

BASIC FIGURES & STEPS OF ARGENTINE CRIOLLO DANCES  
(Criollo= a native of Argentina, but descended  
from European ancestors)

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The basic step of nearly all Criollo dances is the waltz. It is called Caminado Valseado or "Waltzed Walk", because each step moves forward, as in walking.

Both dancers always start with LF - step fwd with LF (1), step sl fwd on RF (2), step sl fwd on LF (3), repeat starting RF. (above is for 3/4 music; if 6/8 music use 2 beats for each step: step L (1,2), Step R (3,4), step L (5,6), etc. There are some variations for 6/8 music as seen in Pala Pala).

These figures are usually found in all couple Criollo dances:

Vuelta entera - Whole circle - moving fwd ptrs travel around a CCW circle, usually this requires 8 waltz, hands at head ht, fingers snapping. Look over L shldr at ptr across ctr of circle, at half way point pass thru ptr's orig place, finish in own orig place & face ptr. When 2 cpls are involved, each M follows his ptr around the circle.

Media vuelta - Half circle - Moving fwd ptrs travel half way around a CCW circle. This has the same elements as Vuelta entera, but each dancer finishes in ptr's orig place, usually uses 4 waltz only.

Giro - Turn - Ptrs move simultaneously, with 4 waltz travel in indiv small CCW circles, remaining in front of ptr. Meet ptr with R shldrs adj at end of 2nd waltz, & complete circle at 4th waltz in own orig place facing ptr.

Contragiro - Reverse turn - This has the same elements as Giro, but each dancer moves in a CW circle & meets ptr with L shldrs adj at 2nd waltz.

Giro final - Final turn - Starting like the Giro each dancer moves twd ptr around a CCW circle meeting with R shldrs adj at end of 2nd waltz, then each dancer turn self around CCW quickly on 3rd waltz to finish facing ptr, advance to ptr on 4th waltz for la Coronacion. There may be a variation in the number of waltz, but the form is as above.

Coronacion - The crowning - This signifies an "embrazo" or salute to your ptr in thanking him for the dance. Ptrs facing each other raise both arms fwd (M's arms outside of W's) until hands are above ptr's shldrs where there is a slight pause. Usually fingers have been snapping & the final snap is just above ptr's shldrs.

This figure is a typical closing for a dance, it may be done on the last waltz meas or on a single ct after the last waltz meas. It is considered poor taste to be too possessive & to attempt to actually embrace ptr during this figure.

Esquinas - Corners - If one or two cpls are dancing in an imaginary square, this fig is when the dancers travel CCW around the square stopping at a corner or side of the square to execute a figure.

Zapateo - Heel tapping - This is only for the M, & is executed to display his skill for his ptr's benefit or in competition with other M dancers. There are many variations; many dancers compose their own variations. During the zapateo the M's hands are usually hanging freely at his sides, he bends fwd very slightly from the waist, his knees are bent keeping the movement below his knees, his upper body is still. He dances practically in place tho he may turn to face different directions.

6/8 music - basic zapateo - tap L heel beside RF (1), step L toe beside RF (2), stamp RF in place (3), tap L heel beside RF (4), stamp LF in place (5), hold (6), repeat start R.

- zapateo cruzado - tap L heel beside RF (1), step L toe crossed in front of RF (2), stamp RF in place (3), tap L heel crossed in front of RF (4), stamp LF beside RF (5), hold (6), repeat start R.

- zapateo con cruce final - tap L heel beside RF (1), step L toe beside RF (2), stamp RF in place (3), tap L heel beside RF (4), stamp LF crossed in front of RF (5), hold (6), repeat start R.

Zarandeo - This figure is only for the W; it is done with the smooth gliding waltz ( caminado valseado) & is a figure in which she coquettishly, but with reserve, displays her grace & charm to her ptr. The zarandeo corresponds to the M's zapateo & the two are usually done simultaneously.

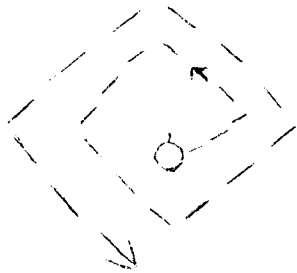
During the zarandeo the W's hands may hold her skirt raising it sl, or she may hold her skirt with her RH, her LH placed on her hip, thumb back & fingers fwd, but in any case the movement of her skirt is not bold or provocative; she always dances in front of her ptr & never turns her back twd him, if she must move away from him she travels bkwd.

There are many patterns for the zarandeo; here are some of the best known:

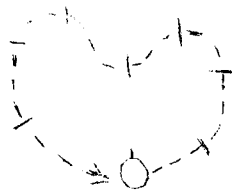
Basic zarandeo - requires 4 waltz; move diag fwd R 1 waltz, diag fwd L 1 waltz, move diag bkwd L 1 waltz, diag bkwd R 1 waltz returning to orig place.



2 zarandeo of 4 steps each - requires 8 waltz; do 2 basic zarandeo, making a larger pattern on the floor with the second one.



Zarandeo circular - requires 8 waltz; move fwd twd ptr's L side in a CCW curve using 3 waltz, turn R shldr twd ptr & cross in front of him to his R side in CW curve using 2 waltz, face ptr & move bkwd in CCW curve using 3 waltz to return to orig place.



Zarandeo of 6 steps - requires 6 waltz; with 4 waltz do a basic zarandeo returning to orig place, on 5th waltz move fwd twd ptr, on 6th waltz move bkwd to place.

