



# Bellydance with Nicola

## The Golden Guidelines for Performing (in any venue, at any level, for any reason...)

Here is the best advice I have been given, the best advice I can pass on, and what has served me best in all areas and all venues of performing. I always try to be prepared, plan for a few scenarios, and expect that something will go wonky, if not for me then for someone I call a friend. You just never know what will come up.

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### Preparation:

- Check the condition and fit of your costuming and props at least 7 days before a show so you have time to solve a problem.
- Practice in your costume and with your prop(s) many times before performing. Avoid making last minute changes, but always be prepared that you may have to.
- Keep a basic dance bag of supplies packed at all times. This could include: bandages; cotton balls or swabs; alcohol wipes; baby wipes or a damp washcloth in a zip plastic bag; extra makeup (black eyeliner, mascara, lipstick at the least); face powder; nail file; scissors; needle and thread; hair clip you could wear performing; deodorant; small bottle of water (to remove stains, cool off, stay hydrated, rinse; hand lotion (works on frizzy hair, too); small hand towel; extra earrings; bobby pins; safety pins; ibuprofen or aspirin (labelled and in a child proof bottle); small mirror; granola bar or dried fruit.
- Have a garment bag or rolling suitcase that is just for dancing. Pack it ahead of time and triple check you have what you need. Air it out in between. Empty it regularly (rotten bananas, damp towels...).
- Eat lightly, 23 hours before dancing. Bring a light snack such as a granola bar or some fruit to have afterward.
- Have a change of clothes, including a bra, for afterward.
- Bring and wear a coverup. If it is large enough, you can change inside of it, in the event there is no bathroom or changeroom.
- Bring slippers or sandals you can wear before you perform. It is fairly easy to contract tetanus or hepatitis from stepping on or in sharp, nasty things.
- Plan for little to no space to change. Arrive as ready as you can.
- Plan for little or no opportunity to rehearse in the performance space. If you get it, then you will be pleasantly surprised. If not, you are ready.
- Bring backup of your music. If you are dancing at a haflah, a restaurant, or anywhere else with multiple dancers where you might use the same music, consider having a different

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backup song or set, so you can change your music if need be. This only works if there is no program prepared that will indicate what you had planned to do.

- Bring a short, simple bio and introduction to your dance, on index cards, just in case.
- Have business cards and brochures, if you are working professionally.

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### **At the show:**

- Stay hydrated. With water. It works best, it isn't sticky, and it doesn't stain. If your brain is thirsty, your dancing will suffer.
- Be courteous, considerate, collegial and careful. This will take you far in most situations and leave folks (patrons and other dancers) with little to say that is negative.
- Have strategies that work for you to deal with rude behaviour on the part of your audience.
- Know when you are expected to dance and for how long. Exit and leave gracefully.
- Be prepared to answer questions about bellydancing, and prepare short, clear, correct answers to common questions.
- If you make a mistake, try to smile or even laugh and keep going. People will appreciate your effort and grace under pressure.
- Be clean, sober, on time, and tidy at all performances.
- Try to be aware of how people are reacting and do what you can to keep them entertained and engaged.
- Respect expectations, restrictions, requests, and guidelines issued by show organizers and hosts. They often have insurance and rental rules to follow. If you don't understand "the rules" ask, and try to respect the answer even if you don't agree.
- Keep quiet or silent in all backstage areas, including the dressing room.
- The best presentation overall is to be pleasant and intelligent. That will work in most styles, situations, and venues. If you can muster friendly, sparkling, confident, calm, witty and generous in your dancing, more power to you.
- Dance the best you can, in that moment, in that space. Adapt, be resilient, and work with what you have.
- Use music you know and love. Enough said.
- Always safeguard your own health and safety. If you feel unsafe, threatened in any way,

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sick or are injured, ask for help and/or leave. Consider a companion in unknown situations, such as a party in someone's home. Tell someone where you are going, when you will be back, and leave a phone number. DO NOT accept a drink that you have not witnessed be prepared or that does not come out of a bottle that you yourself open. Ever experienced a Roofie?? (Rohipnol) You don't want to I spent 12 hours passed out on the floor of my apartment. I am just thankful I got out of there with a friend, in a cab, and home in time. People do crappy things sometimes.

- Double check when you leave that you have everything of yours. Pick up after yourself. Leave only happy memories and your business cards.
- Expect some attitude from some other dancers, especially if you are from another teacher, troupe, studio, or city. Try to be polite and shake it off.
- When in doubt, consider what any other performer of another dance style would do at a show. Keep your behaviour respectable and responsible. You never know who is watching, and in this day and age, who is taking images to post on the Internet. Don't be the next dork of nasty b\*tch on YouTube

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