

# SYRTOS

(Greece)

The Syrtos (sear-TOE) dates back at least to the 16th century when Turkey conquered Greece. There is a legend that the Greek women danced over a cliff to avoid capture by the Turks. The Syrtos is still done in Greek clubs, cafes, and at weddings.

In olden days men and women danced in separate lines and it was customary to hold a handkerchief between the leader and the second dancer. Today men and women dance in the same line and the handkerchief is still used.

The syrtos was originally introduced to the Research Committee of the Folk Dance Federation by Elaine Kockos, Amanda Antipa and Themis Christo. The original description appears in Volume II of Folk Dances from Near and Far. The following description is based on material supplied by Bettie Gall of Stockton and John Pappas of San Francisco.

MUSIC: Record: Any good Syrtos recording. There are many available.

Piano: "Come All Ye Maidens to the Dance"  
Sheet #681, Apollo Music Co.

FORMATION: Open circle, leader at R end. Hands are joined at shoulder level, elbows bent and down, hands comfortably back by the shoulders. Leader may extend R hand and snap fingers in rhythm to the music, or many place hand on R hip, fingers bkwd. Dancer on L end of line may do either of above also. M or W may lead. If M leads, a handkerchief is held between him and the second dancer to facilitate doing "Show-off" steps.

STEPS AND  
STYLING:

Walk\*

On each step knees flex a little. Upper part of body remains erect. Leader only may improvise on steps, while second dancer maintains rhythm and step pattern, and gives support by holding R hand steady and firm. If leader dances with second dancer, the third dancer is responsible for maintaining rhythm and step pattern.

Rhythm is basically Slow (ct 1, &), Quick (ct 2), Quick (ct &)

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MUSIC 2/4

PATTERN

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Measures

## INTRODUCTION

The leader may begin the dance at any time he wishes.

### I. THE DANCE

- 1 Face ctr and move in LOD. Step R to R (Slow); step L across behind R (Quick); step R to R (Quick).
- 2 Step L slightly across in front of R (Slow); step R to R (Quick); step L slightly across in front to R (Quick).

SYRTOS (Continued)

- 3 Step R to R (slow); step L beside or a little in front of R (Quick); step R in place (Quick).
- 4 Small step L to L (Slow); step R beside or a little in front of L (Quick); step L in place (Quick).

II. VARIATION (for meas 3 and 4)

- 3 Step R to R, bending knee (Slow); touch ball of L ft slightly fwd of R and twd ctr, straightening knees (Quick, Quick).
- 4 Small step L to L, bending knees (Slow); touch ball of R ft slightly fwd of L and twd ctr, straightening knees (Quick, Quick).

NOTE: If leader wants to relinquish lead, he does so during the first 2 meas of the dance by joining the line on the L side of the dancer he chooses to be the new leader, pulling the intervening dancers along with him, and changing the handkerchief from his L to his R hand. It is not practical to pass the lead farther than 4 or 5 places down the line. The leader may also ask someone in the line to come up and take the lead. If so, the person simply walks to the front of the line.

FOLK DANCE FEDERATION OF CALIFORNIA RESEARCH COMMITTEE:  
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