



Cheat Sheet for *Flamenco Dancers*

FORMS OF FLAMENCO

- **Casera** (home-style) means the kind of flamenco you'll find at homes danced by non professionals at parties or *juergas*
- **Peña Flamenca** is a private organization or club dedicated to flamenco. They have shows that are more informal for their members.
- **Tablao Flamenco** which is the type performed at the flamenco restaurants or clubs. These are small venues and tend to be improvised, although there may be some rehearsal for ongoing shows.
- **Teatro** (theater) are the big flamenco productions that you see touring with company dancers, a choreographer and many musicians.

ELEMENTS OF FLAMENCO

- **Cante**- singing (*cantaor/a*)
- **Toque/Guitarra**- guitar (*el/la guitarrista*)
- **Baile**- dance (*bailaor/a*)
- **Cajón**- wooden percussion box (*cajonista/a*)
- **Palmas**- hand clapping (*palmero/a*)
- **Jaleos**- shouts of encouragement (*festero/a*)

FLAMENCO TECHNIQUE FOR DANCERS

- **Marcaje** (marking/travel steps)
- **Taconeo** (percussive footwork)
- **Braceo y Manos** (upper body and hands)
- **Vueltas** (turns)
- **Palmas** (hand clapping)

It all starts with *Compás!*

- The rhythm, the beat
- To be IN the rhythm, to be ON the beat
- Also, a “measure” of music

COMPAS

Different rhythms have different times

- **4's** (Tangos, Tientos, Farruca, etc)
- **12's** (Alegrías, Solea, Guajira, etc)
- **5's** (Seguirilla, Martinete)

4 COUNT COMPÁS

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 | 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 | 1 - 2 - 3

(final accent for emphasis ends on 3)

12 COUNT COMPÁS

12 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11

12 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10

(final accent for emphasis ends on 10)

5 COUNT COMPÁS

1 | 2 | 3 || 4 || 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 || 4 || 5

(final accent for emphasis ends on 5)

Let's talk about *Palos!*

Palos (rhythms) are differentiated by melody, time, “aire” (attitude, feeling,) chords

MOST COMMON PALOS FOR DANCE

- **Tangos** (4- light, fun, fast tempo)
- **Solea por Bulerías** (12- intense, aggressive, medium tempo)
- **Alegrías** (12- fun, happy, medium/fast tempo)
- **Seguirilla** (5- intense, soulful, slow to fast tempo)
- **Solea** (12- soulful, anguished, slow tempo)
- **Bulerías fin de fiesta** (12- fun, playful, very fast tempo)

What are the different

Flamenco Dance Structures?

These are for complete dances that are performed as solos such as Alegrías, Soleá, Guajiras, etc.

PROFESSIONAL STRUCTURE

When you're dancing in a *tablaó*, everything can be done without rehearsal because of the implied structure of the dance. The musicians just need to know which *palo* you're dancing and the singer may ask how many *letras* you want. The guitarist may ask if you want a *falseta* or not as well. Everything else is **implied and understood** that the dancer/singer/guitarist can lead (“mandar”) and follow each other.

SIMPLE STRUCTURE

A dance gets broken down to its essence of:

- *Letra(s)* (verses)
- *Escobilla* (footwork section)
- *Bulerías/Tangos/Macho* (fast verse)

These are ALWAYS a part of a dance. Everything else is negotiable.

COMPLETE STRUCTURE

- **Falseta**– Guitar melodic solo that always starts the number.
- **Salida**– The entrance of the singer that generally begins with the “*quejío*” (ay, ay, ay!)
- **Salida & Llamada**– The entrance and opening break of the dancer. She may enter during or after the singer’s *entrada*. Her *llamada* will be a percussive and dramatic move that spans a few *compases* and ‘calls’ the singer to begin singing the first *letra*.
- **Letra**– The first verse of song where the dancer follows the singer’s lead. The dancer should understand the structure of the *letra* according to the palo, or at the very least be able to “listen” to the peaks and valleys of the *cante*.
- **Llamada**– Another percussive and dramatic move by the dancer to call for the second *letra*.
- **Letra**– Second verse of song.
- **Falseta**– The dancer allows the guitarist to shine here by dancing without any heavy footwork.
- **Escobilla**– Long footwork section. There can be multiple rounds of *escobillas*.
- **Subida**– At the end of the *escobilla*, generally, the dancer will increase the tempo and then end with a *cierre* (a closing, just like *llamada*, but at the end) to call for the *Bulerías*, etc.
- **Bulerías/Tangos/Macho** – Fast verse of song with high energy.
- **Estrillo** – The singer sings the ending chorus while the dancer leaves the stage.

A dancer's guide to

Flamenco Vocabulary

There are words that are just the Spanish equivalent from English, but there are many terms specific to flamenco. There are, of course, endless terms in flamenco because, you know, it's another language! But here are the top 20 that every flamenco dancer should know!

- **Aire** Literally “air”- in flamenco an approving reference to the general character of, or manner of performing, a flamenco form- i.e. “This dancer has a lot of aire when she dances Alegrías” ; also the general emotion of a dance- “The aire of Solea is very somber and profound.”
- **Braceo** A dancer’s use of the arms
- **Caída** A point at which the singer “resolves” within the *cante*
- **Cambio** Change; a change in the *cante*
- **Cierre** Close of a series of steps or a line of song
- **Coletilla** An add on of *cante* at the end of a *letra*, or the short *cante* as a dancer dances the final.
- **Compás** Flamencos use the word to mean (a) to stay in Compás, to stay in rhythm, in time; (b) the count of a particular rhythm, i.e. the Compás of Tangos is 4; (c) a measure or bar, i.e. “This particular step is 4 compases long”- it’s 4 measures or 4 counts of 12 (if a 12 count palo)
- **Contratiempo** Counter time
- **Cuadro Flamenco** a flamenco performance group with guitarist(s), dancer(s) and singer(s)
- **Escobilla** The section of a dance in which the bailaor/a does an extended zapateados (footwork)
- **Estríbillo** Short phrases sung repeatedly at the end of a song; the last section of a dance done with singing, where the dancer completes the dance
- **Falseta** Solo passages on the guitar, short melodies played at the start of a dance and between verses of a song

- **Jaleo** Vocal encouragement given to performers, when the audience or *cuadro* calls out phrases such as ¡eso!, ¡arsa!, ¡olé!, ¡toma!, ¡vamo!
- **Letra** Verse of a song; section of a dance when the *cantaor/a* is singing the lyrics
- **Llamada** A call or signal used by dancers to communicate a change in the dance; *llamadas* are commonly used to signal a dancer's entrance or *salida* and the closing of a section of dance (*cierre*)
- **Marcaje** Travel steps done by *bailaor(a)s*, usually while the *cantaor(a)* is singing
- **Palo** Song form or rhythm; literally, a branch. Common *palos* for dancing include Soleá, Alegrías, Bulerías, Tangos and many more
- **Remate** An accented, decisive move
- **Salida** Start of the *baile* (literally, going or coming out)
- **Taconeo** Heelwork; sometimes used to refer to any footwork

I hope you found this cheat sheet helpful!! It's important to be able to SPEAK flamenco in order to DANCE flamenco!!

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xoxo

Rina

