 5 (opp ftwk).

- 1,2,3,5 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD, step on R (ct 1); drag L to R without shifting wt (ct 2); step on L across in front of R (ct 3).
- 1,2,3,5 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD, step on R (ct 1); leaving R in place, rock sharply onto L (ct &); leaving L in place, rock sharply onto R (ct 2); step on L across in front of R (ct 3).
- 1,2,3,5 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD, step on R (ct 1); step on L behind and near R (ct 2); step slightly in LOD on R (ct &); step on L across in front of R (ct 3).
- 1,2,3,5 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD, step on R (ct 1); pick up L sharply behind R (ct 2); step on L across in front of R (ct 3).

B. One measure pattern variations include:

- 2 or 3 Facing slightly R of ctr, touch R ft next to L (or swing R low across in front of L) (ct 1); hold (ct 2); step on R in LOD (ct 3); step on L next to R (ct &).
- 4,6 Facing slightly R of ctr, step on R in RLOD (ct 1); step on L twd ctr in front of R (ct 2); step back on R (ct 3). (Meas 6 with opp ftwk)

C. This two measure variation may be danced during meas 1-2 or 2-3.

- 1 or 2 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD, step on R, hold (cts, 1, 2); step on L across in front of R (ct 3); step on R slightly fwd or near L with wt (ct &).
- 2 or 3 Step on L across in front of R, hold (cts 1, 2); step on R in LOD (ct 3); step on L across in front of or slightly behind R (ct &).

Sequence: Dance basic pattern as written, with variations at will to end of music.