

# Cumbia

(Mexico and Central America)

*Cumbia* is a traditional folk dance from the Atlantic coast of Colombia. It is done with candles and progressed CCW in a circle formation. In the 1950s, the Central American and Mexican population created a social dance expression which took the name “cumbia,” but created new steps and partner relationships representing a composite of tropical dance styles. This form of cumbia may be danced in open or closed partner position. There are two basic steps which interpret the 4/4 beat in different ways.

Pronunciation:

Music:

4/4 meter

Formation: Cpls in Open pos, facing ptr but not touching.

Meas

Pattern

## BASIC STEP 1: OPEN POSITION FACING PARTNER BUT NOT TOUCHING

- ah before 1 Small flick of R ft.  
 1 Step back on ball of R ft, keeping L in place (ct 1); step in place with L and drop R heel (ct 2); step on R in place, keeping L in contact with floor (ct 3); pause (ct 4); small flick of L ft (ct ah).  
 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk.

## SIDE VARIATION

Basic Step 1 can be done by stepping to side instead of back.

## BASIC STEP 2: CLOSED PARTNER POSITION

Description is given for M; W use opp ftwk and direction.

- 1 Small step to side with R (ct 1); pause (ct 2); step on L next to R (ct 3); step in place with R (ct 4).  
 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk.

## TURN VARIATION TO BASIC STEP 2

Begin facing each other with a single hand hold; M L hand holding W R hand—arms extended.

- 1 M does 1 meas of Basic Step 2, beginning a CCW half turn, rolling his body into his R arm, letting go of W hand once it is touching his body. W begins to dance fwd to change places with the M.  
 2 M does a second meas completing CCW turn to end facing W, taking the place where she began the sequence. As he turns, she keeps her hand lightly touching his turning body so that he can catch it and resume the hand hold after the turn.  
 3-4 M does 2 more meas, once again changing places with the W. He dances fwd, pulling her in a CCW turn under his L arm.

## CUMBIA STEP VARIATION

This step is in open pos, slowly circling ptr or turning in place. Quite often the W turns in place as the M goes around her. M’s arm gestures are often stretches out twd ptr. W might use small shimmies and a lot of hip action.

- 1 Whole R ft takes wt crossing in front of L ft (ct 1); keeping this crossed-leg pos, take wt on ball of L, traveling slightly to L (ct 2); repeat cts 1-2 (cts 3-4). This step can be done with opp ftwk and direction.

Presented by Susan Cashion