

Introduction to Argentina's Folk Dances



Lesson 2

**Put On Your Dancing Shoes and Get
Warmed Up!**

The Chacarera



Description of the Dance:

A popular Creole dance

Lively

Playfully mischievous

Festive and happy

Light step and quick rhythm

Danced in partners (each dancer on his/her own and they do not embrace)

During the dance, the male courts the female and tries to win over her love and attention by displaying his complex tap-dancing skills, known as the *zapateo*.

Part of present-day folklore (passed down from one generation to another)

Dance of the people



Additional Details and Information...

The Chacarera consists of four stanzas in which song verses called *coplas* are sung. There is an instrumental part between each of the *coplas* that also serves as an introduction and determines the length of the dance.

The *coplas* are a Spanish influence and a direct result of the Spanish colonization. During the Chacarera, four *coplas* are sung and in at least one of the *coplas*, the name Chacarera is mentioned, and it is believed that is how the dance became known by that name.

The Gato



Description of the Dance:

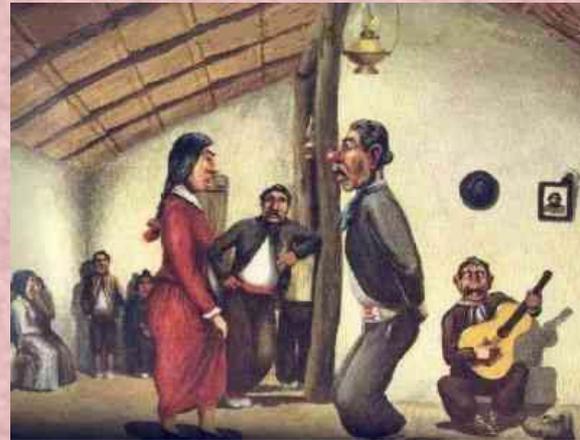
A popular Creole dance

Playfully mischievous

Light step and quick rhythm

Lively, festive, and happy

Dance of the people



Part of present-day folklore (passed down from one generation to another)

Danced in partners (each dancer on his/her own and they do not embrace)

The dance is a display of the showmanship of the Argentine horseman, known as the *gaucho*.

The gentleman pursues the female and tries to impress her with his complex tap dancing steps, called *zapateos*, and incredible jumps, which is a common theme in this type of folk dance.

The man's pursuit of the woman is compared to a cat going after its prey.

It brings together all the unique qualities of each of Argentina's folk dances and through its simple choreography displays the strong personality of the male and the grace of the Argentine woman.

Referred to as the model for Argentina's folk dances

Additional Details and Information...

The Gato consists of four stanzas in which song verses called *coplas* are sung. There is an instrumental part between each of the *coplas* that also serves as an introduction and determines the length of the dance. The *coplas* are a Spanish influence and a direct result of the Spanish colonization.

It is believed that the name of the dance originated from a very famous *copla* written by Ventura R. Lynch that appeared in his “Cancionero Bonarense” (1883).

Salta la “perdiz” madre
Salta la infeliz;
Que se le lleva el “Gato”
El “Gato” “mis-mis”

Musical accompaniment: guitar, violin, accordion, and the *bombo* (a percussion instrument from the province of Santiago del Estero)

The Zamba



Description of the Dance:

A dance of chivalry

Dance of the people

Part of present-day folklore (passed down from one generation to another)

The dance is a game of pantomime where the handkerchief represents the emotion shared between the dancers and ultimately the man's desire to attain the female's love and attention. By the end of the dance, the man achieves his goal and holds the handkerchief around the woman's head in a symbolic embrace.

In this dance of love, the handkerchiefs are an extension of the dancers' hands.

The dance can have either a slow and melancholy rhythm or a lively and quick rhythm.

One of the most beautiful and most passionate of the folk dances

Regarded as the national dance of Argentina



Additional Details and Information...

There are three distinct styles of music that accompany the Zamba:

- (A) Slow and melancholy rhythm that accompanies the light and graceful movements of the couple in which the man pursues the woman and ultimately attains her love and affection by the end of the dance.
- (B) Lively and quick rhythm that accompanies women dancing in a tap-dancing (*zapateada*) style.
- (C) Combination of both rhythms that has a predominantly sad tone.