



CAPOEIRA – A BRAZILIAN MARTIAL ART

CAMARA CALGARY

Capoeira Camara Calgary offers instruction in Capoeira, a form of martial arts that combines self-defense with elements of Brazilian music and dance. The practice of Capoeira is ideal for individuals who would like to increase their Reflexes, Strength, Balance, Agility, Endurance and Flexibility. These six facets of exercise significantly contribute to a strong and healthy lifestyle.

Professor Frankenstein (Roberval Da Silva) has been teaching in Calgary for the past 10 years and his style is an inspiration to all his students. Frankie began his training in Olinda, PE, Brazil over 21 years ago. With all this experience he holds the highest belt in the city and brings a plenitude of expert knowledge to the group. Frankie and Camara Calgary have been involved in multiple events around the city including Fiestaval, Lilac Festival, Sun & Salsa, the Hispanic Arts Festival, Fourplus Urban Arts Expo, Legacies and more. Frankie has long since believed that Capoeira could be implemented as a method of self-improvement to students attending an “open school environment”. Since living in Brazil he has participated as a key coordinator with the government on projects to keep kids off the streets. In Calgary Frankie has performed and participated in community programs such with the Boys and Girls Club, Calgary Board of Education, City of Calgary After School/Starburst Program and the University of Calgary.

CAPOEIRA CAMARA

Capoeira Camara is an international academy with schools, in Canada, Bermuda, Malaysia, Russia, Taiwan, China and Brazil.

The group has been in Calgary for over 10 years under the instruction of Contra Master Frankie Da Silva with the intention of creating a multicultural community that brings people together from around the world to share in an exciting Brazilian Art Form that involves music, dance and self-defence.

Founder Contra Mestre Bola (Marinaldo Da Silva) was born in Olinda, Pernambuco - a thriving centre of Afro-Brazilian culture with a long-standing Capoeira tradition. He began training with a top Capoeira Master in 1988. Initially, Bola moved to Vancouver in 1995 where he taught Capoeira for some time, but then relocated to Toronto in 2000 to open an academy. In 2005 he founded Capoeira Camará, which now includes academies in Toronto, Peterborough, Montreal, and Calgary, Canada, Bermuda, Russia and Brazil.

Beyond his teaching duties in Toronto, Bola participates in numerous Capoeira events all over the world. He is also an accomplished musician and is responsible for producing five successful annual Batizado e Troca da Corda shows. Overall, Bola has been promoting Brazilian culture and Capoeira for 15 years. His travels have taken him to training sessions and performances in St. Croix and to Capoeira workshops as far away as Russia. Bola’s Capoeira expertise and leadership have also earned him international recognition. And, on numerous occasions, major media both in Canada and Brazil exclusively have interviewed him.





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ABOUT CAPOEIRA

Capoeira [kapu'ejre] is a Brazilian martial art that combines elements of dance and music. It was created in Brazil mainly by descendants of African slaves with Brazilian native influences, probably beginning in the 16th century, over 400 years ago. It is known by quick and complex moves, using mainly power, speed, and leverage for leg sweeps.

Capoeira's history begins with the African Slaves used by Portuguese colonists in Brazil. Capoeira has a long and controversial history, since historical documentation in Brazil was very scarce in its colonial times. Evidences, studies and oral tradition leave little doubt about its Brazilian roots, but it is impossible to precisely identify the exact Brazilian region or time it began to take form. Even though slaves outnumbered the Portuguese colonists, the lack of weapons, the colonial law, the disagreement between slaves coming from different African cultures and their complete lack of knowledge about the land and its surroundings would usually discourage the idea of a rebellion. In this environment capoeira began to develop. More than a fighting style, it was created as a hope of survival, a tool for an escaped slave.

Soon several groups of African slaves would gather and establish quilombos, settlements in far and hard to reach places. These attracted more than runaway slaves, they also contained Brazilian natives and even Europeans. Everyday life in a quilombo would offer freedom and the opportunity to rescue traditional cultures lost due to colonial oppression. In this kind of multi-ethnic community, constantly threatened by Portuguese colonial troops, capoeira evolved from a survival tool to a martial art focused on war. Registries of capoeira test practices have existed since the 18th century in Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Recife, but the huge increase of urban slaves and social life in Brazilian cities gave capoeira a greater notoriety and diffusion capacity. The use of capoeira was so problematic the government established severe punishments to its practice.

At the end of the 19th century, slavery in the Brazilian Empire was already doomed for many reasons. After the prohibition, any citizen caught practicing capoeira, in a fight or for any other reason, would be arrested, tortured and often mutilated by the police. The art of capoeira, after brief freedom, was once again condemned and repressed. Cultural practices, like the roda de capoeira, were conducted in far or hidden places and often practitioners would leave someone as sentry, to warn if the police were approaching the area.

In 1932, a time when Capoeira repression wasn't as strong as before, Mestre Bimba, a strong fighter both in legal and illegal fights, founded in Salvador the first ever Capoeira school. Bimba, analyzing the way many capoeiristas were using their abilities only to impress tourists, believed that Capoeira was losing its efficiency as a martial art. Thus Bimba, helped by his student José Cisnando Lima, intended to return Capoeira to its martial roots. Bimba also developed the first Capoeira systematical training method. As the word Capoeira was still forbidden by Brazilian law, Bimba called his new style Luta Regional Baiana (meaning regional fight from Bahia).

In 1937 Bimba founded the school Centro de Cultura Física e Luta Regional, with official permission of Salvador's Secretary of Education. His work was very well accepted in Salvador and Bimba got the unique opportunity to teach Capoeira to the cultural elite of the city. Finally in 1940 Capoeira left the Brazilian penal code and illegality.

Today capoeira is all over the world. In Brazil, as part of the culture, there is capoeira everywhere - in elementary schools, universities, clubs, and in military academies.





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BASIC MOVEMENT

Ginga (to Sway): Pronounced jinga, it is the most basic movement in Capoeira. It is done by moving back and forth alternating both legs in shoulder-width describing a triangular form. The hands are moving with the body aiming to protect those parts that are opened and easy to be attacked.

Aú: The Capoeira Au is known as cartwheel in gymnastics and other martial arts. However, in Capoeira the Aú is performed slowly and in most cases with arms and legs bent forward to protect the player from incoming kicks and attacks.

Balança: This is a combination of faint moves performed side to side (from one leg to the other) in order to deceive the opponent and make it hard for him to track the player's next move. In Balanca, the arms of the capoeirista are moving from side to side as done in Ginga while protecting the face.

Bananeira: Simply, it is a handstand position in which the hands of the capoeirista are placed in shoulder-width and the legs above his head. Like in Au, the head of the player is located between his hands looking toward the other player.

Macaco (Monkey): This movement is a back flip performed low to the ground. It requires strength and flexibility. To start the Macaco, place your body into a crouch position with one hand located on the floor right behind you. Located in that position stretch your body holding your hips up and try to reach the floor with your free hand moving it over the head and when you are ready try to lift your legs over the head as well and transfer them to the other side of the body.

Negativa: The body is supported by one hand while the other is protecting the face. The legs are located close to one another – the leg close to the hand on the ground is placed in extended position and the other one is tucked.

Negativa Angola: The capoeirista bents very low with hands located on the ground and legs free to flow around. The one hand is supporting the front chest and the other the back. The body is a bit twisted to one side so that the upper leg is stretched in front and the lower is bent behind.

Rolê (a roll): Often used as a basic technique for moving in the Roda. In Role, the body is bent forward spinning to one side while the head is placed in a position suitable to constantly watch the opponent. The Role is finished when the body makes turn in 180 degrees.





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Ponte (bridge): It is a basic back bridge (back bend) where the hands and the legs are located on the ground, the back is forming an arc and the stomach is facing upward.

Cocorinha (little coconut): A very simple move, the body goes low to the ground to escape from an incoming kick. All a capoeira fighter has to do is to squat knees to the chest with feet close to the ground and lean on one hand for a support.

Esquiva (escape): The body is low to the ground, one hand supports the body while the other protects the face.

Queixada (pronounced “kay-shah-dah”): The capoeirista steps forward from a middle ginga position with one leg (on 45 degrees from the other leg) twisting the body to continue facing the opponent, then untwist the body releasing the front leg and bringing it up to the opponent to execute the kick.

Armada: This is a circular motion in which the legs are on the ground, the body is wind up from the torso and the arms are located in front of the body. The arms should be opened and free to float when the move begins. In fact, the hands and the body being wind up is what gives power to Armada.

Mei-lua (half-moon): One of the most unique kicks to capoeira. The movement is a spinning kick performed with two or one hand on the ground. It begins with the foot at the back and rotates a full 360 degrees.

Chapa: The Chapa usually starts from Ginga. Once in a standing position throw one leg to the opponent and bend the body on a side to keep the balance. The body should be bent on the opposite side of the leg that is kicking.

Rasteira: This is a common takedown in capoeira. It is a leg sweep done on an opponent during a kick.

