

# The Arabian Horse



GLADYS BROWN EDWARDS  
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Original painting by Gladys Brown Edwards  
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# THE ARABIAN HORSE

## Horse of the Desert

The Arabian horse is striking. Its entire appearance exudes energy, intelligence, courage and nobility. The neck is long and arched, the back is short, and the tail is naturally carried high. Every time an Arabian moves in its famous “floating trot,” he announces to the world his proud, graceful nature.

Arabians are the oldest pure breed of horse. Nearly unchanged throughout the ages, the purebred Arabian is virtually identical to those ridden in ancient Arabia. Long eyelashes protected the eyes from sand while large nostrils assured easy breathing in a hot, dry climate. Likewise, the Arabian’s deep chest, strong joints and good lungs guaranteed its ability to carry its owner across the large stretches of their desert homeland.

Temperament also sets the Arabian apart from many breeds. For thousands of years Arabians lived among the desert tribes of the Arabian peninsula, bred as war mounts for quick raids into enemy camps. The harsh desert climate required these Bedouin tribesmen to share food and water — even tents — with their horses. As a result, Arabians developed a strong desire for human companionship that carries forward today.

Over the centuries, the Bedouin tribes maintained strict purity of the breed. The Arabian is the only breed whose blood has been preserved for over five thousand years and has contributed, in varying degrees, to the development of every other popular breed of horse ridden today.

The Arabian horse is used to create the Half-Arabian, which has one purebred Arabian parent, and the Anglo-Arabian, an Arabian/Thoroughbred cross.

## Breed Characteristics

An Arabian’s most identifiable characteristics are its finely chiseled head, dished face, long arching neck and high tail carriage.

A combination of the qualities described below represents the Arabian horse:

### Conformation

- In general, Arabians have a short, straight back (usually one less vertebra than is common with other breeds), perfect balance and symmetry, a deep chest, well-sprung ribs, strong legs of thick density and a more horizontal pel-vic bone position.

### Head

- The Arabian’s head features small, tipped-in ears, a tiny “teacup” muzzle, large nostrils and large, expressive, dark eyes set wide apart.

### Jibbah

- Characterized by its chiseled appearance, the Arabian head is frequently enhanced by a slight protrusion, called the “jibbah,” over the forehead that extends to just below the eyes.

### Endurance

- The cheek bones are spread wide apart at the throat, enabling the muzzle to be drawn in without compressing the windpipe, and permitting the animal to breathe easily when running long distances.

### Height

- The Arabian horse averages 14.1 to 15.1 hands at the withers, although many are above or below this height.

### Color

- In color, Arabians are bay, gray, chestnut and black, with an occasional roan. Common markings are strips, snips or blaze faces, white feet or stockings.

## Recreation & Competition

Today’s Arabians are also recognized for their extraordinary intelligence, stamina and trainability. Versatile and competent athletes, Arabians excel in a wide variety of activities both on the trail and in the show ring. As an endurance horse, the Arabian has no equal. The top prizes at 100-mile endurance races almost always go to riders of Arabian horses.

Show classes in English, hunter and western pleasure, cutting, reining, jumping, dressage and more provide opportunities at both all-Arabian events and open breed shows, making them the perfect horse for family members of all ages.

## Community Contacts

To locate Arabian farms in your area to visit, find educational materials about the Arabian horse, or request a FREE “Arabian Horse Guidebook,” contact the Arabian Horse Association at (303) 696-4500, or visit [ArabianHorses.org](http://ArabianHorses.org).

Racing enthusiasts should contact the Arabian Jockey Club, (303) 696-4500 or visit [www.ArabianRacing.org](http://www.ArabianRacing.org).

For information about breed registration, horse shows, youth programs, local clubs and membership programs, and horses for sale, contact the Arabian Horse Association at (303) 696-4500 or visit [ArabianHorses.org](http://ArabianHorses.org).



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