

The History of Salsa



Joseph (2020)

Origins of Salsa

Salsa was born in New York City during the mid-20th century, when Cuban, Puerto Rican, and other Latin American communities came together to share their love for rhythm and movement. Their music and dances mixed with American jazz, forming a new expression of Latin identity. Salsa became a way to celebrate culture, joy, and community in a fast-changing urban world (McMains 2015).

The Rise of Salsa

During the 1970s, Fania Records helped launch salsa into global fame, recording legendary artists and turning salsa into a powerful cultural movement. The music and dance spread through Latin America and the United States, symbolizing unity, strength, and pride. It was more than entertainment—it became a voice for immigrants finding identity in a new land (Mirabal and Laó-Montes 2007).



(Exploring the Latino Metropolis: Calle Ocho Dancers, n.d.)

Salsa as Cultural Expression

Salsa reflects the story of its people—a dance of passion, movement, and resilience. Every step and rhythm tells a story of migration, cultural blending, and celebration. As Kealiinohomoku (1983) notes, every dance form reveals the culture it comes from, and salsa shows the heart and history of Latin communities worldwide.