

GOVDUNTSI BAR  
(Armenia)

GOVDUNTSI BAR is an Armenian line dance that originated in the villages northwest of the city of Sepastia, in Western Armenia. Most of the original immigrants to New England came from these villages (e.g. Govdun, Kochisar, Zara, Horsenar, Kotni) and when they used the term "Sepastia Bar", they were referring to the dance described below. In the late 1940s a different dance from the district gained wide popularity, and is currently recognized as "Sepastia Bar" or "Sepo." GOVDUNTSI BAR is still practiced by elderly Sepastatsis, and can be seen in the smaller, more isolated Armenian communities of New England.

Pronunciation: GOHV-doon-tsee Bahr

Source: Boghos (Willey) Peligian, Barkev Kaligian, Carnig and Murad Pelegian.

Music: Gyondbashi (Tape) 4/4 meter

Style: Erect relaxed carriage. Steps get more energetic as the dancers get excited, but remain restrained.

Formation: Open circle in "armenian hold" (little fingers interlocked with hands held at shoulder height). This dance has "follow the leader" characteristics, and the dancers should follow the cue of the "barbashi" at the right end of the line. Changes are not called, so cues are visual.

Meas

Pattern

1-2 The basic step throughout the dance is: Step fwd L (ct 1); step back on ball of R ft (ct &); step fwd L (ct 2); step back on R (ct 3); hop slightly on R as L is raised off floor (ct 4).

Using the basic step, travel to the R.

Using the basic step, back up to the L. The leader does not announce that he is backing up, so the cue usually is when the person ahead of you suddenly backs into you.

Using the basic step, travel to the R while clapping as follows: Step fwd L as clap hands in front at chest level (ct 1); step back on ball of R ft (ct &); step fwd L as clap hands in front at chest level (ct 2); step back on R (ct 3); hop on R as open hands in front (ct 4).

Use basic step and clapping to move to L.

Note: When clapping and gesturing, the gestures differ on cts 3-4 for W and M. The dance was originally a M dance, so the W gesture is restrained.  
W: Extend hands in front at chest level and shldr width with palms facing outward. They may do a slight rotation with wrists if desired.

GOVDUNTSI BAR (Continued)

M: may simply extend palms fwd as W do, or may exaggerate with hands as if preparing to "pass a football" (extend L arm fwd with arm straight and palm outward; draw back R hand beside R ear with palm fwd. Gesture is smooth and strong).

Note: There are definite "unwritten rules" to this dance which are understood by the participants:

- 1) The leader never calls out that he is changing direction. This introduces an element of suspense as the dancers try to anticipate the next change.
- 2) One never changes the direction either way if the dancers are clapping. One must first rejoin hands before reversing direction.
- 3) When one is excited, one can lift the L ft higher on ct 4 for emphasis, but only by drawing it up beside the R calf. The L is never raised high in front.
- 4) Clapping hands with the person beside you during a clapping sequence is considered gauche.
- 5) Leader may wave a handkerchief as cue while changing direction, but it lessens the fun.

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