

6 Rules On What Not To Wear In Europe

by Stacey Bowman, TheSoko.com

Wondering what to wear while in another country? We tell you how to look hip in some of the world's chicest cities.



Ah, Paris in the summer! The air is warm and the scent of cherry blossoms envelops lovers as they stroll arm in arm along the Seine.

Paris, Rome, Vienna and the other great, fabled cities of Europe are wonderful destinations in the summer. Many a romantic traveler feels his or her magnetic pull grow stronger as the days grow warmer.

Any true wanderlust will tell you that major monuments and museums play second fiddle to the pure pleasure of soaking up the ambiance of a different place - walking as an outsider through the day to day paths of others, conversing and learning about new cultures and lifestyles.

Blending In is Key

But in order to really experience the genuine flavour of a city, it's indispensable that one blends in. Just think how we view the hoards of tourists that descend on North American destinations like New York City and Niagara Falls. You know the type - they travel in groups of no less than twenty, snap pictures of every rock, tree and building they pass, oblivious to the obstruction their group creates on the busy sidewalk. They talk too loudly, carry large bags that inevitably get in everyone's way and

generally make a nuisance of themselves. The last thing you as a local would think of doing is invite them for a drink.

Of course many of these tourists really are nice people, but we're immediately turned off because they look like tourists, and there's something inherently undesirable and tacky about that. It's superficial, yes, but it's the truth - nowhere more so than in Europe, where often North Americans are generalized as rude slob.

So if you want to be embraced by the Romans or Parisians, you better not look like an uncouth, rude slob or they'll treat you like a bush-loving, loud-mouthed tourist.

Here are a few hard and fast rules I picked up by observation on my last European tour. They'll prove indispensable for not making you feel like an underdressed beatnik in some of the most posh cities in the world.

Don't wear shorts

You'll stick out like a redhead in Tokyo and at it won't be pretty. European city-dwellers just never wear shorts. Instead, opt for trendy capris if you're a guy, or an elegant, knee-length skirt if you're a girl.

Running Shoes are Verboten

Except for the über-chic bowling-shoes-come-sneakers or the odd lime green pair of Pumas, Europeans save their runners for the gym. Shoes with a low heel or cute ballet flats work well for girls.

You'll notice all the women have fabulous shoes - even 80 year-olds suffer on in impeccable stilettos - but in the interest of being able to walk all day comfortably, settle for something less towering. Guys too should opt for sleek, black leather numbers, or one of the afore-mentioned fashion sneakers.

Birkenstocks, Texas' and flip-flops are a Major No-No

Enough said. See above.

Leave the Ball Caps at Home

No one wears baseball hats here, so donning your sweat-stained Yankee's cap is a sure-fire way to look like a tourist. Wear lots of sunscreen and suck it up.

Lay Off the Sweatshirts

I think anything remotely sweat-like is outlawed in Paris. Ditto for Lulu Lemon stretch pants. Opt for light sweaters, cotton blazers or jackets and shawls. Jeans are okay but dark and fray-free are preferable.

No Logos

You'll see plenty of designer duds on everyone from the bellhop to the businessman, but next to no monikers or logos. So forget about feeling cool in your French Connection (FCUK) monikered cardigan. The French won't feel the connection and the English may run you out of the city.

keep them in good condition

Visiting a European city is a great excuse to look your best no matter what you're doing. Take care of your clothes, iron out the wrinkles, and opt for quality fabrics with fitted cuts. Take a little pride in your appearance and prepare not to be noticed.

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