# Luxury flip-flops spark high fashion revolution as summer staple



As flip-flops transition from poolside staples to high-fashion must-haves, their journey represents a significant cultural shift in contemporary footwear fashion. Traditionally viewed as casual, practical shoes designed to be worn in shared spaces like communal showers and nail salons, flip-flops are witnessing a renaissance, emerging as a staple of summer style. Libby Jane Page, executive director of Vogue Shopping, notes their “endless appeal,” positioning them as “a summer staple” in today’s wardrobe.

The catalyst for this transformation is undeniably the £670 flip-flops introduced by luxury brand The Row, associated with designers Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen. Despite a price tag that sparked widespread outrage, these flip-flops, featuring a black fabric thong and a striking red rubber sole, quickly sold out, with a waiting list forming for those eager to embrace this luxe version of a traditionally low-cost item. Their popularity highlights a growing trend where high fashion redefines the perception of commonplace footwear.

The surging interest in flip-flops extends beyond the luxury market. Catwalks have embraced a variety of styles: Chloé showcased jelly flip-flops, while Ferragamo unveiled smart leather versions. Brands like Coperni and Miu Miu have even reimagined classic designs by integrating flip-flop elements into their collections. This trend has trickled down to the high street, with retailers such as John Lewis reporting a 44% increase in searches for flip-flops amid inconsistent summer weather. Affordable options, like a £14.40 pair from Ipanema and £60 flip-flops from Mango—spotted on supermodel Irina Shayk during the Cannes Film Festival—demonstrate that style and budget can coexist.

Equally significant is the phenomenon of pairing flip-flops with more formal attire. The Spring 2023 fashion weeks, particularly shows by The Row and Burberry, noted models wearing flip-flops alongside elegant gowns and tailored suits, challenging traditional fashion norms. This practice has been supported by celebrities like Kanye West, who famously donned diamond-adorned flip-flops, suggesting a shift towards a more casual elegance in style. This trend resonates with the “wrong shoe theory,” a styling hack popularised by fashion insiders, which embraces footwear that contrast with the overall outfit.

Moreover, the resurgence of flip-flops correlates with a broader trend emphasising exposure, particularly regarding feet—a notion recently articulated by fashion writer Liana Satenstein, who remarked on our collective willingness to express individuality via footwear. Historical perspectives, such as those provided by Rebecca Shawcross, a senior curator at Northampton’s Shoe Museum, suggest that while flip-flops have maintained a contemporary feel, they have roots tracing back thousands of years, with examples dating as far back as 350 BC.

However, as flip-flops make their way into more sophisticated arenas, health considerations remain paramount. Helen Branthwaite, chief clinical adviser for the Royal College of Podiatry, cautions that while flip-flops may be suitable for those with strong feet, excessive wear can lead to injuries due to their lack of fastening and support. Shoes designed with arch profiles, such as those from brands like Archies Footwear and Birkenstock, offer alternatives that prioritise comfort without discarding style.

As summer approaches and forecasts predict a heatwave, the resurgence of flip-flops invites both admiration and caution. For fans of this trend, embracing the laid-back yet stylish aesthetic should be a balanced endeavour, ensuring both fashion and foot health are maintained.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend), [[3]](https://www.harpersbazaar.com.sg/fashion/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/), [[4]](https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/fashion-week/a41435992/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/shopping/summer-sandals-the-marie-claire-edit-216663), [[6]](https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend), [[3]](https://www.harpersbazaar.com.sg/fashion/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend), [[4]](https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/fashion-week/a41435992/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend), [[5]](https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/shopping/summer-sandals-the-marie-claire-edit-216663)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend), [[6]](https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend), [[7]](https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/shopping/designer-sandals)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend> - This article discusses the resurgence of flip-flops as a fashionable footwear choice, moving beyond their traditional use in communal showers and nail salons. It highlights the influence of luxury brands like The Row, which introduced £670 flip-flops featuring a black fabric thong and red rubber sole, leading to high demand and a waiting list. The piece also notes the presence of flip-flops on various catwalks, including jelly versions at Chloé and leather iterations at Ferragamo, and mentions the popularity of affordable options like £60 flip-flops from Mango, as seen on model Irina Shayk at the Cannes film festival.
3. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com.sg/fashion/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/> - This article examines the unexpected rise of flip-flops in high fashion, particularly during the Spring 2023 fashion weeks. It highlights how luxury brands like The Row and Burberry incorporated flip-flops into their collections, with models wearing them alongside elegant gowns and tailored outfits. The piece also notes the presence of celebrities such as Kanye West, who attended the Burberry show wearing diamond-adorned flip-flops, signaling a shift in the perception of flip-flops from casual to chic.
4. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/fashion-week/a41435992/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/> - This article explores the trend of wearing flip-flops with formal attire during the Spring 2023 fashion weeks. It discusses how models at shows like Burberry and The Row paired flip-flops with gowns and tailored pieces, challenging traditional fashion norms. The piece also highlights the influence of celebrities and fashion insiders embracing this trend, suggesting a shift towards comfort and casual elegance in high fashion.
5. <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/shopping/summer-sandals-the-marie-claire-edit-216663> - This article presents a curated guide to the best summer sandals for 2023, featuring a range of styles from minimalist to maximalist. It includes options like elegant Grecian sandals, bold 'ugly' dad sandals, timeless fisherman styles, and easy slip-ons. The guide emphasizes key trends such as metallic shades, elevated yet comfortable heels, and chic flat alternatives like slides and mules, catering to various tastes and occasions.
6. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/> - This article examines the unexpected rise of flip-flops in high fashion, particularly during the Spring 2023 fashion weeks. It highlights how luxury brands like The Row and Burberry incorporated flip-flops into their collections, with models wearing them alongside elegant gowns and tailored outfits. The piece also notes the presence of celebrities such as Kanye West, who attended the Burberry show wearing diamond-adorned flip-flops, signaling a shift in the perception of flip-flops from casual to chic.
7. <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/shopping/designer-sandals> - This article discusses the prominence of designer sandals in the Spring/Summer 2025 season, highlighting their role as essential elements in seasonal wardrobes. It features a range of stylish options from luxury brands, including Hermès’ Oran slides, The Row’s Ginza flip-flops, Miu Miu’s rope cord sandals, and Chloé’s nostalgic jelly sandals. The piece emphasizes the versatility and investment value of these designer sandals across various styles and occasions.