

LA CUCARACHA (Mexico)

There are so many versions of *La Cucaracha* ("The Cockroach"), Mexico's most popular folk dance, that it would be impossible to describe them all; however, they all use the same basic steps. Several patterns are given below. Note that there are two parts to the music. We shall refer to the first part, with which the record begins, as Music A, the second part being Music B.



OPENING FORMATION: Couples side by side, lady to right of man, all facing front. Ladies hold skirts out to side and swish them throughout dance. Men have hands behind their backs, holding back their serapes.

MUSIC A: PATTERNS: Dancers may either both move in the same direction, or in opposite directions, man to left, lady to right. If the latter course is followed, man begins step on left foot, lady on right; they continue to use opposite feet throughout.

The Step in its simplest form:



Moving to right: Step to right for 2 counts. Bring left to right for 3rd count. Step to right for 2 counts. Bring left to right for 3rd count. Turn once around to right with a right, left, right, and stamp on left.

Moving to left: Step to left for 2 counts. Bring right to left for 3rd count. Step to left for 2 counts. Bring right to left for 3rd count. Turn once around to left with a left, right, left, and stamp on right.

The same step but in a more authentic Mexican style:



Moving to right: Jump lightly on both feet to right, with left foot landing a fraction of a second after right. Step in place on left foot. Touch right toe down beside left foot. Jump again to right. Step in place on left foot. Touch right toe down beside left foot. Turn to right as in version given above. **Moving to left:** Jump lightly to left on both feet with right foot landing a fraction of a second after left. Step in place on right foot. Touch left toe down beside right foot. Jump again to left. Step in place on right foot. Touch left toe down beside right foot. Turn to left as in version given above.

Turn to left as in version given above.

EPA-4134-3

MUSIC B: PATTERN 1: The step here described may be done with two lines of partners facing and moving toward each other. Partners may also use it as they turn in place, moving around each other. Lady may stand in front of man and both use the step as man follows lady at will around the dance area.

The Step: Ladies hold skirts, men have both hands behind backs. Cross right foot well over left foot with full weight on right foot (count 1). The body turns slightly to left as right shoulder is brought forward over right foot, body leaning over the foot. Step back on left foot, straightening up body (count 2). Step on right foot near to the left foot (count 3).

Cross left foot over right, leaning body over foot and turning slightly to the right, with left shoulder leaning forward (count 1). Step back on right foot, straightening up (count 2). Step in place on left foot, near to the right foot (count 3).

Repeat this step for 8 full measures of the music.

MUSIC B: PATTERN 2: Partners face each other. Each partner moves to his own right on a straight line—that is, in opposite direction from partner. With high leaping steps, kicking up feet in back, run to own right: right, left, right. Then turn slightly to left so that you can see own partner, and touch left heel twice to the floor.

Run to own left as above: left, right, left. Turn slightly to right to see own partner, and touch right heel twice to floor.

Repeat this pattern to right and left again.

This step may also be done side by side, with dancers moving away from each other and then towards each other.

Using the patterns and steps given here, a variety of dance figures may be done, the leader setting the pattern for the group. Remember that there is much swishing of skirts and the whole style of the dance is very flirtatious. The man does his steps more boldly, turning his shoulders one way and the other, always leaning slightly forward as he dances.

Printed in U. S. A.