Introduction
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in Dancing Tango: Passionate Encounters in a Globalizing World

This introductory chapter briefly explores how the Argentinean tango became a global phenomenon by describing the dance through the eyes of the aficionados and aficionadas for whom tango is more than a hobby and, at times, even a way of life. It also explores how the differences in gender, social class, age, ethnicity, and national belonging seemingly affect the image of the tango as a dance of passion. As a global dance, tango increasingly involves transnational encounters. It has always been a global dance, moving from Argentina (where it was also the dance of immigrants) to Europe and back again. However, international tourism and a growing contingent of relatively affluent individuals with a cosmopolitan lifestyle in search of a specific kind of touristic experience have made tango one of Argentina's most important export items as well as a significant source of revenue at home.