

Shall We Dance?

A fun cultural skill to pass on to younger generations, Norwegian folk dancing is also a great way for families to stay active together. Put on your dancing shoes!

BY LUCY CASALE

Norwegian folk dancing is a popular activity for many Norwegian-Americans. For young people in particular, it provides an opportunity to learn about their heritage and culture, while being active and having fun. Engaging children early in life will hopefully spark a life-long passion for dance. Sons of Norway's Cultural Skill on folk dancing is being revamped, so check it out for new ideas for beginner, intermediate and advanced dancers. Before embarking on the Folk Dancing Cultural Skills pin with the youth in your life, pique their interest in the tradition first with these fun ideas.

➔ To see Family Matters pages from previous issues, go to sonsofnorway.com, log in and select "Family Matters."



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Activities for Young People

PRESCHOOL

Turn Up The Tunes

Spark your preschooler's creativity: let them make up their own dances as you play some Norwegian folk tunes. You can find playlists at Sons of Norway's YouTube channel: youtube.com/user/sonsofnorwayhq

EXPAND IT: Which Norwegian folk dances do you know?

Demonstrate some basic steps in the manner of 'Simon Says' to keep little ones guessing!

ELEMENTARY AGES

Video Viewing

Join your kids at a computer, on a tablet or on a smart phone and search for Norwegian folk dancing videos on YouTube. For starters, look up: "Per Sjuspring," "Karusellen," or "Per Spelmann."

EXPAND IT: Let tech-savvy kids film a home video of you two trying out the new moves you just learned.

TEENAGERS

Step To It

Choose a dance with your teen from the new Sons of Norway Cultural Skills unit and write up a practice schedule. A great instructional book is "Dances from Norway" by Daniel Beal, which you can buy online at amazon.com or find at your local library.

EXPAND IT: Once you've mastered the moves, host a dance party for your teen and their friends. With some snacks, music and a space to dance, you and your teen can lead the group in some Norwegian folk dancing.

LEARN MORE!

Visit the new Folk Dancing Cultural Skills page at sonsofnorway.com. Click on "Programming," select "Cultural Skills" and scroll down to the Folk Dancing section. From there, you can:

- Learn the history of folk dancing in Norway.
- Watch videos and get instructions for a number of Norwegian folk dances.
- Find a list of more resources including DVDs, CDs and instructional booklets available from the Sons of Norway lending library.



Fun Fact

Norwegian dances can be divided into four groups: **song dances** (*sangdanser*), **figure dances** (*turdansar*), **old time couple dances** (*gammeldanser*) and **provincial dances** (*bygdedanser*).