



SYRTOS  
(Aegean Islands & Coasts)



The Syrto is the most widespread and popular of dances performed in the Aegean cultural region. As performed on the islands and coasts of Greece (and western Asia Minor), this Syrtos differs in both step and feel from the mainland Syrto. The term "syrto" means "pulled" & refers to the action of the leader who pulls the chain of dancers behind him either in a circular or meandering floor pattern. Whereas the basic steps of the mainland syrto/kalamatiano are step-together-step, the basic steps of the island syrto are step-step-together performed with a lilting movement. Also, where the underlying rhythmic pattern of the mainland syrto is invariably slow-quick-quick, the rhythmic pattern of the island syrto is more often slow-slow-quick. Source is Aegean communities in NY, Boston and Greece.

Formation: open circle, W or V position hand hold

Meter: 8/8 (3 3 2)

Dancers cts: 1 2 3  
S S Q

MEAS

BASIC PATTERN

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr: Step R fwd LOD (ct 1); Step L fwd in front of R (2); Step R next to or slightly behind L (3)  
[Cue: Long-Long-Short] (see below\*\*, slight modification)
- 2 Repeat on opp ftwk, same direction

NOTE: The dance can be performed occasionally backwards facing L of ctr or it can be danced, for variety (2-3) meas fwd diagonally into the circle's center & (2-3) meas bk from the circle's center

STYLISTIC VARIANT "ALA POLITA"

- 1 Step R fwd LOD (ct 1); Cross L across in front of R (or touch L in front or to the left of R) (2); Swing L slightly in front (and/or across) R (3)
- 2 Repeat on opp ftwk, same direction

NOTE: A stylistic "variant" common in most of the Cycladic Islands is an added "lilt" during count 1 in both measures produced by an almost immediate push off from the foot that was just placed fwd, accompanied by a slightly fwd swing of the opposite foot.

\*\*NOTE: A common modification to the basic pattern is as follows: Step A fwd in front and diagonally across path of B (1); Step B fwd in front of A, wgt usually balanced between both ft (2); Rock back onto and immediately push off (w/ sl movement fwd) A, swinging B up and sl fwd (3).

contd over

179-28

SYRTOS

CONTD

MEAS

4 MEASURE VARIANT

- 1,2 Same ftwk, same direction of Meas 1,2 of Basic above
- 3 Step R fwd (1); Step L fwd in front of R (2); Rock back onto R (in place or sl right) (3).
- 4 Step L back RLOD (1); Step R back behind L (2); Step L sl fwd (3).

NOTE: In some cases, instead of the chain of dancers tracing the circumference of a circle "drawn" by the "Kavos" (lead dancer), the dance line works more like an "axle" in which the last person basically dances in place while the others rotate around him/her. This pattern is commonly seen on some Cycladic islands, eg Sifnos.

presented by Joseph Kaloyanides Graziosi  
at Maine Folk Dance Camp 1987

