



# Bellydance with Nicola

## Dance Costume Checklist for Performers

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[www.nicola-bellydance.com](http://www.nicola-bellydance.com)

**Costume type** should be appropriate to music, style of dance, and venue. Layer sheer fabrics for modesty and be careful of skirt slits in front, back or sides as too much may show when spinning, bending, jumping, doing floor-work, or if up high on a stage. Tight costumes may also impede movement, so check comfort and style to match the criteria above.

**Cover-up & shoes** should be worn before and after dancing. If mingling with the audience afterwards, change into clean and tasteful clothes first. This is to preserve modesty, mystery, protect your investment, and keep you warm!

**Bras and belts** should fit properly, and fasteners should be invisible. Check costume is in good repair the day before an event, and try it on for fit. Decoration should be on the back as well as front, and no bra hooks or strap glides should be seen. Décolleté should be tasteful; not spilling out, and no deep gaps between bra and breasts for admirers to see more than you thought they could.

**Crop tops/vests** need to be decorated front and back. Wear a properly fitted, uplifting bra underneath. Sagging and bouncing are not acceptable. A good bra will ensure nothing slips out underneath the top either. Sports bras (even with fancy trim) flatten the bust, have the wrong shaped back, are too casual, and definitely inappropriate for the elegance of this dance. You will have the dreaded "uniboob" if you use a sports bra!

**Hip scarves** should be in good repair. Consider tying a wide piece of elastic under the upper edge if it is a large, heavy scarf to prevent slippage, and to ensure skirts and underwear doesn't show above it. Hip poufs or veil swag can be added for variety. Don't tie or wear a hip belt/scarf too high - you will look like you have a tube around your belly. As a rule, they should sit just over the hipbones, just above the crack of your bum.

**Accessories/hair jewelry and hairpieces** should complement the costume. While you may mix colours (gold accent even if costume has some silver in it), avoid mixing styles (tribal jewelry with beaded bedlah). Try it on with the costume the day before to check for snags, pieces falling

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off, or distracting elements. Hair should not cover the face while you dance - consider headbands if your hair tends to fall forward. Your makeup, accessories and hair should be above and beyond your everyday look. Don't overdo it! You'll look like a Christmas tree if you do.

**Feet** should be clean & pretty. Bring footwear you can dance in just in case the surface is unclean, uneven, cold, hot, or slippery.

**Cosmetics** are essential to enhance features and expressions, especially under special lighting, on a stage, or in darker settings like a restaurant. Your makeup should draw attention to your eyes and your smile, important elements in the Middle Eastern beauty aesthetic. After doing your makeup, test the effect by standing back 2-3 feet from your mirror. Use waterproof makeup if you sweat a lot. Try to cover scars and blemishes. Never underestimate the impact of red lipstick!

**Mirror check** view front and back to check for visible labels, panties, bulges, and twisted or caught costuming. Do the jump-test to ensure nothing falls out or off.

**Personal hygiene** obvious as this might be, brushing your teeth, getting rid of gum, wearing deodorant, and shaving legs and armpits are mandatory to maintaining a good sensory image for audiences near and far to appreciate. If you smoke, make sure you and your costume doesn't reek of it. Never talk with patrons with alcohol on your breath.

**Afterwards** Expect to sweat, so take a towel to blot off your costume before storing it. If you know it needs repair, do it the day after the dance so you won't have surprises next time you pull it out of the closet. Hang garments to air dry and to remove odours before putting away. Spritzing with diluted vinegar and water, or folding in acid-free tissue or uncoloured cotton towels (to prevent dye transference) can also help keep it fresh between wearing. (NOTE: avoid dry-cleaning and moth balls for long term care - they leave toxic residues on your costuming that may discolour and erode the garments over time. Moth balls contain known carcinogens, and they STINK.) For yourself, take baby wipes or a washcloth to freshen up your underarms, face

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and feet before you re-dress and greet your fans.

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You will invest a lot of time and money in your costumes and accessories with the expectation you will look beautiful and feel joyful when you dance in them. Like any sports equipment, musical instrument or a nice car, you need to protect your investment from damage, store it properly, and give it regular tune-ups if it is to continue giving you the glamour you expect of it. Enjoy the care as much as the wear and you'll get years of beauty from your dance wardrobe.

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