

Types Of Dances

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War Dances and Social Dances

Grand Entry - This begins the main event, as dancers enter the arena in order of dance style, led by a color guard, pow-wow princesses, head dancers, and the host family or organization. This may also be called "Parade In".

Flag Song - Everyone should stand in respect during this song honoring all veterans, like an Indian National Anthem. Most tribes have a flag song today. Flags may be American, Canadian (often in northern states), state or tribal flags, a POW/MIA flag, and an "Indian staff". The flag song is often followed by a memorial song, victory song, and/or calling song.

Round Dance - Most tribes have a version of a "round dance", sometimes called a "soldier dance" or "friendship dance". This dance circles the drum in a side-step movement. Faster-moving lines are nearer the drum. Ladies in some areas may also use a front/back side-step. Everyone is welcome to enter the arena and join in the dance.

War Dance - A dignified "victory" dance, social in nature today, once danced only by the warriors and best dancers, but today is danced by all.

Sneak-Up - A war dance, where the men dancers crouch low to the ground as if searching for tracks, then rising to dance as if in pursuit or following the trail made by their prey.

Ruffle Dance - This is a danced by the men's fancy dancers, which "ruffle" their double-bustles during the fast drum-rolling sections of the song, and then dance very fast during the fast sections. This dance originated with the Otoe-Missouria Tribe in Oklahoma in the early 1900's.

Side-Step - This is a very fast dance where the ladies jingle-dress dancers use a variety of side-ways scooting steps around the arena to a special song. The steps are not the same type of side-ways movement as round-dancing.

Buffalo Dance - This dance may be preceded by a Snake Dance. Dancers move like a restless herd of buffalo, then begin to "stampede" as the drum beats get stronger like pounding hooves.

Inter-tribal - Many inter-tribal songs exist today, as tribes come together to share their culture and songs at pow-wows.

Two-Step - Couple dance this social dance together, in a lively version of "Follow-the-Leader". It's ladies choice, and the men can't refuse or it costs them \$5 (or a piece of clothing/regalia, some say). Everyone may enter the arena and dance. This is the only pow-wow dance where the men and ladies hold hands while dancing as a couple.

Trot Dance - This is a fast-paced song, which is danced with fast, single steps. Some tribes have songs like this that are called "horse stealing" songs.

Crow Hop - This dance isn't seen in the Oklahoma area very often, except at the very large inter-tribal pow-wows. This dance originated in the north (where the Crows live), and is also a fast, single step song. Although the trot song and the crow hops sound very similar, they are NOT interchangeable.

"Specials" - These dances honor a person or group, who lead a procession around the arena as others join in. There are many reasons to have a special, such as a birthday, or when someone is "enters the arena" for the first time.

"Give-Aways" - A give-away ceremony follows a "Special" dance. The honoree (and family and friends) give presents to various people attending the dance as a way to publicly honor them.

Blanket Dance - Dancers drop money (usually \$1 bills) on a blanket spread on the ground near the drum, in appreciation of their fine singing. Singers may travel many miles nearly every weekend to sing at various dances, and "drum" money helps to defray their gasoline and expenses. Everyone is welcome to enter the arena and dance.

Check Back Later For Information On Gourd Dance

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