

Classics revisited The full midi skirt



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Few sartorial styles evoke an image of elegance quite as much as the full midi skirt. Think Audrey Hepburn in *Roman Holiday*, her waspish waist exaggerated by her swinging midi as she wanders wilfully around the ancient city, or Grace Kelly in *To Catch a Thief*, resplendent in a swishing number in coral, surveying the Côte d'Azur as she picnics with Cary Grant.

It was Christian Dior who made the style de rigueur when he unveiled it as a trademark of his 1947 Corolle and En Huit collections, which would become better known as the New Look, *above*. The voluptuous, fabric-heavy skirts that fell mid-calf captured the hearts of post-war women thirsty for designs that did more than fulfil ration stipulations.

Usurped by the more liberal mini skirt in the 1960s, it made a controversial, and somewhat unsuccessful, comeback in 1970 when the fashion editor John Burr Fairchild declared it was 'the year of the midi'. Protestations from women's groups ensued. They claimed the abandonment of the mini for the midi by the fashion market was a way of stifling female progression.

Dior's New Look remains the silhouette that serves the style best. Its ability to minimise the waist and adjust to any occasion or season, like all good classics, is unrivalled. In winter, formed of wool, it is best paired with a fine knit on top, neatly tucked in; in summer a midi in lighter chiffon or cotton is perfect with a plain shirt or camisole. **Bibby Sowray**

How to wear it now by Victoria Bain



The maximalist

For a Latin twist, play with off-the-shoulder tops and bright pom-pom jewels
Cotton skirt, £25.99, Zara (zara.com); cotton top, £232, Tibi, from matchesfashion.com; pom-pom bracelets, £18 each, Sweetlime (sweetlimeuk.com); cat's-eye sunglasses, £255, Prism, from net-a-porter.com; woven bag, £495, Anya Hindmarch (anyahindmarch.com); suede espadrilles, £315, Aquazzura, from lyst.co.uk



Summer black

Take a tip from Dolce & Gabbana and try a lace top and this season's lace-up shoes to create a seductive evening look
Cotton skirt, £39, Finery (finerylondon.com); necklace, £72, Alex Mika (alexmikajewelry.com); lace top, £185, Sandro (uk.sandro-paris.com); acetate sunglasses, £89, Ace & Tate (aceandtate.com); leather bag, £39.99, Zara (zara.com); suede shoes, £60, Office (office.co.uk)



The new nautical

Keep it fresh in blue and white. Make it modern with hints of embroidery and a statement clutch
Cotton skirt, £280, Sea (sea-ny.com); viscose top, £199, Sandro (uk.sandro-paris.com); woven bag, £258, Sophie Anderson (sophieanderson.net); Perspex sunglasses, £215, Illesteva, from net-a-porter.com; gold-plated earrings, £210, Bam-B (bam-b.co.uk); denim clogs, £48, Topshop (topshop.com)



Next week: Dosa's pink collection