

ANNARELLA CONSERVATORY

SUMMER INTENSIVE

USA Dancers & Families Handbook

Leiria, Portugal

One place, one answer: practical guidance for dancers and families traveling with the USA group.

Welcome

This handbook is designed for dancers and families traveling to Annarella Conservatory in Leiria, Portugal through Louise Taitz. It brings together the practical information families need before travel, during the intensive, and for the trip home. **Every participating family is required to read this handbook, sign the acknowledgment on the final page, and submit it to Louise Taitz.**

1. Training at Annarella: What to Expect

The Cuban Ballet Foundation

Annarella's classical training follows the methodology of the **Cuban Ballet School**, where Annarella herself trained before later graduating as a specialist in Classical Dance from Cuba's Instituto Superior de Arte.

The Cuban school developed from a combination of major classical traditions, particularly the **Russian/Vaganova school**, while also incorporating influences from the French, Italian, British and other schools. Rather than simply copying one system, Cuban teachers selected and adapted elements to develop strong, technically secure and expressive dancers.

The Cuban method was shaped through the work of some of the most important figures in Cuban ballet, including **Alicia Alonso, Fernando Alonso and Alberto Alonso**. Fernando Alonso became one of the central figures in the development of Cuban ballet pedagogy.

That **Cuban foundation** remains at the center of Annarella's classical training today. Over the years, the Conservatory has also worked with prominent Cuban teachers such as **Ramona de Sáa**, one of the major figures in the development and codification of Cuban ballet training, while continuing to expose students to teachers and coaches from other international schools and traditions.

A Training Method with Results

The Cuban method is not simply a style of ballet. It is a **structured training system** refined over generations of dancers and teachers—and the results of that training are very visible at Annarella.

Today, more than 50 dancers trained at the Annarella Sánchez Conservatory are pursuing professional careers around the world. Annarella alumni have gone on to some of the most recognized names in international ballet, including **The Royal Ballet in London, Vienna State Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet, Bayerisches Staatsballett, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Dutch National Ballet and Finnish National Opera and Ballet**. Other graduates are dancing professionally with companies across Europe, Asia, Africa and beyond, including **Companhia Nacional de Bailado, Ljubljana Opera and Ballet, National Theatre Brno, Sofia Opera and Ballet, Opéra de Metz, Balletto di Milano, Varna Ballet, Cairo Opera Ballet, Cape Ballet Africa and Chongqing Ballet of China**. The reach of Annarella's training extends beyond traditional ballet companies as well, with graduates building careers in major international commercial and theatrical productions.

Among the most prominent examples is **António Casalinho**, who began training with Annarella at eight years old, won **First Prize and the Contemporary Dance Prize at the Prix de Lausanne in 2021**, became a Principal Dancer with Bayerisches Staatsballett and is now a **Principal Dancer with Vienna State Ballet**. **Margarita Fernandes**, another Annarella-trained dancer, is now a **First Soloist with Vienna State Ballet**. **Maia Rose is dancing with The Royal Ballet in London, Matilde Rodrigues with Birmingham Royal Ballet, and Núria Fernandes with the Paris Opera Ballet Junior Company**.

And these are not isolated success stories. **In just one recent five-year period, 36 Annarella dancers moved into professional companies**, while successive generations of students have earned significant recognition at major international competitions including **Prix de Lausanne and Youth America Grand Prix**.

For a Summer Intensive dancer, there is an important message behind those results. The detailed placement work, slower combinations and corrections that may initially feel unfamiliar are part of a training tradition with a long history and a remarkable record of developing professional dancers. You may only have a few weeks at Annarella, but you are stepping into the same studios, methodology and teaching culture that have helped dancers reach **The Royal Ballet, Vienna State Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet and other leading stages around the world**.

What a Training Day Looks Like

Each day, in addition to **ballet technique** and **pointe classes** in the morning, dancers are offered **contemporary** and a **conditioning/flexibility class** after lunch, such as **acrobatics, PBT or stretching**. The schedule may also include **character** or other dance styles; guest masterclasses and specialty classes may include **Latin, Caucasian or Slavic dance**, for example. **Maestro Annarella strongly believes in dance diversity** and brings in master teachers from different styles whenever possible.

The schedule is busy, and not every dancer will take every extra afternoon class every day. Two afternoon classes may happen at the same time, a dancer may have a rehearsal scheduled, or she may sometimes need to choose between options. This can feel a little frustrating at first, but dancers help one another navigate the process, and the **Secretary does their best to keep track and help every student be in the right class**.

Classes normally begin at 9:30 a.m., with a one-hour lunch break from approximately 1:30–2:30 p.m. The end of the day varies depending on classes, casting and rehearsals. Some dancers may finish around **5:30–6:30 p.m.**, while rehearsal-heavy days—particularly as a Gala approaches—can continue until approximately **8:30 p.m.**

The daily schedule is usually updated each morning and displayed on the large screen in the lobby. **Dancers should make a habit of checking it when they arrive and throughout the day, as schedules can change quite often.**

Learning to Navigate the Day

One of the valuable parts of the intensive is the **independence** it encourages. Dancers learn to check their own schedules, keep track of classes and rehearsals, manage their belongings, arrive where they need to be on time, and **adapt when plans change**. In many ways, it gives young dancers a first **taste of professional company life**, where schedules can shift, rehearsals are added, and dancers are expected to **stay informed and take responsibility for themselves**.

Participating dancers will also be cast in **Gala choreography**. As the Gala approaches, part of center and across-the-floor work may be used to rehearse assigned choreography. **This becomes part of repertoire work and is coached carefully as part of the training rather than simply running a dance.**

The work in technique class is often **deliberately slow and detailed**, but **slow does not mean easy**. Training is **concentrated, physically demanding and intense**. To get the most out of the training and return home a better dancer, **stay focused**.

Placement Day

The first day of each week is a placement day. **Maestro Annarella observes dancers every Monday** and assigns placement according to the work she believes each dancer needs to concentrate on.

Maestro Annarella believes **summer is a perfect time to fill technical gaps** that can help a dancer progress in the following season. Sometimes the issue may be surprisingly fundamental: weight distribution over the balls of the feet, keeping the pelvis square, alignment, turnout mechanics, or another detail that is limiting the next stage of the dancer's technique.

A dancer may therefore work beside younger or older students, or dancers who appear to be at a different overall level. That does not necessarily reflect her talent or performance ability. **Trust the teacher's judgment and trust the process.**

This summer intensive is not about levels, comparisons and who is standing next to you. **Focus in class, listen carefully and work on what the teachers are asking you to change.**

Portuguese/Spanish Language and Corrections

You are coming to train in **Portugal in an international environment**, and many teachers are Spanish-speaking. Some speak English very well and some less, and even when a translator is present, not every word will always be translated. Expect not to understand everything at first, but **keep listening**.

The first week can feel frustrating, but it gets easier. Watch demonstrations, observe other dancers and try to understand the intention behind the correction. **Maestro Annarella trains a highly international student body, and dancers from many countries learn to work successfully across language differences. You can do it, too.**

Don't confuse directness, language differences or intensity with personal criticism - concentrate on the work. Corrections may sometimes sound harsher in another language than intended. **Remember, teachers correct you because they see your ability to improve.**

2. Travel to Portugal, Leiria

Airport Transportation

For the main arrival and departure dates, a **USA-group charter bus** may be organized between Lisbon Airport and Leiria. Exact times, availability and cost depend on the current year's flight schedules, so families should check the group travel information before booking flights whenever possible.

Dancers arriving outside the charter schedule can arrange transportation directly with **Victor / Silver Coast Tours**, a local transportation service familiar with the Annarella group. Families may share a van when arrival times are compatible. When several families share a transfer, **choose one person to communicate** with Victor so that pickup information, flight delays and changes remain clear.

If a flight is delayed, the **designated contact** should update Victor directly rather than having several families message him separately.

Pack with independence in mind. Dancers should be able to manage and lift their own luggage and are expected to help load and unload it. This is a good reason not to overpack.

Return Flights

Do not book the return flight until the current Gala dates are confirmed. For U.S.-bound flights, plan a **generous amount of time at Lisbon Airport**. International departures can involve check-in, security and passport control, and the process may take longer than families are accustomed to in the U.S. **Flights after noon are preferable when possible.**

For very early departures, spending the final night in Lisbon may be easier than traveling from Leiria to the airport before dawn.

Whenever possible, coordinate flights with the USA-group travel schedule before booking rather than trying to fit transportation around an already-purchased ticket.

3. Independence, Supervision & Daily Life

This is not an American-style recreational camp where teenagers are entertained or escorted every minute. Dancers are given a **degree of independence**, and families should prepare them for it before arrival.

Dancers should know how to:

- use a debit card and keep track of spending money.
- use Uber/Bolt as part of an assigned group.
- put together a few simple meals and manage snacks/lunch.
- keep track of keys, phone, passport copy and dance supplies.
- manage laundry and keep personal items labeled.
- carry and organize your own luggage.

Chaperone's Support

Independence does not mean dancers are expected to handle every problem on their own. **Louise is the primary point of contact for day-to-day concerns and is available to help dancers when they need adult support.**

Dancers should come to her with **health concerns or injuries, problems with their room or accommodation, questions they don't know how to solve, or practical issues that come up during their stay.** If a dancer needs medical attention, she will help arrange a doctor or walk-in clinic and accompany an unaccompanied dancer when necessary. She can also help with practical things such as finding or purchasing something a dancer unexpectedly needs.

Health concerns, injuries, accommodation problems or anything a dancer cannot reasonably resolve on her own should be communicated rather than quietly managed alone.

Free Time for Unaccompanied Dancers

Unaccompanied dancers are given a **reasonable amount of freedom** after classes. Weekends usually provide opportunities for outings—often a **trip to the beach, the mall, or a walk around town.** Leiria is very walkable, with plenty of hiking/biking trails, small waterfalls, shops, restaurants and cafés where dancers can sit together, have something to eat and enjoy their free time.

The goal is to give dancers room for independence while maintaining a clear system of **accountability.** Dancers should communicate where they are going, who they are going with and approximately when they expect to return. **Each room has a designated room contact** who is responsible for communicating this information and providing an **evening room count** confirming that everyone is back and accounted for. If plans change significantly, dancers should send Louise an update. **Random room checks** may also take place, and **current-year curfew and check-in times should always be followed.**

Travel outside Leiria: If an unaccompanied dancer plans to leave Leiria—for example, for a day or weekend trip to Lisbon—**written permission from a parent/guardian is required in advance.** This applies even if the dancer will be traveling with another dancer's parent or another adult.

Beach Days

Beach days require a little more planning because bus tickets need to be purchased ahead of time. Transportation is usually coordinated so that everyone who wants to participate can be included, but dancers should **pay attention to instructions and deadlines for signing up.**

A Portugal summer tip: Don't be fooled by the mild temperatures—the Portuguese sun can be surprisingly intense, especially at the beach. **High-SPF sunscreen, a hat and a lightweight sleeved cover-up are a must.** Bring plenty of **water and appropriate footwear,** and remember to reapply sunscreen throughout the day.

Daily Transportation

Dancers travel to and from the conservatory in **assigned small groups using Uber/Bolt.** Roommates are grouped together when possible. Do not casually switch groups, because the system is designed so no dancer is accidentally left behind.

Start Here: Your Summer Intensive Preparation Checklist

There are many details involved in spending several weeks training in Portugal, but you do not need to figure everything out at once. **Work through this checklist in order.**

☐ 1. Secure Your Place with the USA Group

Once your dancer has been accepted, a **\$400 non-refundable administration fee** is required to secure her place with the USA group.

Payment: Zelle to **danceleiria@yahoo.com**

Please include: dancer's name + "Administration Fee"

You are encouraged to pay **as soon as possible once you have decided to participate**, as USA-group spots are limited and a place is not guaranteed until the administration fee has been paid.

Families must also read the handbook and return the signed **Acknowledgment/Agreement** page as part of the acceptance process.

☐ 2. Complete the Annarella Conservatory Summer Intensive Registration

After securing your place with the USA group, every dancer must also register directly with **Annarella Conservatory** for the Summer Intensive.

Complete the Annarella Conservatory Summer Intensive Registration Form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScGae_fWgRZQ0lZhTBYY2nalhj26JWulUSShtOJq4jtlbgmlw/viewform

Under **Academy**, enter **Louise Taitz**.

Under **Observations**, include any relevant allergies, chronic medical conditions or previous injuries that the Conservatory should be aware of.

☐ 2. Pay Annarella Summer Intensive Tuition

Summer Intensive tuition is paid **directly to Annarella Conservatory** and is separate from the USA-group administration fee.

Current payment and banking instructions will be provided to families separately. Please use the banking information provided for your summer rather than details from a previous year.

Full tuition payment is due by April 20.

Tuition

Attendance	Tuition	Amount to Send
2 weeks	€750	€765
4 weeks	€1,450	€1,465

The additional **€15** is a general estimate of international bank/exchange fees that may be deducted before the payment reaches Annarella. Actual fees vary by bank and payment method; the buffer helps avoid a small outstanding balance on arrival.

Due date for full tuition payment is April 20

☐ 3. Confirm and Pay for Accommodation

USA-group dancers and families may stay with the group at **Eurosol Residence in Leiria** or arrange their own accommodation.

If you would like to stay with the USA group at Eurosol, **please arrange your accommodation through Louise** rather than contacting the hotel directly. Louise reserves a block of rooms for the group and coordinates room assignments before sending the final arrangements to the hotel.

Unaccompanied dancers are housed together on designated floors, while dancers traveling with parents and families are housed separately. Louise also considers the **dancers' ages** when **arranging roommates** and the size of each family and length of stay when selecting the most appropriate apartment.

Eurosol Residence offers apartment-style accommodations with **breakfast, Wi-Fi, a seasonal outdoor pool and basic kitchen equipment, so families do not need to bring pots, pans or utensils.**

For general budgeting purposes, 2026 group rates were approximately €70–€90 per night, depending on apartment size and occupancy. Rates may change each summer. **Contact Louise with your interest in staying at Eurosol for current group rates and availability.** She will coordinate the appropriate room arrangement based on family size, length of stay and, for unaccompanied dancers, age and roommate needs.

Families are also welcome to arrange their own apartment or hotel in Leiria. If doing so, **consider the location carefully**—dancers will need convenient daily transportation to and from Annarella.

☐ 4. Book Flights & Prepare for International Travel

Before purchasing flights, check the **current Gala dates and recommended USA-group arrival and departure dates.**

An Optional Travel Agent for booking your flights:

Patricia Clarke

Infinity Travel / Expert Journeys Travel

Phone: **+1 847-528-4949**

Email: patricia@expertjourneystravel.com

Client registration form:

https://www.vacationcrm.com/IFrameRegistration?lookup_id=dadf9947-ee48-4f5c-a0c8-e86e5e326038&utm_source=chatgpt.com

When completing the form, select **Patricia C.** For U.S. telephone numbers, enter **+1 followed by the 10-digit number without spaces or dashes.** Patricia generally contacts families within **1–2 business days** after receiving the registration form, although holidays can affect response time.

Her travel-planning fee is **\$75 per person**: \$40 non-refundable before she begins researching flights and another \$35 when the ticket is issued.

Her service can include researching and booking flights, helping with entry requirements, seat selection and special requests, and assistance if flights are delayed or cancelled.

She can also help families **arrange additional travel within Portugal or elsewhere in Europe**; additional planning fees may apply.

If you are purchasing a ticket for your child traveling independently, or if you would like your dancer to use the organized airport transportation, **choose flights that coordinate with the USA-group airport transportation schedule.**

Once your travel dates are confirmed:

- Check the current **Portugal/EU entry requirements for U.S., Canadian and Mexican travelers**, including whether an online travel authorization is required for that summer (check **ETIAS**).
- Make sure the dancer's **passport will remain valid for the at least three months beyond the planned departure from the EU**
- Book the return flight the day **after the dancer's final Gala date**.
- Save the complete flight itinerary—you will need it when completing the **Dancer Info Form**.
- If your dancer is traveling alone or with only one parent, check the **Minor Permission to Travel** requirements before departure.

☐ **5. Complete the Minor Permission to Travel Form, if Applicable**

Minor dancers traveling without a parent/guardian should follow the current-year instructions regarding parental authorization, signatures and notarization. Here's the form:

https://www.usadanceinternational.com/_files/ugd/6df147_94e7df5bb276459c9ce4233c17b2797c.pdf

If a minor is traveling with only one parent, permission from the non-traveling parent is **also required**. Families should carry the appropriate written authorization, as a minor traveling with only one parent may be asked to provide proof of consent when entering Portugal.

Make the required documents and keep the authorization with the dancer's travel documents.

☐ **6. After Flights Are Booked, Complete Louise's Dancer Info Form**

This is required for **every dancer**, even if airport transportation is not needed. It is the **central logistics form for the USA group** and includes travel information and other details needed for the summer.

<https://www.usadanceinternational.com/general-clean>

☐ 7. Confirm Airport Transportation

Confirm whether the dancer will travel between Lisbon Airport and Leiria by the USA-group charter bus, Victor/Silver Coast Tours <https://leiriasilvercoast.com> or independently with family.

Dancers arriving outside the organized charter schedule can arrange transportation directly with **Victor / Silver Coast Tours**. Families with similar arrival times may share a van. If sharing a transfer, **choose one family as the point of contact and have only that person communicate with Victor** about arrival times, delays and pickup arrangements.

Victor / Silver Coast Tours —

WhatsApp: +351 917 297 018

☐ 8. Join the Communication Groups

Set up **BAND and WhatsApp** and make sure both parent and dancer understand where to look for official information, schedule changes and group updates.

For Band closer to the departure day, you'll receive an invitation link. Please, make sure you are on it and stay connected and informed.

☐ 9. Prepare Your Dancer

Annarella Conservatory has specific training requirements for the Summer Intensive. **Label everything with the dancer's name**, especially dancewear, shoes, water bottles and items that may be left in a studio or dressing room.

For Girls, bring:

- **Black leotards** for regular training days; **Wednesday is free-choice color day**
- **Salmon/ballet-pink tights** (footed)
- **Black ballet skirt**; other colors may be worn on **Wednesday**
- Salmon/ballet-pink ballet shoes with ribbons
- Pointe shoes and usual pointe accessories
- **Black shorts or skirt and black socks/leggings** for contemporary
- **Black knee pads** recommended for contemporary (but not required)
- **Character shoes**
- **Black character skirt**
- **White practice/platter tutu** for repertoire rehearsals
- **Theraband/resistance band** and small towel
- **Labeled water bottle**

- **Hair should be neat with no flyaways.** For performances: neat **middle-to-high bun with a center part**
- **Stage makeup for Gala performances**
- **A romantic tutu is not required for the USA group***

*If your dancer already owns one, she may bring it, but there is no need to purchase one specifically for the intensive. If needed for rehearsal/performance, it can be rented for **€10 per week** (and usually needed once). Other costume rent (for solo/duo/demi parts) is **€25** per costume.

Note: warm-ups such as jumpsuits, pants, sweaters may be worn while stretching before class but it should be removed before class begins.

For Boys, bring:

- **White ballet leotard**
- **Black footed and footless tights/leggings with white elastics imitating suspenders**
- **Black Lycra waistband**
- **White knee socks and white ballet shoes**
- **Black ballet shoes and high black knee socks**
- **Character shoes**
- **Black socks and shorter black leggings** for contemporary
- **Knee pads**
- **Wednesday training uniform is free choice**
- **Hair gel or wax as needed; hair should be kept neat.** Long hair is not allowed.
- **Theraband/resistance band** and small towel
- **Labeled water bottle**

☐ **10. Prepare an Independent Dancer**

Before leaving home, dancers should be comfortable **using their debit card and managing spending money**, traveling with their assigned **Uber/Bolt group**, **checking a changing daily schedule**, **preparing a few simple meals**, **managing laundry**, **keeping track of keys, phone and belongings**, and **handling their own luggage**.

☐ **11. Prepare for Travel**

Print at least **one paper copy of the dancer's passport** and **save a screenshot to the dancer's phone**. Bring any required travel authorization (if applicable), insurance information and prescribed medications. Bring a **working debit/credit card and some cash in euros**. A good guideline is approximately **€150** in cash per week.

Pack for life in Portugal as well as ballet: comfortable clothes, good walking shoes for cobbled streets, flip-flops or other easy beach shoes, a swimsuit and beach items. **High-SPF sunscreen (can be purchased in Leiria)**, **a hat and a lightweight sleeved cover-up are essentials**.

Practical information During the Intensive

Galas & Performance Preparation

Casting

All dancers participating in the Summer Intensive have the opportunity to perform in the Galas. **Casting is an artistic decision made by Maestro Annarella and the faculty and is not negotiable.** Tuition covers participation in the Summer Intensive but does not guarantee a featured role, solo, or particular place in the choreography.

Casting is based on what the faculty sees in the studio and what each piece needs. It is not determined by how many weeks a dancer attends or by class placement.

Learning to be part of a production is also part of the training. Sometimes a dancer will receive an exciting featured role; another time the most valuable experience may be learning unfamiliar choreography quickly, dancing as part of an ensemble, adapting to a new choreographer, or making a smaller role memorable. Every part is an opportunity to learn, perform and contribute to the Gala as a whole.

We ask dancers and families to respect the casting, avoid comparisons, and encourage dancers to make the most of the role they are given.

Gala participation is optional. If your dancer prefers not to participate, that is absolutely fine—just let Louise know before casting and rehearsals begin so the faculty can plan accordingly.

Private Variation Coaching

Private coaching is available for dancers who would like additional help with a classical variation or other performance material. These sessions are for **variation coaching and artistic polishing** rather than additional technique training—technique is taught as part of the regular daily program.

Coaching is **€60** per hour. Dancers may share a session with one or more other dancers and divide the cost between them.

There is no need to pay the coach directly. **Coaches keep a card on which they record the dancer's name and the amount of coaching time used.** The card is then passed to the Conservatory secretary, who keeps track of the amount due and collects payment. Payment is due before the last day of stay.

Costume rental

Sometimes unexpected performance opportunities come up during the intensive. A dancer may be invited to perform a classical variation she already knows or be offered a solo or demi-solo role in the Gala. **There is no need to pack costumes for every possibility.** Costumes can be rented from the Conservatory for **€25 per costume**, with each costume charged separately. Payment may be made in cash or by transfer.

Once choreography and costumes are assigned, dancers may also be asked to provide a few simple items, such as a white long-sleeved shirt, fishnet tights for a contemporary piece, or a black tie. **Don't try to anticipate every possible request before traveling.** These basics can usually be purchased inexpensively in Leiria at local Chinese variety stores, including World of China.

Stage preparation

- Bring your own **stage makeup**.
- Keep **two clean pairs of tights aside for performance** use.
- Hair for girls: **center part with a secure middle/high bun** unless the choreographer gives different instructions.
- Be prepared for **additional costume instructions** once casting is finalized.

Laundry, Food & Apartment Life

Laundry service

Louise's organized **laundry service** is primarily intended for unaccompanied dancers. In the 2026 plan, the price was **€70** for a **two-week session** and **€140** for **four weeks**, paid in cash in a labeled envelope on arrival. Dancers need the specified collapsible laundry basket and must label every item. **Oversized loads may cost extra.**

Food

Apartment kitchens are **equipped with basic pots, pans and utensils**. Dancers should be comfortable making a few simple foods such as pasta or rice and assembling easy meals from grocery-store foods.

A lunch box or small cooler and reusable ice packs are especially useful for long training days. It is also worth packing a small silicone ice tray. Surprisingly, ice trays are not always included in apartment freezers in Portugal, and finding the simple flexible silicone kind many American families are used to can be less convenient than expected. It takes almost no room in a suitcase and is useful for cold drinks, lunch bags and icing sore muscles after training.

Health & Personal Care

Bring routine medications and a small familiar first-aid kit. Dancers who use an inhaler, EpiPen or other essential medication should have it accessible and make sure Louise has the relevant health information. **Avoid introducing unfamiliar supplements or medications simply because of travel.**

A small travel health kit might include:

- Routine prescription medications
- Inhaler/EpiPen if applicable
- Basic pain reliever normally used by the family
- Bandages and familiar first-aid supplies
- **Sunscreen is a must**, (easy to purchase in Leiria)
- Electrolyte product the dancer already tolerates
- Any usual personal-care products that are familiar and difficult to substitute

If your dancer becomes ill or needs help with an injury, let Louise know. She can help arrange a visit with a local doctor or physical therapist and, for an unaccompanied dancer, make sure she gets the care she needs. Parents will be kept informed when medical care is needed.

Photography, Social Events & Excursions

Annarella Conservatory Social Lunch

During the Summer Intensive, **Annarella Conservatory** organizes a **social lunch for dancers, families and faculty** at a local restaurant with a large outdoor space and swimming pool. The afternoon begins with appetizers served outside, followed by a full sit-down meal, with desserts served buffet-style outdoors.

It is also a chance for everyone to relax and spend time together away from the studios. Dancers can swim, play ball and socialize, while parents and teachers have time to enjoy the afternoon together.

Advance registration is required so attendance and transportation can be organized. Payment is made in cash rather than by bank transfer, in a labeled envelope with the dancer's name and number of people attending. The current-year date, cost, registration deadline and transportation details will be communicated through the USA group.

Dancer photo session

Louise may organize dancer photo sessions during the intensive. In **2026** the session price was **€150** cash in a labeled envelope. Dancers were asked to prepare approximately **15** poses because the photographer does not pose the dancer.

A little tip for accompanying parents: give the photographer some room to work. Try not to hover or direct the session from the sidelines—he is just as invested in creating beautiful images as you are and does his best work when he has the artistic space to create.

BalletShop Leiria & Ballet Rosa Parties

Leiria has a well-stocked local dance store, **BalletShop**, within walking distance of Eurosol. The shop carries Ballet Rosa as well as a wide range of other major dance brands, making it a convenient place to replace dancewear, shoes or accessories during the intensive. Dancers can shop at European prices, which American families may find a little bit more affordable than prices at home. The staff also offers pointe shoe fittings and speaks English.

During the Summer Intensive, **Louise organizes Ballet Rosa parties for dancers and parents at the shop.** These are casual evening gatherings with snacks and drinks, including wine for adults, and an opportunity to socialize and shop after classes. Dancers can shop across all of the brands carried by the store, not only Ballet Rosa, and may also schedule a pointe shoe fitting if needed.

Dates and times vary each summer and will be communicated through the USA group.

BalletShop Leiria

Av. Dr. Adelino Amaro da Costa, Lote 4, Loja 4C, Leiria
Tel. +351 244 833 898

Parent/family excursions

Victor / Silver Coast Tours offers optional sightseeing days for parents and families while dancers are in class. It can be an easy way to explore Portugal without having to plan transportation and logistics yourself.

These are **informal sightseeing days with a local driver rather than traditional guided tours**. If there is a particular place you really want to see, let Victor know ahead of time and confirm the itinerary for the day.

Excursions are **€60 per person** and depend on having enough people signed up to fill the car or van. If there is not enough interest in a particular trip, it may not be possible to organize it.

Entrance tickets, meals and personal purchases are separate, and some attractions require timed tickets that need to be booked in advance. **Victor provides the transportation, helps the group decide where to go and what makes the most sense to see that day, and provides water during the trip.**

Visa and Mastercard are accepted in most places, but it is always useful to have some cash with you.

A useful Portugal travel tip: don't be intimidated if an attraction's booking website opens in Portuguese. Most browsers can translate the entire page into English. On your phone, open the browser menu (the small menu icon near the address bar) and choose **Translate to English**.

Sintra is especially convenient to visit with Victor, as getting between the major sights can be complicated and time-consuming on your own.

Communication

Channel	Use
Email	Official instructions, deadlines and sign-ups.
BAND	Required group communication, updates, photos and day-to-day summer information.
WhatsApp	Direct/private communication and transportation coordination.
Instagram	Optional social/news content.

Louise: +1 847-899-5703 | Steven: +1 847-899-5702

Victor / Silver Coast Tours (WhatsApp): +351 917 297 018

Annarella Conservatory: Travessa do Sol nº 14, Gândara dos Olivais, 2415-599 Leiria, Portugal

A Few Things to Remember

- **Pack light.** Everyday toiletries, clothing basics and last-minute costume accessories are easy to find in Leiria. Bring the things that really matter and don't try to prepare for every possible request.
- **Trust the teaching process.** Don't measure the value of a class by how quickly the combinations move. Some of the most important work at Annarella is deliberately slow and detailed. The professional dancers who came through these studios are a good reminder that mastering the fundamentals matters.
- **Think of placement as a teaching decision, not a status symbol.** You may find yourself beside dancers who are younger, older, stronger in some areas or less experienced in others. Concentrate on why *you* were placed there and what the teacher wants *you* to improve.

- **Keep listening, even when you don't understand every word.** Not every correction will be translated word-for-word. Watch demonstrations, watch the other dancers and listen for the words you begin to recognize. Understanding comes surprisingly quickly.
- **Be flexible.** You are in Portugal, and plans may sometimes come together much closer to the moment than many American dancers and families are accustomed to. Rehearsals can be added, schedules can change and a Gala may suddenly require something you didn't know you needed. It can feel frustrating at first, but remember that you are experiencing a different culture—one that is warm and caring toward its dancers, while also expecting everyone to adapt and contribute to the collective result. **A last-minute change is not a judgment of you personally.** Check your messages and schedule, help one another and be ready to adjust.
- **Let your dancer become more independent.** Keeping track of a changing schedule, figuring out a small problem, remembering what needs to be brought tomorrow, managing money and asking for help when it is genuinely needed are all part of the experience.

The goal is to return home not only a stronger dancer, but a more independent, adaptable and confident one.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT & AGREEMENT

By signing below, we confirm that we have read the Annarella Conservatory Summer Intensive — USA Dancers & Families Handbook and understand and agree to follow the information, expectations and USA-group rules outlined in it.

We understand that dancers are expected to follow the rules regarding conduct, curfew, supervision, accommodations and independent free time, and that failure to follow these rules may result in a dancer being sent home at the parent/guardian's expense without refund of fees.

We understand that schedules, activities, prices and other practical details may change, and that dancers and families are responsible for staying informed through the official USA-group communication channels.

Dancer's Full Name: _____

Dancer's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Full Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Please return the signed Acknowledgment & Agreement to Louise Taitz as part of the acceptance process. Louise Taitz danceleiria@yahoo.com