

DOWNTOWN FIESTA LATINA AMATEUR SALSA DANCING COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Purpose of the Competition

There's space for only 13 participating couples. Prior registration through www.downtownelpaso.com is required and first come, first served. The main objective is to take part and have a blast. Just go out, compete, and have fun dancing Salsa!

The Competition

Once you arrive at the competition, each couple is assigned a number, and only the winners will be named.

For the first round, all 13 couples will dance simultaneously to a random Salsa song for about 90 seconds. During this time, judges will mark the couples they wish to advance to the next round, and five couples will be eliminated. The announcer will call the numbers of the eight couples advancing to the second round. They will dance for 90 seconds to a song they have chosen and practiced. For the third and final round, the five remaining couples will dance for 90 seconds to a different song they have selected and rehearsed. The judges will then determine third, second, and first place.

It is important to always pay attention so you don't miss a callback. Similarly, keep an eye on your partner to avoid scrambling to locate each other. This process continues until the final round, after which the finalists will dance one last time before the judges rank them. The results will be announced later in the competition.

Points System

Points will be awarded to each couple for every round. Based on their points, couples will advance to the finals. In the event of a tie, the points system will determine the leader.

Competition Walkthrough

1. Arrive at the competition 45 minutes before it starts and pick up your competitor packet from the front desk. The packet will include your

number and safety pins to attach it to your back. The numbers will be handed to the ladies, who will ensure their partners wear them during the rounds. Don't lose your number.

2. Make sure to eat a healthy meal to fuel you throughout the day. Many people avoid eating when nervous, but staying fueled is important for the physical exertion of dancing.
3. Arrive at the competition 45 minutes in advance so you aren't rushed, in case the event runs early. This gives you time to shake off any nervousness.
4. Check if the competition is on time, running early, or behind schedule. Double-check the time you'll be dancing.
5. Change into your dancewear.
6. Warm up and prepare for your event.
7. Stay near the competition floor to avoid missing your event or callbacks. When it's close to your time to dance, line up with the other competitors.
8. When your event is called, walk onto the floor and prepare to dance for 90 seconds.
9. When the music starts, begin dancing.
10. When the music stops, bow to the audience and walk off the floor.
11. Wait to see if you've been recalled for the next round. There will be three rounds in total if you make it to the final.
12. If you're recalled – great job! Repeat steps 6–11.
13. If you make it to the finals, you'll find out your placement and collect your trophy during the awards ceremony.

What Judges Look For

Sell it to the judges! Competitors are "on stage" from the moment they step on the dance floor until they leave. This includes walking on, waiting for the music, and walking off the floor. During the dances, judges look for several key characteristics:

- Overall – Smile! Salsa is meant to be fun, so show that you're enjoying yourself.
- Salsa Dancing – It should be fun and sensuous.
- Timing – If a couple isn't dancing in time with the music, no other skill can make up for it. The music is the boss.
- Togetherness – The blending of two people's body movements into one seamless connection, making leading and following appear effortless.
- Musicality and Expression – How well the dancers reflect the music's character, rhythm, and phrasing through their choreography.
- Presentation – Does the couple captivate the audience? Do they dance with enthusiasm and confidence, or do they appear strained and introverted?
- Lead and Follow – Does the man lead with his whole body, not just his arms? Does the lady follow effortlessly, or does the man have to assist her?
- Floor Craft – Not just avoiding collisions with other couples, but also the ability to keep dancing without interruption, showing mastery over their choreography.
- Intangibles – How the couple looks together, their emotional connection, neatness of appearance, costuming, choreography flow, and whether they look like dancers – all of these can influence a judge's perception.

What to Wear

Couples are not required to wear costumes. Men typically wear dress pants, a dress shirt, a tie or bowtie, and an optional vest. Women typically wear a dress or skirt.

Participation Cancellation

If you can't make it to the competition, you are obligated to notify us prior to the event so your spot can be opened to another couple. Please contact Marilú Alemán at maleman@elpasodmd.org to cancel your participation.