

Salsa Dance: Let's Talk about Salsa dance shoes and how to choose them

[Most FAQs]

One of the most common questions we get as Salsa Instructors is about what shoes to wear. Mostly it's ladies that ask first, the men never seem too bothered about what they're wearing, which is sometimes frustrating.

Salsa dancing is all about being connected to the floor, by what? Yes, your feet! And if your feet are in big heavy walking boots I'm guessing you can't feel the floor, let alone bend your feet or turn properly. Which is why you need [Salsa dance shoes!!](#)

There are many health implications from not wearing the correct dance shoe on your feet. But what is the correct dance shoe for [Salsa dancing](#) and where do you buy them?

We've compiled a list of the most frequently asked questions (FAQs) about Salsa dance shoes

I'm a Beginner, do I really need dance shoes?

Let's talk about salsa dance shoes. Why should you invest in dance shoes when you've only just started?

Well actually, for the first few lessons don't worry about hurrying out to buy new shoes. Just wear something soft (so you don't hurt your dance partners' feet) and something comfortable which is not too grippy and not too slippery and is secure on your foot.

My classes are held in a dance studio, do I need dance shoes?

Most Salsa classes are held in nightclubs or community centres so you should be fine in a street shoe. However, if your class is being held in a proper dance studio with a sprung dance floor they may actually ban street shoes in the studio, so it's best to call ahead and check. It is most likely that you will need a pair of soft suede soled shoes from Day 1. And definitely no stiletto heels for ladies.

Which dance shoes should I buy?

The choice of dance shoes is immense. The best advice is to find something that will not grip to the floor, but equally does not slide so much that you will slip over, something that will stay on your foot and not slip off, something that is flexible so that you can move your foot with ease and something light so that if you step on someone else's foot it reduces the damage that you do.

So you want: Non-grip, Non-slide, Secure, Flexible, Light.. easy right?

Can I wear Jazz Shoes for Salsa dancing?

Once you've completed a Beginner course and decided to continue then it's definitely time to get thinking about dance shoes. Our first recommendation is a pair of Jazz

shoes. These are just one option for your dancing needs and will depend on how much or little support you feel you need.

Jazz shoes don't have much support, not like a dance sneaker, but they do help you feel in contact with the floor more, allowing you to spread the weight over the ball of the foot.

There are several styles of Jazz shoes, with full or split soles and rubber or suede soles. We recommend a suede sole with a rubber heel (split or full sole is fine, but if you have strong arches go straight to a split sole).

A split suede sole, (not the rubber sole) is best for Salsa dancing (rubber is more grippy and we use that in other dance styles).

When men start Salsa dancing they will probably be wearing hard outdoor shoes which hurt when you tread on the ladies' toes, so getting a pair of Jazz shoes is a must have affordable option for your salsa dancing feet in our opinion!

Don't forget you cannot wear a suede sole outside in the street, you must change into these once you are at the dance studio, and never get the suede soles wet or sticky.

Aren't Jazz shoes just for male Salsa dancers?

We actually recommend ladies to have a pair of jazz shoes for practice sessions and dance workshops when you don't want to be in your dance heels the whole time.

However if you're not used to ever wearing a completely flat shoe you might find it a little strange at first being so flat. We also recommend a number of stretching exercises that will help your feet feel flexible enough to be in flat shoes.

A Jazz shoe is too flat (low) is there any alternative to Jazz shoes for ladies?

Latin (Ballroom) practice shoes are a great alternative to jazz shoes for Ladies. They offer a soft leather upper, suede sole and a solid Cuban heel around 1.5".

They are very comfortable and you should be able to practice for hours before getting sore feet. Having a small heel but not too high (under 2") will help to keep you in the right position for the Salsa footwork and turns.

They are also a halfway-house to the higher heels you might wear later for going out socially so will help train your feet towards wearing a higher heel.

A Jazz shoe is too soft, is there any alternative to Jazz shoes for Men?

A shoe that men can wear all the time (and that ladies could wear for practice shoes) is a canvas trainer / pump by Taygra. These are a Brazilian style casual canvas trainer which have a sole which slides nicely for dancing.

We at The Dance Guru also wear these as a casual street shoe because they are so comfortable. They are also an ethically run company and we recommend reading the 'About Us' section whilst you're on their website.

We order our normal street size shoe for Taygra's, although our Lady dancers have a slim foot, we know that sometimes men go up a size if they have a wide foot but check out their sizing guide to be sure.

They can be found online here:

<https://www.taygra.shoes/>

I do other Latin dancing, can I wear a Latin Dance shoe for Salsa?

Latin dance shoes for ladies come in many styles, shapes and heel heights. This can be very confusing for the new lady Salsa dancer.

So, [**how do Ladies choose the right type of Latin dance shoe?**](#)

In our comprehensive guide on this subject we show Ladies how to determine the correct height of Latin dance shoe based on their foot length, we help Ladies with how to choose the right shape, style and height of Latin shoe for the EXACT type of Latin dance they are doing.

Where can I buy Ladies Salsa dance shoes?

We get nearly all my Latin & Ballroom dance shoes from 1 supplier. They are based in China but have been trading on the internet for years. They make shoes in sizes that we can't get from the UK dance shoe suppliers.

[Terrier Playnet Shop on Ebay](#) have ready to wear shoes on eBay, which means they are dispatched very quickly as they are 'IN STOCK'.

If you want to customise the shoe by changing the heel height or width of the shoe, then you go to their main website. You can either pay in Dollars through the American version or Euro through their European site, both links are below.

When you choose a custom shoe, it takes a little longer to receive. The website states 4 to 6 weeks, but we have never waited over 4 weeks ourselves.

[Terrier Playnet Shop USA](#)

[Terrier Playnet Shop EU](#)

Please consider their sizing chart, they give the length of the shoe in cm. Please stand on a piece of paper, draw a line where your big toe end and your heel sticks out and measure with a ruler, then match this up against the corresponding size chart.

In high heels, most ladies will come down a size against their true street shoe size, however in a closed toe shoe you may need to order the same size as your street shoe size.

The most expensive pairs of shoes, once you've included postage and packing, are still only around £32. Compared to going into a high street dance shoe shop where you will pay around £90 - £120 per pair we think this is good value, especially for the Beginner Salserso.

However Ebay and Amazon have a huge amount of dance shoe suppliers, yes some of them are very cheap and some are very expensive. If you look [for International Dance Shoes](#) or [Freed of London](#) you will spend a small fortune, [Supadance](#) are a little more affordable, but for a Beginner we would advise starting off cheaper.

[Katz dancewear](#) or Roch Valley are a middle of the road price and we buy a number of shoes from both. (Roch Valley can't be bought direct, but many dancewear supplies sell Roch Valley, plenty of these on amazon or Ebay)

How do I know what style is right for me?

Remember the style of dance shoe is personal not only to how your feet feel in it but also what style of dance you will be doing. Different styles of dance can require different styles of shoes.

If you are going to a class once a week it won't matter as much if you wear the same shoe; but if you are going to 4 or 5 classes a week and dancing all night at socials, you need to look after your feet and treat them to the right shoes for the occasion.

Going too high or too low in heel height can both be painful, as can not having enough support underneath your arch, especially if you don't have naturally strong arches.

We would always suggest checking with your Chiropodist to establish your natural gait and arch height as this will also impact on your shoe choice.

Unfortunately you might have to try several different styles before you find out what is really comfortable.

As a guide, if you can dance all night and still be comfortable, keep your balance in your turns and spins, keep a small step, flex & point your foot then your shoe is allowing you to do everything you need for Salsa.

If possible, we would recommend going to an actual dance shoe shop and trying on several different styles. Then go home and look up similar styles on the internet for the best prices.

Want to know more about dancing Salsa?

Have you tried our short course Salsa Dance: The Ultimate Guide for Beginners?

We have everything in there that the Beginning Salsero (Salsa dancer) needs to know.

Why not head on over to The Dance Guru Academy and check it out?