

## Quimbara by Celia Cruz

This is a lively, class salsa song performed by Celia Cruz from the island of Cuba. The word “quimbara” is actually not Spanish. It’s believed the word itself has African origin, which demonstrates the diverse roots of salsa music. It's believed to mean something similar to having a good time, relaxing, and enjoying yourself.

This song was written by Junior Cepeda, a Puerto Rican musician that lived in New York, but its musical influence is distinctly Afro-Cuban.

Check out [How to Review Songs](#) for the recommended method to learn this song and improve your Spanish.

### Part One

Quimbara quimbara cumba quim bamba. [4x]

!Ehh Mamá! ¡Ehh Mamá! [2x]

La rumba me está llamando

*The party is calling me*

Bombo, dile que ya voy

*Bongo, tell them that I’m coming*

Que se espere un momentico

*Tell them to wait a minute*

mientras canto un guaguancó

*While I sing a guaguancó*

Dile que no es un desprecio

*Tell them that it's not a slight*

### Key Words

Llamando – calling

Dile – tell

Mientras – While

Desprecio – slight,  
indifference

Pues – Well...

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pues, vive en mi corazón  
*Well, it lives in my heart*

Mi vida es tan solo eso, rumba buena y guaguancó !Eahh!  
*My life's just about good partying and guaguancó, Eahh!*

!Ehh Mamá! ¡Eh eh Mamá!

!Azúcar!  
*Sugar!*

### Explanations

The first verse references “guaguancó,” a type of rumba music from Cuba. At the end of this song, I will share a video of rumba music and dance. While rumba is a genre of music and has a dance by the same name, in this song the word “rumba” is used to mean “going out to party” or “having a good time.”

### Chorus

*Note: There are no new key words for the chorus.*

### Chorus (Coro) - Lyrics (Letra)

Quimbara quimbara cumba quim bamba. [2x]

Sí quieres gozar, sí quieres bailar.

*If you want to enjoy, if you want to dance.*

Quimbara quimbara cumba quimbamba eh!

Quimbara quimbara cumba quim bamba. [2x]

Ay lo baila Maria y también Joseito

*Ay! María dances it, and Joseito too.*

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Quimba Quimbara cumba quim, bajito.

*Quimba Quimbara cumba quim, a little lower.*

### Outro

The rest of the song doesn't have much Spanish, it's mainly a repeat of the same phrases over and over again. It's very musical, so enjoy! There aren't any new key words, but here are the lyrics in case you want to follow along when you listen to the full version of the song:

Quimbara quimbara cumba quim bamba . [2x]

Quimbara quimbara quimbara quimbara.

Mi cumba cumba quimbara cumbara cumba.

Quimbara quimbara cumba quim bamba. [2x]

Eh! Quimbara cumbara cumba.

Quimbara cumbara cumba. [2x]

Quimbara quimbara cumba quimbamba. [2x]

¡Ay! lo baila Teresa y también Joseito.

*Ay! Teresa dances it and Joseito too.*

Quimba Quimbara cumba quim bajito.

*Quimba Quimbara cumba quim very low.*

Cumba Quimbara quimbara cumba quimbamba.

Quimbara quimbara cumba quimbamba.

Ay Quimbara quimbara quimbara.

Mi cumba cumba quimbara mi cumba.

Quimbara quimbara cumba quimbamba. [2x]

¡Ajá!... Vámonos pa' alla... ¡Ehh!... ¡Ah!

*¡Aja!... Here we go... ¡Ehh!... ¡Ah!*

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Ay Dios mío, que lío,

*Oh my God, what trouble!*

Quimbara quimbara cumba quim bamba. [8x]

Eh Quimbara quimbara cumba quim bamba.

Quimbara quimbara cumba quim bamba. [3x]

Eh! Quimbara que quimbara que quimbara.

Que quimbara que cumbara que quimbara que quim bamba.

Quimbara quimbara cumba quim bamba. [2x]

Ay lo baila Teresa, y lo baila Juanito.

*Ay Teresa dances it, and Juanito too*

Download .mp3 of Full Song



### *Just for Fun...*

1. Want to know why Celia Cruz says Azucar? [Here's one story that explains why.](#)
2. Check out this video featuring [Rumba music and the Afro-Cuban dance.](#)

### Spanish You Can Use

#### 1) Well...

“Pues” is a great filler word you can use during conversation. If you get stuck, or need to buy yourself some time to think, simply use the word “pues.” In English, we would say something like “Well...” when we are in between thoughts or thinking of what to say next.

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### 2) Gerund

In English, when the ending “-ing” is added to a word, it becomes a gerund and indicates an action currently in progress. In Spanish, the gerund endings are “-ando” and “-iendo.” In this song, Celia uses the word “llamando” (calling).

#### *Examples*

- Vivir (to live) – Viviendo (living)
- Gozar (to enjoy) – Gozando (having fun)
- Esperar (to wait, to hope for) – Esperando (waiting, hoping)

### 3) Diminutive

There are several uses of the diminutive in this song. This is used to indicate something is small, or shows affection for it. In English, we add ‘y’ to some words—such as changing “cute” to “cutey” or “dog” to “doggy.” In Spanish, the diminutive is formed by adding “-ito” or “-ico” to the end of words. In this song, Celia says “bajito” and “momentico.” These are the diminutive forms of “bajo” and “momento.”

You can also use it for people’s names as a term of endearment or a nickname. In this song Celia refers to “Juanito,” the diminutive of the name “Juan,” and “Joseito” for “Jose.”

#### *Examples*

- Espere un momemto (Wait a moment)
- Espere un momentito (Wait just a minute)

You can make almost any adjective or noun in Spanish a diminutive. You can use it to say someone is skinny “flaquito” (flaco) or chubby “gordito” (gordo) and it is not seen as offensive. For the feminine form, the letter “a” is used instead of “o” (flaquita, gordita).

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*Note the spelling change for “flaquito” – “qu” is used instead of “c” to preserve the sound of the word. Flacito would be pronounced “flah-see-toe” instead of “flah-kee-toe,” so the spelling had to be changed.*

### Your Assignment

*Beginners* – Write the diminutive form of the following 5 words:

1. Poco (small)
2. Perro (dog)
3. Chico (another word for “small”, also means “boy”)
4. Pollo (chicken)
5. Gato (cat)

Post to the Facebook group or email to [team@spanishconsalsa.com](mailto:team@spanishconsalsa.com) for review.

### *Intermediate Learners*

Write 5 sentences using the gerund form of the following verbs used in the song:

1. Llamar
2. Bailar
3. Gozar
4. Cantar
5. Esperar

Post to the Facebook group for review. To practice pronunciation, send a voice note below or post a video of yourself saying the sentences in the Facebook group.

### *Advanced Learners*

Tell a story about the craziest or most fun night out you can remember. Post to the Facebook group for review. To practice pronunciation, send a voice note below or post a video of yourself telling your story to the Facebook group.