

“Latin” Music Style Glossary

Afro Cuban 6/8	Felt in triple, 2 bars of 6/8 or one bar of 4/4 with a triple feel.	Afro Blue- Tito Puente, Mongo Santamaria and Cal Tjader
Cha Cha Cha	Felt in 4/4 with prominent quarters on Cowbell, with dominant guiro.	Oye Como Va- Tito Puente El Bodeguero- Orquesta Aragon
Mambo	Felt in cut time, with lots of repetitive horn lines. Often fast tempos. Can also refer to a section of a song with repetitive figures.	Que Rico Mambo- Perez Prado Babarabatiri- Machito
Salsa	A broad term that can include numerous styles, but usually in a big band context it will be cut time (unless written incorrectly) can be moderate to fast. Usually has piano montunos, conga and bass tumbaos.	Dejame Soñar- Tito Puente A Ver Sus Campos- Ray Barretto Toro Mata- Celia Cruz Bilongo- Eddie Palmieri
Timba	Modern Cuban salsa characterized by breakdown sections and funkier bass and drumset. Piano is very busy and over the barline.	Santa Palabra- NG La Banda Mi Salsa- Havana D' Primera Pa que Bailes- Bamboleo
Songo	A hybrid of styles developed in Cuba with use of drumset. Rarely actually a songo in modern jazz writing. Usually a prominent half note on cowbell felt in cut time. Weckl made this popular	Real Songo- Los Van Van ex: Aqui el que baila la gana Fusion Songo- Dave Weckl festival del ritmo
Merengue	Fast rhythm from the DR. no clave. felt in cut time. bass plays half notes entire time. A metal scraper (guira) drives the time.	Suavemente- Elvis Crespo
Guaguanco	Folkloric rhythm based around a 3-2 rumba clave. Low to High conga drum melody with lots of improvisation on a higher pitched drum. usually long melodies that float over the fast rhythm. One of the few rhythms that almost always has clave as an instrument being played.	Cuba Linda- Cachao Elio Reve- Rumberos Latino Americanos

“Latin” terms Glossary

Mambo	Section of song with repetitive lines played usually in unison by a section or entire band.
Tumbao	For Congas it is the basic pattern For Bass it is the standard & of 2 and 4.
Moña	Repetitive horn lines often improvised instead of written out. similar to a mambo but usually less complex and layered with counter melodies once established.
Montuno	Usually refers to a percussive repetitive piano groove. Involves lots of arpeggios
Bongo Bell	Handheld cowbell most often played by the bongo player
Mambo/timbal bell	Cowbell played by timbalero that is mounted on timbales
Guiro	Gourd with notches in it. Rarely a good idea to use the wooden fish. Very important instrument to a band. Drives the time and is necessary for a cha cha.
Guira	Metal instrument played w a scraper for merengue and cumbias.
Congas/Tumbadoras	Barrel shaped hand drums. Large. Each size has a name, but usually referred to as “Congas”
Bongos	Small hand drums joined together. Played between a players legs. High pitched.
Timbales	Two metal drums on stands with mounted cowbells. played with sticks