

#FASHION & BEAUTY

Kaftans: Breezing through autumn

Symbolising exoticism and bohemianism since time immemorial, the kaftan is a traditional dress from the ancient Mesopotamian era that has stood the test of time for millennia. Now a catchall phrase for any kind of loose-fitting robe or tunic, a true kaftan was originally a narrow cut, long robe with full sleeves and a deep, open neck, sometimes with buttons. The baggy outfit without defined sleeves historically made its way through the royal courts of the Ottoman empire to parts of Africa and even Russia. Eccentrics brought the Turkish fad, with all its benefits, to Europe in the 1950s and the attire has ever since made a space for itself in modern day fashion in a number of refreshing ways.

Length, sleeve and neck; there is a lot to play around with when it comes to the nifty kaftan.

V-necks, or boat necks, squared or ballooned sleeves, long kameezes or shorter resort wear, the kaftan enhances any chosen style. The loose cut of the garment makes ventilation possible, and this attribute makes it one of the top choices of attire for those living in hotter climates. Comfortable to boot, women have been known to be partial to kaftans as sleepwear too!

The unisex dress can be made in almost all fabrics such as cottons, silks and linens and is versatile enough to do justice to both eastern and western genres of clothing. You can just as easily pair it with a shalwar and dupatta for a cultural vibe as you can double it up as a sundress and wear it to beaches and resorts. The kaftan looks super festive with mirror work or tassels on the sides, but due to its unconventional cut, the garment look just as stylish without a lot of embellishments.

Think of the African tribes in Algeria, or the Pashtuns in Northern Pakistan. Almost as if to level up the spirited vibe of the kaftan, men and women in most parts of the world have been known to wear this garment in all sorts of vibrant prints and colours.

Similarly, one simply cannot go light on the accessories when they wear the kaftan. Kaftans scream fun and what's better than chunky jewellery to amplify that aspect? While worked and embellished kaftans will not require elaborate neck pieces, breezy, beachy kaftans in plain colours will love some large, beads adorning the neck. To lend an extra oomph to the eastern style of donning the kaftan, choose from a wide selection of chunky accessories like mandala rings, printed headbands, large hoops, or mirrored sandals. Give your ears, fingers, hair, and feet all the attention you want — the kaftan will still invariably walk away with the showstopper award.

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