

Important news for folkdancers ...

Folkdancing is a wonderfully social activity, which also means that it has its own peculiar set of guidelines. Whether you're new to Israeli folkdance or a seasoned veteran, everyone enjoys dancing more when a few easy-to-follow Folkdance Etiquette guidelines are followed:

During teaching:

- Keep quiet, or go outside to talk.
- Don't "correct" the teacher during teaching, but please offer your comments later.
- If you already know the dance being taught and have nothing else to do, relearn it. This gives people learning it for the first time more feet to watch.
- Some songs have more than one dance, and some dances are done differently in different places. For the sake of those learning a dance for the first time, save alternate versions for open dancing.

During dancing:

- Follow *behind* the circle if you don't know a dance or can't keep up. You'll have a clearer view, and the folks who do know it will be able to dance it.
- Make one or more circles (instead of spirals or several semi-circles) unless the dance really is supposed to be like that.
- Don't join at the front of a line.
- Holding hands in a circle while dancing is common, but no longer universal. Each session has its preference.
- Don't squeeze in where there's no space - find a less crowded part of the circle or ask people to make room.

Couples dances:

- Anyone may ask anyone to be a partner, but please don't be offended if you're turned down - maybe s/he doesn't like this dance, has already promised it to another partner, or is just tired.
- Let your prospective partner know ahead of time if you don't know the dance.
- It's bad form to turn down a request to dance, then accept another offer for the same dance.
- Eye contact with your partner is good, penetrating glares and leers are bad.
- In many sessions, couples dances are done in "sets" of 2 or more dances in a row, so be prepared to stay with the same partner for several dances. Don't leave your partner in the middle of a set (without a reason!), and don't "cut in" on another couple.
- Unless you've both agreed ahead of time to dance all or most of the evening together (which is perfectly OK), don't monopolize a partner; give him/her and the other dancers a chance to circulate.
- "Booking ahead" (reserving a partner before the couples dance / set comes on) is considered rude in some communities, accepted elsewhere, and required in others. Know the local protocol.

In general:

- Phrases like, "Please", "Thank you", "Excuse me", "Do you mind if I ...", etc. really do make a difference, and may be freely distributed both to other dancers and to those running the session.
 - While folkdancing is a very social event, some fanatics really show up mostly to dance. So don't be offended if one excuses him/herself quickly in the middle of conversing to dance.
 - Some sessions have dress codes / guidelines, some dance floors require special shoes; check ahead.
 - Good hygiene is always in style.
 - Be aware of others standing / dancing near you.
 - Learn the names of the dances you like and request them.
 - The instructor's equipment is often expensive and breakable, and is not public property. Please don't touch it!
 - For that matter, please be gentle with the dance space in general (unless it's your own home).
 - Offer suggestions, comments, likes and dislikes. Constructive feedback is better, but be sure to make your feelings known.
 - Don't get discouraged, try stuff you don't know, smile once in a while, and have fun. That's why you're here.
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What it all comes down to is this: Remember that everyone here came to have a good time, and whatever *you* can do to make it a more enjoyable evening for *everyone* makes it that much better.