

SIMPLE STYLE

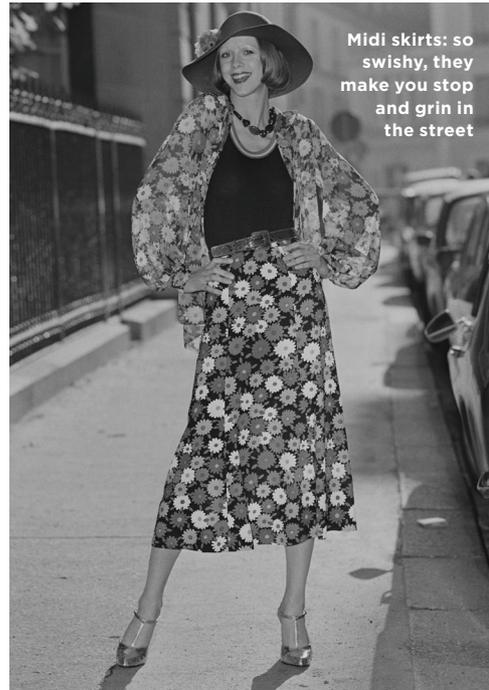
THE MIDI SKIRT

Words: **CLARE GOGERTY**

With the joys of a loose, longer skirt on a hot day. No one needs to be constricted by a stiff, fitted garment when the sun is out, and there's a skip in your step. The feel of soft cotton swishing around your bare calves feels right for summer. Worn with flat sandals and a T-shirt, a midi skirt is liberating, like you're channelling a Californian hippie hitching a ride on a long, dusty highway with flowers in your hair.

Unlike a pencil skirt, a midi skirt – the hem of which sits a little below the knee, hitting the widest part of your calf – allows movement. Wearing one, you can run, dance, throw interesting shapes, or sit comfortably cross-legged on the grass without showing your knickers. It looks good with trainers, loafers, even with heels for that oft-touted office-to-evening transformation. Its length means you don't need to wear tights or worry too much about depilation. It covers a multitude of blemishes and stubbly shins.

Historically, the midi has been with us since the dawn of clothing. Ancient Egyptian men and women wore them; as did the rest of humanity until advances in weaving loom technology and scissor manufacture saw men pulling



Midi skirts: so swishy, they make you stop and grin in the street

on trousers instead. In women's fashion, hemlines rose from the floor during the 1890s when a six-inch rise was introduced for sportswear.

By 1915 it was commonplace to show your ankles, and hemlines continued to rise consecutively through the decades reaching their loftiest (and skimpiest) with the mini in the 60s and 70s. 'Midi-skirt' as a term was introduced as a backlash to the mini by designers in 1967, and the new longer skirt was worn with tight-fitting tops, strings of beads and fitted jackets.

Its widespread adoption and demure length burdened the midi with 'frumpy' and 'bookish' labels. It was the garment worn by the 'blue-stocking' or the 'housewife' (both terms, thankfully, outdated). No such problems now, however. Long, pleated skirts have been adopted by a new generation of women, who pair them with loafers or trainers and stride purposefully about, relishing the freedom that they bring. Pleated, flowery, asymmetrical, leopard print, polka dot: there is no end to the choice available. The midi-skirt's time is now. **S**

“The feel of soft cotton swishing around bare calves feels right for summer”

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES

THE UPDATE



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