



WHAT TO WEAR ON FIRST DATES

We asked, they answered! Fashion experts and authors offer tips on what will make the right impression, clothing-wise, for both men and women — and outfits to avoid at all costs.

Don't wear clown shoes on the first date." That would seem to be a pretty solid rule, right? Ah, but what if your date is someone *you met in clown school*? Hmm? Well, then, clown shoes might not just be completely appropriate — they might even be *de rigueur*. This style business is more complex than you thought!

Whether you're a man or a woman, you want to make a great first impression on dates. Of course, we all want to be loved for both our finer innate qualities and our physical attributes, not just for being a snappy dresser. But what we wear says a lot about our personalities and our day-to-day lives, too. Good clothes may have no effect on a date, but bad clothes almost *certainly* will.

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So, what to wear... or avoid at all costs? Women can poll friends with mixed results, depending on those friends' taste and ability to stay objective while being emotionally supportive (and still giving you an honest critique). Guys usually only know other guys who are just as clueless as they are, but can save themselves some embarrassment by checking a restaurant's dress code, for example (jackets and ties might be required), or picking a date that requires a certain type of clothing (camping, a trip to the beach, or other activity dates practically dress themselves, so to speak). We asked some fashion experts for some helpful tips to help keep you sartorially superb and feeling confident on your first date.

Classy Equals Confident

"It is always better to be over-dressed than under-dressed. Especially on first dates; if you go somewhere where others are a bit more casual than you, if anything you will feel a bit 'cooler' and your date will be impressed."

— William Squire, host of *Your Signature Style*

"The one piece of advice I would give is this: If you are meeting someone for the first time, wear something that makes you feel good and confident! The best way to make a great first impression on a date is to leave your 'crazy clothes' in the closet. We all have an outfit that is fun, silly and reflects our personality. But a first date is not the best time to show it off! If you're worried about being either too dressy or too casual, you should go with a business casual outfit (something appropriate for the office). Additionally, do a little research. Don't hesitate to call the venue and ask what guests visiting the establishment typically wear."

— **Steve Kemble**, lifestyle guru and member of *US Weekly's* Fashion Police

My Date's In An Hour! What Should I Wear?

For men: "If you only have an hour, I would suggest first and foremost that you concentrate on being neat and clean. Your personal hygiene says a lot about who you are. Additionally, keep it simple by wearing your favorite outfit versus trying to impress someone with a new outfit that you are not accustomed to wearing. You don't want to look uncomfortable."

— **Steve Kemble**

For women: "First, pull out your favorite outfits. One of them is bound to fit. Second, pick out your sexiest (comfortable) shoes and work your outfit around them. Third, tap into your feminine side with a dress. A dress is always good because it is one item that you can dress up or down with a boot, a jacket, pumps or a shawl."

— Odessa B.

Mark Amundsen is a writer and editor in New York who is working on a book about acute, chronic slovenliness, its diagnoses and cures.