

Basic flamenco dance terms

Baile Flamenco

Braceo: The working and positioning of the arms particular to Spanish dance technique, which includes the continuous movement of one or both arms passing from one position to another. The term also signifies Spanish dance arm movements/exercises, which flow and originate from the center of the back (between the shoulder blades).

Chufra: The foot lifts from behind or the side and strikes the floor with a *gólpe* while the other foot simultaneously slides along the floor. The same foot can also perform a *gólpe* and then a slide. The most audible sound on the floor is the *gólpe*. The step can also be performed simultaneously on both feet.

Cierre: Act of ending; closing. A flamenco term applied to the closing of a rhythmic phrase (*compás*) section, or the ending of a dance. It is a type of *llamada*. (see definition of *llamada*).

Compás: The rhythmic cycle and foundation for all flamenco dances. The most common cycles are in 4/4 meter, and combinations of 3/4 and 6/8 meter. To be *en compás* means to have mastered being within these self-contained units.

Contra tiempo: Counter time/counter rhythm accentuation and syncopation typical of flamenco. These rhythms are produced by stamps of the feet (*gólpes de pies*) in combination with *palmas*, by oneself or with others.

Desplante: A type of *llamada* that signifies a change in choreographic sequences. The *desplante* is longer than the *llamada*. It has a consequent musical phrase (a musical phrase answering the first phrase). In 12 count dances, *desplantes* are usually 24 counts long; in 4 count dances, *desplantes* are generally 2 sets of 8 counts each.

Escobilla: Extended flamenco dance sequence of footwork combinations, performed to demonstrate the dancer's virtuosity. Originally, *escobillas* were the small brushing steps described below, which allowed female dancers to display the beauty of their feet and arms. Contemporarily, *escobillas* have become highly technical and often quite long.

Escobilla step: Literally means brushing. A brushing step executed as the ball of the foot brushes out along the floor forwards and/or backwards. The foot makes a soft brushing sound on the floor.

Gólpe: The whole surface of the foot strikes full upon the floor. The foot makes an audible sound on the floor. A stamp.

Jaleo: Encouraging words and sounds flamenco performers shout as other flamencos are performing. *Aficionados* (knowledgeable observers, participants, or participant/observers of flamenco) also often shout *jaleo*. Familiar flamenco *jaleos* include: *¡olé!*, *anda*, *vamos ya*, *alla*, and *eso es*.

Llamada: Literally means to "call". In flamenco terminology, it is the means by which a flamenco dancer notifies or cues the guitarist or singer of a forthcoming change of rhythm or the next section of the dance being performed, such as in the class choreography, the *tangos*. A *llamada* can also signal a dancer's entrance (*salida*) or the closing (*cierre*) that is approaching.

Marcando/Marcar/Marcaje: To keep time/marking time with the feet.

Muñecas/Flores: The gentle rotary motions of the wrists and fingers typical of flamenco.

Palmas: Rhythmic hand claps that accompany flamenco dancers, singers and guitarists. Generally speaking, *palmas* accompany in regular rhythm or counter time (*contra tiempo*). They are performed as *sordas* (dry and muffled/cupped) or *secas/claras* (striking, strong, and dry).

Pellizco: Literally means a pinch, nip, or a small bit. In flamenco parlance, *pellizcos* are small, spontaneous gestures, mimics, or whimsical movements employed by a flamenco dancer to heighten the effect of a dance, just as a cook adds a "pinch" of salt to food to accentuate flavor. The term also describes being spicy, saucy, juicy, flirtatious or light and humorous. These gestures are often dance movements, which are enlivened with a flip of the head, a movement of the shoulder or arms, a look in the eye or any similar activity.

Pitos: Rhythmic finger snaps performed in either regular or counter time by dancers and singers.

Planta: The striking or placing of the ball of the foot on the floor with the instep arched. The ball of the foot may either make or not make an audible sound on the floor.

Punta: The tip of the toe strikes the floor behind or in front of the standing leg and immediately rebounds to approximately the ankle of the standing leg. The point of the toe makes an audible sound on the floor.

Tacón: The drop of the heel from the *planta* or *golpe* position. The heel makes an audible sound on the floor. The heel does not leave the floor until another step is initiated.

Talón: The whole foot lifts from the floor and strikes the edge of the heel upon the floor. The heel does make an audible sound on the floor, though not as audible as the *tacón*. The heel also immediately rebounds to approximately the middle of the calf of the standing leg.

Taconeo: Term in Flamenco dancing used for heelwork. Rhythmic patterns made with the heels.

Vuelta: turn

Zapateado: Term in flamenco dancing used generally for footwork. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with *taconeo*. *Zapateado* is also the name of a rhythmic flamenco dance.