# The surprising comeback of 19th-century bloomers in modern fashion



The 19th-century undergarment known as bloomers has made an unexpected resurgence in contemporary fashion, emerging as a notable trend this spring. Celebrities and influencers such as actor Lily James, Alexa Chung, and Camille Charrière have been seen embracing these voluminous, frilly bloomers, which evoke the spirit of Folie Bergère dancers. Their revival has gained traction on social media platforms, where younger generations, including Gen Z and millennials, pair Victorian-style bloomers—sourced from vintage shops or high street retailers—with casual items like band T-shirts, crop tops, and cardigans.

Free People’s “forever young pants,” priced at £88 and available in six colours adorned with dramatic lace trims, stand out as a popular commercial example of these trousers. However, there is some confusion in terminology; garments featuring balloon-like shapes or lace trims at the hem are often broadly, and sometimes inaccurately, labelled as bloomers. This includes “micro bloomer shorts” sold by retailers such as ASOS and Urban Outfitters, and luxury versions like Alaïa's bloomer-style trousers priced at £1,560.

The revival is believed to have gained momentum following Chemena Kamali’s spring/summer 2025 collection for Chloé, showcased in September of the previous year. Her creations featured bloomers made in sheer lace and apricot silk-charmeuse, designed with ankle ties or tapered knee lengths. Vogue commented on this collection, suggesting that it "has the potential to reshape how young women think about sexy dressing in 2025."

London-based brand Flora Mae, led by creative director Flora Sharp, has contributed to the trend with its hand-made, historically inspired bloomers crafted from repurposed vintage fabrics. Sharp’s 'Verona' bloomers, retailing at £65, have become the most sought-after item on her website over the past year. She notes that her customer base spans from New York to London, predominantly aged between 18 and 34, and they tend to have "a strong interest in fashion history and sustainability." Sharp highlights the bloomers’ combination of charm, playfulness, and comfort, factors that distinguish them from other historical garments revived in fashion.

The origins of the bloomer date back to the 1850s and are closely linked to Amelia Bloomer, a New York-born suffragist who advocated for women’s liberation from constrictive attire like corsets and crinolines. She promoted a style of wearing shortened dresses over Turkish-style pantaloons for greater freedom and comfort. This style gained international attention at the World’s Peace Congress in London in 1851 when American suffragists wore bloomers publicly. The reaction was hostile, with many “Bloomerites” facing harassment and arrests—a backlash Amelia Bloomer later interpreted as symbolic of the broader struggle for women’s rights.

Flora Sharp points out that, unlike other historical recreations such as corsets or chainmail, bloomers offer an element of comfortability. Her modern versions adapt original Victorian designs by eliminating impractical features like split legs, adjusting waist sizes with elastic bands, and using thicker vintage cotton to avoid transparency. She adds an adjustable drawstring bow at the ankles to accommodate diverse body types.

The versatility of bloomers is one of their attractions. Sharp observes that wearers enjoy experimenting with styling, layering bloomers under skirts much like their 19th-century predecessors or wearing them as stand-alone statement pieces. Nonetheless, street style verdicts may vary; the visual impact of these substantial undergarments worn as outerwear has led some onlookers to find the trend strikingly unconventional.

The Guardian’s report underlines that this revival highlights a fusion of history, sustainability, and contemporary fashion experimentation, describing bloomers as an emerging garment category that defies traditional expectations of lingerie and outerwear boundaries.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.elle.com/fashion/trend-reports/a61867506/bloomers-summer-2024-trend/> - This article discusses the resurgence of bloomers in contemporary fashion, linking their origins to the 19th-century women’s liberation movement and highlighting how they are styled today with casual and sporty items.
* <https://www.instyle.com/bloomers-spring-fashion-trend-11687325> - Instyle covers bloomers as a spring fashion trend, noting their romantic appeal and versatility, which aligns with how they are perceived today as a fusion of history and modern fashion.
* <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/bloomer-pants-trend-outfit-ideas> - Refinery29 explores the styling possibilities of bloomer pants, suggesting they can be versatile for both casual and work settings, much like the varied ways they are being adapted in the current trend.
* <https://www.nylon.com/fashion/the-return-of-bloomers-fashion-trend> - Nylon discusses the return of bloomers as influenced by hyper-feminine fashion trends and notes their historical significance in women's liberation, similar to how they are perceived today.
* <handbag-sense.com/romantic-trend-of-the-summer-how-to-style-bloomer-shorts> - This article provides guidance on styling bloomers, discussing their history and versatility as both a symbol of liberation and a fashion statement, aligning with their current popularity.