



# CONTESTANT'S HANDBOOK



## Arrival/Departure Schedules

When booking flights be sure to arrive between **9:00 AM & 1:00 PM on Monday, June 24th.**



The recommend airline is Southwest Airlines. They offer free Two check-in bags + One carry on, and no fee to change flights. You still can use any other airlines if you would like.

If you go to the Facebook group page 'Miss Arab USA 2024 Contestants' and make friends with all the other girls, you may be able to find fun ways to save on expenses, like driving with one of the contestants. You should book your flight to arrive at Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport (PHX) in the state of Arizona. You **MUST** update your portfolio with your arrival time, airline, and flight number. You will have the option to either rent a car at your own expense, use UBER or schedule a **FREE** pick up with us between 9:00 AM & 1:00 PM on the arrival day. Please inform us if you need to be picked up during those times. Hotel check-out will be on Sunday, June 30th, before 1:00 PM.

Rides back to the airport will be available between **9:00AM & 1:00PM on Sunday, June 30th.** Please book your return flight to departure between **11:00am-4:00pm.** The Organization will not be able to provide a shuttle other than the above listed time frame. PHX airport is a 20 minute drive from the hotel.

In some cases, contestant may live in an area without a major airport which may result in difficulties to find a flight to arrive during the above time frame. Please work it out on your own to arrive within the requested time.

Contestants flying from the east coast must consider the difference of time zones and the flying hours. For example, if you are flying from New York to PHX, the trip is a minimum of 5 hours if it's a non-stop flight, plus the 2-3 hour difference in time zones; this makes it a total of SEVEN hours. If you fly at 11am, you will arrive by 4pm, that will be too late to check-in to the pageant. We strongly advise you to consider an early morning flight.

## Brief Outline of Schedule

Rehearsal will begin once you arrive to the hotel and check-in. This will begin with checking your Photo IDs and you will sign the pageant contract which is similar to the terms and conditions which you agreed to when you paid the application fees. Rehearsal will

**Congratulations** for making it this far; it is a huge success to have reached this level in the competition. You should be proud to have been selected as a finalist in the Miss Arab USA 2024 Pageant. Below we will outline a general description of what will take place during the pageant week, as well as all the steps you will need to take in the next few weeks leading up to the pageant. Everything will be described here in detail, so please refer to this handbook if you have any questions or concerns. We know this is a lot of information, so as always, feel free to email us. Send ALL your emails to [info@MissArab.Org](mailto:info@MissArab.Org) We are looking forward to crowning the next Miss Arab USA, so be prepared and good luck!

### Items you are required to bring to the Pageant:

- Debit or Credit Card
- Photo ID
- 1 Formal Gown (2 recommended)
- 1 Business Casual outfit
- 1 National Dress
- White shoes, dark blue jeans, and leggings
- Clothing for the remainder of the trip
- Make-up, hair products, and accessories



### Hotel

Full accommodations will be provided by the Miss Arab Organization. The hotel you will be staying at is the Hilton Hotel in Chandler, AZ. All contestants will need to bring a credit or debit card to cover any incidentals (*room service, phone calls, damages, etc.*) at the hotel. You will be assigned a room number and roommate once you arrive and it is randomly selected by the pageant committee. Roommate assignments will be final.



last from the day of your arrival until the the pageant show. Your personal interviews with the judges will be on Friday. The Final Pageant dress rehearsal will take place on the morning of Saturday. The pageant will start 8:00 PM.

### Dress and Clothing Requirements

You need: 1 formal gown, 1 business casual outfit, 1 national dress. We recommend that you bring 2 gowns and 2 casual outfits in case anything happens to them.

There are any number of accidents that could occur - rips, spills, burns, or even worse, one of the other contestants has the same dress! So bring 2! Each girl is required to bring 1 national dress/costume. The National Dress is a traditional outfit from your country of origin - so represent your country well!

**ALL DRESSES NEED TO BE APPROVED!**  
**Submit pictures for approval before you purchase!**



**Formal Gowns** - Requirements for the gown - MUST be floor length, no HIGH slits in the legs, NO super low backs, example above.



**Casual Dresses** - You need 1 business casual dress or outfit (you can wear pants) for the opening part of the pageant. Wear something that you are comfortable in, nothing too revealing, and nothing too flashy. The photo above shows an example of business casual, but keep in mind, some of the contestants will lose points because they are not wearing 'Business casual'. This is why all outfits MUST BE APPROVED beforehand.



**National Dress** - you only need ONE national dress. A national dress is an example of traditional clothing from the country you are representing. This means that if you are from Syria, you cannot wear Khaliji style, or if you are Moroccan, you cannot wear Egyptian style.

**Other important clothes** - You must also have clothes for the rest of the week. The dresses listed above are only for the night of the pageant. Bring blue jeans, leggings and white shoes. We will give you a pageant t-shirt & leggings to wear for the photo session, the personal interview, and when we go out on group activities.



Shoes are important. Bring comfortable shoes for rehearsal and appropriate shoes for the night of the pageant. Remember, you have to be able to walk across the stage, stand for up to 25 mins, and not trip on your dress. Keep in mind, you also need appropriate shoes for all of your outfits (evening gown included). You will be responsible of all your makeup, hair styling and accessories for the pageant night, that's a part of your scoring points.

## Cash Prize (Fundraising)



The winner of this year's Miss Arab USA Pageant will receive a \$10,000 conditional cash prize!

### How does that work?

Once the final contestants are announced, there will be a few weeks before the pageant for each contestant to prepare her-

self. We ask that finalists also use this time to contact businesses and friends in her community to ask for monetary sponsors for herself. You are not required to do this. The point of this activity is to assess your involvement in the community and help support the charity cause of the Arab American Organization "AAO" (AAO is the organizer of the Miss Arab Pageant).

Your participation in this fundraising program will only minimally affect your final score in the pageant, and the points will depend ONLY on the effort you make, NOT the amount of money you raise. But of course, raising more funds will give a more positive impression about yourself.

The money raised will go towards making the pageant a success, but at the end, the winner of the pageant will receive a \$10,000 cash prize with a condition of raising a minimum of \$1,000, or ALL the money she personally raised as a cash prize. Therefore the amount of money you can receive as a cash prize for winning depends on yourself.

It is possible to win the title of Miss Arab without raising any money and without participating in this at all, but you will receive no cash prize when you win, and it will affect your fundraising score points.

You will have 3 options to use your cash prize:

1. Take it for yourself
2. Donate it to the Miss Arab charity cause
3. Donate it to a 3rd party charity organization

### Tips for getting sponsors:

- Start with the people you know: friends, family, local businesses you are familiar with.
- Emphasize that our Organization is a non-profit charity 501(c)3 organization, all donations are 100% tax deductible.
- Personalize your request: tell your friends and family that, if you win, all the money they donate will go directly back to you.
- Emphasize the role of Miss Arab USA in promoting community involvement, supporting children, refugees, orphans, homeless, and young women.

-Emphasize the importance of community support and your previous efforts to help the community.

Businesses and individuals wanting to donate will write checks or money orders to Miss Arab USA and write in the comments line "in sponsorship of (contestant's name)."

Checks to be mailed to:  
**Miss Arab Organization**

PO Box 22  
Phoenix, AZ 85001

Send Zelle to [info@aaausa.org](mailto:info@aaausa.org)

They may also donate through PayPal by sending their donation to [donation@aaausa.org](mailto:donation@aaausa.org) in the Notice section write "in sponsorship of (contestant's name)."

The sooner you start your sponsorship search the better!! Again, the purpose of this is to encourage contestants to connect with their local communities. **It is not mandatory.** You will NOT lose your chance at winning if you choose not to participate. The points received from this activity depend on the EFFORT, not on the amount of money raised. This is not a requirement; however we strongly encourage you to try and earn these points as they will help increase your OVERALL score. Please encourage friends and family to support you. You may also recruit local and international companies as sponsors. But start with your local community and the connections with your friends and family. All donations are considered 100% tax deductible as we are a charity organization. All sponsors are welcome, and your bonus points will not be based on the size or amount of the donations made. See the "Cash Prizes" link on the Miss Arab website for more details.



## PUBLIC VOTE

### Miss Arab People's Choice Award

Public vote is an online system that allows family, friends, and the public to vote for you to receive the trophy & title of Miss Arab People's Choice.

The winner of the public vote will be guaranteed a reserved spot in the top 5 finalists, and will receive the trophy of the 2024 People's Choice in a special ceremony.

Winning the People's Choice title will not eliminate or grant you winning the Miss Arab USA title. The winner may hold one or both titles.

The public vote is a paid voting system. It is an increase of 10 votes for \$10, and it is paid by all major debit or credit cards.

The winner of the public vote will be determined based on the amount of funds she collects online.

Public vote is expected to be live on May 30th and ends 12:00am MST on June 29th.



### Pageant's Tickets



Tickets will be on sale by June 5th on our web site MissArab.Org; encourage your family and friends to purchase their tickets for the Pageant extravaganza! We want all of you to have a cheering section supporting you when you step on stage. We know that it is a long way for loved ones to travel, but this is a lifetime memory for all of you and it would be amazing if you are able to share the experience with your friends and family!

Make sure your family and friends buy their tickets together to ensure they are sitting next to each other. Buy tickets early, because we WILL sell out before the Pageant night!

## Representing Miss Arab USA

Starting now, you have the opportunity to build up your score before the pageant. We do look at your social media profiles periodically, to see how you are behaving and representing the Arab culture. We also consider how promptly and clearly you follow the instructions we send. This does not mean that you should not ask questions - if we have missed something important, please tell us.



We are just looking at how well you can communicate with us and how willing you are to take responsibility for your role in the pageant. Please keep in mind at ALL times, that you are a representation to the Arab culture and the Miss Arab Organization now that you've made it to the top finalists. You should be very proud and honored that you have made it this far!

### Point System

You earn a score out of **200** points during the pageant process. You are scored on **70** of those points before you arrive for the pageant. The remaining **130** points are given during the week of the pageant.

The first 70 points of your score are determined by your online promotion, fundraising, your portfolio, public vote, and most importantly, how you communicate with the Organization and how well you **follow instructions**. Read your emails **carefully**, and do what you can to be involved. The committee does spend a lot of time looking at your social media, because we feel it's an important way to measure how well you involve your community and how well you interact with each other. Here is how it is broken down:

#### Before Arrival (70 points)

- 10 Online Profile
- 20 Communication/Following Instructions
- 20 Fundraising
- 20 Public Vote

#### After Arrival (100 points)

- 15 Behavior/Following Instructions
- 30 Personal Interview
- 35 Judges Interview
- 10 Business Casual Outfit
- 10 National Dress
- 10 Gown Dress
- 10 Appearance (*hairstyles & makeup*)
- 10 On-Stage Question

**200 Total Points + 10 Points Talent Bonus**

## Promoting yourself

Start by gathering all the support you can get from friends and family. We are sure all of these people are very proud of you and want to show it! So start with promoting yourself on social media networks you have access to, like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. Also, invite your family and friends to join our fan page on Facebook <http://fb.com/MissArabUSA>.

It is always nice to hear lots of cheers when you get up on stage - so invite everyone you love from your friends and family to come support you while you take a huge step in your life! This is a life changing experience and it should not be missed.

## Talent Segment



The pageant will include a talent segment, but it is optional. If you have a talent you would like to share, start thinking about how you would like to present it. Some suggestions include -singing, dancing, playing an instrument, painting, presenting a movie you made, acting, photography, Acrobat or stand-up comedy, etc. If you choose belly dancing as your talent, you are not allowed to wear a “cabaret style” costume. See attached photo for what sort of costume is allowed. If you have a different talent not listed to present, contact us and give us the details. The talent segment should not exceed 4 minutes.

If you choose to perform a dance segment, you are required to submit a picture of the outfit you choose and the audio file. If you wish to sing, you must provide a digital audio file. There is no live band to provide backup for your talent - submit your own soundtrack (it must be a MP3 file). Finally, if you are going to play music, you must bring your own instrument and submit your audio file sample of what you will be playing.

Those who participate in the talent portion will be given bonus points in the pageant, and one contestant will be picked as the winner of the talent segment and given the title “**Miss Arab Talent,**” which is a separate award from “Miss Arab USA.”



## FAQ's

**Q: Are our friends and family going to be able to vote for us?**

**A:** Yes. The official website ([www.MissArab.Org](http://www.MissArab.Org)) has a public voting system, and that is the only voting that WILL count towards your overall pageant score. The start date for voting will be announced.

**Q: I am promoting Miss Arab USA on Facebook to my friends. Will the “comments” and “likes” on our contestant photos make any difference in our scores?**

**A:** No, it will not affect the judges’ scores.

**Q: Can I bring my own hair stylist and make up artist to the Pageant?**

**A:** You can bring your own team if you want. They will need to register at our website as a volunteer in order to have access to backstage. We will not provide your personal hair or make-up artists with hotel accommodations, or pageant’s tickets. You do have to keep in mind that you will NOT have a great deal of time on the day of the pageant for preparation; everything will be very fast-paced that day.

**Q: Will the winner leave on Sunday with the other contestants?**

**A:** No, the winner will NOT departure on Sunday July 16th. She will remain staying until Thursday July 20th for training & photo-shoots. Her accommodation and any flight change fees will be paid by the organization. It’s recommended, if you have work or school, to give them an advanced notice that you may extend your stay if you win!

**Q: If a contestant wins the talent competition, can she also win the main title?**

**A:** Yes, winning the talent or people’s choice will not eliminate you from winning the pageant. The winner can hold both titles.

**Q: Can I leave the hotel at anytime during my participation?**

**A:** Once you arrive you will be required to follow the daily program of the pageant and be present for all events, you will not be allowed to leave the hotel at any time.

**Q: I found a local business for the fundraising part, but they are asking if their business would be advertised in any way if they continue with the fundraising? They wanted to know in what ways their business will benefit out of it.**

A: There is a difference between sponsoring YOU, and sponsoring the PAGEANT.

Sponsoring YOU will NOT receive any recognition or advertising benefits; this is a fundraising effort for charity only. A business who wants to support charity should not ask to take back; their donations are 100% tax deductible, and you get points for your efforts.

There is only one option that may grant you points, and grant your sponsors advertising benefits: they could advertise on the Pageant's booklet. This way you get the charity efforts' points, but it would not be added to your cash prize qualification! The \$1,000 cash prize qualification must be donated in cash for charity purposes only.

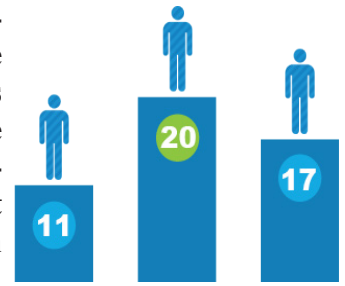
We will email the booklet advertising package to everyone in case you would like to use it.

Sponsoring the PAGEANT is a process handled by our team only. Sponsors will get promoted, advertised, and recognized to millions of people worldwide. The sponsorship package is available upon request, and it is not available on our website. Not all sponsorships will be approved! Many times, we have denied \$10,000 sponsorships from private grocery stores and restaurants. These types of businesses are welcome to advertise on the booklet, but not to be pageant sponsors.

Pageant sponsorship through a contestant will be considered and added to her fundraising effort. email [info@MissArab.Org](mailto:info@MissArab.Org) if you know someone who is interested in sponsoring the pageant.



**Q: How is the public voting scored? I know that the person with the most votes gets a guaranteed top five finalist spot and the People's Choice award, but how is everyone scored on the 20 points?**



A: Public vote score will be based on the ranking 1-20, if you take a look at the vote page, you will see the highest vote is posted first, and then decreased.

So, highest will take 20 points, the 2nd 19 points, the 3rd 18 points, the 4th 17 points, and so on. When there are 2 contestants that have the same votes, they will get the same score, and when the lowest vote, for example is 12, and there is 8 contestants all with zero votes, they all will get zero point scores. scores keep changing every second till the vote is closed.

**Q: Are we allowed to vote for ourselves?**

A: We want you to encourage your family, friends, and fans to vote for you. However, as an honest contestant, you should not vote for yourself. We wouldn't know if you did, but you shouldn't.

**Q: If someone votes for example; \$40.00 is this still only one vote counted? Or are 4 votes counted from the one voter since each vote is a \$10.00 donation?**

A: \$40 is equal to 40 votes, it is based on the money raised. \$40 from one voter, is equal to \$40 from 4 voters (at \$10 each) it is not one vote, it's 40 votes.

**Q: Can we create our own contestants group?**

A: No, this is a violation of our rules and policies. You can not create any ALIKE facebook group, snapchat, whatsapp group, etc.. without prior approval from the organization.

Once you meet with other contestants in person, you will be able to exchange emails, phone numbers, and other contact information, and maintain a lifetime friendship with everyone.

**Q: How much time do I have to prepare before the pageant?**

A: You will approximately have around 3 hours to get ready, but that is subject to change.

**Q: Do I have time to touch up in breaks during the Pageant?**

A: You will have between 10-15 minutes in between segments to touch up, use the restroom, change outfits, etc...

### Q: What is the Facebook Group?.

A: We have started a Facebook group for our 2024 contestants so that you ladies can communicate and get to know each other, receive TONS of information about the pageant, know the answers to tons of questions, receive alerts on upcoming due dates, and learn how to be prepared for the pageant.



If you don't have a Facebook account, we strongly advise you to create one so that you can get to know your fellow contestants before the pageant and feel well informed on the details leading up to the pageant. Participating in the Facebook group is not mandatory, but not participating in the group will result in you missing A LOT of very important information. Think about it and make your decision!

Please send a friend request to the following Facebook account <https://fb.com/LaylaShehabAZ> and you will be added to the Facebook group accordingly.

If you are already a friend of that account, send a message requesting to be added to the contestants' group. Check your NOTIFICATIONS to accept the group membership.

Note: This "Layla Shehab" is the organization's FB account. With this being said, there is no such person, posts & replies are from our staff members.

### Q: What do judges look for?

A: They are looking for confidence, humility, communication, attention-to-detail, timeliness, and basic knowledge. Show your smile, make eye contact, and be well-poised. They are looking for someone who is easy to speak with, conversational and authentic.

Do not try to be a pageant patty by giving the 'perfect cookie-cutter' answer. Your \$500 shoes or your \$5000 gown will not get you any extra points as it does not matter how much you spend but rather how you present yourself. In short, they want to see a woman who knows her brand.

If you make a mistake, just laugh it off, maintain composure, and keep going. But if you do need to correct yourself, there's nothing wrong with saying "excuse me, what I meant to say is...". Don't get hung up on your mistakes!

Be yourself, always communicate with the organization, and always complete your duties and requests on time. Show that you care!



### Q: Could I be EXCLUDED from participating in the pageant after I have been selected?

A: Once you have been selected, your participation can be discontinued by the organization at any point. In the next few weeks, there are many actions that will be needed from you and each required action has a due date. Missing one or more of these due dates may result in you being disqualified and excluded from participating in the pageant.

It's important to understand that you are in a competition. With that being said, there are scores and points for every activity and action which means that missing these points will lead to a decrease in your chance of winning. We want to ensure that ALL final participants have an equal chance of winning the pageant.

We understand that circumstances and out-of-control situations may happen. In this case, communication with the organization is very important, and you may request an extension if needed.

### Q: May I promote myself on social media?

A: Yes, promoting yourselves and the pageant is one of the most important steps leading up to the pageant.

We will upload a banner for each of you with your picture and the Miss Arab logo on the Facebook page (<http://fb.com/MissArabUSA>). Go to this page, click 'LIKE' page, then go to "Photos", and click on the album titled "2023 Contestants." Find your photo and click SHARE. We may also asking that you change your profile picture to the image that it will be posted on the FB group to help you with promotion. You will NOT be allowed to create ANY like or friend pages for your fans; this is a violation of our rules and policies. You can ONLY keep promoting your ID on the Miss Arab USA Facebook page.







**Q: Are we able to bring one family member along with us and can we stay in the same room?**

**A:** We welcome any friends and family you want to bring with you, but we are unable to provide them with rooms at the hotel. All of our contestants will be staying at the Hilton Hotel during the week of the pageant, and they will be given a room to share with one of the other contestants. If you want to stay in your family/friend's room, they must book their room separately with the hotel, and you must inform us **3 weeks** before the pageant that you are intending to do so.

**Q: Do my friends and family get discounted rooms at the Hilton Hotel?**

**A:** Yes, we do have an agreement with the Hotel to get a discounted rate for your friends and family. Individual guests can call the hotel direct for reservation (480-899-7400, press 1) or book online via the private online booking link [CLICK HERE](#).

**Rooms must be booked by June 14th**, otherwise the discount will be expired.

Single Bed \$109.00 + tax

Double Bed \$109.00 + tax

If your family or friends would like to stay somewhere else other than the Hilton Hotel, we encourage you to search for hotels in the local area, zip code for searching is 85225 or 85224. You can not stay with your family in this case.

**Q: Concerns about comments that have been posted on pictures in our public profiles, forum, social media sites (facebook, instagram, etc...)**

**A:** Due to our daily viewing of our profiles, we are aware of most activities that take place on these accounts. We have taken care of inappropriate comments containing profanity or harsh language. However, under the First Amendment, people are entitled to their own opinions, and as a Pageant contestant you should be able to handle the positive and negative comments that might come your way. If you see any inappropriate comments that were not removed, please let us know.

## **DUE DATES**

**Items you are required to submit by May 24th:**

- Flight number and airline
- Arrival and departure time
- If you need a pick-up service from the airport. Please note: your family will not be allowed to use our shuttle as a pick-up service from the airport

**Items you are required to submit by June 7th:**

- Photos of your outfits for the pageant!
- Your talent competition file.

**Items you are required to submit by June 14th:**

- Winner bio!
- Report of your fundraising effort.
- Cash prize distribution

If you have any questions that have not been answered in this handbook, please feel free to email the Miss Arab Organization at [info@MissArab.Org](mailto:info@MissArab.Org)

**GOOD LUCK!**

