

STARA BABA

Source: Stara Baba is a couple dance in 2/4 time from the region of Kurpie Zielone [KOOR-pyeh zyeh-LOH-neh] in northeast Poland. It came to Kurpie from the neighbouring region of Warmia and Mazury [VAHR-myah and mah-ZOO-rih], where another version of this dance also exists. The title, which means “an old woman,” derives from the words of a song which goes with the dance.

Originally the dance was done at parties and weddings by 4 couples dancing from 4 corners of the room, moving in and out of the center and changing partners. Here the dance has been adapted to two lines to fit the American folk dancing situation.

Dance introduced in fall of 1977, at the 4th Annual North-South Folkdance Teachers’ Seminar in Ben Lomond, CA, by Ada and Jas Dziewanowski, who learned it in Ostroleka and Myszyńiec, Poland.

Formation: Pairs of couples across from each other in two lines approximately 15 feet apart, couples in closed social dance position. M’s back to center, W faces partner.

Styling and steps

Stara Baba step: (in this description, will be referred to as the basic step) done in a closed social dance position, partners facing each other.

Measures **PART A** - slightly bend knees and lean in LOD (count 2 of previous measure)

1-2 Moving in the direction of the joined hands w/3 small step-togethers (counts 1, &, 2, &, 1, &)
One step hold (counts 2, &)

3-4 REPEAT action of measures 1-2, w/opposite footwork and direction

PART B

5 Dance 3 steps (M-LRL, W-RLR) in place on bent and springy knees (counts 1, &, 2), hold (&)
M- call “ozwij sie” [oh-zveey sheh] which means “say something”

6 REPEAT action of measure 5 w/opposite footwork.
W- call “u-ha-ha” [oo-hah-hah]

7-8 W/4 smooth, flat steps (M-LRLR, W-RLRL) dance 1 full CW turn in place

9-12 REPEAT action of measures 5-8.
(NOTE: the CW turn done during measure 11-12 will often be adjusted)

Variations to measures 5-6

With the 3 steps, make a 1/4 turn CW turn (measure 5) and a 1/4 CCW turn (measure 6)

or

With a preliminary flex of the knees, stamp w/outside (M-L, W-R) foot (measure 5);
REPEAT action with inside foot (measure 6)

PATTERN on next page...



...STARA BABA CONTINUED

Measures

Introduction

1-2 No action

FIG. 1 - UP AND DOWN THE SET

1-4 Dance PART A of the basic step, couples moving up and down the set
(NOTE: the 2 lines will move in opposite direction)

5-12 Dance PART A of the basic step, except w/the second pivot make only a 3/4 CW turn.

FIG. 2 - IN AND OUT

1-12 Dance the basic step, moving w/PART A toward and away from the other couple in your pair.

FIG. 3 - CHANGE PARTNERS

1-4 Dance PART A of the basic step, moving toward and away from the other couple in your pair, except during counts 2, & of the 2nd measure "swap" partners (W make a 1/2 turn CW, passing back-to-back, while M "send-off" original partner and join in social dance position with new partner). The remaining side-together steps are then done with your new partner. M returning to his original place (measures 3-4).

5-12 Dance PART B of the basic step with your new partner. With the 2nd pivot, end w/M's back to center.

REPEAT the dance w/new partner. At the beginning of FIG. 3, original partners will return to each other.