

THE BIG APPLE

(United States)

This Swing-era dance became a craze in 1936-38, and lived on for another decade in informal settings. It was named after the black dance club where it was discovered, a former church in Columbia, South Carolina, that had been turned into a night club called "The Big Apple." The dance is an unusual mixture of old country dance figures and the latest jazz and swing steps. A caller would usually prompt figures borrowed from Big Circle dances, the Paul Jones and squares (Right-Hand Star, All Forward and Back, Swing Partners), while the dancers freestyled with the Shag, Charleston, Truckin' and Lindy.

MUSIC: "Jazz It Blues" on R. Powers special cassette for Laguna Folkdancers Festival 1993
Note: This is a 20 bar blues, which is uncommon. If other music is used, it will probably be 16 bars, requiring the deletion of one step from each Part.

FORMATION: Form a large circle of cpls. Each M place W at his R side, facing ctr. Optional: pair off into sets of 2 cpls around the circle, all facing ctr.

STEPS and STYLING: Right Foot In: Done as solo. Any foot-tapping to ctr, for 8 cts, is acceptable.
Suggested step: Tap R toe fwd twice w/o weight (ct 1,2); step bkwd R (ct 3); close L back to R (ct &); step fwd R (ct 4). Repeat with opp ft, beg L (ct 5,6,7,&,8). Styling is very loose and casual, nonchalant.

Swing It Low: a Charleston w/o the swivel: Tap R fwd crossed over L (ct 1); step R bkwd (ct 2); tap L bkwd behind R (ct 3); step L fwd (ct 4).

Swing It High: Kick R straight fwd (ct 1); step R bkwd (ct 2); tap L bkwd (ct 3); step L fwd (ct 4).

Let Roosevelt Knock at the White House Do': Stamp R fwd 3 times, each time an inch further fwd ending w/ weight on R (ct 1,&,2); step L bkwd (ct 3); step R bkwd (ct 4); rock fwd onto L (ct &). Repeat.

Kill the Spider: Stamp R loudly fwd (ct 1); swivel R foot back and forth on the ball of the foot, in time with music (ct &,2,&,3,&,4).

Truckin'. a Cakewalk-like step: Rise and step fwd onto the R toe (ct 1); sink onto the R heel (ct &). Repeat w/ L. Raise finger to eye level w/ wagging action, both elbows slightly elevated, L hand on L hip, or L fingers touching R elbow.

Road House Truckin': Same, with some degree of hip swiveling. Turn R in, pigeon-toed on the rise (ct 1); swivel R out, rotating CW on the ball of the R ft, sinking (ct &); turn L in (ct 2); swivel L out (ct &). Repeat.

Shag: Cpl in closed Ballroom pos, M kick R bkwd (ct 1); slightly bounce on L (ct &); switch ft to kick L bkwd (ct 2); bounce (ct &); switch to kick R bkwd (ct 3); switch to kick L bkwd (ct &). Repeat. (W opposite.)

London Bridge Shag (Common style in Big Apple): Dancers raise both arms fwd, holding ptnr w/ palm contact, forming a bridge. Step is the Shag.

Crazy Legs Shag: M step L kicking R to R side (ct 1); kick R crossed behind L (ct &); step R kicking L to L (ct 2); kick L crossed behind R (ct &); kick R bkwd (ct 3); kick L bkwd (ct &). Repeat.

Spinning Lindy Shag, 6-count Lindy in Shag style: Cpl in Semi-open pos (both facing fwd), M step fwd L (ct 1); bounce and raise R leg bkwd (ct &); rock back onto R (ct 2); bounce and raise L leg bkwd (ct &); step bkwd L (ct 3); rock fwd R (ct &), rotating as a cpl CW. (W opposite.) For "Crazy Legs" style, throw legs around instead of simply raising them bkwd.

Polka Shag (unique to Big Apple): Cpl in Ballroom or London Bridge pos, M step L to L (ct 1); close R to L (ct &); step L to L (ct 2); kick R crossed behind L (ct &). Repeat to R (ct 3,&4,&). Execute basic Shag (ct 1,2,3,&); and add 2 more quick back kicks (ct 4,&).

Flea Hop: Cpl in Ballroom pos. W does "Jumping Jack" separating ft to 2nd Pos while M kicks R fwd between her feet (ct 1); W and M both close ft (ct &); M does Jumping Jack while W kicks R fwd (ct 2); both close ft (ct &); W ft apart while M kicks L fwd (ct 3); close (ct &); M ft apart while W kicks L (ct 4); close (ct &). Repeat (cts 5-8).

Flea Hop Sequence, Part 1: Do Scooter, chugging fwd to L diag and back (ct 1,&); chug fwd to R diag and back (ct 2,&); Jumping Jack (ct 3,&). Repeat (cts 4-6). Repeat Scooter chugs only (cts 7-8). Part 2: Flea Hop (cts 1-8).

The Shout: Standing in place, solo, rise and swing arms fwd (ct 1); flex knees, lowering arm's (ct &); rise and swing arms back (ct 2); flex knees (ct &). Repeat.

Other Big Apple steps not described: The Duster, Organ Grinder, Suzie-Q, Wipe the Windshield, The Drag, Camel Walk, Peckin, Bumps, Apple Jack, The Rock, Balboa Double Shuffle, Little Sister, Sizzle Step, Stomp Off, Carioca, Gaze Afar, Peel the Apple, Joe Louis, Red Robin, Duchin Step, Leap Frog, Black Bottom, Bunny Hop, Frankenstein, At Ease, Slow Motion, Spank the Baby, Gertie Swing.

METER: 4/4

PATTERN

Meas

8 meas Introduction

I. SOLO STEPS TO THE CENTER

1-4 RIGHT FOOT IN as described above, done as individuals facing in to ctr.

5-8 SWING IT LOW repeated for a total of 8 cts.

9-12 SWING IT HIGH repeated for a total of 8 cts.

13-18 LET ROOSEVELT KNOCK AT THE WHITE HOUSE DO' done 3 times (12 cts).

19-20 KILL THE SPIDER as described.

II. TRUCKIN'

- 1-4 CIRCLE LEFT: All turn L to face against LOD. Do Truckin' step individually in single-file, with M ahead of W, for 8 steps, beg R. (Note: If this dance had arisen from a ballroom tradition, the circle would have been to LOD, but the Big Apple has country dance roots, with the ancient circle-L tradition.)
- 5-8 LADIES TURN BACK: Continuing Truckin', W cast in to ctr and turn back, traveling LOD in an inside circle; all M continue RLOD. 8 steps for all.
- 9-12 ABOUT FACE: All turn L to reverse directions in their respective circles, Truckin' 8 steps.
- 13-16 WHEN THE MERRY GO 'ROUND BROKE DOWN: All offer L hands to opp ptrn (from preliminary pairing off) to do Truckin' around in a L-hand Star, 8 steps, wagging free R finger. (If not paired off as 2 cpls, offer L to own ptrn instead, to turn by the L hand.)
- 17-20 SWING PARTNERS: Face ptrn to turn ptrn in place by R elbow, Truckin' 8 steps (L finger in air).

III. SHININ'

- 1-20 One or more cpls (or individuals) enter circle to show off with Swing, Charleston, Shag, Tap Dance, Clogging, or other flamboyant steps, while others in the circle do the Shout, sway in place, clap or stamp.

IV. SHAG

- 1-20 Cpls freestyle with any of the Shag steps described above.

V. POSIN'

- 1-16 Individuals strike a pose and hold as a statue for 4 counts. Repeat with a different pose. Variation: cpl strikes a combined pose.
- 17-20 Walk or Truck to partners for finale.

VI. FINALE

- 1-8 8-COUNT SHAG as described above, in Ballroom or London Bridge pos (ct 1-8). Repeat (ct 9-16).
- 9-16 KICK THE MULE: All take hands in one circle, facing ctr. Walk fwd 3 steps (ct 1,2,3); kick fwd (ct 4); walk bkwd 4 steps (cts 5-8). Repeat.
- 17-20 PRAISE ALLAH: All drop hands and Truck fwd 4 steps, crouching low to shake spread hands close to the floor while advancing (ct 1,2,3,4). Truck fwd 4 more steps, rising and raising hands fwd to the sky.