

Welcome to

Astin International
Folk Dancers

Saturday Night Folk Dancing



Hancock Recreation Center
811 E. 41st Street
Austin, TX 78751

We're glad you've joined us!

www.aifd.cc

About Saturday night folk dancing:

How much does it cost? \$5, 16 yrs. and up

What is the evening schedule? About 7-10:45, often with some teaching early in the evening, then announcements and a contra about halfway through.

* Scheduled teaching may not occur each week. Stay tuned to AIFD web page and AIFD newsletter for details.

Do you meet every Saturday? Just about.

Who sets the program? The programmer .. the person frantically running the sound equipment in the corner of the room.

How do I know what will be played next? The list of dances coming up is on the dry marker board next to the programmer.

Do you play line AND couple dances? Yes. About half of the dances we do are line dances. The rest are couples, mixers, and set dances.

Can I request specific dances? Yes, there is a request list by the programmer in the corner of the room.

Who do I see if I have questions? Start with the person next to you. If they don't know, they usually can point you in the right direction. Or try someone you saw leading or teaching a dance.

Should I come back next week? Yes!

HELP – I feel like a wallflower!!!

Walking into a folk dance group for the first time can be daunting. You don't know the people and may not know the dances. People you talk to suddenly run off when "their" dance is played. You may feel awkward when joining a dance.

What's the solution? Stick with it. Try us for a few weeks. When the dances are easy, jump in and become part of the action. If it's more difficult, ask someone to help you through it or dance behind a line dance. Introduce yourself to the people. And most of all, remember that everyone you see around you has been in your shoes before.

What makes Saturday night dancing so much fun is the people. We want you to become part of that fun. And we want folk dancing to be as enjoyable an activity for you as it is for others you see around you.



New to folk dancing? Some frequently asked questions:

Do all those people really know that dance? No. But they've done the dance (or dances like it) enough to quickly pick up the steps. Many of our dances you can learn by just jumping in and doing them.

How do I know if I can do the dance? The programmer will announce if the dance is easy. If it is, do it. Otherwise, ask someone.

How do I join a line dance? Best to join at the end (opposite from where the dance is being led). Some dances are better learned by dancing behind someone in the line.

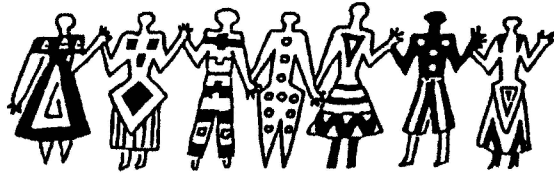
Will I be able to learn all these dances? Sure. But most people don't. Instead people learn how to learn a dance – identify the rhythm, patterns and footwork so they can pick up the dance after just a few phrases of the music. This just comes with experience.

Should I ask someone to do a couples dance? Yes. And be prepared to be asked.

Can I say “No” to someone who asks me to dance? Yes. And it's perfectly fine to say “No” under any circumstances for any reason.

Where do I learn more dances? Best way is to attend the beginners class Saturdays at 7:30. Or ask someone to lead you through a dance. If you really get the folk dance bug, attend folk dance workshops. Info about these is posted near the sign-in sheet.

NOTE: AIFD does not provide child care. Parents are responsible for their children at all times during AIFD events. Children are encouraged to participate.



About folk dancing:

In many countries dance and music have long been part of the village celebration of important events. The variety of music and dance, from a Bulgarian men's line dance, or a Hungarian twirling couple dance, to a Scottish country set dance, reflects the cultural diversity of these countries. As immigrants moved to this country, the dances and music they brought with them helped to preserve their cultural heritage and identity.

Modern folk dancing was born when people found that doing ethnic dances from all over the world was a fun, challenging, and uplifting activity. It also provides aerobic exercise, education in music and culture, new skills, and new friends and community.

Folk dancing has also preserved parts of the cultural heritage of ethnic groups. In some cases it has allowed descendants of certain groups to “reseed” traditions in countries they came from, long after war, upheaval, and modernity had all but wiped them out.

There is often an overlap between folk dancing and other recreational dancing. You'll find a number of fliers announcing contra, ballroom and specific ethnic dance groups. They all provide a fun, exciting, and enriching form of exercise, recreation, and socializing. But in all dance groups, it's always the people that make the difference, and the goal of each group is to include everyone in building a healthy and enriching dance experience.

Some folk dance tips:

- DO follow the formation (put your hands up if everyone else has their hands up)
- DO join the dance at the end of the line or ask when joining in the middle
- DO try dancing behind a line if you don't feel comfortable joining in
- DO try as many dances as possible
- DON'T be offended if someone suggests that dance might be too difficult
- DON'T be afraid to ask someone to lead you through a dance
- DON'T be afraid to say “no” if you don't feel comfortable with any dance or dancer.
- DO stick with it and come back next week
- DO attend the teaching session