

Useful Info for First-Timers

We are especially pleased to have you with us for the first time! While your confirmation letter included much valuable information, here is information particularly useful to first-timers:

ARRIVAL

Plan to arrive **3:30 to 5 PM** and **meet by the registration sign at 5pm for a brief orientation**. You can register before 5pm or right after orientation. The **Welcome Reception** is at **6pm**.

TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

Morning

8:00 AM Breakfast (food is left out until 8:45 AM)

9:00 AM Dance classes with our featured guests, plus a mid-morning snack.

Afternoon

1:00 PM Lunch, followed by a variety of basic and advanced dance classes, music classes, other cultural activities, swimming in the river or pool, and free time

Evening

6:00 PM Ethnic festivities or free time

6:30 PM Dinner

7:45 PM Optional (but recommended) review of dances taught that day

8:00 PM Evening dance party with requests

11:00 PM Evening snack

11:30 Late night dancing for those who wish to continue to dance informally

ETHNIC THEMES

From Monday through Thursday, a different ethnicity is celebrated each evening depending on the week's featured guests, with special dances, food, cultural activities, and optional costuming. Many dress up for evening dancing, either ethnically or not; there is absolutely no requirement to do so.

BASIC CLASSES

We usually offer a Basic Class on Monday and Tuesday afternoon. **If you are relatively new to or out of practice with folk dancing, please make these a priority.**

FREE TIME ACTIVITIES

In addition to swimming, people sometimes offer yoga or meditation, sing rounds, play music, take a walk along the river, relax into conversation on the front lawn, etc. Also, our Internet Hall (the room where you registered) is always available, though you supply your computer.

PURCHASES

We work on an **IOU basis** for all purchases during the week—store items, auction purchases, hard copy of dance notes, etc. (No personal videotaping during classes, please.) **At the end of the week, you settle up with us by cash, check or credit card.**

DEPARTURE

The last meal is **breakfast at 8:00 AM Saturday**. Please vacate your cabin **by 10:00 AM** unless you are staying for both sessions

IMPORTANT INFO NEXT PAGE!

Experienced folk dance teacher?

We typically offer an hour-long “Dance Swap” session one afternoon at which you are invited to share a dance that is not widely known. There are usually four or five slots, so your dance must be teachable and doable in 10-15 minutes. If you’re interested, be sure to bring the music and written instructions.

New to folk dancing? Some tips...

Folk dances are traditional dances from countries all over the world, from hundreds of years ago as well as recent times. Many dances are danced in lines or circles; others are for pairs or individuals. In some dances, called mixers, the dancers change partners during the dance.

Here at Mainewoods, we strive for a mix of easy and harder dances. If a particular dance seems to be too much, enjoy watching it. There’s no need to try to learn all the dances taught. Eventually patterns of steps become familiar. When experienced dancers can’t remember a dance, they simply follow what the leader does.

— *Adapted with the kind permission of Janice Rayman*

Tips for Beginners

1. In the beginning, don’t worry about styling and grace. Nearly every dancer started out clumsy and three-footed. Concentrate on learning the steps first.
2. If you’re not familiar with a dance that’s being done, don’t get in the line unless you are told, “This is a good one for beginners,” or you have someone who knows the dance guiding you. Otherwise, stand behind the line of dancers and follow the steps.
3. When dancing with others, try to relax your arms and hands. A tight grip is uncomfortable for those next to you, and experienced dancers are willing to help move your arms for you.
4. Don’t try to follow the person next to you unless they are guiding you. Instead, watch someone four or five dancers ahead of you in the line. Don’t try to copy someone across the circle from you—you’ll wind up mirroring them and doing everything backward until you get more practice.
5. Use your head while you dance. As you learn a dance, try to identify the steps and say them to yourself (“grapevine... step, hold... turn left...”).
6. In partner dances, ask to dance with someone who is more familiar with the dance than you are. If you don’t have a partner, don’t sit down. Stand off to one side and practice your part. Sometimes a friendly dancer will notice you and offer to be your partner.
7. Relax. Smile. Contrary to what you might think, all eyes are not focused on you. But everyone on the floor is rooting for you, because we’ve all been where you are now. And be patient with yourself. Remember, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers weren’t all that great at first either!

Welcome to the international family of folk dancers!

— *Adapted with the kind permission of Loui Tucker*