

1914 Tango Argentino

(Buenos Aires, Argentina)

“The true Argentine Tango, the one and only” as described by Nicanor Lima, Buenos Aires, ca. 1914.

These are some of the most typical figures from the 50 figures and 125 variations described in this rare illustrated tango manual.

Music: Any early tango with 8-bar phrases. If these steps are rearranged into freestyle improvisation, the music need no longer have 8-bar phrases.

Rhythm: 2/4 meter Tempo: 66-74 bpm

Formation: Cpls in Ballroom pos.

Steps: Ftwk described for M; W use opp ftwk.

Meas Pattern

4 meas INTRODUCTION No action.

PART I

- 1-2 PASOS PASEOS SERENOS: M walk fwd 4 steps beg L. Timing: S S S S.
 3-4 MEDIA LUNA “SANJUANINA:” M fwd L (ct 1); side R (ct 2); close L to R with wt (ct &); bkwd R (ct 1); side L (ct 2); close R to L with wt (ct &). Timing: S QQ S QQ.
 5-6 PASOS PASEOS SERENOS: M walk fwd 4 steps beg L. Timing: S S S S.
 7-8 SENTADA (which other dance manuals called Corte): M fwd L (ct 1); side R (ct 2); close L to R with wt (ct &); bkwd R (ct 1); hold (ct 2). Timing: S QQ S hold.

PART II

- 1 PASOS PASEOS SERENOS; M walk fwd L and R. Timing: S S.
 2 SALTITO #3: M step diag L (ct 1); close R to L cutting R toe under heel (ct 2); step fwd L (ct &). Timing: QQ S
 3-4 MEDIA LUNA “VAI VEN:” M touch R ft fwd, no wt, sweeping in a crescent arc around to the R side (cts 1); take a small step bkwd R (ct 2); touch L back (ct 1); take a small step fwd L (ct 2). Timing: S S S S.
 5-6 MEDIA LUNA “MENDOCINA:” Grapevine twd the ctr of the hall thus: M cross R over L (ct 1); step sdwd L (ct 2); cross R behind L (ct 1); step side L (ct 2); approach R to L (not quite closing) (ct &). Timing: S S S QQ.
 7-8 RETURNING: M cross L behind R (ct 1); side R (ct 2); cross L over R (ct 1); side R (ct 2); approach L to R (ct &). Same timing.

PART III

- 1-2 PASOS PASEOS SERENOS: M step back R (ct 1); walk fwd L, R, L (cts 2,1,2).
 Timing: S S S S
 3-4 EL OCHO: Both cross-step toward the ctr of the hall then back thus: M cross R over L (ct 1); step side L (ct 2); approach R to L (ct &). Timing: SQQ. Repeat opp, crossing in front again. W also crosses in front both times.

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- 5-6 MOLINETE (Rueda): M cross R tightly over L, rise on balls of both ft and slowly turn in place CCW for 4 slow cts (cts 1,2,1,2) while W does a grapevine around him. W cross L over R (ct 1); side R (ct 2); cross L behind R (ct 3); side R (ct 4).
- 7-8 SALIDA: M cross R over L as W cross L over R, both crossing twd LOD (ct 1); face ptr in Ballroom pos, M facing LOD, as M step fwd L and W bkwd in LOD (ct 2); M step side R (ct 1); close L to R (ct &); step back R (ct 2). Timing: S S QQ S.

Note 1: These steps may be recombined in a different order for freestyle improvisation.

Note 2: Many other vintage tango and modern social tango steps remain from the early Buenos Aires tango, and were also described in Lima's tango manual. If you know other tango steps, you may include them in your improvisation with the assurance that they were probably described in Lima's 1914 book. Some exceptions are the British closing without wt on a concluding step (the Argentines usually closed with wt and proceeded to step on the next alternating ft), German head snaps, pivots and deep dips, which probably came from Parisian Apache influence.

Note 3: Today's living tradition Tango Argentino is clearly based on this original framework, but done with a newer style which evolved over the past, and embellished with many kicks, slides, sweeps and other intricate ftwk.

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