

THE 12 BASIC MOVES OF CUBAN SALSA

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The following moves are some of the basic units of Cuban salsa: other short moves are often armwork variations on these, and longer routines are often an assemblage of these basic ones. From a teacher's point of view, these moves can be used as a language to explain long routines efficiently (e.g., Bayamo = Vuelta + Paseala por Abajo/Atras + Vuelta). From a learner's point of view, knowing about them is helpful while observing and "decoding" longer routines. These basic moves are also useful to develop and polish some essential dancing skills, e.g., space awareness or leading/following.

#	Name	Skill(s) developed through that move	Notes	Same family as	Description
0	Guapea step	Cuban basic	Guapear = acting tough, being brave. Guapea = the tough step (to show off).		Basic Cuban salsa step. Combination of casino + salsa. Connection: equalise the tension.
1	Enchufia	Swapping positions	Enchufar = to plug in or turn on (some electrical equipment)	Enchufia doble, Enchufia Complicado, Enchufia con Mambo/Rumba etc.	Back-rock-turn, back-rock-forward.
2	Dile que no (DQN)	Slingshot effect; dancing together, bouncing energy from each other	Dile que no = tell her/tell him that not. "Yes but no, OK maybe."		Dile que no with lady's hips tilting backwards on 3 to create the "slingshot effect". Dancing together, exchange of complementary energy.
3	Hecho a.k.a. Vuelta a.k.a. Pimienta	Ability of ladies to turn clockwise; partners swapping positions in 8 beats	Hecho = done. Vuelta = turn.	Velta Vacilala, Sombrero, Balsero, Abanico, Setenta	Lady's clockwise turn on 8 beats led by man's left hand (var. right hand), with prep on preceding 8.
4	Enchufia Ronde (hook turn)	Hook turn for men		Enchufia ronde with hands high, low, two hands, hands crossed etc., Evelyn, Abanico	Starts like enchufia, then hook turn for the man.
5	Paseala al frente	Lead and follow, don't anticipate; prep for sacala	Pasear = to go for a stroll. Pasea la = bring her on a stroll. Al frente = in front. Preparation for sacala.		Leading the lady inside/outside of the circle, lady walking in a figure of 8 or infinity sign, man stepping side to side. Keep shoulder lines parallel. Very good for learning to lead and follow.
6	Sacala a.k.a. Exhibela	Changing directions from line to cross (from East-West to North-South); slingshot effect in a different context	Sacar = to throw. Saca la = throw her out. A.k.a. Exhibela, but Exhibela is lead with man's right hand / crosshand hold.		Lady's clockwise turn "thrown" by the leader. Ladies use hips for styling and creating motion from within the body. Action-reaction.
7	Paseala por abajo y por atrás	Ladies hip movement; partner's elastic interaction	Pasear = go for a stroll. Please don't confuse with "paseala al frente". Por abajo y por atrás = down (the street) and back.		Bringing the lady right to left, then left to right. Starts from enchufia-DQN.
8	Adios con la Prima a.k.a. la Prima	Round motion (son-style) rather than partner bouncing motion	La Prima = the cousin. Adios con la prima = leave with the cousin.	Evelyn, Adios con la Prima y la Hermana/con la Familia	Man pushes into the ladies right arm and pulls her left hip to start the clockwise rotation, then travels under the lady's arm.
9	Cubanita, Cubanito	Keeping connection, eye contact and "shoulder parallelism" (even when leading from behind); how body parts define direction; keeping hug circle distance		El Uno, El Dos.	S-shaped arm leading, lady in front and man behind (resp. man in front, lady behind). Keep the connection even though the lady (resp. man) is in front, "reconnect" on 3 and 7 with eyes and body direction.
10	Enrocate	Health and safety for Coca Cola (be able to catch the lady), geometry of Coca Cola (2x 3/4 turn DQN)	Enrocar = to castle. Enrocate = castle yourself. Think of protecting with a wall.		Preparation to Coca Cola, keep the lady in the centre.
11	Coca cola	Ladie's anticlockwise turn; hug circle distance			"Ladie's inside turn", lady's anti-clockwise turn led by the man. Can start from enchufia-DQN.
12	Siete a.k.a. Panque	Yo-yo lead	Spanish panque = pancake. Think of flipping a pancake.	Siete con Coca Cola	Whipping hand motion to lead the woman to turn clockwise and "roll her in". Prep-throw, action-reaction.