

# CROSS-STEP RUEDA

(United States)

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The Cross-Step Waltz Mixer traditionally begins with two Turning Basics, taking four measures of music. If the Turning Basics are replaced with variations, it's called **Cross-Step Rueda**. The variations are usually led spontaneously, instead of being prompted by a caller (as Salsa Rueda and Swing Rueda are).

Doing variations during the four bars of the Cross-Step Waltz Mixer presents a unique challenge. The variations must travel uniformly LOD, to keep up with the other couples. Then instead of finishing a variation in closed position with the Lead facing out as usual, you must finish side-by-side facing in, with his R hand holding her L. You have very little time to adapt to your new partner's frame and style, so the Lead must instantly ascertain how experienced his new partner is, if he wishes to lead something tricky. And both partners must be careful about exiting smoothly, without bumping into the next person.

The majority (two-thirds) of Cross-Step Waltz variations don't work in the Mixer. Many stop traveling LOD. Many don't resolve within four measures. And many don't flow or resolve smoothly. But here are a few that work especially well in the Cross-Step Waltz Mixer.

MUSIC: Any slow waltz music of approximately walking tempo.

RHYTHM: 3/4 TEMPO: 112 to 116 bpm is best.

FORMATION: Large circle of Cpls, in Ballroom pos., spaced evenly around the room in LOD.

PATTERN for the basic Cross-Step Waltz Mixer:

Bars

4 Turning Cross-Step Waltz rotating CW and traveling LOD for two full rotations:

1) M crosses R over his L toward LOD; 2) steps side L across LOD; 3) steps side R toward LOD while pulling R shoulder back. This was a half-turn and M is now on outside facing in.

4) M crosses L over R toward LOD; 5) steps R fwd LOD between ptrn's feet; 6) steps L fwd toward LOD. W does these steps beginning on M's ct 4. Note: M may cross L behind R on ct 4.

1 Unfold from Ballroom pos. to take hands in one large circle, so the W is at the M's R side, all generally facing into the center of the room but look at your Corner (the next person) during this measure. The step is a simple waltz balance forward (step-close-close).

1 Do a waltz balance backwards, looking at your ptrn.

1 Dropping hand with ptrn, do an Inside Turn with your corner:

1) M crosses his R over his L while raising his L arm gracefully toward the center of the hall; as W crosses her L over her R, raising her R arm and beginning to turn CCW.

2) M steps side L and loops her head with his L hand in a CCW circular path like a halo; W steps back R continuing to rotate CCW, backing up under her own R hand.

3) Having exchanged places with your Corner, face them and simply take the 3rd step in place, wherever it comfortably falls. W continues to rotate. M faces LOD at this moment.

- 1) M steps L in place as W crosses R over her L, directly away from the center.
- 2) M steps R in place as W steps side L, directly away from the center, beginning to turn CW.
- 3) Take the third step wherever it comfortably falls, continuing to rotate CW, and taking Ballroom pos., M facing out and W facing into center.

Repeat from the top.

## **CROSS-STEP RUEDA VARIATIONS**

### **1 BASIC STEP then GRAPEVINE UNDERARM (OUTSIDE) TURN**

After one waltz (2 meas), 3 steps of the Grapevine followed by M turning W once CW under his L arm.

- 1) M crosses R behind as W crosses L in front; 2) Side step toward LOD; 3) M crosses R in front as W crosses L behind; 4) Side step letting W face forward LOD; 5-6) W's Outside Underarm Turn.

### **1 BASIC STEP then OPEN 2-HAND GRAPEVINE, UNDERARM (OUTSIDE) TURN**

At the end of one waltz, M slips away to a 2-hand hold, then does 3 steps of the Grapevine followed by M turning W once CW under his L arm.

- 1) M crosses R behind as W crosses L in front; 2) Side step toward LOD; 3) M crosses R in front as W crosses L behind; 4) Side step letting W face forward LOD; 5-6) W's Outside Underarm Turn.

Note: M can also change from waltz position to open 2-hands during the three steps of the grapevine.

### **1 BASIC STEP then OPEN 2-HAND GRAPEVINE, FREE SPIN**

After one waltz, M leads W into a Free Spin instead of Underarm Turn on 4-5-6, which is much easier to follow from open 2-hand position. M can change to open 2-hands during the first basic, or during the grapevine itself. He gives a gentle lead to the free spin, not pushy.

### **1 BASIC STEP then OPEN 2-HAND GRAPEVINE, REAR-HAND INSIDE TURN**

After one waltz, 1-2-3) The same open 2-hand grapevine as above; 4-5-6) The M brings his rear R hand (W's L hand) through to lead a W's Inside Underarm Turn. W still turns forward, CW. The beauty is that this is the hand you need to be holding when you all face in.

## **CHAINED 2-HAND GRAPEVINE TURNS**

The M intercepts W's L hand with his R hand, before it reaches his R shoulder for the initial waltz, to gain open 2-hand position. 1-2-3) The usual three-step Grapevine, with the M crossing R behind on count 1. 4-5-6) Outside Turn, where M leads W to turn CW with his forward L hand and looping her head.

1-2-3) Three-step Grapevine, with the M crossing R behind on count 1. 4-5-6) Inside Turn, where M leads W to turn CW by bringing his rear R hand across in front of her then looping her head. Keep this hand when you're done, facing in.

### LONG GRAPEVINE, DOUBLE OUTSIDE TURN

Six steps of a lateral grapevine: 1) M crosses R behind as W crosses L in front; 2) Side step toward LOD; 3) M crosses R in front as W crosses L behind; 4) Side step; 5&6) Same as 1 & 2. (Note: he must lead her grapevine.) Then W crosses behind on 1, winding up (tuck), then W turns forward CW under M's raised L arm on 2-3. W turns a second time on 4-5. Face in on 6, as M backs out of her way to face in.

### LONG GRAPEVINE, OUTSIDE TURN, FREE SPIN

It's the same except you push away with a lowered connecting hand on 4 then W free-spins on 5-6, to end facing in.

### LONG GRAPEVINE, REAR-HAND DOUBLE INSIDE TURN

Six steps of a lateral grapevine, slipping away to open 2-hand hold (either before or during the grapevine): 1) M crosses R behind as W crosses L in front; 2) Side step toward LOD; 3) M crosses R in front as W crosses L behind; 4) Side step; 5&6) Same as 1 & 2. Then W crosses behind on 1, winding up, then W turns forward CW under M's raised R arm on 2-3. W turns a second time on 4-5. Face in on 6, as M backs out of W's way to face in. Note this is also better because there is more room under M's R arm than his L.

### LEAD'S WRAP, FOLLOW'S INSIDE TURN EXIT

M takes W's free L hand in his R, to 2-hand hold, at the beginning of the Turning Basic, faces LOD, raises his R hand back to his R ear, leads his R elbow into the frame as M passes by in front of W, traveling into the outside lane. Then M drops his R hand down in front of himself, into Lead's Wrap. Both walk forward facing LOD on 4-5-6-1-2-3. Then M leads W into an Inside Turn on the final 4-5-6, releasing his L hand and bringing his R hand in toward his abdomen then looping CW over her head. End facing in, holding inside hands.

### 1 BASIC STEP then WAIST SLIDE

After one waltz, 1) The M disengages his R arm and brings his R elbow slightly over his R hand. 2-3) M cuts toward the right, leading with his R elbow, in front of his ptr, lowering his L hand to his lower right ribcage. 4) M almost stops in place (or actually stops), keeping W's R hand at his waist just barely enough to spin W forward by him. 5-6) As W flies by him, facing him, M takes W's L hand with his R hand, hanging back and facing in.

### TURNING BASICS, NO VARIATIONS

Sometimes the simplest is the best. Enjoy being with your partner.