

DE-NVÎRTIT

(Oaş)

De-nvîrtit (den-ver-TEET, "turning"), a couple dance, is one of the two basic traditional dances of the tiny district of Oaş in northern Romania. (The other basic folk dance of the area, *roata*, is a circle dance done by men only.)

At a Sunday afternoon dance gathering, *de-nvîrtit* is usually the opening dance, and it is repeated regularly during the rest of the event. Only the unmarried people dance it on such occasions. Older, married people sometimes dance it at less public celebrations (weddings, christenings, etc.).

As performed spontaneously by the young *oşeni* ("Oaşians"), *de-nvîrtit* is made up of two "phases": at the beginning the couples dance non-turning figures, in place or moving about a small area of the floor. This Phase 1 includes the "Basic Step" and the "Men's Steps" (see descriptions below) and serves as a kind of warm-up. After a few minutes of this opening phase the man leads the woman into side-to-side movements and the various turning figures from which the dance itself gets its name. The turning phase is the main part of *de-nvîrtit*.

Recording: There are no readily available recordings of the customary music used for this dance. A good substitute is Electrecord EPE 0536 (ST-EPE 0537), *Rencontre avec la Roumanie: Maramureş II*, side 1, bd 6, *Dans din Certeza*.

Rhythm and meter: *De-nvîrtit* is conventionally notated in 2/4 meter. Its basic rhythm pattern is slow-quick-slow-quick-slow and spans two measures of music. (For other rhythm patterns see "Men's Steps" below.)

Dancer's beats (counts)	1	2	3	4	5
Rhythm	S	q	S	q	S
2/4 notation (2-meas phrase)					

BASIC STEP PATTERNS

In its simplest form, *de-nvîrtit* has two different step patterns which are done individually or in combination with each other, depending on the particular figure being done. These two patterns are the "Basic Step" and the "Continuation Step". Both can be done by men or women, are in the S-q-S-q-S rhythm, and can begin with either foot depending on the figure being danced.

1. "Basic Step"

The Basic Step is done in place or moving in various directions--sideways, forward, backward, twirling around in place, etc., depending on the figure being done.

Basic Step (Rft)

S Step Rft
q Step Lft
S Step Rft
q Step Lft
S Step Rft

Basic Step (Lft)

S Step Lft
q Step Rft
S Step Lft
q Step Rft
S Step Lft

continued...

2. "Continuation Step"

Though sometimes done in place, the Continuation Step is primarily used as a traveling step in couple turns moving clockwise or counterclockwise.

Continuation Step (Rft)

S Step Rft
q Hop or bounce on Rft
S Step Lft
q Step Rft
S Step Lft

Continuation Step (Lft)

S Step Lft
q Hop or bounce on Lft
S Step Rft
q Step Lft
S Step Rft

MEN'S STEPS

Os men embellish their dancing with a variety of taps, stamps and heel clicks, often in syncopated rhythms. They usually do these steps during "Phase 1" (non-turning figures, see introductory notes above). A comprehensive list of these embellishments would be impossible; three typical men's figures are given here.

1. Men's Step #1 - "Basic Step with Heel Taps"

Done in place or moving a short distance sideways.

Basic Step with Heel Taps (Rft)

q Audible step with Rft in place
or sideways R
q Tap L heel beside Rft
q Step Lft beside Rft
q Step Rft in place or sideways
R

q Tap L heel beside Rft
q Step Lft beside Rft
q Step Rft beside Lft
q Tap L heel beside Rft

Basic Step with Heel Taps (Lft)

q Audible step with Lft in place
or sideways L
q Tap R heel beside Lft
q Step Rft beside Lft
q Step Lft in place or sideways
L

q Tap R heel beside Lft
q Step Rft beside Lft
q Step Lft beside Rft
q Tap R heel beside Lft

2. Men's Step #2 - "Heel Clicks"

Done in place or moving forward or backwards.

q Land on both feet about 6" apart, bending both knees slightly
q Low jump into air, clicking insides of both feet together
q Land on both feet close together
q Land on both feet about 6" apart, bending both knees slightly

q Low jump into air, clicking insides of both feet together
q Land on both feet close together
q Land on both feet about 6" apart, bending both knees slightly
q Low jump into air, clicking insides of both feet together

Note: Most native dancers do this step close to the floor without spreading their feet very far apart, i.e., it is not a calisthenics-type jumping-jack step.

Continued...

3. Men's Step #3 - "Stamp-Hop-Step-Hop-Stamp"

Done in place.

S Stamp Rft (no wt) across in front of Lft

q Hop or bounce on Lft in place

S Step Rft beside Lft

q Hop or bounce on Rft in place

S Stamp Lft (no wt) across in front of Rft

S Stamp Lft (no wt) across in front of Rft again

q Hop or bounce on Rft in place

S Step Lft beside Rft

q Hop or bounce on Lft in place

S Stamp Rft (no wt) across in front of Lft

WOMEN'S STEPS

While the men are doing the Men's Steps, the women adjust their footwork to accommodate the men's movements. In the case of Men's Step #1, for example, the woman would do the ordinary Basic Step beginning with the opposite foot from the man. In the case of Men's Steps #1 or #2, she might do the ordinary Basic Step, or the following "Step-Hop-Step-Hop-Step":

Woman's Step - "Step-Hop-Step-Hop-Step"

Done in the direction led by partner.

S Step Rft

q Hop or bounce on Rft

S Step Lft

q Hop or bounce on Lft

S Step Rft

S Step Lft

q Hop or bounce on Lft

S Step Rft

q Hop or bounce on Rft

S Step Lft

FORMATION AND POSITIONS

Couples anywhere on the dance floor. The most common position is shoulder-waist, but very often the W grasps the M's upper arms or elbows. An alternative hand position for the M is one hand at W's waist, with his other hand "hooked" on her elbow. During the steps of Phase 1 partners are face-to-face; during the couple turns in Phase 2 they are often turned R-shoulder-to-R-shoulder or L-shoulder-to-L-shoulder.

Note: Even when in face-to-face position, the native dancers seldom look at their partners.

SEQUENCE OF FIGURES

Aside from the overall sequence of Phase 1 (non-turning figures) followed by phase 2 (turning and twirling figures), there is no set sequence to the dance as

danced by the natives in Oaş, and even this sequence is not absolutely rigid; sometimes the dancers will return to Phase 1 briefly as a kind of break between the more active movements of Phase 2.

PHASE 1 - NON-TURNING FIGURES (M and W use opposite footwork)

Figure #1 - Basic Step in Place

("X" meas) M beginning Lft, W beginning Rft, couple does Basic Step, alternating feet with each new phrase, as if "marking time" in place. This is done for as long as the M wishes.

Figure #2 - Basic Step Sideways

("X" meas) M beginning Lft, W beginning Rft, couple does Basic Step, alternating feet with each new phrase and dancing sideways, first to M's L, then his R, etc., until M leads into another figure.

Figure #3 - Basic Step about Floor

("X" meas) M beginning Lft, W beginning Rft, couple does Basic Step, alternating feet with each new phrase and dancing casually about the dance floor. Usually the M moves fwd, the W bkwd as they travel.

Figure #4 - Men's Steps

("X" meas) M does any or all of Men's Steps #1, 2 or 3, either in place or traveling, as appropriate. W accommodates her footwork to his movements (see under Men's Steps and Women's Steps above).

Note: There is no rule as to the sequence or length of time devoted to the above figures; these are entirely up to the discretion of the M.

PHASE 2 - TURNING FIGURES (M and W use same footwork)

After a few minutes doing figures from Phase 1, the M leads the W into various turning figures; note that during these figures the partners use the same foot. This means that the W must quickly change feet as she feels the M's lead into Phase 2.

Figure #5 - Side-to-Side

Meas 1-2 Retaining shoulder-waist position, couple does one Basic Step (Lft), the M doing his in place as he turns very slightly R (CW), leading W with his L hand over toward his R side. She meantime faces in this direction and takes her Basic Step (Lft), ending up almost on his R side and turning slightly R at the very end to face in the direction she just came from.

Meas 3-4 Reversing footwork and direction, M leads W over to his L side (she "returns home" and goes a little beyond), turning slightly L at the very end to face in the direction she just came from.

This figure may be repeated as many times as the M wishes.

Figure #6 - Short Turn

- Meas 1-4 Retaining shoulder-waist position (or M may "hook" his L hand on W's R elbow), partners turn R-shoulder-to-R-shoulder, and each moves forward so that they turn as a couple CW, using 1 Basic Step (Lft) plus 1 Continuation Step (Rft).
- Meas 5-8 Reverse footwork and direction of Meas 1-4, i.e. with L shoulders together, turn CCW with 1 Basic Step (Rft) plus 1 Continuation Step (Lft).

Do as many Short Turns as the M wishes.

Figure #7 - Long Turn

- Meas 1-8 Identical to the Short Turn, except that the CW turn is longer, i.e., 1 Basic Step (Lft) plus 3 consecutive Continuation Steps (Rft).
- Meas 9-16 Identical to the CCW turn of the Short Turn, except it is longer, i.e., 1 Basic Step (Rft) plus 3 consecutive Continuation Steps (Lft).

Do as many Long Turns as the M wishes.

Figure #8 - "Open-End" Turn

- ("X" meas) If the M wishes, he may extend the Long Turn "indefinitely" simply by tacking on more Continuation Steps. The "open-end" turns may be done either CW or CCW, although the preference in Oa§ is CW.

Figure #9 - "Short Stop and Reverse"

- Meas 1-4 Couple does 1 Short Turn CW, stamping onto Lft on the last count and not turning to begin a Short Turn CCW.
- Meas 5-8 Still facing CW, the couple "goes into reverse", backing up CCW with 2 Continuation Steps (Rft) moving backwards.
- Meas 9-16 M abruptly shifts W across in front of him into L-shoulder-to-L-shoulder position and they do a Long Turn CCW (cf. Meas 9-16 of Figure #7).

Figure #10- Woman's Walk-Around

- Meas 1-4 Couple does 1 Short Turn CW.
- Meas 5-6 Partners release hold; M does 1 Continuation Step (Rft) in place, his hands loose down at sides, while W moves past his R shoulder, around in back of him, past his L shoulder and around in front of him using a total of 1 Continuation Step (Rft), her hands down at sides.
- Meas 7-8 As W comes around in front, M takes her in R-shoulder-to-R-shoulder position and they do 1 Continuation Step (Rft) CW.
- Meas 9-16 Reverse direction and footwork of Meas 1-8 of this figure.

Figure #11 - Woman's Twirl

Meas 1-2 Partners release hold as M takes W's L hand in his R hand; he twirls her once or twice CCW in place in front of him, both dancers using 1 Basic Step (Lft) (he does his marking time in place as she turns).

Meas 3-4 M takes W's R hand in his L hand and twirls her once or twice CW in place in front of him. Both dancers do 1 Basic Step (Rft), he doing his in place, she using hers to make the twirl.

Note: The number and duration of these twirls is up to the man.