

# Fashion, Music and Style

## Dining etiquette

Upon hearing the word "three-course meal", our mindset automatically goes to Europe. However, the three-course meal was introduced in the 9th century by a man named Abul- Hasan Ali ibn Nafi, also known as Ziryab (the blackbird), which was his nickname. He came from Iraq to Cordoba, Andalusia (Spain) and suggested that a meal should start with a light soup followed by a main meal consisting of fish, meat or poultry and finished off with fruit and nuts. Also, the use of a table cloth and cutlery was introduced by him. Ziryab was a trendsetter for clothing, food, etiquette and music.

- Queen Christina of Denmark, Sweden and Norway ate her food in the Muslim way.
- Crystal was made of sand and stone by the Muslim genius Abbas ibn Firnas, who died in 887 CE. Ziryab switched to using much lighter crystal glasses while eating, instead of the heavy metals (copper, bronze, silver and gold) cups which were common in the 9th century.
- Muslim potters introduced dining in style by producing plates and glasses made from ceramic and polished glass.

## Music

Even some of the well-known modern musical instruments are designed by 9th century Muslims.

- Al-Kindi started with the use of musical script, this is a system that was used to write music down. They did not use letters but syllables, namely Dal – Meem – Ra – Fa – Sad – Lam – Seen, which are similar to today's do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti.
- 1100 years ago, Al-Kindi discussed in detail the design and sounds for the lute. The word lute, comes from the Arabic 'al' ud ', which simply means 'wood'. This is also the predecessor of the guitar.
- Al-Kindi had discovered the therapeutic value of music in a very early stage. Once a father with his crippled son came to visit him. With therapeutic music Al-Kindi treated the boy and had a brief conversation with the father. Music was also played at some Bimartistans (hospitals).
- Al-Farabi created the rababah, a predecessor of today's violin. He also wrote several books, but his masterpiece was "The Big Book of Music", a book in which the theory of music was written.
- Present-day musical instruments owe their names to the Arabic language. The lute is derived from al-ud, rebec (violin instrument) from rababah, guitar from qitarah and naker (drums) comes from naqarrah.

- Ziryab was named blackbird for a reason: because of his musical voice and beautiful dark skin. He played a crucial role in the distribution of music. He was chief entertainer in the court of Caliph Abd al-Rahman II and earned 200 gold dinars a month.
- In 1299 the Ottoman Caliphate was the first state to have a military musical band, called "Mehterhane Military" Band. Wherever the Caliph went, he was accompanied by the orchestra. They also would arrive and play in the middle of battles to rouse the spirit of their soldiers.

## Fashion

Baghdad was the source for the latest news in the field of fashion, as Paris and New York are now the centers of fashion. And the father of fashion was the blackbird: Abul- Hasan Ali ibn Nafi (Ziryab).

- Abul- Hasan Ali ibn Nafi introduced the wearing of short hair in Córdoba. According to Al-Maqqari the people in al-Andalus (Andalusia, Spain) and Cordoba carried their hair long, down to the shoulders and parted in the middle. This was for both men and women. Ziryab, however, had cut his hair short and wore a pony-tail to his eyebrows. He also popularized shaving among men and was always introducing new hairstyle trends. The nobility used rose water to wash their hair, but Ziryab introduced the use of salt and aromatic oils to improve the condition of the hair.
- Ziryab also fabricated deodorant to smell good and toothpaste. He encouraged taking a bath both in the morning and in the evening. He also stressed the importance of physical maintenance and personal hygiene. In Europe it was not customary to take a bath, sometimes not even once a month.
- Ziryab also introduced seasonal clothing. Depending on the weather, season or time of day, he dressed in various styles and garments. He used various colored and striped fabrics and transparent material. Even now his style can be found in Morocco.
- Muslim Writers al-Saqati and Ibn Abdun described in detail how soles made of cork should be fabricated for shoes. They described the work of a mysterious sandalmaker Abdullah. The use of corksoles was a legacy of the Romans, but was polished and refined by Muslims in Andalusia. The softer / springy soles were worn by all classes of society.

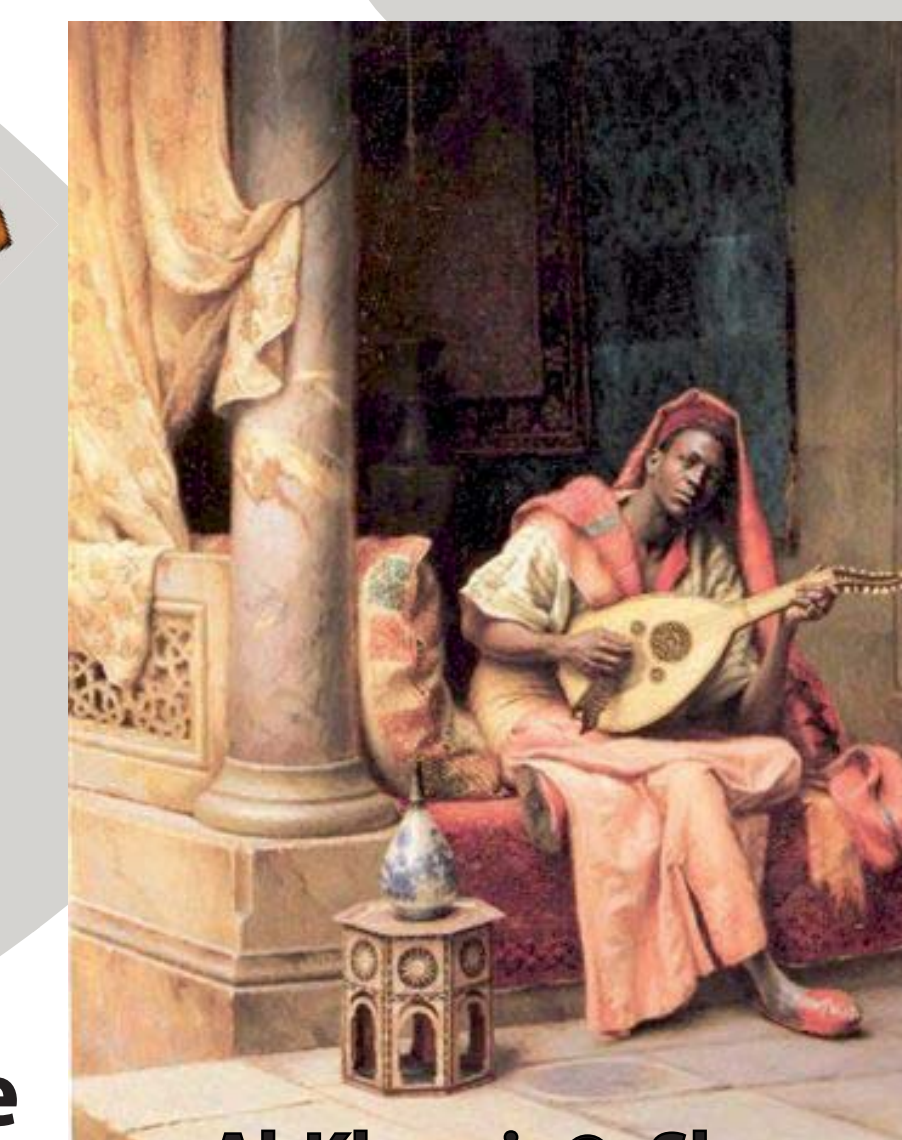


Naqarrah



Zuma

Ziryab:  
Master of Style



Cristal cup  
inlaid with  
gold, rubies,  
emeralds and  
diamonds.  
Mughal, India.  
16th Century CE



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