

Hello everyone,

Lately I have found myself thinking a lot about dancing, ethnic dancing, folk dancing. What is folk dancing?

I looked online and found a book entitled Folk Dancing by Erica Nielsen which includes everything from Native American dances, African American dances, European dances, International dances, Modern Western square dance and contra dance. This is the first of a series of dance books and covers the American dance floor and recreational international folk dancing (RIFD). You can preview many pages of this book online, and follow the origins and development of RIFD. Folk dance historians generally trace its beginning as a nationwide movement to the late 1930's in Chicago, New York City, and San Francisco. Some early dance enthusiasts even started their own record labels so they could dance to recorded music.

Definitions of folk dance can be a little unsatisfying. Merriam-Webster defines folk dance as a dance that originates as ritual among and is characteristic of the common people of a country and that is transmitted from generation to generation with increasing secularization, as distinguished from court dance.

Wikipedia starts out with this: "Folk dances are [dances](#) that are developed by people that reflect the life of the people of a certain country or region. Not all ethnic dances are folk dances; for example, ritual dances or dances of ritual origin are not considered to be folk dances. Ritual dances are usually called 'religious dances' because of their purpose. The terms 'ethnic' and 'traditional' are used when it is required to emphasize the cultural roots of the dance. In this sense, nearly all folk dances are ethnic ones."

Certainly, folk dancing is a lot more fun and less dry than these definitions!

Where can we folkdance?

As you doubtless know, NFDI's Northwest Folkdancer provides a wonderful schedule and compendium of dances in the greater Northwest.

On the web, [www.seattledance.org](http://www.seattledance.org) is also an excellent resource for dancing in Seattle. Matt Fisher hosts this site with listings for Balkan, Belly dance, Cajun/Zydeco, Clogging, Contra, English, Irish, Israeli, Finnish, French, International, Morris, Scandinavian, Scottish, Square, Swing, and Family.

Some of you already dance three, four and more times a week. For the rest of us, what are we waiting for? Let's get out there and dance, maybe try something new this month.

Let's cut a rug! (defined by Urban Dictionary as dancing really well and impressing others)

Bernice