



SESSION HANDOUT

Arabian Nights

Amina El Mallah

Zumba Jammer, Sweden/Egypt

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Presenter

Amina El Mallah

ZINs: Lena Helt (Belly Dance), Sabrina Cherif, Fridrik Arnason & Mohamed Ragragui

Schedule

20 min: **Intro & History**

10 min: **Warm-up**

15 min: **Breakdown of *Arabian Nights* choreo**

65 min: ***Arabian Nights* Master Class**

10 min: **Wrap up/ Q&A**

Session Objective

Welcome to the mesmerizing world of Arabian Nights! In this session you will discover the beauty, passion and mystery surrounding the dance styles of the Middle East.

In modern Arabic music they still to this day use a lot of traditional instruments and authentic rhythms from the Middle East, and this is what we are going to focus on in this session. You will learn how old traditional styles meet the new in a fun and exciting way and of course how you as a Zumba instructor can use this in your Zumba Fitness classes. Middle Eastern dance has a great variety to it! You can cool-down with sensual Belly Dance, get grooving to a hip hop fusion song, you can shake everything you've got to a Arabic pop hit, wow your students with a drum-solo or finish your class while holding hands and dancing in a ring. With the *Arabian Nights* session you will discover *A whole New World* of exciting new flavors to bring back to your classes! You will also learn some of the important technique used when dancing these styles.

History & Background

The Middle East has because of its central location in the world and natural resources been a key area throughout history and it is by many even referred to as the cradle of life. Although the big area, the history of all these countries have been entwined over the years by the same rulers, religion and languages. This has lead to an overall common culture in the Middle East.

Due to the long and well established tradition to pass on information and history by word of mouth, the origin of Arabic music and culture is hard to track down. What we do know is that even in the old Mesopotamia, around 200 years BC, creating music was part of everyday life. It is said that the women of lower status, working in the households were singing and dancing as a way of showing

joy and happiness, much as we do today. At this time there were yet no bonds between the different tribes, ethnic and religious groups in the area. They all had their own traditions and styles.



The rise of Islam

It was with the rise of the Islamic empire in the 7th century that the area for the first time was united under the same ruling. It started in Saudi Arabia and quickly concord the whole region, which lead to a unity because of religion but also a new first language: Arabic. In just 70 years they had taken over all of North Africa. Having the same religion, language and ruling meant a huge deal for what came to be known as Arabic culture. Groups that had before been independent, exposed only to their own music, started to be influenced by others and also leaving their trace to what we today recognize as Arabic music. At the peak of the Islamic rule, the kingdom reached from Turkey in the north, to Yemen in the south, from Portugal in the west to India in the East. Arabian music therefore became a mix of old traditional Arabic tribe music and Persian, Turkish, Spanish rhythms etc. During the following 1000 years, this Arabic identity came to be stronger and more spread out amongst the people in the whole area. The Islamic Empire collapsed around year 1050.

Other influences

After the withdrawal of the Muslim ruling came the Turks. Although this time, the culture had been too well established to be influenced further more or change from what it was. Under the ruling of the Ottoman Empire, the people of the Arab world still spoke Arabic and still lived their lives as before. It wasn't until the beginning of the 1900s and the ending of World War I, during the colonial rule of the British, Spanish and French that the Arabic culture came to change fundamentally in its content and in its formal and sociological aspects. Some people started to take on the European culture and music while discarding the old traditions. Despite this, the traditional music has been able to maintain its ground in certain areas. One of those who have contributed to its preservation is the famous singer Umm Kulthum. During the 1920s her authentic Arabic music became extremely popular not only in Egypt where she lived, but all over the Middle East. She is to this day seen as one of the leading, most important Middle Eastern artists of all time and has inspired many others.

Middle Eastern music today

The Middle Eastern countries share a lot of musical expression by using the same instruments, language and style. They influence and are influenced by each other. Some styles are the same in all the countries, but there are also some differences between the areas.

Khaleej - The Gulf countries

These are the countries surrounding the Persian Gulf; UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman. The Khaleeji music also took influence by the Bedouins living in the desert as well as Persia and India on the other side of the sea. The music usually has heavy drums. Khaleeji dance is often danced in groups; the women use their hair a lot and the men create formations.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T78axifuW-g>

Popular artists: Hussein Al-Jasmi, Rashed Al-Majid

Mashriq - The Sunrise countries

These are the counties by the South East of the Mediterranean Sea: Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. They are called the sunrise countries since the sun rises in the east. A majority of the counties were under British rule after World War 1, which made English their second language. Many of the European styles were adapted into their music culture and today you can even find Arabic house music. Some artists still try to stick to traditional tunes though. Egypt continues to be one of the leading countries when it comes to dance, music, comedy and film.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-r9F1NBdFc>

Popular artists: Amr Diab, Nancy Ajram

Maghreb - The Sunset countries

These are the countries of North West Africa: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. They are called the sunset countries since the sun sets in the west. A majority of the countries were under French colonization after WW1, which is why French is used as a second language. Many songs therefore have some French lyrics. At that time some people started to express their political opinions through music, this became *Rai*. The music was also influenced by the Berber people.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnqucokEsl4>

Popular artists: Cheb Khaled, Saber el Roubai

Debke

The *Debke* is said to have originated somewhere in Syria or Lebanon. Back when houses were built from stone with a roof made of wood and dirt, the roof had to be compacted somehow – and so came the idea of holding on to each other while stomping the dirt in a uniform way. Debke is today spread out all over the Middle East, mostly in the Sunrise area. There is no correct way to do it since every country has their steps. This can be a super fun break in your class! Create a line or dance in a ring.

Belly Dance (Raqs Sharqi)

The origin of Belly Dance is hard to track down. Some say it comes from old Persia where it was danced for the kings and some say that it was part of religious rituals. Nonetheless, it has been spread out over the world and recognized for its femininity and sensual movements. Belly Dance is

actually not one dance style. It is the overall expression for some of the Middle Eastern dances such as *Oriental*, *Baladie*, *Saidi*, *Ghawazi* and even *Khaleeji*. Belly Dance as an art form today has sadly almost disappeared from the Middle East but it can still be seen at some weddings and tourist attractions. Instead, it has been taken over by non Arabs and that way spread all over the world! This has also led to new modern styles evolving such as *ATS* and *Fusion*. But if you travel to the Middle East you can still see some of the moves being used in everyday dancing.

2014 ZUMBA INSTRUCTOR CONVENTION

The Zumba® Formula

Do you remember the *Zumba Formula* from your Basic 1 training?

Z = MC² (Zumba = Music + Core Steps + Choreography)

The Zumba formula makes the Zumba program unique and revolutionary in the fitness world. The three elements to the formula are in themselves not unique but the combination of them results in a special new dynamic fitness experience:

Music – Music is the driving force and most important element of the Zumba formula if the music comes from the creativity passion and story that the artist have created. Instead of the traditional fitness industry's use of 32-count monotonous beats, the Zumba formula uses the flavor to bring the party to the class. It's this approach of letting the music drive the moves that puts the Zumba program in a class of its own. Middle Eastern music is in general very dependent on the instruments and melody, and this makes it easy to sense if a song is happy or sad without understanding the lyrics. Rule #1: Know your music! The order of the song parts in Middle Eastern music is often very logical and repetitive which makes it perfect for Zumba. A lot of students LOVE these styles already but it's important that you, the instructor feel for the song so that you can pass it on to your participants.

Core steps – Each of the basic rhythms has a unique feel and authentic inspired steps. The Zumba formula applies a systematic approach to each movement to add variety using arms beat rhythmic directional and fitness variations. The use of these variations creates an endless amount of options, all based on the basic movements. Since the music and styles are new to many people, make sure to not use too many arm variations and complicated moves in the beginning.

Choreography - The method of choreography that the Zumba formula uses is unique in the fitness world. It uses the music to dictate the movements. The artists wrote the songs to tell a story, all the musical stories are broken down into different sections: intro verse, chorus, musical bridge, tags etc. the Zumba formula takes one of our basic movements in the rhythm of a particular song and matches it to each section of the music. In the music, whenever that section repeats itself, the same basic movement is repeated as well so that each musical section has a matching movement. Add your own flavor to your choreography and have fun with it, but remember: keeping it simple is the key to success.

Zumba Basic Steps for Belly Dance

In the Basic 2 training you will learn some core steps to use while teaching Belly Dance in your classes.

Basic Stance: Squat position – use arm variations such as “Egyptian hands”, Circles with hands, Jellyfish arms etc.

Alternating hips – can also be done with one leg. This step is often used in a direction; forward, to the side or in a circle.

Figure 8 hips – can be done forward, backward, up or down.

Hip shimmy – Shake on the spot or use it while moving around.

Although Belly Dance has left its trace all over the Middle East, and therefore can be seen as the base for these dances when it comes to Zumba, it’s important to know that it doesn’t apply to all the styles; for example some of the more masculine styles and the Debke.

Music Fusion and Stylistic Separation

Within Zumba Fitness music, you will hear rhythms being combined on top of each other as well as different parts of the song being represented by a separate style. This is called *Music Fusion*. This collaboration of the different forms of music makes it richer and more cultured. Middle Eastern dance, especially Belly Dance is a rhythm that is often fused with other dance styles.

Understanding the fusion of rhythms used in each song will help to enrich the experience for the participants as well as the instructor. As the music changes from one rhythm to another, it’s important that you as an instructor change the steps and dance style with it. For example, if you are teaching a Reggaeton song with a Belly Dance musical break, you incorporate Belly dance moves to the choreography for that part. This is called *Stylistic Separation*.

Some songs from the Master Class

| Name of Song | Artist | Genre |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Roubla Party | Harage Mc, Seff & Kader Sghir | Modern Raï |
| Eh eli beyehsal | Myriam Fares | Arabic Pop |
| Waylo | Rashed Al-Majid | Khaleeji |
| Khad alby maah | Amr Diab | Arabic Pop |
| Habibi min zaman | Balkan Beatbox | Belly Dance Fusion |
| Elli byekzeb ala marto | Fares Karam | Lebanese |
| Mazal | Samira Said | Arabic Pop |
| Yearning | Angelika | Belly Dance |
| Warda hamra | Medina | Arabic Reggaeton |
| Nar | Hakim | Egyptian |
| Zineb | Jalal Al Hamdaoui | Raï |

Choreo Notes:

Ana Âchek by Cheb Khaled (Modern Raï, the album *C'est la Vie*)

| Song Part | Step | Note |
|--------------------|---|---|
| A (0:08) Chorus | Repeat 4 times: - Jump from side to side (2 jumps) - Shake your hips. | |
| B (0:24) Verse | Repeat 4 times (2 towards each side): - Turn to the side and do 4 "Alternating hips, single leg- one hip". - Walk 3 steps backwards. | |
| C (0:40) Bridge | Repeat 2 times: - 2 "Figure 8" down. - 1 V-step | |
| A (0:47) | See previous "A". | |
| B (1:04) | See previous "B". | |
| C (1:20) | See previous "C". | |
| A (1:27) | See previous "A". NOTE! Repeat 8 times. | After 4, instead of shaking hips - shake shoulders! |
| D (1.59) Break | Repeat 4 times: - Take one arm up to the side then back. - Do the same with the other arm. - Do it with both arms at the same time 2 times. | |
| E (2:15) Oooh | - Bend down to the side with your arms to the same side and move your arms to the other side over your head. Then do the same to the other side. - Repeat but this time clap your hands. And again the same to the other side. | |
| A (2:30) | See previous "A". NOTE! Repeat 8 times. | Go crazy! :D |