

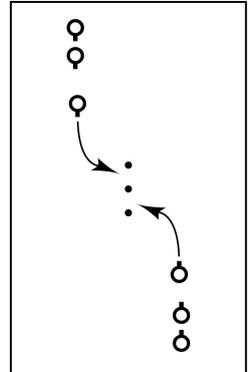
# EL COSTILLAR (Chile)

Pronounced El Costillyar

*A game not to be missed for fun and usefulness! It uses important spatial and directional maths as well as observant cooperation. Use it too for systematic problem-solving, and in social studies. It gives the basics for dancing a hey/reel. And it's fun for the staff party!*

**Props:** 3 bottles for every 6 or 8 children.

**Set-up:** 3 bottles are placed about a metre apart in a line.  
Two short teams of participants line up as shown in diagram.



**INTRO.** 22 beats (or begin earlier). The first two dancers stand ready.

**GO!** The first dancer in each team skips a looping path around the three bottles and back to his own team, passing the other dancer halfway there and halfway back (see the video).

They then move the end bottles a little closer in, and go to the back of their teams.

The next pair of dancers do the same, and move the bottles in further.

So it goes on – until it would spoil the game to move the bottles any further in.

## NOTES FOR TEACHERS

1. Discussing rules or advice for playing this game provides systematic problem-solving – clear thinking ("What do you really mean when you say start from the *same* side of the bottles?"), seeing values ("What are the pleasures in the game? What can spoil them?"), and deciding on action ("So what do we do about that?").
2. It's interesting to discuss traditional children's games, in our own and other cultures and conditions. This one seems to give insight into the games that pre-dated cheap plastic balls, the soccer craze, and the rule of the motor vehicle. Who played, sang, and danced in the alleys? How come they made a game with empty bottles?

## THE SONG

El costillar es mio, mio es costillar. (Repeat)  
Que cuenta tiene naide con mi costillar. (Repeat)  
El costillar es mio, me lo quieren quitar. (Repeat)  
Si tu no me lo quitas quien me lo va a quitar. (Repeat)

A boy sings about his "spare rib", his girl: she is his spare rib and no one else has any right to her. Eve was made from Adam's spare rib, as Catholic-educated children know.

## ORIGIN:

Beginning as a competitive party game in which two young men looped around a single bottle between them, to impress the beautiful girls, this dance, with its song, has become a feature of Chileans' celebrations and performances worldwide, sometimes in cueca-like flirting for a man-woman couple - or even for two couples interweaving. (Google it.) But our version was collected from immigrant Chileans in Holland who knew it as a children's street game in southern Chile – kids had taken it up and it had been passed on as theirs.