

Its sheer, regal,  
*and* ORGANZA

In fashion, transparency has always been celebrated. A sheer medium that lets a designer's creativity blossom, while elevating it to the next level, has forever been desired and favoured.

There's something undeniably magical woven in the delicate threads of sheer fabrics. It's gentle, soft material caresses the wearer's body, enveloping her in a cocoon, showing a little bit of skin while providing modesty where needed; it truly is wearable romance! And organza truly rules the roost when it comes to sheer fabrics.

Organza traces its origin back to China, towards the beginning of the 18th century. Silk threads were used to weave this light-weight fabric. Its stiff nature was ideal for usage in ball gowns and dresses of the time, and couturiers fashioned ornate creations with it. There is a subtle sheen to it, which was perfect for wedding dresses. It holds up to heavy embroidery, unlike chiffon which can sometimes weigh down or tear. Legendary haute couturier Cristobal Balenciaga designed exquisite creations using it, which went on to become wearable art. Interestingly, even though it was invented in China, it quickly became the fabric du jour when it came to Europe. Organza is stiff, unlike its Bengali cousin, the muslin, which is flimsy and delicate, and that quality made it ideal to attain volume, and hold up to the embroiders' needle. The earliest rendition was woven with silk threads, making it a luxury only the nobility could afford. Over time, synthetic threads replaced silk ones to minimise cost and promote accessibility.

Organza retains its hold over wedding dresses in the West, as ball gowns have been relegated to the dusty pages of history books for modern women. Many designers cleverly use this versatile fabric to bring a diaphanous quality to dresses, blouses and skirts. It's definitely making a comeback because of a revival of sheer outfits. International runways are rampant with outfits fashioned from it in the past year. A full organza skirt paired with a simple chiffon blouse is very chic, as is a cocktail dress with a slip. Organza has been given different avatars by textile designers who are always pushing the limit, just like fashion. Variations include mirror, crystal, embroidered, crushed and satin. Each kind is being used differently with spectacular results!

In our part of the world, organza has always had a place of pride. Organza saris are very popular and look very feminine. Whether printed or embroidered, the result is always spectacular. Another outfit that truly utilises organza's characteristics is the lehenga. It makes skirts full of volume without adding unnecessary bulk, and hence, remains lightweight, making the wearer look slim. An organza dupatta is stiff yet soft, making it ideal for draping however one wants. For fusion outfits such as gown-style lehenga, this fabric is a godsend. It provides a western feel because of its stiff nature, yet retains the Eastern flair because of its versatility. Many women choose fusion outfits these days, and organza realises their dream of looking contemporary and stylish. It is great for capes and veils. Another way to use it is for underpinning if you want volume without bulk. In fashion, a golden rule is to listen to your heart and be yourself. A true fashionista makes any fabric her own, giving it her own twist and that's what makes her stand out. So go ahead, there is a whole new world full of organza dreams waiting for you to be explored!

