



Rumba

Brief History

The Rumba is often referred to as the "grandfather of the Latin dances." Originating in Cuba, it first came to the United States in the early 1920s. Monsieur Pierre and Doris Lavelle (London's leading teacher in this dance form) introduced the true 'Cuban Rumba' in the 1930's which was finally established after much argument, as the official recognised version in 1955.

The Rumba is the slowest of the five competition Latin and American dances. The basic rhythm of the Rumba is quick-quick-slow with distinctive side-to-side hip movements. Hip movements are exaggerated, but are not generated by the hips - they are simply a result of good foot, ankle, knee and leg action. When these weight transfers are well-controlled, the hips take care of themselves.

Rumba rhythms, while once influenced by African-style music, have now found their way into Country Western, Blues, Rock, and other popular music types.

Rumba is the spirit and soul of Latin American music and dance. The fascinating rhythms and bodily expressions make Rumba one of the most popular ballroom dances.

Characteristics and Technique

Tempo:	100-120 beats per minute
Rhythm:	2,3,4,1 (QQS)
Time signature:	4/4

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Cuban Action is used throughout, along with a 'figure-8' rotational movement, with a rotation of the hips over the supporting foot common to most steps.

The Rumba is danced on beat 2, and so to achieve this it is necessary to take a **preparation step** with LF to side on beat 1 of the first step in order to begin on the correct timing & rhythm of the dance.

Each step rolls from the inside edge of the big toe to the ball of the foot to the flat of the foot.

Each step is taken onto a straightening leg, so by the time the body weight is fully supported by leg, the knee is straight. If the free leg is held under the body then the knee of the free leg is flexed. This is not necessarily so when the free leg is held away from the body as it is often straight with the heel lifted from the floor to create the image of a longer leg line.

Because of its moderate pace and slow flowing rhythm allowing for easy inclusion of stretching movements and breathing exercises, **Rumba should be used as the cool down section for the purposes of teaching a successful SOSA Dance Fitness class.**

Toe Turn-out

As a general rule, the step before a 'replacing' action will have a slight natural turn out of the toe (between 1/16th and 1/8th, depending on the dancer's own physique). This is also known as a 'checking action'. Any step which is followed by another step in the same direction, does not have this turn out action and the toe of the stepping foot should be kept straight.

Begin with a proud elegant posture, all weight on RF (hip to right) feet slightly apart. Release the heel of LF in order to take a preparation step to side on 1. Arms should be held naturally by your side, elbows slightly lifted in basic Latin position.

Basic Rumba Movement

Foot Position	Footwork	Body Movement/ Action Amount of Turn	Rhythm	Beat value
RF back Replace weight to LF RF side LF forward Replace weight to RF LF side	Ball flat Ball flat Ball flat Ball flat Ball flat Ball flat	Beat 1 is used to 'settle' into the hip of the supporting foot	Quick (1 beat) Quick (1 beat) Slow (2 beats) Quick (1 beat) Quick (1 beat) Slow (2 beats)	2 3 4,1 2 3 4,1
Notes				

Cucaracha

Foot Position	Footwork	Body Movement/ Action Amount of Turn	Rhythm	Beat value
RF side (part weight) Replace weight to LF RF close to LF LF side (part weight) Replace weight to RF LF close to RF	Ball flat Flat Ball flat Ball flat Flat Ball flat	Cuban hip motion is used throughout, along with a 'figure 8' hip rotation	Quick (1 beat) Quick (1 beat) Slow (2 beats) Quick (1 beat) Quick (1 beat) Slow (2 beats)	2 3 4,1 2 3 4,1
Notes				
On the first step, the foot moves further than the body, with pressure into the floor and part-weight retained on the supporting foot. The toe will be slightly turned out at the end of this step.				

Forward Check – New York

Foot Position	Footwork	Body Movement/ Action Amount of Turn	Rhythm	Beat value
RF forward	Ball flat	1/8 turn to L	Quick (1 beat)	2
Replace weight to LF	Ball flat	3/8 turn to R is made	Quick (1 beat)	3
RF to side	Ball flat	over beats 3,4,1	Slow (2 beats)	4,1
LF forward	Ball flat	1/8 turn to R	Quick (1 beat)	2
Replace weight to RF	Ball flat	3/8 turn to R is made	Quick (1 beat)	3
LF to side	Ball flat	over beats 3,4,1	Slow (2 beats)	4,1

Notes

Although only 1/8 turn is made on each of the forward checking actions, each of the side steps will be taken facing diagonally to the wall (L or R) so that each of the Forward Checks are danced facing the wall.

Opening Outs

Foot Position	Footwork	Body Movement/ Action Amount of Turn	Rhythm	Beat value
RF back to face right	Ball flat	¼ turn to R	Quick (1 beat)	2
Replace weight to LF	Ball flat		Quick (1 beat)	3
RF forward to end side	Ball flat	¼ turn to L to face front	Slow (2 beats)	4,1
LF back to face left	Ball flat	¼ turn to L	Quick (1 beat)	2
Replace weight to RF	Ball flat		Quick (1 beat)	3
LF forward to end side	Ball flat	¼ turn to R to face front	Slow (2 beats)	4,1

Notes

Forward Walks

Foot Position	Footwork	Body Movement/ Action Amount of Turn	Rhythm	Beat value
RF forward	Toe Ball Flat	Upper body moves in advance of feet. Add pressure to floor when lowering heel, straighten leg to complete step	Quick (1 beat)	2
LF forward	Toe Ball Flat		Quick (1 beat)	3
RF forward	Toe Ball Flat		Slow (2 beats)	4,1

Notes

Forward walks should be danced with the weight held slightly forward allowing the upper body to move slightly in advance of feet. Just before the point of unbalance, the foot moves forward first using the toe, then the ball of the foot with pressure into the floor before lowering the heel and straightening leg to complete the step. The foot remains straight and the toe is NOT turned out.

Backward Walks

Foot Position	Footwork	Body Movement/ Action Amount of Turn	Rhythm	Beat value
RF back	Toe Ball Flat	Move foot backwards without weight. Add pressure to floor when lowering heel, straighten leg to complete step	Quick (1 beat)	2
LF back	Toe Ball Flat		Quick (1 beat)	3
RF back	Toe Ball Flat		Slow (2 beats)	4,1

Notes

Backward walks are achieved by moving the foot backwards first using the ball then the toe of the foot with pressure into the floor. The knee of the moving foot will be slightly flexed and full weight is still retained on the supporting foot until the heel of the moving foot is lowered and the leg straightened, when the weight is then transferred.

Cuban Rocks

Foot Position	Footwork	Body Movement/ Action Amount of Turn	Rhythm	Beat value
(Preceded by 3 forward/backward walks) RF in place LF in place RF in place	Flat Flat Flat	Weight transfers in place	Quick (1 beat) Quick (1 beat) Slow (2 beats)	2 3 4,1
Notes				

Switch Turn to Right

Foot Position	Footwork	Body Movement/ Action Amount of Turn	Rhythm	Beat value
LF forward turning to finish LF Back	Ball Flat	Forward Walk turning to finish LF back making $\frac{1}{2}$ turn to the R	Quick (1 beat)	2
Replace weight fwd to RF LF forward walk to end side	Ball Flat Ball Flat	Forward Walk turning $\frac{1}{4}$ to R to face front on 4,1	Quick (1 beat) Slow (2 beats)	3 4,1
Notes $\frac{1}{4}$ turn to the R is made before placing the LF forward into the first step therefore completing one complete turn to R overall				