



Shades of ochre dunes, mehndi green, peacock blue and mirror-work silver come together to make a splash this season as you gear up to welcome the best time of the year. Experts weigh in.

Desert Hues

Desert tones are a nice way of bringing calm elegance to celebrations. They don't shout; they resonate. Whether it's a knit ensemble, a georgette kurta, vibrant silk, or a deep-hued jacket set, it's all about letting fabric, texture, and craftsmanship shine through. For modern Indian silhouettes, desert tones work beautifully with layered textures. In fact, desert hues come alive in festive light.

Raghav Agarwal, CEO, Twamev, explains, "The desert's silent elegance inspires all our beige and neutral designs. Take our Beige Knit Indo-Western Ensemble – the soft knit in gentle beige, detailed with hand embroidery, sequins, and cutdana, reflects that quiet, understated luxury drawn from warm dunes and muted horizons."

Desert Couture FOR THE DIWALI Diva

This festive season give your wardrobe a makeover with fashion inspired by the rich palette of the Marwar region with these style tips.

Text ✨ Bindu Gopal Rao

PHOTO: VVANI BY VANI VATS



PHOTO: FAYORE



PHOTO: ABHISHEK SHARMA



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Fabric Feels

It is advisable to use fabrics like silk, chanderi, tussar, or organza to let the earthy palette breathe. Layer with a dupatta in a slightly deeper shade for dimension. For cooler evenings, velvet and raw silk in terracotta and ochre offer warmth and luxe.

Shriya Nagi, co-founder of Mrida, shares, "Imagine a soft, handwoven mulmul kurta in a shade of pale beige, feeling like a second skin. Now, layer it with a silk bandhani dupatta in rich maroon or indigo. The matte, organic feel of the cotton against the subtle lustre and craft of the silk is where the magic lies. It's a reflection of the desert itself – vast and simple, yet punctuated by moments of vibrant life. Or consider a fluid linen tunic paired with trousers. The beauty is in its relaxed silhouette, allowing you to move with grace and ease. It's less about a perfect 'pairing' and more about creating a feeling of effortless harmony."

Colour-Coded

The desert is a masterclass in understated beauty. It's vast, quiet, and powerful without needing to shout. The colour palette alone is inspiring, for example, warm ochres, soft sands, burnt terracottas, sun-bleached ivory, and deep twilight browns.

"But beyond the colours, it's the textures and shapes that captivate me, like wind-swept dunes and the matte-meets-shimmer effect of sand in sunlight. I also love the raw ruggedness against an endless sky. In fashion, the desert represents minimalism with soul. It teaches us that you can be impactful without being loud. It's why I often gravitate towards clean silhouettes, organic fabrics and handcrafted details that feel rooted," says fashion designer Abhishek Sharma.

It's all about layering tones from the same family so they flow together effortlessly. "For example, a sandy beige lehenga with an amber mirror-work blouse, or a copper skirt with a soft ivory organza dupatta. These colours suit almost every skin tone and can be styled up with statement jewellery for a bold festive look or kept minimal for daytime celebrations. Mirror work has always fascinated me... it's like wearing a piece of light. In my collections, I don't just use it as an accent; I let it take centre stage. The

way a thousand tiny mirrors catch and scatter light feels magical, almost celebratory. It's deeply rooted in Indian craft traditions, yet when done in a more contemporary way, it becomes incredibly versatile, perfect for a mehendi under the sun, a Diwali night lit by diyas, or even a cocktail by the beach. I think that's the beauty of full-blown mirror work – it's as festive as it is timeless," says Vani Vats, Founder, Vvani by Vani Vats.

Style File

There's a quiet but powerful return to roots – sustainable, hand-crafted textiles are having their moment again. People want clothes with meaning, with a sense of place. Versatile silhouettes that work across occasions are also in-demand pieces you can style differently for a puja, a brunch, or a wedding.

Sarika Kakrania, Founder of Pink City by Sarika, advises, "My favourite way to wear them is to pick one hero hue, say, a rich saffron or a deep maroon, and build around it with softer companions like muted beige, ivory, or sand. For festive wear, I love pairing these earthy tones with hints of metallic gold or antique silver, just enough to catch the light without overwhelming the richness of the colour. Layering is also key; a rust-toned bandhani dupatta over a neutral kurta or an organza jacket in dusty rose over champagne silk instantly elevates the look."



PHOTO: MRIDA



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Festive Vibe

Desert tones are perfect for Diwali because they're rich without being overpowering. In the evening light, they reflect warmth beautifully. You can elevate them with subtle metallic hand embroidery, sequins used sparingly, or fine zardozi work that catches the light just enough.

Farhana Bodi, Global Content Creator & Founder of Fayore, says, "Diwali is all about celebrating light and new beginnings, so your outfit should reflect that. It's a time for high-impact glamour and unapologetic celebration. For me, this means leaning into metallics, crystals, and rich, jewel-toned colours. A festive look for Diwali is not just about a beautiful outfit; it's about the energy you bring to it. Whether it's an embellished co-ord set for a card party or a stunning, embroidered gown for a grand dinner. It's the perfect occasion to step into your most confident self and shine."

Ultimately, fashion is about self-expression and empowerment. Desert couture is about celebrating the best of both worlds: the rich, cultural heritage of India and the modern, global aesthetic of today's woman. It's about dressing loudly and living boldly, just like a desert queen. ✨