

Fandangos de Huelva

Fandangos de Huelva are beautiful songs that belong to the larger family of flamenco songs, the *fandangos naturales* and *fandangos grandes*, and are also related to the *verdiales* and *malagueñas*. *Fandangos de Huelva* originate in the autonomous region of Huelva, which is located in western Andalucía.

In a traditional setting the *cante* and *baile* are accompanied by guitar, reed flutes, split canes that make a high, rasping sound, castanets, violins, and tambourines. The dance is popular during the annual pilgrimage and festival to Rocio, Spain – the *Romería del Rocio*. Participants in this event dress in traditional costume and travel on foot, by car or in a brightly decorated horse or oxen drawn wagon. All converge in the city of Rocio to then participate in a weekend of religious ritual and party merriment.

Today the dances and songs are also popular in Spanish dance companies and in smaller flamenco performances, and are mostly accompanied by the guitar, *cante*, and castanets. Each *copla* (verse) contains 6 sets of 12 counts each, and dancers generally perform 3 or more verses or trade off performing a verse with another dancer. A distinctive element of the song when accompanied by *baile* is that between the verses, the guitarist plays either 2 or 4 sets of 12 count cycles, a section called an “*estribillo*” meaning a fragment, which connects the *coplas* to one another. *Estribillos* are also often sung, and may appear at the beginning of a dance prior to the 1st *copla*.

The dance steps are characterized by beautiful leg gestures, a small amount of *taconeo/zapateado*, castanets, and a distinctive line in the back of the dancer, called *torcido* - an arch and spiraling effect.

The verses for *Fandangos de Huelva* are both about beauty and are religious and refer to the statue of the *Virgen del Rocio*, which is transported from Seville to Huelva during the pilgrimage:

Copla Fandangos de Huelva

Por ti...
A una flor en la marisma
Yo le pregunte por ti

Le dije que si me amaba
Y me contesto que si
La picara me engañaba.

There is a flower in the marsh,
And I have a question for it

I asked it if it loved me
It said, yes, but it deceived me.

Estrillo:

Vamos andando de Rociera
entre pinares, por las arenas
Yase divisa, tras de la loma
La Hermita Blanca, de la Paloma.

Let's go walking in our Rociera garb
Between the pine trees, to the arena,
With money in our pockets, and in our costumes,
To the palace of the white dove.

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