



***The Basics***  
**Merengue**

Maria F. Trujillo

# Our cruise

- Cumbia - Colombia



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- Cumbia - Colombia
- Merengue (Pambiche) - Dominican Republic



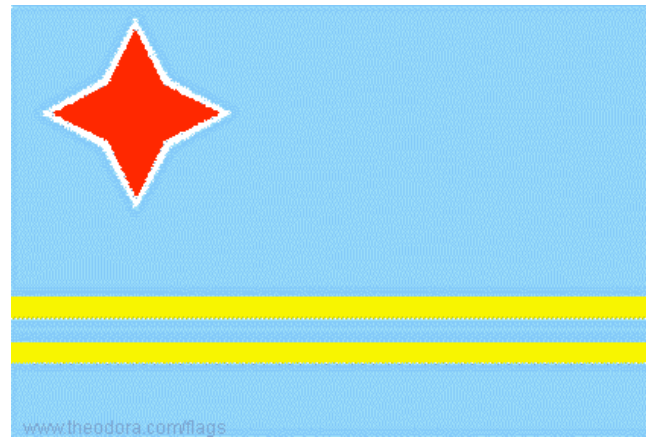


# Origins

- The Merengue has existed since the early years of the **Dominican Republic** around the time of the Spanish-American War (1898,) as well as in **Haiti** and was written about in the mid 1800s.
- The dance comes from the **Upa** Music (*Urpa Dance*) of Havana around 1840 which featured a part called Merengue.
- The Merengue is sometimes called the "**Palm Beach One Step**" or "**Pambiche**" (1916). -
- The original dance was fast and agitated, while the newer ballroom version is much slower and uses more hip movement.
- The Merengue was not introduced to the **United States** till about 1950 and had seen some acceptance and popularity. (*Craze Magazine [1957] reported that "the Fred Astaire dance studios were teaching the New Haitian Merengue?"*).
- ---**There are two folk stories as to the style of the dance.**
  - **1)** Slaves, who were chained together by the ankles would use this "walking style" as they cut sugar cane to the beat of the drums (*this has merit*).
  - **2)** A great hero, (*sometimes said King or General*) was wounded in action, and upon his return a great party was thrown in his honor. This hero/king loved to dance and tried to dance at the party but was not able with his wounded leg, the best he could do was limp and drag his wounded leg through the dance, so the dancers feeling sorry for him and not wanting to offend, limped and dragged one foot to the beat just as he did (*popular story but sounds fictional.*)
- The "merengue confection" used in pies and such has been said to be the source of the name on occasion.



More ...



- Dutch caribbean rhythm pambiche (*mixed with merengue*)
- “Prome Bia” is sung to the local language Papiamentu which blends African languages with Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and French

## Even more ...



- In the neighbouring Haiti, there is a slower variant of the Dominican merengue called **méringue** which has produced another rhythm called **compas**.
- Haiti and Dominican Republic share the island of the Hispaniola, although the cultures of each country are quite distinct.
- The spanish ceded Haiti to the French in 1697. The French brought millions of African slaves to work the sugar, coffee and tobacco plantations and soon outnumbered the white colonists.
- Its music has a strong African character.

# Our cruise

- Cumbia - Colombia
- Merengue (Pambiche) - Dominican Republic
- Pambiche - Aruba
- Compas (Meringue) - Haiti





# Steps & Choreography

- Most “easy to dance” caribbean rhythm
- Wounded leg, Going over fences
- Merengue choreography is as follows: Men and woman hold each other in a vals-like position and step to their side in what is know as "paso de la empalizada" or "stick-fence step".
- They can then turn clockwise or counterclockwise. This is called Ballroom Merengue (merengue de salón), in which couples never separated.
- There is also what is called Figure Merengue (Merengue de Figura) in which dancers also make turns individually, but never letting go the hand of the partner.
- Nowadays, genuine merengue only survives in the rural areas. Traditional form of merengue has changed. The walk disappeared. The body has been extended and instead of 8 to 12 beats sometimes 32 or 48 are used.

***Let's do it***

Maria F. Trujillo