

Panjabis Bespoke!



Even during festive times, women's fashion overpower men's fashion scene. Our fashion requirements stripped to the basic, our options are often limited to the

As someone who is horizontally challenged, it is rather difficult to maintain a standard shirt size; more difficulty lies in maintaining a standard waistline. The perils are endless. To breathe respite from this suffocating situation, when what to wear at a wedding becomes a limited option, I chose a different path. Bid farewell to pants and shirts. Choose the pyjama-panjabi combo. And I haven't looked back ever since.

Panjabis make things easy. And once you put one on, the only thing that you need to think about is a matching pyjama. Although some prefer pants or a pair of denims, I opt for the traditional white pyjama.

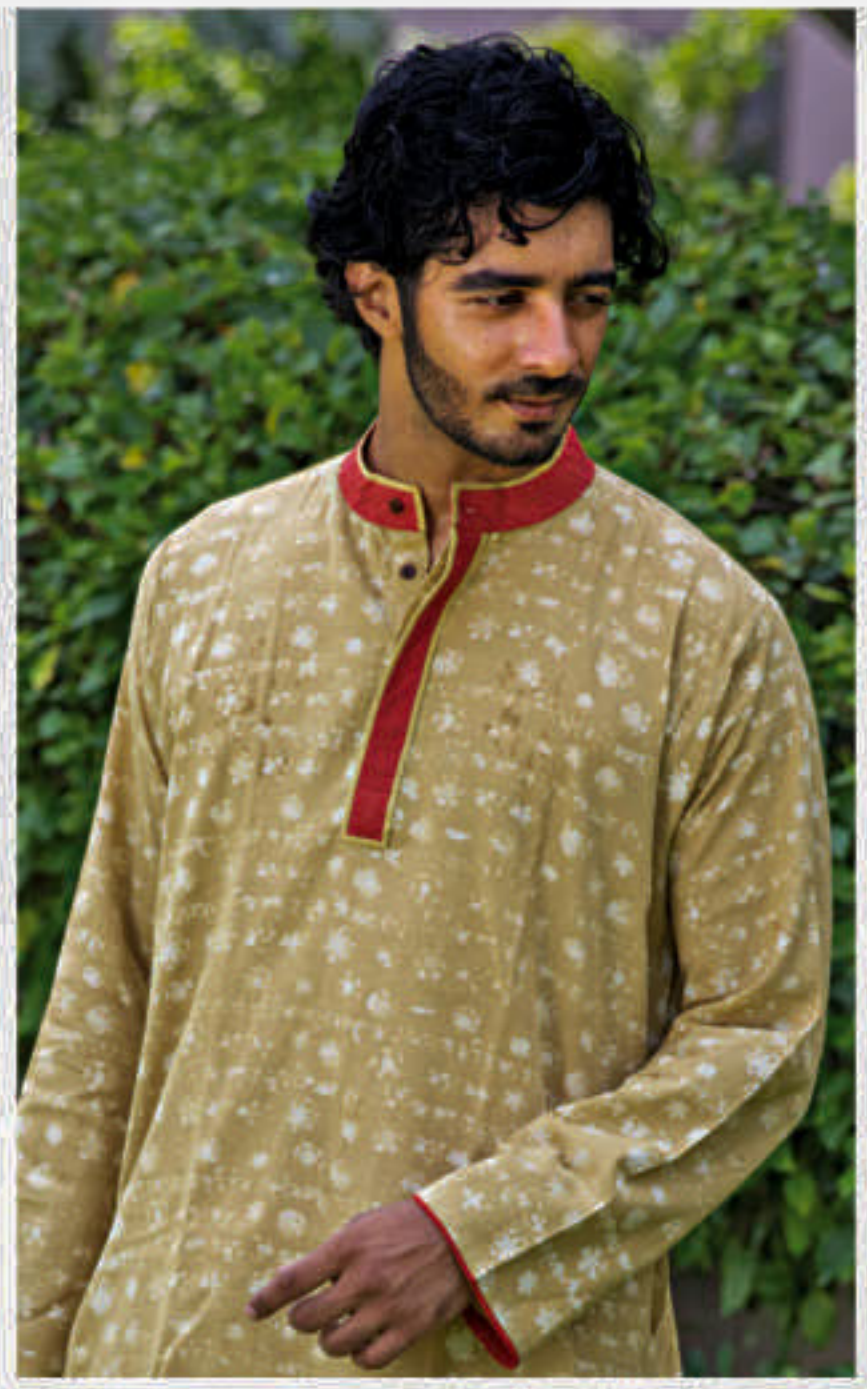
However, the biggest benefit of choosing panjabis is the fact that it can accommodate a wide range of body sizes. If you can go easy on the length issue, the panjabis that I tailor can easily accommodate my pre-Ramadan self and my post Eid-ul-Fitr size, sans eight pounds.

Some commentators have opined that a panjabi adds 12 pounds to my body. But if I were to listen to such staunch criticism, I would be shaven, sans facial hair. I must add, I take pride in my beard and I take pride in my panjabi. Some of the most handsome men I know bear the beard and put on a traditional costume – my uncle, the late Badal Rahman, noted actor Aly Zaker to name a few.

The options with panjabis seems limited only to the untrained eye. True we do not have the nuances to match the graceful sari, or the comfy shalwar kameez, panjabis too can have a lot of fashion idiosyncrasies. However, shaking all fashion boundaries, the upfront fashion sensation does not break fashion boundaries beyond – short and long. True, other aspects are there, but for a fashion layman like myself, those are beyond the scope of this write-up.

I like things plain and simple. Works of embroidery, even if around the neckline, is a big no. Works of zardosi – a red alert. But that does not mean I do not walk the extra mile to make my panjabis stand out in the crowd.

It must be stated, and should be stated here before I narrate my Panjabi



saga, that I shop only twice a year – during the two Eids, and occasionally on the onset of winter. These are the times when I can be seen roaming around Gawsia, Chadni Chawk area looking for a bargain on fabric prices.

On more than one occasion, I am accompanied by a female colleague or friend, who nurture the genome required to haggled at these places for a bargain price. So the key is in selecting the right fabric. Cotton is the choice fabric. And some stores at Chadni Chawk carry a long list of fabrics suited not only for making shalwar kameez sets, but also for making panjabis. Trust me, there is a thing called a 'unisex' fabric.

Colour keys are important. If you like to express yourself, you may prefer to opt for various shades, stripes and combinations of colours. These fabrics make you stand out in the crowd as only a handful of people opt for bespoke panjabis.

However, like almost all other things regarding fashion, I leave it to the specialists – my band of female friends. Once the haggling is done and the selection made. We take 10 plus fabrics to the tailor, also at Chadni Chawk.

The tailor, although a familiar face by now, still tries to coax us to make value additions, which for me is a big no! A cool fabric, plainly cut to make a panjabi is the way I like it.

After all the measurements are taken and the size alterations in light of recent weight-gains made, we take a final sip of the cola served courtesy of the tailor and we come out pleased, content with a day's work done to perfection. Now I am geared to take on the fashion challenge. At least for the next six months. At least!

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Wardrobe: Aranya
Location: Pan Pacific Sonargaon
Styling: Azra Mahmood

