

THE IRISH JIG

The [Highland] Irish Jig is another energetic character dance featuring lots of fist shaking and skirt flouncing among female competitors. The angry gestures and stomping motions of the **Irish Jig** have lent themselves to many an interpretation of the origin of the dance. It is a parody of Irish dancing and the infamous Irish temper. The story of the dance is provided here as a compilation of individual interpretations to be passed from generation to generation.

1. Females dancing the Jig are acting out an angry fit of an Irishwoman whose husband has been out drinking until all hours.
2. Males dancing the Jig act out the happy-go-lucky Irishman facing his wife's tirade.
3. The Scottish version of the Irish Jig is a parody dance depicting an Irish washer woman who is yelling and shaking her fists at her husband who came home late from the pub after spending all his money.
4. Another version describes a woman who shakes her fists and flounces her skirt because she is furious with her husband who has been out drinking until the wee hours.
5. The Scottish version of the Irish Jig is meant to parody an angry Irish washerwoman when she finds out some neighbourhood boys have knocked all of her clean wash to the ground.
6. Another (used when there is a children's audience) is that the woman is angry because the neighbourhood boys have stolen the laundry she placed out on the line.
7. Other versions include the Irish washerwoman chasing away the kids or pigs that ran through her clean laundry.
8. The male version of the dance tells of the husband mad at the washerwoman for shrinking his pants.
9. The Scottish Version of the Irish Jig is another caricature dance depicting an Irish washerwoman who is unhappy with her lot in life.
10. Many believe that this "Irish Washerwoman's Jig" was a way for the women to show their frustration with long hours and little pay without jeopardising their employment.
11. The Jig you see here today is the "Washerwoman," which commemorates the heart and determination of a working-class woman.
12. The Irish Jig is a parody of Irish dancing – borrowing many similar foot and leg movements, and even using hard shoes and ‘temper’. The Arm movements reflect the history behind the dance—namely, an angry washwoman, flouncing her skirt, and shaking her fists, the hard shoes are for ‘stomping’ out the rhythm.