

Meghan Markle

A Style Icon

Since her engagement, Meghan Markle's wardrobe has been the focus of so much public interest. From TV starlet to soon-to-be royal, we decode Meghan's fashion journey

Words by Rachel Avery

Successful American actress Meghan Markle was thrust even further into the spotlight when it was announced she was dating the UK's most eligible bachelor, Prince Harry. She had a huge fan base and loyal following even before her royal connections, but since their engagement in November 2017 publicity around Meghan's fashion choices has hit an all-time high. With websites that track her every outfit and store sell-outs when they do, it's safe to say as a nation we've gone 'Meghan-mad'. We take a look back at her past fashion choices, analyse her signature style and predict how this may evolve when she marries into the British monarchy in May.

IF THE SUITS FIT

Before giving up her job on the American TV drama, *Suits*, Meghan played a key role on the hit show for seven years. Her character Rachel Zane was in possession of a working wardrobe that any business woman would envy; and Meghan has actually admitted that some of her fashion style has been influenced by the character. Having a successful acting career meant that she would make a plethora of red carpet appearances and always managed to look effortlessly chic. A dedicated fan of form-fitting evening dresses that ooze glamour, Meghan's



Meghan wore a tuxedo-inspired Stella McCartney coat in Cardiff

Meghan's fresh no-makeup look at the Royal Foundation Forum



On a visit to Nottingham, stepping out in a Joseph midi skirt and Kurt Geiger boots



Celebrating Christmas at Sandringham with this super-chic Chloé 'Pixie' handbag



Picture-perfect at an Elton John AIDS Foundation Benefit, with a 'barely there' nude lip colour and the subtlest of fluttery false lashes

choices always strike the perfect balance between sultry and sophisticated. Despite looking very at home when dressed up for the swanky events, Meghan's go-to style is in fact much more low-key.

Growing up in chilled-out LA and working in Toronto for years, her clothes are coolly casual and practical: often seen out in jeans and flats at the airport or heading to a yoga class. She showcased her relaxed, perfectly-executed style on the couple's first official public appearance at the Invictus Games wearing a plain white shirt and light denim jeans. We can all relate to this down-to-earth style – just an ordinary girl, marrying a real-life prince!

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PERFECTLY POLISHED

Whether she's at a Hollywood event or running errands around town, you can guarantee that Meghan's signature brunette locks are always photo-ready. Even when her hair is pulled back into a loose up-do, it still manages to look ultra-chic. It's not just her tresses that get preened to perfection though, Meghan's beauty look is also consistently flawless. On the whole, she goes for a very natural and minimal look with her make-up style – usually opting for a nude lip and fluttery lashes. We have seen her rock a colour-pop lip at parties in the past to make a bolder statement.

Thanks to Meghan's links with the US, Canada and now the UK, her wardrobe is an eclectic mix of brands. We've even seen her giving a nod to the British high street already and for her first official engagement as Harry's fiancée, she stepped out in a skirt from Joseph and boots from Kurt Geiger. It appears 'The Meghan Effect' is well underway as many of the items she's seen to be sporting have sold out almost immediately. Not only do we love to mimic Meghan's style, we love that she reminds us how fantastic the Great British high street really is. ▶



Making a bold statement with colour-pop lip colour



An unstructured up-do is framed by loose strands



A smart chambray shorts suit and classic white shirt for an arts party event in Hollywood, May 2016



Meghan wore this cosy Smythe 'Brando' coat when she and Harry went to Brixton in south London

Yes, she's working more classic, tailored pieces, but her overall look still has a noted fashion flair

FASHION FRIENDS

It's safe to say that Meghan is very well connected in the world of fashion. Since her engagement, she's been in touch with fashion powerhouse Victoria Beckham, but even before her social circle expanded rather royally, she was surrounded by fashionistas. Close friend, Jessica Mulrone is a Canadian fashion stylist and is thought to be the visionary behind some of Meghan's signature looks. Fashion designer, Misha Nonoo is another pal of Meghan's

and it was in fact Misha who designed the sell-out shirt that Meghan wore at the Invictus Games.

Her soon-to-be royal status hasn't affected her style choices too much. Yes, she's working more classic, tailored pieces, but her overall look still has a noted fashion flair. It was widely reported by the fashion press when Meghan broke with royal tradition and wore mismatched earrings on an official engagement in Cardiff. While her star earrings were very small in size, they made a big statement. We think it's Meghan's way of saying 'there's something a little different about me.' Conscious of royal protocols, she is keen to keep her own fashion identity.

It was the couple's official engagement photographs where Meghan really cemented her fashion autonomy. Her fashion-forward dress choice was deemed by some as a little risqué – the couture Ralph & Russo gown featured a sheer bodice adorned with decadent gold embroidery. A world away from the simple, demure dress Kate chose to wear in her engagement pictures. We think we'll continue to see Meghan have fun with fashion and do things her own way, carving out a legacy as a style icon as well as the nation's new royal sweetheart.

LEFT From demure lace sleeves to a close-fitting strapless body-con dress, Meghan's versatile style makes a statement whatever the event

Style showdown

Like Princess Diana, the dress sense of these young royal women is of enormous public interest. We take a look at their fashion style...

OFFICIAL ENGAGEMENTS



Kate Kate always opts for timeless pieces in classic colours, demure cuts and inoffensive styles. She often cleverly mixes high street with designer to achieve a winning look. For Kate, this bold red-and-white dogtooth coat by Catherine Walker is one of her more daring fashion choices



Meghan Similarly to Kate, Meghan has a winter wardrobe packed full of ultra-stylish coats that are perfect for meet-and-greets. We've seen her in a few different tailored coats on recent outings, like this Burberry tartan number she wore in Edinburgh this February

EVENING ATTIRE



Kate We have seen Kate dipping her toe into the fashion waters a little by sporting heavily beaded gowns and off-the-shoulder styles on occasion, but her usual look is demure and sophisticated like this feminine lace dress with black velvet ribbon trim from Temperley London

OFF DUTY



Meghan This is a signature red carpet look for Meghan - a glam fitted dress that shows off her fabulous figure, but perhaps when we see her attending an increasing amount of official royal soirées, her choices will become more British royal, less Hollywood



Kate Kate certainly knows how to nail the smart/casual dress code. She's a fan of a good pair of jeans and as a country girl at heart, we often see her in sturdy knee-high boots. As a mum rushing around with her young children, she combines practicality and comfort with classic English county flair



Meghan Her everyday style is very similar to Kate's in the sense that she's happy enough running around town in flats and a plain jumper. However as we can see here, Meghan uses chic accessories to take the style edge, like this Everlane leather tote made in Florence

THE VERDICT

Both Kate's and Meghan's styles are clearly a hit with the nation, causing online excitement every time they step out in the public eye. However, as a mother and potential Queen of England one

day, Kate does favour a slightly more classic and traditional style. So we think it's down to Meghan to push a few more fashion boundaries and we look forward to seeing what she'll wear next...