# David Beckham’s fashion evolution: a 30-year style journey on his 50th birthday



David Beckham's fashion journey over nearly three decades has been as remarkable and trendsetting as his illustrious football career. As the celebrated footballer marks his 50th birthday, a retrospective look reveals how he has continually challenged sartorial norms and influenced male fashion across different eras.

Beckham first became a household name after scoring a memorable goal for Manchester United on 17 August 1996. Not long after, in 1997, he began dating Victoria Adams—the Spice Girl famed for her own fashion credentials—cementing their status as one of the most stylish couples around. Early in 2000, the pair turned heads on red carpets sporting all-leather and animal print ensembles, a style that set them apart. A particularly notable moment came when Beckham met the then Prince of Wales, Prince Charles, adorned in a sleeveless shirt and durag—a look that drew significant attention and established Beckham as a male fashion icon.

Transitioning into the early 2000s, Beckham adopted the era’s neutral beige and brown palette, opting for a more relaxed off-duty uniform of white T-shirts paired with jeans and statement jackets. His affinity for baggy puddle jeans and beanies reflected a streetwear trend popular at the time. Following the birth of his sons Brooklyn in 1999 and Romeo in 2002, Beckham and Victoria embraced coordinated but understated styles for their public appearances. The couple continued to attract media acclaim for their matching outfits, such as their white and rhinestone ensembles at the 2003 MTV Movie Awards, earning them comparisons to American pop icons Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake.

From 2004 onwards, Beckham’s red carpet style evolved to include relaxed jeans and untucked shirts paired with blazers, complemented by the addition of bohemian beads—a jewellery trend he helped popularise among men in the UK. In 2005, he experimented with more eye-catching suits, including an iridescent plum number with a romantic ruffled shirt, demonstrated as he and Victoria attended a star-studded event hosted by Elton John in London, where Victoria’s Roberto Cavalli dress captured more fashion headlines.

Between 2006 and 2007, Beckham’s day-to-day outfits incorporated waistcoats and shirts alongside relaxed denim, contrasting with pared-back red carpet ensembles reflecting Victoria’s emerging minimalist style. By 2010, his trademark casual look consolidated around a combination of jeans, white T-shirts, and Ray-Ban aviators, solidifying him as a figure synonymous with effortless cool. On colder days, he donned timeless outerwear in neutral shades, such as double-breasted jackets and striped scarves.

In 2012, Beckham unveiled a collaboration with high-street brand H&M for a bodywear collection featuring cotton trunks and close-fitting vests. At the launch event, he appeared in a cream knitted cardigan and drainpipe jeans, signalling a shift towards more comfortable, understated fashion following the birth of his daughter, Harper Seven, in 2011.

The mid-2010s saw Beckham revisit his rugged roots, favouring black jeans, leather jackets, and shorter sleeves to display his tattoos. This period reflected a broader fashion trend towards capsule wardrobes and monochromatic dressing, as he frequently sported all-black ensembles on red carpets. By 2017, Beckham’s style embraced heritage country aesthetics, wearing tweed, brown suede, and forest green hues—an influence perhaps inspired by his family’s purchase in 2016 of a Cotswolds estate near Chipping Norton. This rural lifestyle dovetailed with his interest in farming and countryside pursuits, mirrored in casual attires such as green fedoras worn to tennis events.

Since 2021, Beckham’s sartorial choices have gravitated towards the ‘quiet luxury’ movement marked by traditional tailoring, earthy tones, and refined silhouettes. His preference for double-breasted suit jackets, pinstripes, and pocket squares contrasts with his earlier rugged image, a style shift also reflected in longer sleeves that often cover his tattoos. This sophisticated direction coincided with his appointment as the face of fashion brand Hugo Boss in May 2024, adding to previous collaborations with H&M and Kent & Curwen.

Throughout his journey, Beckham has not only pushed the boundaries of male fashion but also subverted gender stereotypes, notably when he wore a sarong at the 1998 World Cup in France—a move that sparked controversy at the time. Reflecting on that moment in a 2018 interview with The Telegraph, he said, “Twenty years ago when I wore that sarong, people were shocked. It was an outrage; ‘why are you wearing that? What were you thinking?’ Today no one bats an eyelid if a guy wears a sarong in the street.”

As David Beckham celebrates his milestone birthday, his influence in both football and fashion remains indelible. His evolving style encapsulates shifts in fashion over the past 30 years while highlighting his role as a pioneer in redefining how men express themselves through clothing.

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