

HALAY #4 (TRADITIONAL)

There are (or were) hundreds of different HALAYS/KOTCHARIS/GOVANDS, many going back to different regions of Eastern or Western Armenia. Aside from these traditional dances, there are many modern versions, with many Armenian-American communities having their own particular favorite dance and style distinct to that community. Originally a men's dance adopted from the Kurdish mountain tribes, there are still many versions, both traditional and modern, done by men only. At a major picnic or gathering it is possible to see a dozen different HALAYS being done simultaneously. This is an old traditional version that used to be popular among international folk-dancers in the Boston area. It was first introduced to international dancers by Vilma Machette, who learned it from the San Francisco Armenian community.

Source: International folkdancers in Greater Boston.

Music: Dance Armenian Side B-band #2, The Armenian Side B-"zurna halay", or any good 2/4 or 4/4 'HALAY' music.

Style: The subtleties of the traditional men's dances are too complex to detail here, and can only be learned by dancing with someone who knows it, rather than watching them. The most outstanding characteristic is the "knee breaks", as the old-timers call it. Knees are always flexed, never locked straight. This flex can vary, from sudden powerful movements which are almost full squats, to subtle weight shifts while leaning or rocking (as in this dance). The line must move as a single cohesive unit.

Formation: Short lines of men in "Kurdish hold" (dancers very close with fingers interlocked and arms bent at elbows, so that the forearms are at a right angle to the body, pointing forward while touching neighbor's forearm). Any women dancing should be in separate lines.

<u>Meas.</u>	<u>Ct.</u>	<u>Movements</u>
1	1,2	Facing center but moving to right, step R to right as lean forward slightly (ct 1). Step L behind R as lean backward slightly (ct 2).
2	3,4&	Step R to right as lean forward slightly, but keep L touching floor (ct 3). Bounce twice on R while leaning forward (cts 4,&).
3	5,6&	Shift weight backward onto L (ct 5). Shift weight forward onto R again as bounce twice (cts 6,&). The weight shift on (ct 5) has a bouncy rebound quality, as weight springs/shifts forward again immediately.
4	7,8&	Shift weight backward onto left (ct 7). Bounce twice on left as lean slightly backward (cts 8,&).