

# DANCE-O-RAMA



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# WHAT IS DANCE-O-RAMA?

A Dance-O-Rama event is a total immersion approach to dance development that will offer the biggest gains you'll see in your dance confidence. Think of it as a 3-5 day dance vacation, set in wonderful getaway locations.

Each Dance-O-Rama is an extended weekend of fun activities where students compete, watch competitions, attend cocktail parties and banquets, and see outstanding professional dance shows. Special awards are presented to the top student in each standard, as well as the highest placing instructors and schools.

Additionally, after students have finished their competition, Dance-O-Rama's feature a professional dance competition to cap off the festivities.

## HOW DOES IT HELP?

While taking private lessons is a huge part of developing your dancing confidence, eventually you'll need to work on applying those skills in an unfamiliar environment. To take a page out of football, a quarterback can learn the skills of the position but eventually needs to try those skills in a real environment, with real defenders.

At a Dance-O-Rama event, you'll be performing in front of people who all feel exactly like you do – a supportive community full of people trying to build their dance confidence. This is, by far, the best type of audience for your first performance. Not only is competing at a Dance-O-Rama fun, it'll make your heart beat a little faster and help you develop your dancing hobby.

## INTRODUCTION

# WHO CAN PERFORM?

If you attend an Arthur Murray dance studio, you can go, no matter your level. Every Dance-O-Rama event has specific categories, so experienced students do not participate with newer students. In fact, there's a category specifically designed for new students – the Newcomer Division.

To attend a Dance-O-Rama you don't need a strong desire to compete, win, and destroy the competition. While dancing is a sport, it's more akin to golf than football. You're only competing against your own best efforts, nothing else.

## THE PLACES YOU'LL GO

There are over 10 Dance-O-Ramas held each year in different parts of the world. Some of the most popular, and longest running, Dance-O-Ramas are the World Dance-O-Rama in the Spring, the Unique Dance-O-Rama in the Summer, and Superama in the Fall.

While some locations remain static, such as the Superama in Las Vegas and Unique Dance-O-Rama in Irvine, California. Other events take place in Hawaii and Italy, while the World Dance-O-Rama changes cities each year. As you can expect, with locations like these, many dancers coordinate their vacations to match with their Dance-O-Ramas of choice!





# CHAPTER ONE

# WHAT TO EXPECT



# WHAT TO EXPECT?

Realize up front that you'll never feel "ready" to compete at a Dance-O-Rama. "Ready" is just a word that you'll end up using after the fact, in the past tense. As in, "I really was ready for that event!"

It's also important to understand that everyone gets nervous, from total newbies to seasoned pros. All that means is that you care about what you're doing. For many dancers getting ready to compete, excitement is mistaken for nervousness. Keep telling yourself that you're excited, not nervous, and you'll be amazed at how your inner-monologue will become less negative.

## EARLY DAY ACTIVITY

For those students that want to turn their Dance-O-Rama into a true "dance vacation," we recommend adding the early day activity to your experience. This can include things like guided tours, excursions, and dance activities with Arthur Murray students and staff from around the world. Whether it's a tour of the French Quarter with an evening of

dancing to live jazz music on Bourbon Street, or a waterfall excursion and luau on a Hawaiian island, the early day activity adds the fun of the locale mixed with just the right amount of Arthur Murray.

## CLOSED CATEGORY DAY

A "closed" category, or closed freestyle, means that the material you are dancing is restricted to the dance level you are working on in your dance program. Every dance, every level, and everything will be from your Arthur Murray syllabus. The closed category day is typically on Friday, although it can occasionally begin earlier depending on the size of the event – always check with your teacher to confirm any of your entries.

# WHAT TO EXPECT?

## OPEN CATEGORY DAY

Open category day, or open freestyles, typically land on Saturday. Again, this can vary depending on the size of your event so be sure to confirm with your instructor. An open freestyle takes the syllabus from the closed category and throws it out. Instead, open freestyles feature everything from simple sequences to heavily choreographed routines!

## SOLO ROUTINES

Whereas the closed and open category days consist of multiple dancers dancing at the same time as you, the solo routines are exactly what they sound like. Just you (and your partner) with all eyes watching – it's thrilling, exhilarating, a little bit scary... and a whole lot of fun!

## AMATEUR 3 DANCE

While the majority of a Dance-O-Rama features students dancing with their teachers (referred to as Pro/Am), the amateur division has its own competitive event, with the Amateur 3 Dance is the pinnacle. Featuring student couples, this event includes the foxtrot, tango, and waltz in the smooth/ballroom division, and cha-cha, rumba, and swing in the rhythm division. Couples wear costumes, have choreographed routines, and are judged and placed in the same format as the professional competitions. While dancing with another amateur is an incredible accomplishment in and of itself, the Amateur 3 Dance gives student couples a chance to take their training to the biggest stage.





# WHAT TO EXPECT?

## SCHOLARSHIP

For those students that want to compete against the best in their age category, there is the Scholarship. An event restricted to those who are competing at a Silver level or above, the Scholarship competition is scored and judged in the same format as a professional competition. Scholarship is Pro/Am at its best. It gives spectators an inspiring vision of what dance students are capable of, and it gives participants an opportunity to refine their dancing to a level that earns the attention of everyone in the ballroom.

## ALL AROUND

The basics are the featured item on the agenda in the All Around Competition. With Pro/Am competitors restricted to material from their level in the Arthur Murray syllabus, the dancers can't rely on flashy choreography to gain favor from the judging panel. It's the execution, style, technique, and delivery of the basics that count in this division. This popular addition to the Dance-O-Rama agenda

originally began as an alternative to the scholarship, and in the process has improved the student dance standard of the syllabus across the organization.

## PROFESSIONAL EVENTS

Part of the fun of your Dance-O-Rama experience is having a chance see the teachers in competition. This is usually done when you've finished dancing, wearing your civilian clothing, and enjoying a celebratory drink.



# WHAT TO EXPECT?

## THE PROFESSIONAL ONE DANCE

To showcase some of the exciting dances and dancers Arthur Murray has to offer, the One Dance competitions are a visual treat. Featuring dances like bachata, salsa, hustle, Lindy Hop, or quickstep - this no holds barred event may give you a new perspective on the dance, or the dancers performing them.

## THE FUTURE CHAMPIONS COMPETITION

**Smooth - Waltz, Tango**

**Rhythm - Cha-Cha, Rumba**

In business, you'd call it a startup, in Arthur Murray you call it the Future Champions. Featuring professionals under three years in the business, this two dance competition is restricted to the Bronze and Silver level of the syllabus, but there are no restrictions on style, technique, and execution for these up and coming professional competitors.

## THE RISING STAR COMPETITION

**Smooth - Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Foxtrot**

**Rhythm - Cha-Cha, Rumba, Swing, Bolero, Mambo**

Exclusive to the World Dance-O-Rama and Superama, the Arthur Murray Rising Star is a championship event for professional competitors that have yet to place in the finals of the Open Professional Competition. Couples who have won the Rising Star at both the World Dance-O-Rama and Superama can no longer compete in the category and are then restricted to the open category. This is a huge honor to the competitors.

# WHAT TO EXPECT?

## THE 9 DANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

**Smooth - Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Foxtrot**

**Rhythm - Cha-Cha, Rumba, Swing, Bolero, Mambo**

Some professionals compete in both the smooth and rhythm championships, which total out at 9 competitive dances. The couple with the highest placements in both categories combined receives the Jesse Smith 9 Dance Championship award, named after the late Jesse Smith who was both an Arthur Murray franchisee and United States 9 Dance Champion with his wife Lynda.

## THE OPEN PROFESSIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

**Smooth - Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Foxtrot**

**Rhythm - Cha-Cha, Rumba, Swing, Bolero, Mambo**

**Standard - Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Slow Foxtrot, Quickstep**

**Latin - Cha-Cha, Samba, Paso Doble, Rumba, Jive**

Arthur Murray has one of the largest pools of professional competitors in the world. Proof of this is the Open Professional Championships. In most cases, the preliminary rounds of this event are done early in the day on Saturday, with the remaining quarterfinal, semi-final, and final rounds in the evening. Many Arthur Murray competitors in the final of the Open Professional Category are also United States Champions, like Emmanuel Pierre Antoine and Liana Churliova, Peter and Alexandria Perzhu, Bob and Julia Powers, and Nick and Lena Kosovich, to name a few.

## FAREWELL BREAKFAST

Every Dance-O-Rama ends with the farewell breakfast. This is a great opportunity to look through your collection of dance photos by the on site photographers, share highlights with your fellow students and teachers, and to make plans for a Dance-O-Rama in the future.



# CHAPTER TWO

# HOW TO PREPARE



## CHAPTER TWO

# HOW TO PREPARE

While your Arthur Murray instructors are really great at what they do, they do lack in one area – mind reading.

Despite all of their dance training and customer service skills, the most important thing in making your Dance-O-Rama experience a success is dialogue. Without it, you're left with risk, speculation and the possibility of losing confidence in the project, your instructor, or worse... yourself.

Instead, by communicating opening and honestly with your instructor, you'll be able to begin an incredible collaboration, a united effort to slay any performance anxiety dragons. A true reward.



## SETTING YOUR DANCE CALENDAR

Throughout the calendar year, there will be events of different scale that all work towards a common objective: Building dance confidence.

Whether that is a small event in your studio, a medium sized event for schools in your area, or a large scale Dance-O-Rama, there are strategies you can employ based on your personality and dance goals. Here are a couple:

## NATURAL PROGRESSION

Starting small, and gradually working your way up to a Dance-O-Rama is the most common route to acquiring a steady expansion of your dance comfort zone. This is the traditional route, with each event acting as a rung as you climb the dance confidence ladder.

# HOW TO PREPARE

### SLAY THE DRAGON

If you're a take-no-prisoners type of student that wants to go straight for the big event, we can tell you that it isn't for everyone – and that may be exactly what you are looking for. The benefit in this approach is that every smaller event after your Dance-O-Rama will be much easier in comparison.

### THE ONE RULE TO FOLLOW

Regardless of the approach you take, if you want to supercharge your dance progress, you've got to follow one simple rule: It takes pressure to turn coal into a diamond. It's not comfortable, your heart may beat a little faster, and you can't assign this to your executive assistant or intern. But the goal is to travel far outside your comfort zone, learn, grow and return to laugh at what used to hold you back.

Sit down with your dance instructor and schedule out your events. You may decide to try out a smaller event, such

as the Medal Ball or District Showcase, to prepare for a Dance-O-Rama. Or, you and your instructor might decide that to really get you motivated, you need to jump headfirst into the big one!

### SOLO ROUTINE SUCCESS

Start early and practice often. By starting your solo routine early, you have time to get really comfortable in your dance. The goal is for you to be able to focus on your performance, not the steps. Too often students are preoccupied with thinking about the patterns and timing instead of performing.

If at all possible, perform for an audience before the Dance-O-Rama. It'll give you a chance to test out your routine, get used to being in front of an audience and to get feedback. There's a number of ways to find an audience, from performing it during your lessons and asking others to watch to performing at a studio event.



# HOW TO PREPARE

## AVOID FREAKING OUT ON FREESTYLES

The name of the game is physiology. You can rest easy with the muscle memory you've developed, but nerves can be a nightmare. Here are some tips to vanquishing your nervous energy, and developing dance confidence:

### THE NERVOUS STAGE

It will usually take 15-20 freestyles for your body to calm down. We recommend utilizing fun, fast paced, and low criteria dances like country western and nightclub dances to concentrate your energy on breaking a sweat and smiling on the dance floor.

### YOUR FAVORITE DANCES

You'll find that the dances that are your favorite may also cause the most stress. This is only due to the fact that you've most likely added the most refinement, and criteria, to these. Not to worry, dancing these multiple times will allow you to strip away the nervous energy and your muscle memory will begin to shine through.

## EXPANDING YOUR ZONE

Your teachers may recommend some new dances to you. Fear not, this is not a sign that your teacher has forgotten your goals, who you are, or your dance preferences. This is about acquiring dance confidence by attacking your pre-existing comfort zone.

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT

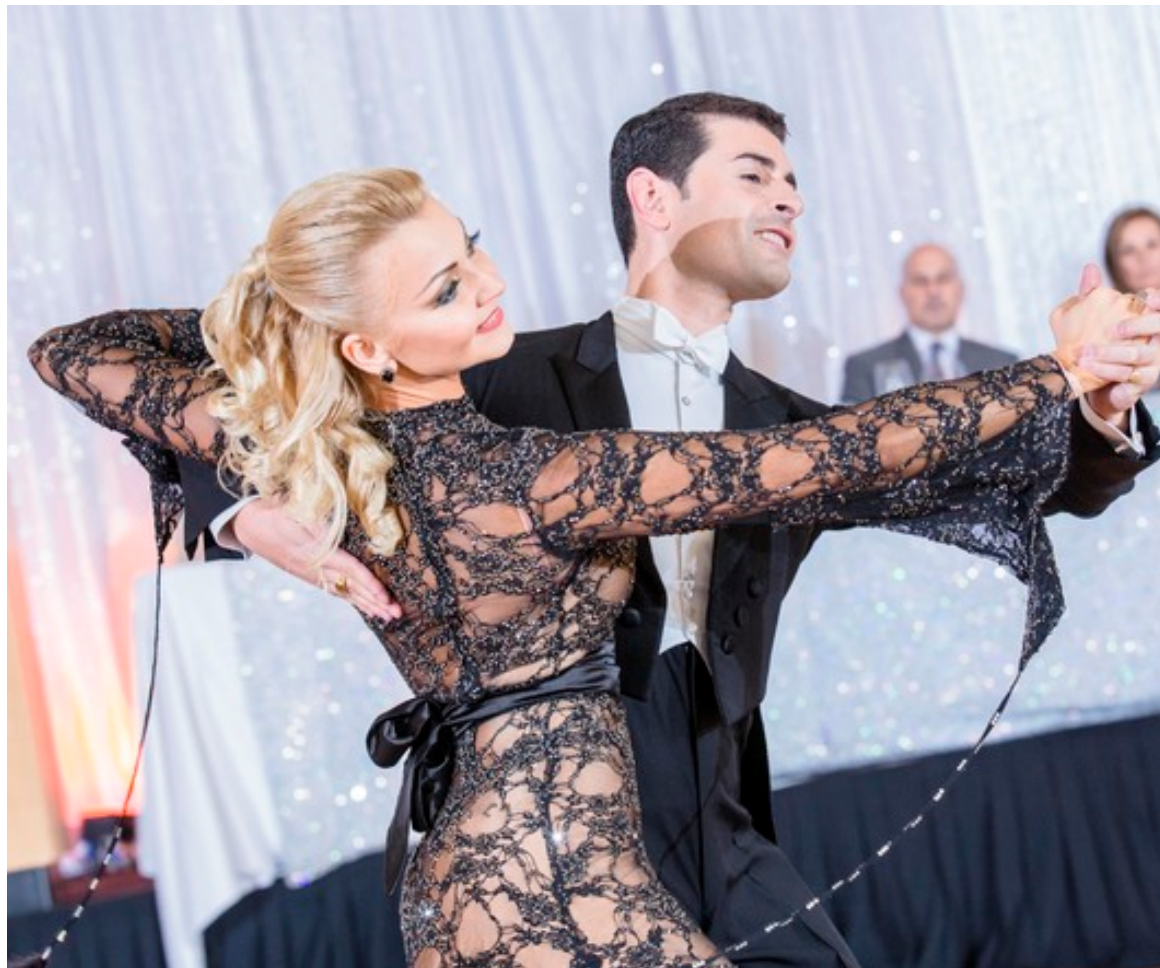
The first, and most important, thing to remember is this: A Dance-O-Rama is a battle to show the best version of your dance ability. A judge will watch you for your own demonstration of the dance, not your teacher's, or another student's. When they are watching you, they are watching you. They want to see clear timing, great posture, confidence, and people that look like they are enjoying their experience. You won't have to worry about politics, conspiracies, or favoritism at a Dance-O-Rama. The judges are looking for objective dance criteria, and you are always dancing against the best version of you.

## CHAPTER TWO

# HOW TO PREPARE

### RECOVERY

Finally, remember that mistakes are normal. It's how you recover that is the real challenge. A bump or stumble (and how you recover) can reveal more about your character than it does about your dance ability.





# CHAPTER THREE

# WHAT TO PACK





# CHAPTER THREE

## WHAT TO PACK

What to bring to your first Dance-O-Rama won't likely be on the top of your mind – you'll probably be preoccupied with your routine and calming down the nerves and excitement. But at some point you'll realize you need to pack and prepare for your Dance-O-Rama experience. You don't want that realization to come at the last minute. Here's what you need to know.

### COSTUME SUGGESTIONS

Is a costume required? Absolutely not. Consult with your teacher about the best entry level outfits to wear. For example, something as simple as a vest and slacks for men can work. Additionally, at the Dance-O-Rama event itself there will be vendors selling costumes, should you be so inclined.

While vendors have plenty of costumes available for immediate use, keep in mind there won't be time to tailor it if you need adjustments. If you want something custom made, each dance costume

company has a team of designers that help sketch, fit, and construct your costume.

### DANCE SHOES

If you don't own a pair of dance shoes yet, now may be the time to move away from the tennis shoes and into something more comfortable. While there's plenty of online retailers to choose from, ballroom dance shoes don't typically match your street shoe size. For that reason you may want to visit a local retailer. Here's what you should look for.

Men have it easy with two choices: Latin or smooth heels. Latin shoes have a 1.5" heel while smooth shoes are more akin to normal dress shoes. If you want to play it safe, go with the smooth heel with matte leather. Matte may not look as fancy, but it can help you avoid a stumble.

For the ladies it's a little more complicated. Stay away from glittery 3" rhythm shoes. Rhythm shoes have a distinct difference from your standard heel and will take some getting used to.

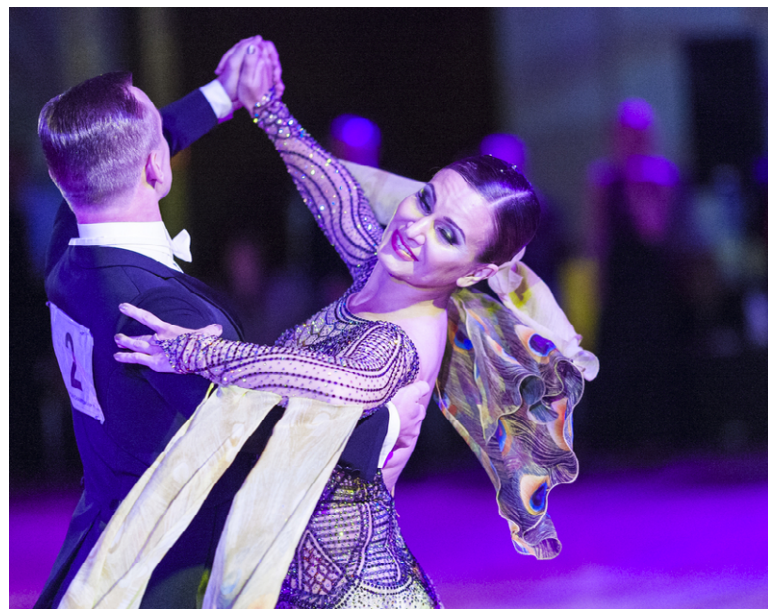
## CHAPTER THREE

# WHAT TO PACK

But if you can't fathom dancing without heels, consider a smooth shoe. These shoes have a closed toe and provide more structure than the typical rhythm shoe.

### RANDOM ITEMS YOU'LL TYPICALLY FORGET

- A formal dress-up outfit. On Saturday night, after students have finished dancing there will be a spectacular formal affair celebrating your achievements, along with an opportunity to watch the professionals compete.
- Scissors and hairpins. Scissors can end up being the dance competition equivalent of a swiss army knife, while hairpins keep your hair and accessories from flapping out of control.
- Snacks, water and mints. You're going to get tired and thirsty, so it's critical to stay hydrated and keep your energy up with food.
- A sweater or wrap. While you may be running hot on the dance floor, it can get chilly in the ballroom. It's more comfortable and better for your dancing to stay warm between heats.
- Extra dance pants and bras. It doesn't hurt to bring extras, ladies. In the hustle and bustle of changing outfits throughout the day, you won't always know where that one item is, and you'll thank yourself for remembering to pack extra.
- Your heat sheet. The heat sheet is the schedule of events and their order throughout the weekend. Things can get hectic, so don't try to rely on your memory alone – bring your sheet.
- A great attitude! This is going to be an amazing and fun experience. So get excited, and be ready to have a great time!



# CHAPTER FOUR

# MAINTAINING PROGRESS

# AFTER RETURNING





## CHAPTER FOUR

# MAINTAINING PROGRESS AFTER YOU RETURN

With the overwhelming anticipation of your Dance-O-Rama event in the weeks leading up to it, putting thought into what you'll do once it's over is undoubtedly the last thing on your mind. And that's perfectly understandable! That said, it's wise to spend a few minutes thinking about what you'll do once you're back home. Not only do you want to maintain the immense progress you'll have made, but you'll want to plan ahead to avoid those just-back-from-dancing blues.

## BACK HOME

It's human nature to return from any kind of vacation with a small sense of dread. Whether that is brought on by the reality that you'll be returning to work soon, or that you have a mountain of laundry to look forward to, it's normal.

The same can be said for a dance vacation, and the real world can feel very muted in comparison to the dance world you just spent time in. While your body may suggest a week off, your brain needs dancing to counteract the stark contrast as you adjust back to the world of no rhinestones.

So what do you do? Here are some tips for maintaining progress after returning home:

- **Monday, Monday.** If you return on a Sunday, have a lesson or two pre-scheduled for Monday. Every achy muscle in your body will fight this, but this lesson will be less strenuous, and absolutely important in the event that you are down in the dumps about your dance performance.
- **Work with a coach.** As soon as possible, set up some coaching lessons. In some cases, the coach may have judged you at the Dance-O-Rama. This will be how you build on the event, and load up the next chapter of dance information. Coaches also serve as a great objective voice in the event that you, or someone you know, has tuned out the voice of their teacher.
- **Share your thoughts.** Nothing can improve that remains in secrecy. If you felt like your footwork could have been better, let your teacher know. If you were bummed out by your mambo timing, let your teacher know. There's a trend

## CHAPTER FOUR

# MAINTAINING PROGRESS AFTER YOU RETURN

forming here. In every case, your teachers will put your concern into a better, and more productive, perspective.

- Assess your goals. A Dance-O-Rama is not a pass/fail. There should always be personal goals you've discussed with your teacher about customized aspects of your own dance journey. The 48-72 hours after you've finished is the time when those goals will be the most relevant and clear. It's during this window where you and your teacher should assess and improve upon your current goals, as well as discuss a revised strategy for your next dance event.

## PLANNING YOUR NEXT DANCE-O-RAMA

Any Dance-O-Rama is like cooking a Thanksgiving dinner, or planning a wedding – you can't do it at the last minute. While a dance vacation like these can be a great experience even at the last minute, planning six months to a year in advance is standard.

## FOR THE DANCE-O-RAMA STUDENT

Every souvenir program will include the dates of Dance-O-Rama's in the future, and the Sunday Farewell Breakfast is an ideal time to create a strategy with your teacher.

## FOR THE VACATIONING STUDENT

Most Dance-O-Rama's are located in dream vacation destinations like Las Vegas, New York, Miami, or Hawaii. For frequent travelers, a Dance-O-Rama may be the starting (or ending) point of a longer vacation. This type of planning is not for beginners, and requires dialogue with management to ensure the proper logistics.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# MAINTAINING PROGRESS AFTER YOU RETURN

### FOR THE FIRST TIME STUDENT

Any event like this will be a departure from your comfort zone. There are very few students that walk in for their first lesson immediately thinking about events like these. You can't go wrong with any Dance-O-Rama for your first experience. Here are some ideas:

- Participate at a Dance-O-Rama located close to family and friends so they can see you shine in your new hobby.
- Attend a Dance-O-Rama that is far enough from home so that it feels like a true vacation.
- Try a Dance-O-Rama close to a major tourist attraction.
- Schedule a Dance-O-Rama after a major milestone at work, in your personal life, or in your dance hobby.

Remember, regardless of what your inner pessimist may say, the only reason your instructor brought up a Dance-O-Rama to you was because you're ready for it. Your dance hobby has come a long way since the "testing the waters" stage, and a Dance-O-Rama will be the proof of that.

