Chile: THE CUECA

—”national dance” of Chile with Spanish and African influences

— rooster courting chicken!

— rooster wears cowboy hat and riding clothes, chicken wears flowery dress with apron

HOW WE DANCE THE CUECA IN CLASS

— Step 1: rooster and chicken GREET EACH OTHER

— Step 2: WAVE SCARVES OVER HEADS,

— Step 3: do some FANCY FOOTWORK,

— Step 4: CIRCLE EACH OTHER, then become a pair...but never touch.

— Step 5: more SCARF WAVING and FUN.
Introducing the Cueca:

The “national dance” of Chile is the cueca, an exuberant mix of Native American, African and Spanish influences, in which two dancers simulate the courtship of a rooster and chicken. A male cueca dancer — the rooster — usually wears a traditional Chilean cowboy costume. A female dancer often dons a flowered dress with an apron. They dance, they prance, they fall in love. Learn about the cueca at http://www.allaroundthisworld.com/thecueca

How to teach the Cueca in your classroom:

Step 1:
Prepare your classroom for dancing by moving desks back, if possible, to create some extra space. (If you can't make space, don't worry; your dancers will manage.) Queue up either the AATW training video, one of the suggested cueca videos from below, or any of your own favorite Chilean music. The cueca is most fun when the dancers have access to scarves, pieces of fabric or anything they can wave in the air. If you don't have access to fabric you may cut long strips of colorful construction paper and give one to each student to use during the dance. If you have nothing on hand you may also have dancers use their imagination – that will still work fine.

Step 2:
Introduce your students to the cueca while they're still seated. You may tell them the cueca is both the “national dance of Chile” and a “courtship dance” involving a chicken and rooster. Traditionally the male portrayed the rooster and the rooster courted the female chicken, but you needn't emphasize idea of “boys” courting “girls;” in our dance, roosters and chickens can court each other. During the dance you will be calling for “fancy footwork,” which in our version of the dance will involve some enjoyably imprecise hopping. Demonstrate the “fancy footwork” and assure them that while dancing during All Around This World explorations you're eager to inspire engagement and care very little about precise dance steps.

Step 3:
In our dance there is no difference between the dance moves of the rooster and that of the chicken. After telling that to your students, ask them, “Who wants to be a rooster? Who wants to be a chicken?” Or, you can break the class into two groups by counting 1/2, 1/2, 1/2 etc.

Step 4:
Stand up! Roosters will stand on one side of your dance floor, chickens on the other.
Chile: THE CUECA for teachers

Step 5:
Now, get the video or music going and dance. You lead the experience, calling each subsequent step like you’re calling a square dance:

1) rooster and chicken **GREET EACH OTHER** – “Roosters, bow to all chickens. Chickens, bow to the roosters.

2) **WAVE SCARVES OVER HEADS**

3) do some **FANCY FOOTWORK**

4) Roosters and chickens **CIRCLE EACH OTHER**, then become a pair...but never touch.

5) more **SCARF WAVING** and **FUN**

**Suggested videos:**
(These links lead online. Watch first to confirm suitability for your classroom.)

- “La Cueca Chilena II” 🌟
- “Chilean Dance Cueva” 🌟
- “Cecilia Bolocco baila cueca con Bafochi” 🌟
- “Cueca Dance from Chile” 🌟
- “Niño Cueca” 🌟

**Follow-up for your classroom**

The cueca is widely agreed to be the “national dance” of Chile. Ask your students to name their country’s “national dance” if there is one. If not, why not? What do your students consider to be their community's most popular dance? How did it get to be popular? (TV? The internet? Something less electronic?). Ask your students if there is a dance that’s particularly popular with their family or cultural group that everyone else may not know – perhaps something the family enjoys during special occasions. (Example: a family has the tradition to dance “the electric slide” at every birthday party. Jewish families dance the “hora” at weddings.) If your students are enjoying the conversation, take it one step further by asking for three volunteers to teach everyone their family's “national dance.” This may involve some quick internet navigation on your part or on the students', if your classroom has the technical capabilities, or you may do the dance steps to any piece of music you can play. Knowing specific steps isn't at all important – the fun will come when your students share each other's “national dance.”