



A MÉLANGE OF STYLES THIS MONSOON

Bindu Gopal Rao talks about how to lend your wardrobe a monsoon makeover because after all, a new season calls for a new way of dressing up too.

As the sun makes way for the rains, monsoon becomes the perfect opportunity to wear bold and cheerful colours and give the season a stylish spin. Fashion-wise, rains are all about adding a splash of colour—and excitement—to your wardrobe.

NEW VISTAS

The colour theme of the season is bright, and encompasses shades of red, burgundy, greens, and blues. If your wardrobe consists of classic colors such as beige, pastels, and white, then consider layering or adding pops of colour to it. Bold prints and chequers also make for great workwear options. Dipti Tolani, Founder and CEO, Salt Attire avers, “Our monsoon collection mostly comprises dark prints, cotton knits, and formal culottes that are perfect for the rains. Instead of full-length pants, you can pick these

culottes with their hem above the ankle, to keep you off the water and puddles. A range of skirts and dresses that you can pick from across our collections, work excellently for the season. We have also introduced lightweight fabrics—wispy polyesters or cottons that are good picks for monsoon since they dry easily. By design, all our clothing is non-sheer and non-body-hugging, which are two factors one must keep in mind during this time of the year.” Designers from all over the world are experimenting and introducing items to suit the weather with fuss-free options such as jumpsuits and coordinate sets in fabrics such as cotton, linen and khadi, keeping it breezy and comfortable. Chandan Gandhi, Designer and Founder, The Maroon Suit says, “With the advancement towards the monsoon months, it has become imperative to invest in a wardrobe that is in sync with the unpredictable weather

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conditions. Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) has made a comeback in the form of clear handbags, trench coats, and hoodies. Paired with the right kind of bottoms and shirt, these fashion choices can help you to battle the rainy season. Designers are also working with handiwork organic fabrics and oversized silhouettes, which are making a popular comeback from the '80s and '90s.”

TREND CHECK

Trends for monsoon are mostly functional and include elements such as high hems, skirts, knee- and calf-length dresses, formal culottes, and ankle-grazing pants. Fabrics that work well in this season include lightweight polyesters or cottons, which are basically those that dry easily. It is better to avoid sheer/light-coloured fabrics because in case you get drenched, the clothes turn transparent. Dark shades and pop colours add brightness to the dull weather. Shilpa Sharma, Co-founder, Jaypore adds, “Airy, natural—preferably not in white—and woven fabrics are breathable and therefore perfect for this season. Darker, naturally dyed colors, and quirky details and prints add an extra dimension to your looks.” Clothes made of denim and crepe should definitely be avoided, since they take a lot of time to dry up. Instead, blended fabrics of polynylon and cotton would be a good choice to invest in. “To give monsoon a fashionable spin, this year, we will be talking about rich hues, fresh prints, light fabrics, and just the right amount of layering. This time, it is ideal to play around with the outfits, proportions, and colours. Culottes, capes, playsuits, roomy chiffon dresses, palazzo pants teamed with crop tops, and maxi dresses



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are functional and chic outfits that will rule this rainy season. In ethnic wear, floral-printed kurtis and dresses with elegant zardozi work on satin fabrics are in. The hues for monsoon will be brighter than the sun—orange, canary yellow, and fuchsia pink,” says Nishit Gupta, Director, Kalki.

FEATURE



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WATER PROOF

This weather plays a major role on the choice of fabric, fit, and colours. With brighter and happier colours taking a front seat to provide a visual pick-me-up, comfort is at the forefront this season. Fabrics with quick-dry technology, wrinkle-resistance, and comfort stretch are monsoon favourites. Most often, consumers look for print and texture options that can transition from day into night. Harsh Chheda, Founder and CEO, Corporate Collars, says, "In recent times, technology has played quite an important role in the apparel industry and is coming up with innovative options that are weather-friendly. Firstly, a lot of stress is given to the weight of the apparel. The lighter the fabric, the faster it dries. Also, wrinkle-free shirts and trousers are popular as they are easy to wear and maintain. Moreover, today, fabrics are innovated such that they have a high degree of water resistance."

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TECH TALK

Different versions of breathable and smart fabrics are being introduced to improve consumer usage. Technologies like quick-dry are being used by active sportswear brands including Nike and Adidas, to take moisture away from the skin, keeping it cool and dry. Various superior mechanisms have also been introduced, wherein these clothes can identify one's health statistics and communicate them to the right person. Delna Nallaseth, Creative Head, ANJ says, "One of the innovations is water-proof textiles that are being introduced using nano waterproofing technology. Clothing made from nanotechnology is immune to wetness. They use a silicone nano-filament, which is highly chemically hydrophobic."

CHALLENGES GALORE

The challenges mostly vary with the degree and intensity of monsoon in different parts of the country. "Some cities will be extremely

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humid, while some might experience a drop in temperature, and hence the type of clothing you would want to wear will depend on the topography of that particular region,” says Tolani. Depending on the location, monsoon can prove to create different dilemmas for consumers. Adapting to in-store and online channels to cater to each of these varied needs is just the first marketing hurdle. “Next up is the ever-important ‘price justification’. While consumers look for fabrics with top-level technologies like quick-dry, wrinkle-resistant, and flexible stretch, the premium charged on such clothing becomes a point of discussion. Once these challenges are cracked, the market will show better results in terms of growth, which we are inching towards now,”

adds Chedda. Another challenge is that Indians are unaware of the growing e-textile industry, and the advancement in technology in relation to the different fabrics and materials used to create monsoon-specific pieces. Sharad Venkta, MD and CEO, Toonz Retail, says, “Monsoon clothes are all about the fabric being used. It is important to opt for the right fabric. Waterproof jackets and hoodies are in trend this season. At Toonz, we are focusing on quickly drying fabrics. Monsoon in India is very unpredictable and arrives at different timings in different regions, making it difficult to launch, advertise, and reach out to customers at the right time to meet their immediate requirements.”

When it comes to fashion, India is a scattered market. There is a section of people that is probably not yet ready to ditch the denims even in monsoon—those who are not willing to experiment. Hence, while there are opportunities, there are several challenges too. However, what we are seeing today is a shift with the spurt of online portals that announce season-specific clothing styles, which have an audience as well.

The apparel industry is changing and with seasonal clothing making inroads into wardrobes, monsoon dressing now has a whole new dimension. ■

