

#FASHION & BEAUTY

Traditional menswear has never really gone out of style. The panjabi, sherwani, and other familiar pieces have remained part of men's wardrobes for generations, appearing at weddings, Eid gatherings, and family occasions. But somewhere along the way, they became associated with a particular look: polished, sophisticated, and carefully put together.

Star LIFE Style



Breaking the RULES of Traditional Menswear



There is, however, another side to it. These pieces can be just as bold, relaxed and unconventional as anything in a modern wardrobe. They simply need to be worn a little differently.

A well-made panjabi or sherwani already has plenty of character. The cuts, fabrics, embroidery and details give these garments an identity that does not need much help. What makes them interesting today is the freedom to move beyond the usual combinations.



Traditional clothing does not always need to be paired with matching trousers, formal footwear and carefully coordinated accessories. Sometimes, the best way to wear it is to break a few of those expectations.

A panjabi, for instance, does not have to be treated as a complete outfit on its own. Pairing one with relaxed trousers, textured bottoms, or even a contrasting pair of pants can give it a more casual edge. Printed trousers can add personality to a relatively simple top, while shades such as olive, brown and beige work well for a more understated look.

The idea is to let the pieces complement each other without making everything look too coordinated.

Layering is another way to change the character of traditional clothing. A long, textured coat or an open sherwani worn over a panjabi can add depth to an otherwise familiar outfit. It also creates an opportunity to play with different fabrics and lengths.

Dark outerwear over a lighter base, for example, gives the outfit contrast without relying on loud colours. For something bolder, patterned fabrics and unusual colour combinations can make traditional silhouettes feel less predictable.

The sherwani, often reserved for weddings and formal celebrations, is particularly interesting in this regard. Its structured shape naturally gives an outfit presence, but that does not mean it has to be styled in the conventional way.

Wearing it with relaxed or patterned trousers instead of matching bottoms can take away some of its formality. An open front, a less structured inner layer or even a pair of simple, understated shoes can make the entire look feel more relaxed. The garment remains recognisably traditional, but the attitude changes.

Accessories deserve some attention too. Traditional menswear has room for more than a watch and a pair of formal shoes. Rings, layered necklaces, bracelets and statement scarves can bring a different personality to an outfit.

A scarf worn loosely rather than folded neatly, for instance, adds movement and makes the look feel less rehearsed. Small leather bags, unusual headwear and heavier jewellery can also work, particularly when the rest of the outfit is kept relatively simple. There is no need to wear everything at once. One or two strong accessories are often enough.

There is also something to be said for moving away from the idea that traditional clothing must always look refined.

A panjabi with rolled-up sleeves, relaxed trousers and sturdy footwear can have a much rougher edge than the usual festive combination.

Similarly, a sherwani does not lose its character when worn with a more casual attitude. Dark colours, heavier textures and slightly unconventional pairings can give these garments a tougher appearance without taking away from their heritage.

This flexibility is part of what makes traditional clothing worth investing in. A panjabi bought for Eid should not have to spend the rest of the year sitting in the wardrobe.

With a change of trousers, footwear or accessories, the same piece can work for a casual evening out or a gathering with friends. Sherwanis may be more occasion-specific, but simpler designs can also be reused as outer layers over different outfits.

The appeal of traditional menswear lies in the fact that it already has a history. There is no need to reinvent the panjabi or sherwani to make it relevant. What matters is how they are worn. A little contrast, some confidence and a willingness to experiment can take these familiar garments somewhere unexpected.

Traditional clothing can be elegant, but it does not always have to be well-behaved. Sometimes, a little swagger suits it better.

By Mehdi Islam Mahi
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Azim
Fashion Direction & Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Wardrobe: Shahrukh Amin
Makeup: Piash
Location: Studio Crane
Lights: Selim Ahamed