

## Ballroom Dancing - The Jive

The fastest of all the Latin dances would be the Jive. According to some sources the roots of this dance are in New York's Harlem area, others put the origin of the dance with the Negroes of the southeast United States where it resembled the dances of the Seminole Indians. Depending on which source you are looking at either the Negroes copied it from the Indians or the Indians copied it from the Negroes.

The Jive is a fast paced, rhythmical dance that was influenced by a number of other dance styles including Boogie, Rock, African American Swing and the Lindyhop. In the late 1800's the Negroes in the south held Jive competitions where the prize was a cake which is how the dance became known for a while as the Cake Walk.

Unlike the other ballroom dances the Jive doesn't require moving around the dance floor, however, even though it looks like the dancers feet are flying every which way the feet should be directly under the body with the knees always close together. You'll see the woman being twirled a lot and lots of kicks. The music that is associated with the Jive is commonly called Ragtime, possibly because the participants dressed up in their finest clothes ("rags") or maybe because of the syncopation of the music giving it a ragged feel.

## Ballroom Dancing - The Samba

When the Samba music plays its party time! The Samba originated with Brazil's Rio Carnival and is comprised of several different South American dances. While walking and side steps are the main moves with heavy hitting rhythm and lots of hip action the Samba is the perfect party dance.

Slaves imported into Portugal in the 16th century brought along their dances (a few of which are the Catarete, Embolada and the Batuque). Europeans thought these dances were quite sinful as the dancers were close enough to have their navels touching. The Batuque was an incredibly popular dance - so much so that at one time it was outlawed. The Batuque was done in a circle with dance steps resembling those of a Charleston with a solo dancer in the center of the circle. Down the line carnival steps were added and members of Rio's high society decided that once the dance had been modified to use the closed ballroom position it was then a proper dance.

Eventually aspects from all these dances and probably others combined emerging as the Samba we know today.

Some things the judges watch for in a good Samba are steps like the Volta

(crossing in front of the body), the Samba Roll (moving the upper body in a circular motion while going through a six step turn), Botafogo (traveling walk that includes a direction change) and dancers who have a good balance of moving and stationary moves. They will also look for outstretched arms and the distinctive climax of the Samba where the dancers throw their heads back and their arms are splayed out to the side.