# White after Labour Day: fashion’s old rule falls to modern style freedom



The belief that white should not be worn after Labour Day is one of fashion’s most persistent and perplexing rules. However, many are now discarding this outdated notion, embracing a more flexible approach to seasonal attire. While the exact origins of this convention remain murky, style expert and Velvet Image Lab founder Elena Mensch posits that it likely arose centuries ago as a practical measure. In an era when clothing was more vulnerable to soiling from adverse weather conditions, white garments were particularly susceptible, making hand-washing a chore during the colder months.

Mensch further suggests that this rule served as a social marker established by old-money families, who were keen to distinguish themselves from the rising class of "new money." They would return to urban life after summering at coastal destinations, and donning white after Labour Day was viewed as a signifier of newly acquired wealth. As Mensch notes, “If they spotted someone wearing white after that date, it signalled first-generation wealth.”

Contemporary attitudes towards this rule reflect a significant shift in cultural values regarding fashion and social status. Stylist Vanessa Valiente highlights this transformation, stating, "Caring about social status is becoming passé." The evolution of style, alongside the efforts of designers and brands, is making white clothing more accessible year-round. In particular, fashion houses are producing winter-friendly white garments, subverting the old conventions and granting consumers new freedom in their fashion choices.

Celebrity endorsements of this shift further underscore its acceptance. Public figures, including Princess Eugenie and Meghan Markle, have been seen wearing white outfits during events held in the off-season, illustrating that white can be both practical and chic in colder months. This modern twist infuses the seemingly rigid guidelines with a degree of elegance, allowing room for creative expression even in wintry settings.

Historically, the fixation on when to wear white aligns itself with social hierarchies, particularly during America's Gilded Age. According to various fashion analyses, including insights from Vogue, the upper class notoriously donned white apparel to signify their wealth and leisure. In defiance of these norms, influential fashion icons like Coco Chanel famously wore white throughout the year, challenging prevailing beliefs and inspiring future generations to reconsider the stringent rules of fashion.

The discourse surrounding the ‘no white after Labour Day’ rule exemplifies a broader dialogue about individuality and freedom in style choices. Many enthusiasts argue that such restrictions feel unnecessarily archaic in today’s more egalitarian fashion landscape. As principles of inclusivity and personal expression take hold, the spectre of outdated fashion norms begins to fade, making way for fresh interpretations of style.

Ultimately, the rejection of the 'no white after Labour Day' rule reflects a newfound appreciation for creativity, one that is steadily reshaping the way society approaches fashion. The emphasis is now on personal style, allowing individuals to embrace white not just as a seasonal colour but as a versatile staple that transcends traditional boundaries.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2
2. Paragraph 3
3. Paragraphs 4, 5
4. Paragraphs 6, 7
5. None
6. None
7. None

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.glam.com/1851521/outdated-fashion-rule-not-following-anymore/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.southernliving.com/holidays-occasions/labor-day/why-cant-you-wear-white-after-labor-day> - This article explores the origins of the 'no white after Labor Day' rule, suggesting it began as a practical choice to keep cool during summer and evolved into a social marker among the wealthy. It also notes that some fashion icons, like Coco Chanel, defied this rule by wearing white year-round.
3. <https://www.vogue.com/article/wearing-white-after-labor-day> - Vogue traces the history of the 'no white after Labor Day' rule, linking it to the Gilded Age when the elite wore white to signify leisure and wealth. The article also highlights how designers and fashion icons have challenged this tradition by incorporating white into fall and winter collections.
4. <https://www.farmersalmanac.com/wear-white-after-labor-day> - The Farmers' Almanac delves into the historical context of the 'no white after Labor Day' rule, suggesting it was a way for the wealthy to distinguish themselves from the working class. It also discusses how this rule became more rigid in the 1950s and how some fashion icons have defied it.
5. <https://www.rd.com/article/the-history-of-no-white-after-labor-day/> - Reader's Digest examines the origins of the 'no white after Labor Day' rule, proposing it was a symbol of wealth and a means to separate the old-money elite from the nouveau riche. The article also notes that some fashion icons, like Coco Chanel, wore white year-round, challenging this tradition.
6. <https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/holidays-celebrations/a40246129/white-after-labor-day-history/> - This article discusses the history of the 'no white after Labor Day' rule, suggesting it was a way for the upper class to separate themselves from the working class. It also notes that some fashion icons, like Coco Chanel, defied this rule by wearing white year-round.
7. <https://www.voanews.com/a/usa_all-about-america_why-americans-dont-wear-white-after-labor-day/6174877.html> - Voice of America explores the origins of the 'no white after Labor Day' rule, linking it to the Gilded Age when the elite wore white to signify leisure and wealth. The article also highlights how some fashion icons have defied this tradition by wearing white year-round.