



Scottish Ceilidh Dance Guide



St Bernard's Waltz

A gentle, graceful waltz — perfect for all ages and a beautiful mid-evening moment

Formation

Couples in a circle

Difficulty

♥ **Easy**

Music

Waltz time (3/4)

About This Dance

St Bernard's Waltz is the most graceful of the popular ceilidh dances — and all the better for it at a wedding. It's a chance for older guests to shine, for couples to share a quieter moment together, and for the room to breathe after something more energetic. The steps are slow, clear, and memorable after a single run-through.

How to Dance It

1	Couples face each other in a large circle in a ballroom hold.
2	Both take three side steps to the right (step-together, step-together), moving anti-clockwise.
3	Both take two side steps to the left (step-together, step-together), moving clockwise back to starting position.
4	Both progress towards the centre of the circle for two steps.
5	Then return to the side.
6	Lady turns once under the man's hand..
7	Waltz onwards around the circle.

What to Watch For

- Couples getting the direction of the side steps wrong — both should move the same way (anti-clockwise for the first two steps, clockwise for the return).
- The advance and retire (step 4) — some couples rush it. Encourage two clear, deliberate steps each way.
- The waltz hold (step 7) — if guests aren't confident in ballroom hold, a simple two-hands-joined waltz works perfectly.

Did you know?

St Bernard's Waltz is thought to have originated as a teaching dance in Scottish schools and social clubs in the early 20th century, designed to introduce beginners to waltz timing in a structured, approachable format. It remains one of the most universally loved ceilidh dances at Scottish weddings.

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