

# FASHION AND DRESS OF 1920

With tickets bought to the New Year's Eve Centenary Ball, you need a new frock, or to get that suit dry cleaned, but which one will be the style of the season?

The 1920's was a fashion revolution. The shift dress brought in the ability for those who hadn't had the means to frequent a fashion house to be just as stylish as those who did. Mostly known for the brief flapper period the dresses of the 1920's were distinctive and even the men got in on the act.



THE  
SHIFT DRESS

INSIDE:  
A STEP  
BY  
STEP  
GUIDE  
FROM  
MAKEUP  
AND  
SHOES  
TO  
HOW  
TO  
DRESS  
THE  
KIDS

## THE LOGIC BEHIND THE STYLES ~ A TOUCH OF HISTORY

Ladies, I'm sad to inform you that your feminine shape was not celebrated in this era. The bust was suppressed, the waist disappeared, the shoulders became broader and hair shorter and shorter. Narrow boyish hips were preferred. The silhouette emphasised a flattened chest and all curves were eliminated as the line became more simplified. Not only that, the forehead was considered unfashionable and even though it may be covered in a fringe usually it was also encased in a hat or headband ribbon. However, liberation came in the revelation of skin. Bare arms became commonplace, sleeves may even have been left un-sewn on the top seam to give this illusion. Hemlines moved up to just below the knee and during the flapper years even higher. Longer skirts frequently also used the illusion of uneven hemlines for the same effect. Though skirts often flared out to produce a more traditional ball gown shape, most designs emphasised straight, parallel lines and deep 'V' shapes. Though some styles of dress became shapeless the wealth was shown by the materials and embroidery used. However, this fashion revolution upset many older ladies who stuck to the traditional styles that had preceded the 20's.

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# STEP BY STEP OUTFIT

## FROM THE HAT TO THE SHOES AND EVERYTHING BETWEEN

Short hair curled into the face, if not a low bun sitting on your neck line. Curly hair was made very frizzy for as short a length as possible. Cloche hats, head scarves or decorated ribbons, even strings of beads around forehead

Makeup was striking, deep red lips and colour as well as eye liner on the eyes.

Usually fine beads or chains with multiple pendants. Pearls were a girl's best friend, the longer the better.

**CHEAT: COSTUME JEWELRY WAS POPULAR!**

The mark of a dress was both the cut and the decoration. Flappers had layers of fringing, designers scrolled embroidery or panels of design partly to make the wearer look slender. A bow or belt decoration was a must.

**CHEAT: THE PLAINER THE MATERIAL THE MORE LIKELY EMBELLISHMENT, BUT GENTLER STYLES LIKE THIS WERE POPULAR TOO**

Fasten the belt or ribbon or material round the outside of one's hips

**CHEAT: IF USING SEPARATES UNTUCK THE TOP TO MAKE IT APPEAR LOOSE. A HUGE BOW FOR YOUNGER LADIES OR A LONG STRETCH OF MATERIAL TIED IN THE MIDDLE AND LEFT HANGING FOR MORE MATURE LADIES**

Gloves with any length sleeve will complete any outfit alongside the draw string clutch bag.

**CHEAT: DITCH THE GLOVES UNLESS YOU ALREADY OWN SOME AND GO FOR ANY SMALL HAND HELD BAG.**

Necklines were usually square, a narrow 'V' or a straight line curved into a gentle scoop neck. Straps were wide with underwear well hidden.

**CHEAT: TOPS OF DRESSES WERE OFTEN A DIFFERENT COLOUR, SEPARATES MAY BE EASIER TO FIND AND ADAPT**

Sleeves can be any length, no sleeves for strap dresses.

The sleeves were not particularly (if at all) fitted.

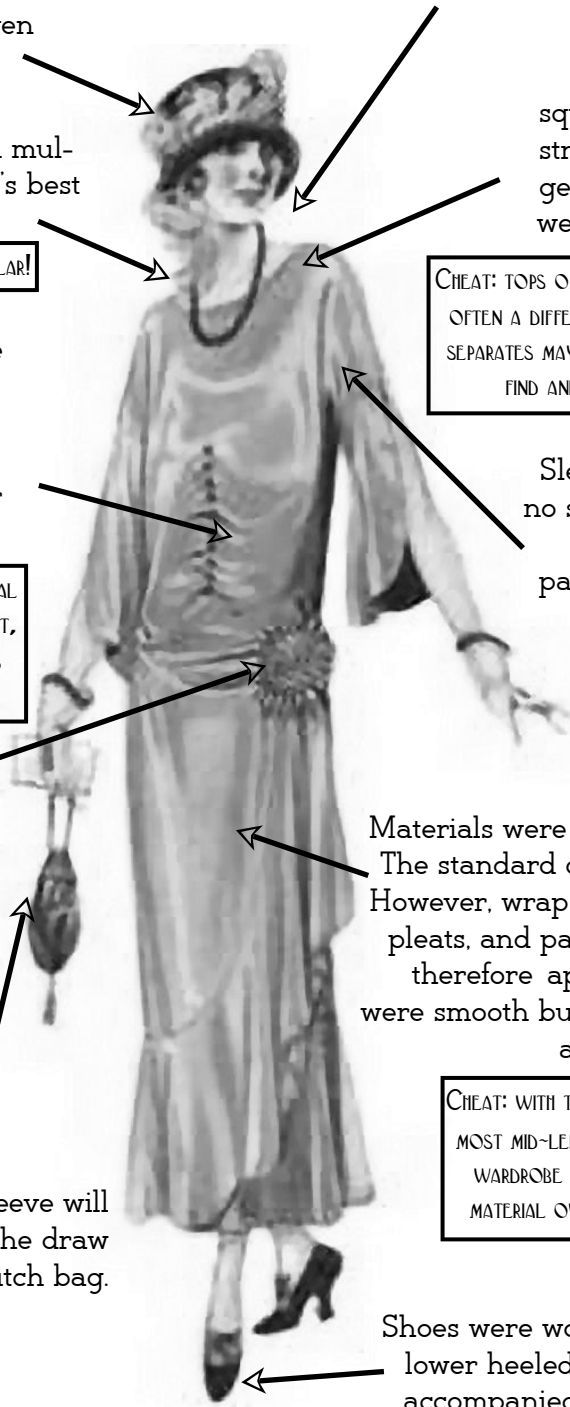
**CHEAT: THE LONG SLEEVE LOOK IS MORE DISTINCTIVE BUT NO MORE POPULAR THAN THE LOOSE T-SHIRT SLEEVE**

Materials were delicate, often patterned. The standard cut was to fall like a tube. However, wrap dresses, gathering, loose pleats, and panels were be used. Skirts therefore appeared fuller. Hemlines were smooth but not necessarily straight and could appear choppy

**CHEAT: WITH THE RIGHT ACCESSORIES MOST MID-LENGTH SKIRTS IN ONE'S WARDROBE WILL DO. CHOOSE MATERIAL OVER CUT EVERY TIME**

Shoes were worn with solid small heels, lower heeled pumps and small straps, accompanied by natural colour tights.

**CHEAT: WEAR SOMETHING PLAIN, COMFORTABLE AND SMART**



# INSPIRATION GALLERY

JUST A SMALL COLLECTION OF THE STYLES



Fig. 1



MEN AND CHILDREN :  
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# FASHION AND DRESS OF 1920

## CHILDREN

Oh to be young... Well in the 1920's the young generations saw the rise of the gymslip, the school uniform and the adaptability of the boy's pullover.



Young girls wore shapeless smocks, which grew slightly longer as they grew older, but still remained above the

knee. With the ideal figure being that of a 15-year-old, the girls would party in simplified versions of the adult's costume,

often with a preference for straighter hems and more pleats.

Waistlines were also more realistic. Younger girls wore short socks but those slightly older would have black stockings. If you want to make your child look adorable then little girls still sported the hair bow to one side of the head.



Young boys wore stretchy jerseys with collars and often buttons one side, teamed with grey shorts for day wear. Boys took to wearing flannel, tweed and serge suits with shirts and scarfs like those of their elders, topped by the beret and also the peaked cloth cap. The rise of the scout movement meant that this uniform was very popular. Any dark trousers and shirt wouldn't look out of place and may be the easiest outfit of the decade to rustle up!



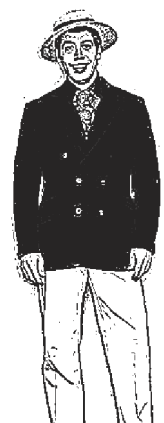
## GENTLEMEN

Men of the 20's got styles of their own, the stripped blazer, the un-starched collar and the gangster look. For formal events a black suit was still the usual. Military uniform was still occasionally seen too.

Short neat hair was often topped with a straw hat or a trilby style felt hat. The flat cap with brim was also popular. Suits were worn either single or double-breasted and trousers became looser hanging from the waist

not the hip. The waistcoat was a must at formal events though braces with no belt was also an option. black or white shirts and ties (both plain or with small geometric pattern) or a bow tie. One would not be seen without a tie,

even though it may be loosened slightly on hot evenings. Lace-up shoes were sometimes two-toned, but the, usually white pocket handkerchief was never missing.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EVENT SEE THE NOTICE SHEET OR PUBLICITY IN CHURCH.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COSTUME STYLES AND WAYS TO CHEAT AT LOOKING AUTHENTIC TALK TO KATE ABBOTT.



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