



Scottish Ceilidh Dance Guide



# Canadian Barn Dance

*Relaxed, flowing, and perfect for mixed age groups*

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Formation <b>Couples in a circle</b>	Difficulty <b>♥ Easy</b>	Music <b>4/4 or 6/8 march</b>
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## About This Dance

The Canadian Barn Dance is one of the gentler dances in the ceilidh repertoire — a welcome breather between more energetic dances. It's progressive (each couple moves on to a new partner with every repeat), which makes it wonderful for getting all your guests mingling. The steps are simple, the tempo unhurried, and it works beautifully for guests of all ages and abilities.

## How to Dance It

1	Couples stand side by side in a large circle facing anti-clockwise with the man on the inside. Hold hands.
2	Starting with the outside foot, walk forward together for three steps then hop lightly.
3	Walk backwards for three steps, then hop lightly.
4	Skip sideways away from your partner, men towards the centre of the circle and women away from the centre, for 2 steps and clap once.
5	Return to your partner and take a ballroom hold.
6	Skip sideways to the mans left then back again
7	Polka forward around the room for eight counts.
8	On the final step of the polka, the gentleman moves backward into the circle so his new partner (the lady behind him) is now on his right. Repeat from step 1 with the new partner.

**Caller's tip:** *The hop (steps 2–3) trips people up if they think about it too hard. Tell them it's just a 'walk-walk-walk-bounce' — saying it aloud as they dance helps enormously.*

## What to Watch For

- Couples taking the hop too literally and jumping instead of adding a light bounce.
- The partner-change moment (step 8) — the gentleman needs to step back decisively; hesitation causes a pile-up.

### Did you know?

*Despite the name, the Canadian Barn Dance is widely believed to have originated in Britain, not Canada. It became popular at barn dances and ceilidhs throughout the UK in the early twentieth century and has remained a fixture at Scottish events ever since.*

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*Don't worry — every step will be called on the night before the music starts!*