

# 5 STEPS TO MAXIMIZING YOUR DANCE CONGRESS EXPERIENCE



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**Y**ou're passionate about your favorite kind of social dancing. You've taken classes, you've been going out regularly, and you want more. You're definitely going to the next big congress (or festival, or exchange, or whatever they're calling the event). Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your amazing dance weekend.

### 1. Go with a group.

Of course you want to meet new people and make new friends. However, traveling with a group of people you know provides several advantages. You can share the responsibility of planning travel and accommodations. You'll have a safe base from which to venture out and go crazy. You'll have people you can rely on if a problem comes up. Best of all, you'll have a group with whom to share the memories, take pictures, and tell stories with back home. If you hear about a congress you want to attend, try encouraging your friends in your local scene to come with you!

### 2. Consider your accommodations carefully.

Generally you have a few options:

1. Stay in the festival hotel
2. Stay in a cheaper hotel or hostel nearby
3. Stay in someone's home

Here are some questions to consider:

- A. Where is the festival located? What's nearby?
- B. What is the schedule like? What will you want to participate in?
- C. Who do you know in the area? Who do you know that's going?



How that all adds up can vary widely. Do yourself a favor by not defaulting to a single choice, but considering what makes the most sense this time. Feel free to check out my longer exploration of this topic – [Where to Lay Your](http://www.kizombacomunity.com/rachels-blog/kiz-talks-sept-23-2014-festival-accommodations-where-to-lay-your-head/)

[Head](http://www.kizombacomunity.com/rachels-blog/kiz-talks-sept-23-2014-festival-accommodations-where-to-lay-your-head/)(<http://www.kizombacomunity.com/rachels-blog/kiz-talks-sept-23-2014-festival-accommodations-where-to-lay-your-head/>).

### 3. Don't do everything.

(<http://socialdancecommunity.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Just-Tired.jpg>). This third one's the charm. ***If you take no other piece of advice from me, hear this.***

**DON'T** try to take advantage of ALL the hours of class, socializing, and dance parties. I completely understand the reasoning: "But it's such a special event!

But I never get to dance with so many people! But these are the best teachers! But I paid so much for this! But I'm having so much fun!"



All of those are great reasons NOT to get burned out. Everyone has limits, and you will reach at least one of them during a dance congress. It might be your mental ability to learn new material, or your social ability to reach out and connect with new

people, your physical ability to keep going, or something else. Tell yourself from the start that you won't do everything, and that it's okay to have down time or alone time or whatever you may need. Give yourself permission to have fun at your own pace. Let go of the fear of missing out!

#### 4. Prioritize

It follows logically that if you don't do everything, you're going to have to make some choices about what you will do. Consider, what is it you really want?

- to hear a particular musical act?
- to dance to your favorite DJ's mixing?
- to learn from certain teachers?
- to improve specific skills?
- to dance with people of different backgrounds?
- to dance with as many people as possible?
- to make new friends?
- to bond with your home scene's hardcore members?
- to network with key people?
- to have a vacation?
- to experience the city the congress takes place in?



You probably have a few different priorities that you'll want to balance. Looking at the official schedule for the weekend, create your own schedule. Mark down the things that you absolutely must do (a class with that one couple, a poolside party, a trip downtown...) Circle or highlight other things that are of secondary interest to you. You can play a lot of it by ear, depending on your mood or what your friends are doing, feeling confident that

you won't miss what's most important to you.

#### 5. Take care of your body

Dancing is a physical activity. No matter how low-impact your preferred form may be, the hours you put in at a congress will take their toll. So take care of yourself(<http://www.kizombacommunity.com/rachels-blog/kiz-talks-aug-17-2014-relief-for-the-dance-stressed-body/>)!

Start the week before by prioritizing sleep and eating right. That's far easier to do at home, and reaching the weekend fresh and healthy will make a huge difference. Respect whatever your usual health regimen is, and make a point of eating fruits and vegetables.

During the congress, listen to your body. Take a break when you need it. Drink plenty



of water. Wear comfortable shoes when you can. If you buy new dance shoes from one of the tempting displays, don't wear them for too long at a time – try to rush breaking them in, and you may find yourself limping the next day. Stretch sore muscles. If you have the means, treat yourself to a massage. And of course, try to block of a few hours each

day to sleep!

You're all set to have an exhilarating and memorable time. Enjoy!

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