

AKHALZKHA VART
(Armenia)

AKHALZKHA VART is a traditional song-dance from the district of Garin (Erzerum), in Western Armenia. The district had several couple dances (e.g., Akhalzkha Vart, Gamourch Bar, Miteritsa, Kher Pan), which was very unusual by traditional Armenian standards. The Garnetsis attributed these dances to probable foreign influence. Although originally performed by mixed couples, in America the dance developed into a women's dance, which emphasizes female grace and gestures. The latter form is described here.

Pronunciation: AKH-ahlz-khah VART Translation: Rose from Akhalzkha

Source: Hasmig Aroian, Hourig Sahagian, Margaret Tellelian
Kyrkostas, Sossy Kadian.

Music: Gyondbashi (Tape) 2/4 meter

Style: Erect relaxed carriage. Steps and gestures are smooth and unhurried.

Formation: Open circle or line of women in "armenian hold" (little fingers interlocked and hands held at waist level). Dancers may use scarf in R hand as prop. Before beginning, the dancers should "couple off" to determine their partners. Leader is at R end of line.

MeasPatternCHORUS

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|-----|---|
| 1 | Eyes are downcast throughout the dance. Moving fwd twd ctr of circle, step R-together-R (cts 1,&,2) as arms sway slightly to the R with eyes following hands. |
| 2 | Move fwd with L-together-L (ct 3,&,4) as arms sway to the L, eyes following hands. |
| 3 | Backing up, step R-together-R (cts 5,&,6) as arms sway to the R, eyes following hands. |
| 4 | Backing up, step L-together-L (cts 7,&,8) as arms sway to the L, eyes following hands. |
| 5-8 | Repeat meas 1-4 (cts 9-16). |

FIG I - "Travel"

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|------|---|
| 1-2 | Traveling to the R, step R-together-R (cts 1,&,2) as arms sway to the R. Step L-together-L (cts 3,&,4) as arms sway to the L |
| 3-6 | Continue to travel to R, repeating meas 1-2 twice more (cts 5-12). |
| 7 | Reverse direction to travel to the L. Step R across L (ct 13); step L beside R (ct &); step R across L (ct 14). Arms sway to R. |
| 8 | Moving to L, step L-together-L as arms sway to L (cts 15,&,16). |
| 9-12 | Repeat meas 7-8 twice (cts 17-24). |

AKHALZKHA VART (Continued)CHORUS

1-8 Repeat Chorus (cts 1-16).

FIG II - "Turn"

1 Release joined hands and face ptr. Grasp R elbow of ptr with R hand. Maintaining handhold, turn CW in a circle with R-together-R (cts 1,&,2) as free hand gestures inward twd waist.

2 Continuing turn, step L-together-L, as free hand gestures outward (cts 3,&,4).

3-6 Repeat meas 1-2 twice more (cts 5-12).
Release elbows and grasp L elbow of ptr with L hand. Turn in CCW circle and gesture with free hand:

7 Step R-together-R (cts 13,&,14) and gesture outward with R hand.

8 Step L-together-L (cts 15,&,16) and gesture inward with R hand.

9-12 Repeat meas 7-8 twice more (cts 17-24).

CHORUS

1-8 Repeat Chorus (cts 1-16).

FIG I - "Travel"

1-12 Repeat Fig I as before (cts 1-24).

CHORUS

1-8 Repeat Chorus (cts 1-16)

FIG III "Face partner"

1 Release joined hands and face ptr
Each dancer move gradually to own R: Step R-together-R (cts 1,&,2) as arms gesture. Raise R arm slightly over head level, leading with wrist, while the L arm lowers to waist level, leading with wrist.

2 Continuing to move to the R, step L-together-L (cts 3,&,4) as arms gesture with L arm raising and R arm lowering.

3-6 Repeat meas 1-2 twice more (cts 5-12), moving to R.

7-12 Repeat same steps and gestures as in meas 1-6, but move to the L to resume pos across from ptr (cts 13-24).

CHORUS

1-8 Repeat Chorus (cts 1-16).

Fig I - "Travel"

1-12 Repeat Fig I as before (cts 1-24).

CHORUS

1-8 Repeat Chorus (cts 1-16).

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