

So there is an event coming up with a Middle Eastern theme and you want to dress appropriately but don't want to break the bank or spend ten years figuring out what to wear? Here are some suggestions on how to dress so you fit in without killing yourself. The patterns included here are from other SCAdians, articles and websites, plus from some professional patterns. They are not for commercial use. They are only to aid you in constructing appropriate and basic garb. This is of course, not an in-depth study, it is merely to give folks some options for styles of dress if they are attending a Middle Eastern themed event and want to blend in.

Women's Dress Options- Women often wore similar clothing to the men, but then added additional covers when they went outside. The clothing described here is inside clothing and does not include the many veils and cloaks worn when outside the home.

Early Andalusion/Moorish Dress (Early Period)

The Andalusion woman wore the same items as her masculine counterpart. They started with the pants or sarwal and then a qamis. They also wore the under tunic (al-shaya) and the over tunic (al-jubba) and robe (durr'a) as the men. They covered their heads with several layers including the lifafa (a piece of fabric to anchor the veils on the hair); the miqna'a (which went over the head, under the chin and back over the head); the isaba (this rested on the head to keep the miqna'a in place) or the taj (which was a jeweled or metal band to keep the miqna'a in place). They of course loved jewelry and often embellished their clothing with embroidery.

Seljuk Women (Early Period):

Seljuk women started with the ichton (pants) that are the same as the Seljuk man's pants; a chemise and a coat. There were two types of chemise. There was a changshu which was short (could be tucked into the pants) and there was the terincheck which was a long shirt that resembled a dress. Then there was a dress layer or under coat layer. These seem to have a v neckline. Finally there is the robe, called a farajiyya, also known as a lounge robe. The robe is wide, with a straight opening in the front and did not have any closures. The robe was lined and decorated with tiraz bands. Women covered their heads in this culture as well, wearing a yashmak or head scarf.

Ottoman Women:

The women of the Ottoman period started with the sarwal (pants) that were loose and flowing but tight at the ankle. Again, these are not the stereotypical harem pants. They wore a chemise or gomlek as an under tunic. These shirts are often portrayed in art as very sheer, though I have not found any extant examples to confirm that. Over the chemise they wore a number of coats (caftans, anteri, yelek). The first coat could be waist length or full length and short or long sleeved. The over coats tended to show the layers the wearer had and the materials the coats were made of. The ladies covered their heads with small caps, tall hats or combinations of the styles in addition to veils.

Here are some images of these styles for the women:

Andalusian woman:

The first is an image of a Moorish Queen with her court:



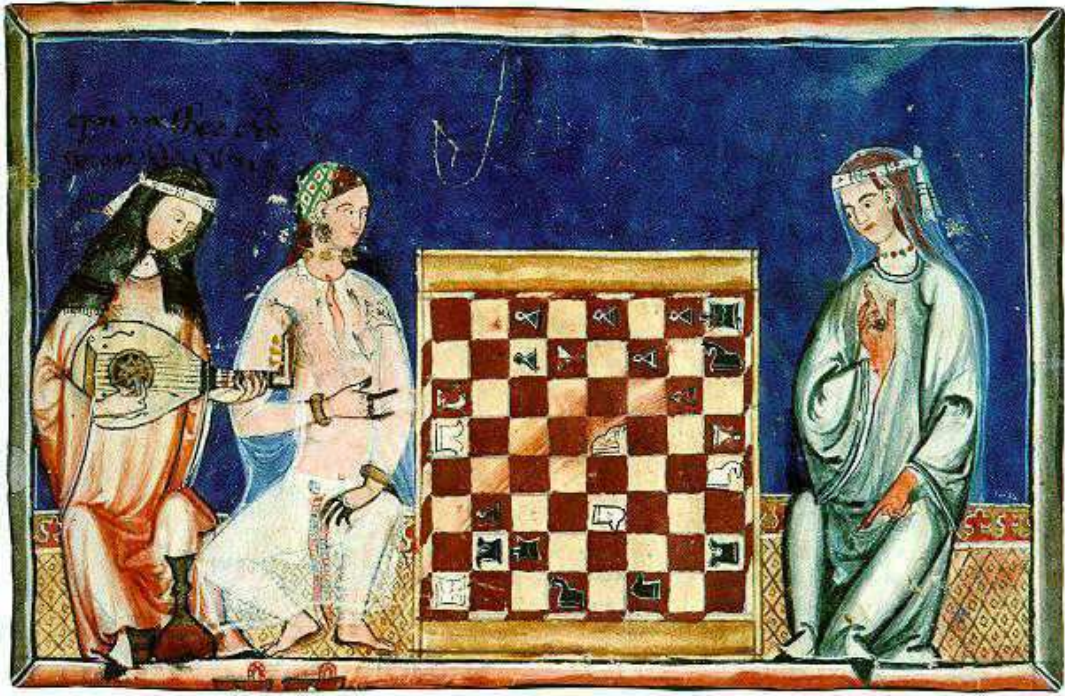
The next image is of Women's Face Veils from Violante de Sant Sabastian's handout on Andalusian Garb.

Drawings: Women's Face Veils

The following pictures show one way in which an upper class Moorish lady's veils may have been arranged. The first figure shows the lifafa tied over the hair. In the second picture, a miqn'a has been draped over the head, under the chin, then brought back over the head. The lifafa helps anchor it in place. The 'isaba, in turn (figure 3) serves to hold the miqn'a in place. Figure 4 shows the face veil in place with the ensemble; it probably would have actually been put on before the miqn'a, and affixed to the lifafa behind the head by means of a pin.



The next image is from "The Book of Chess" and shows Andalusian women playing Chess.



Seljuk Women: The best image I could find was from a miniature of automatic servers. I am not sure whether these are supposed to be actual robots or whether this was a disparaging term for servants.



Ottoman Women: This being my particular area of research, I have several images of Ottoman Women at home. These are some of the clearest showing the layers of dress.

The first is from an artist named Peter Munday, who showed the women getting ready after visiting the baths.



Here are some images from different miniatures.



