
THE
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REVIVAL
Italian style guide



ITALIAN *Style*

Italy in the 1950s and '60s was a crucible of style, fuelled by centuries of exquisite craftsmanship and keen design, and a booming film industry. Rome's Cinecittà Studios became known as 'Hollywood on the Tiber', hosting a dazzling mix of American productions and home-grown cinema. The result was a global vision of Italian elegance that felt effortless, sun-kissed and impossibly chic.

The influx of movie stars added a frisson of celebrity glamour, immortalised in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*. Anita Ekberg wading through the Trevi Fountain in a black strapless gown remains one of the era's defining images and is a look that can still be found on vintage rails today. Italian cinema of the time is a masterclass in style inspiration, from Ingrid Bergman's leopard-print coat in Roberto Rossellini's *Journey to Italy* (1954) to Sophia Loren's wardrobe in *Scandal in Sorrento* (1955), which captures her carefree allure through deep, wide necklines and skirts that are voluminously full or voluptuously tight: a Mediterranean take on the decade's hourglass silhouette.





***“Take me to
my tailor”***

La Dolce Vita also delivers a lesson in sprezzatura via Marcello Mastroianni's slim, single-breasted suits and ever-present Persol sunglasses. Italian tailoring was popularised by houses such as Brioni, who may have dressed Mastroianni for the film. A slim suit can be given Mastroianni's nonchalant touch with a spotted tie or striped shirt

The global influence of Italian suiting is unmistakable in *The Italian Job* (1969), which includes Michael Caine's immortal line, “take me to my tailor” on his release

from prison. His suits, cut by London tailor Doug Hayward (with shirts from Michael Fish), were shaped by the slimmer Italian styles that had been gaining ground since the 1950s. The look had already filtered into British Mod culture, evolving into the tonic suit made from iridescent mohair blends. Even the film's marketing celebrated Italian design, from fashion and accessories to Vespa and Lambretta scooters and Mini Coopers, described as “partly the stars” of the production.



Preloved versions in similar styles remain easy wins

Florence was the epicentre of Italy's post-war fashion shows, with international film stars helping broadcast the country's craftsmanship and luxury credentials. Many key Italian houses began with accessories: Gucci and Ferragamo both trace their roots to 1920s Florence. The 1950s saw

Ferragamo introduce his ballet flats, while Gucci launched the horsebit loafer in 1953. Preloved versions in similar styles remain easy wins, especially paired with a structured Prada-esque bag - Prada began as a Milanese leather goods company in 1913.





Sun-drenched resort style

Gucci also gave us another enduring flourish: silk scarves. Introduced in the 1960s, the iconic Flora print was designed in 1966 for Grace Kelly. A scarf tied rakishly at the neck instantly adds insouciance - think Audrey Hepburn on a Vespa in *Roman Holiday* (1953). They can be picked up in charity shops and paired with Ferragamo-style flats for laid-back panache.

The post-war era ushered in the Jet Age. Capri became a jet set playground and the home of Emilio Pucci's label in 1950. His vibrant prints defined sun-drenched resort style and remain shorthand for carefree glamour. For an accessible update, look for Pucci-esque patterns secondhand or a psychedelic scarf for a splash of pizzazz.





*For venetian flair,
gondolier style
never fails.*

A striped top or sailor smock, straw hat and furlane-style slippers exude effortless cool using items you may already own. For inspiration, watch *Venice, the Moon and You* (1958), or channel Peggy Guggenheim on the Canal Grande in oversized sunglasses and a dramatic cape.





Italian **ACCESSORIES**

Silk scarf tied at the neck
Croc-effect belt at the waist
Mid-size hoop earrings
Layered gold bangles
Ballet flats
Silk pocket square
Leather gloves
Slim silk tie

Leather loafers
Monk strap shoes
Embellished thong sandals
Murano glass jewellery
Boxy leather bag
Persol 649 sunglasses
Coppola flat cap
Capulet hat

INSPIRATION

watchlist

Story of a Love Affair (1950), Michelangelo Antonioni

Roman Holiday (1953), William Wyler

Summertime (1955), David Lean

Scandal in Sorrento (1955), Dino Risi

Venice, the Moon and You (1958), Dino Risi

La Dolce Vita (1960), Federico Fellini

L'Avventura (1960), Michelangelo Antonioni

It Started in Naples (1960), Melville Shavelson

8½ (1963), Federico Fellini

The Italian Job (1969), Peter Collinson



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