

Wedding Outfits and Hats

With the Royal Wedding many people in England will be wearing hats to honor the couple. Wearing hats to a British wedding is a long standing tradition but what about us Americans. We don't have the same tradition but it is becoming increasingly popular to wear hats to a wedding. Wear an outfit to the wedding that presents you in your best light in order to honor the bride on her special day.

Now the hard part - what kind of hat goes with what kind of outfit? If you are in the wedding party then you may not wear a hat unless the bride has asked you to as part of your ensemble. Some mothers of the bride or mothers of the groom like to wear hats to complete their outfits. Designers have promoted many styles of dresses that lend themselves to wedding attire. To be specific the tea dress, the sundress, the suit or coat with dress, the sheath and the Maxi dress. Each style requires a different type of hat so that the look can be complete. The hat needs to echo the outfit in mood and design and of course the color of the hat should relate to the dress (not necessarily match).



The tea dress:

A tea dress is a longer length dress made from materials like chiffon or cotton lawn a highly feminine style. Usually this style is more covered up, likely with sleeves. A broad brimmed hat with a round crown, decorated in a vintage inspired floral trim will really compliment this style of dress. Pick a neutral hat with trims that pick up the colors in the dress OR pick a hat that is the color of the dress and trim it with neutral colored flowers and ribbon. The straw of the hat should be very tightly woven with a fine texture such as a parasol straw. The idea is that flowing material has many curves so your hat should echo the curves in its shape and drape. For the best effect, the hat, dress and shoes should not be the same color - too much of a good thing!



Sundresses:

The ever popular sundress will be the easiest style to find an appropriate hat. The coloring on sundresses is usually bolder than the tea dress and is sleeveless. The sundress will work with a small, medium or large brimmed hat and a variety of crown styles as well. The texture of the straw can be coarser, such as patterned sisal. Again a neutral straw with a trim that compliments the dress will always work. Usually sundresses have floral motifs which can be repeated in the hat but if you are not into flowers a simple ribbon trim with an interesting feather can work as well.



Suit or Two piece dresses:

If you are wearing a dress with a jacket or a suit, then you should look for a hat with a more tailored quality. You might choose a hat with a square shaped crown and a narrower brim. It can be up or down turned. Usually a tailored hat does not have flowers but a tailored bow or a trim made from the same fabric as the hat. In the case of a hat made from Sinemay. It may have some embellishment with a swirl. Feathers can be on either a tailored hat or on a more feminine one.



The Sheath:

The sheath dress can either be casual or more like a cocktail dress. If it is similar to a cocktail dress then try out a Fascinator. As the volume of the dress decreases so should your hat. Smaller brimmed hats will work well with the more tailored sheath style. If the brim is smaller the crown can be taller. The Breakfast at Tiffany's hat followed this design aesthetic.



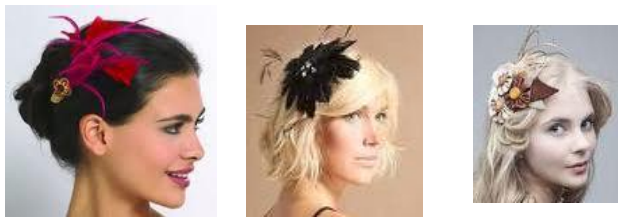
Maxi dress:

The maxi dress can be tricky for picking out a hat. Typically they are shown with floppy hats, but I think this look is too informal for wedding attire unless it is an outdoor casual wedding. If the maxi dress is more formal in fabrication, then switch to a Fascinator so as to not overdo it. Too much hat and too much dress together can give the look a costume effect. Remember that taller gals can carry this look better than shorter gals 5'4" and under (you run the risk of looking frumpy).



Baby Doll:

The newer baby doll style dresses are being made in dressier materials and have become a favorite of the skinny younger set. Be careful with this style as it will be very easy to overwhelm the dress with a hat. I believe a Fascinator will also be great with this style of dress.



In summary;

The concept is that you want your hat to echo the style of your outfit. Colors can be matching, neutral or complementary (on the color wheel), but the lines of the hat should reflect the lines of your dress. The more tailored the dress, the more tailored the hat.

A note about the British 'Fascinator or Whimsy'. These are really accent pieces and not hats, but they can be a very effective accessory to a dress that needs that special something. The trick with them is to find one that compliments your look without stealing the show. I think this is a great option for those gals sporting very short hair. The pixie haircuts look really terrific with the fascinator attached to one side of the head. The fascinator often has a comb on the underside and can include a black elastic strap for extra security. (Hint: the black strap never goes under your chin but around the back of the hair at the nape of the neck)