



Festive fashion forecast

As 2026 eases into the festive season, we crystal gaze into the fashion trends that will rule the season.

Text ✱ **Bindu Gopal Rao**

estive fashion in 2026 is moving towards a more refined and understated kind of luxury. Experts weigh in.

Trend check

Fashion today is moving beyond just the visual impact of a garment. The focus is increasingly on consciousness of comfort, quality, fit and finesse. There is a strong preference for fluid yet sculpted silhouettes, contemporary lehengas, modern sarees, statement blouses and versatile separates. “Organza, silk, tissue and fine brocades are particularly relevant because they allow designers to create structure and movement without making the garment feel heavy. Embellishment is also becoming more refined—3D embroidery, botanical motifs, delicate sequins, tonal work and subtle metallic detailing are replacing the need for excessive surface ornamentation,” says Apoorva S. Kumar, Founder, Armadio.

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Festive fashion is evolving towards a more contemporary take on Indian wear. Indo-Western silhouettes, pre-draped sarees, corsets with skirts, and structured jackets are gaining popularity, especially among the younger generation.

Reuse and repeat

Prints, patterns and plenty of embroidery are in vogue, but in more wearable, contemporary designs set to dominate the market this season. People are looking for pieces that feel festive yet remain easy to wear and style beyond a single occasion.

Anoushka Sadarangani, founder of Anoushka, says, "People want clothes that are comfortable, stylish and feel like an investment. Nobody wants to buy something and then wonder where they'll store it after wearing it once. There's a growing preference for timeless, versatile pieces that can be styled differently for different occasions. Consumers are becoming much more conscious about what they invest in and how often they can wear it."

This is pushing designers to create pieces that feel special enough for an occasion without being limited to just one. Versatility and longevity are becoming just as important as the design itself.

Style file

Statement blouses, unconventional drapes, layering and contemporary tailoring are making festive dressing far more versatile. A statement blouse or an interesting drape can completely transform a simpler saree or skirt, while layering and contemporary tailoring allow people to create multiple looks using the same pieces.

Raghav Agarwal, Business Head at Twamev, says, "Younger consumers are dressing with a much more mix-and-match mindset. They are borrowing from different wardrobes and eras—think a traditional embroidered skirt with a cropped knit, a kurta styled with wide-leg trousers, a saree paired with a bomber jacket, or a dupatta worn almost like a scarf. Even jewellery is being layered in unexpected ways, with vintage pieces sitting alongside minimal contemporary accessories. There is a certain freedom in the way this generation dresses; they are not trying to look traditionally festive, they are trying to make festive wear feel like them."

Colour coded

After two seasons dominated by pastels and softer shades, this festive season is expected to see a strong shift towards



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reds, deeper tones and bolder colours. "Metallics are also making a comeback, especially gold and silver combinations, along with sequins and a little more bling," says Sadarangani.

The mood this festive season is likely to bring together both classic and contemporary colour stories. "While jewel tones and metallics will continue to have a strong presence, we also expect to see softer, unexpected shades and fresh colour pairings making their way



into festive wardrobes. Think emerald with blush pink, aqua with deep wine, tangerine with fuchsia, or powder blue with silver. Consumers today are more open to experimenting, so we see space for both the traditional richness of jewel tones and the freshness of newer, more playful combinations,” adds Agarwal.

Comfort rules

Comfort has become an essential part of luxury as most people want to feel beautiful without compromising on movement or ease. “We are therefore

seeing lighter fabrics, fluid silhouettes, pre-draped sarees and separates that feel effortless while retaining the richness expected from festive dressing. For me, comfort does not mean compromising on glamour. The best festive pieces are those where the craftsmanship, fit and construction make the garment feel almost effortless to wear,” adds Kumar.

What is important is that these elements are not being added simply to make a garment look different. The best designs combine strong fashion with beautiful construction, comfort and proportion. That balance is where the finesse comes through.

Heritage hues

There is a renewed appreciation for Indian craftsmanship, but it is being presented with much more finesse. Traditional textiles such as silk, Banarasi, brocade and tissue are being reinterpreted through contemporary silhouettes, while techniques such as zari, mirror work, hand embroidery, Kantha and intricate thread work are being used more thoughtfully.

“For me, quality is increasingly about what you discover when you look closely—the hand of the fabric, the precision of the embroidery, the finishing and the way the garment sits on the body. That quiet attention to detail is what makes a piece feel truly luxurious,” says Kumar.

Traditional crafts, too, are being used in a much more contemporary way rather than being restricted to conventional silhouettes. “We are seeing crafts like Ajrakh, Ikat, Bandhani and hand embroidery being introduced through modern cuts, separates and everyday-wear pieces. The craft remains the hero, but the way it is presented feels much more current,” says Sadarangani.

Handloom is also finding its way back into festive wardrobes, particularly because it brings texture and character to an outfit. The beauty lies in keeping the craft authentic while allowing the way it is worn to evolve with the wearer.

The idea of quiet confidence is becoming much more relevant than simply making a statement. Whether it is a traditional silhouette or a completely unconventional combination, the emphasis is on individuality, comfort, quality and an impeccable finish. ✨

