# Cannes film festival bans naked dresses and oversized gowns in controversial dress code shift



The 2025 Cannes Film Festival is witnessing a significant shift in its red carpet etiquette, an evolution marked by a controversial ban on "naked dressing" and oversized gowns. Organisers have defended this newly implemented dress code with claims of maintaining "decency" and ensuring better guest movement, which they argue is vital for the festival's prestigious reputation. The exclusion zone notably affects celebrity favourites known for their daring fashion choices, such as sheer dresses that flaunt more skin than fabric.

Despite the strict guidelines, many attendees have defied the edict in striking fashion. Iconic figures such as Halle Berry and Heidi Klum made headlines with audacious outfits that arguably sidestepped the rules. Berry initially donned a more extravagant gown before opting for a less ostentatious style, responding to the newly established norms. “I’m not going to break the rules,” she stated, although her final choice did not quite align with her intent to adhere fully to the updated code.

This year's regulations also advocate for more conservative attire options, encouraging cocktail dresses, tailored pantsuits, or elegant tops paired with dressy bottoms — a directive perceived as an attempt to rekindle a more traditional sense of fashion at the festival. Critics, however, argue that these new standards stem from a patriarchal perspective, potentially stifling self-expression and body positivity — themes increasingly resonant within the contemporary fashion dialogue.

Fashion expert Karla Welch expressed concerns that the new dress code appears regressive, and she remarks on how such restrictions could undermine what should be a celebration of personal expression. Moreover, the directive could possibly set a precedent that influences other high-profile events, pushing them toward more conservative fashion standards overall. The debate around the festival's evolving style ethos is emblematic of wider cultural discussions regarding autonomy, body image, and the way women are viewed in the public sphere.

While iconic moments in Cannes history have showcased sheer fashion statements—like Jane Birkin in the 1970s or Bella Hadid's bold appearances in recent years—this year represents a stark contrast, echoing calls for decorum and restraint. Many, including feminist author Natasha Walter, view the prohibition on such bold attire as a regression. Walter remarked on the absurdity of suggesting women must adhere to restrictive fashion statutes while the films showcased often depict matters of nudity without hesitation. This contradiction starkly highlights the complexities involved in aligning personal expression with cultural expectations.

In addition to the nudity prohibition, the festival has outlawed voluminous gowns, particularly those with long trains that may obstruct guest flow or create complications during seating. This decision has sparked further debate over the idea that a woman’s worth should not rely on her ability to flaunt extravagant fashions. Critics suggest that such regulations only amplify a misconception that influences how women's contributions are perceived within the industry.

As the festival unfolds, it remains to be seen how these guidelines will ultimately influence fashion choices and cultural commentary surrounding one of cinema’s most significant gatherings. The Cannes red carpet, traditionally a space of glamour and bold statements, is becoming a focal point for discussions about respectability, freedom, and the ongoing tug-of-war between self-expression and societal norms. The high-profile attendees find themselves not only posing for photographs but also navigating the tensions between personal style and institutional expectations.

In observing the wide spectrum of responses to the new dress code, from adherence to flouting the rules, it becomes clear that the conversation around the evolution of red carpet fashion is far from settled. The attendees’ choices illuminate a broader cultural narrative—the balance between artistry, propriety, and individual autonomy continues to be a dynamic landscape.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 4, and 5: [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2025/may/16/a-push-towards-the-conservative-cannes-tries-to-ban-oversized-outfits-and-naked-dressing)
2. Paragraphs 3 and 6: [[2]](https://www.marieclaire.com/fashion/cannes-red-carpet-dress-code-naked-dress-ban/), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/halle-berry-had-change-cannes-red-carpet-dress-last-minute-due-dress-code-2025-05-13/)
3. Paragraph 7: [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/598f63831e619b5aa8129daa55ab554d), [[6]](https://www.apnews.com/article/2655d4d76dab30f5bba075b63221cf5c)
4. Paragraphs 8 and 9: [[7]](https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/live/cannes-film-festival-red-carpet-dresses-2025)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2025/may/16/a-push-towards-the-conservative-cannes-tries-to-ban-oversized-outfits-and-naked-dressing> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.marieclaire.com/fashion/cannes-red-carpet-dress-code-naked-dress-ban/> - The 2025 Cannes Film Festival has introduced a controversial update to its red carpet dress code, prohibiting nudity and banning sheer 'naked dresses' and voluminous gowns. The organizers cited 'decency' and the need to prevent disruption in guest flow as reasons behind the change. This move directly affects regular celebrity attendees known for bold, skin-baring fashion choices, sparking backlash from stylists like Karla Welch who criticized the rules as patriarchal and regressive. The updated guidelines list modest attire such as cocktail dresses, pantsuits, or a dressy top with black pants as acceptable alternatives. The ban on revealing attire marks a cultural shift that could influence other red carpet events and fashion designers, potentially leading to less transparency and more conservative designs overall. Critics argue that the policy undermines self-expression and body positivity, values often associated with sheer dressing. This is not the first time Cannes has faced criticism over its dress code—until 2018, women were required to wear high heels. The latest change raises ongoing debates about autonomy, fashion boundaries, and the evolving definitions of respectability and elegance on the red carpet. ([marieclaire.com](https://www.marieclaire.com/fashion/cannes-red-carpet-dress-code-naked-dress-ban/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://apnews.com/article/598f63831e619b5aa8129daa55ab554d> - Despite the Cannes Film Festival recently instituting a ban on nudity and voluminous outfits on its red carpet, several attendees still showcased extravagant ensembles at the event's opening ceremony. Notably, Heidi Klum wore a striking pink-and-white gown with a long train, defying the policy. Bella Hadid opted for a more modest black dress, signaling a shift from her usual bold styles. Other standout looks included Chinese actor Wan QianHui’s large white cloudlike dress and fashion columnist Aliia Roza’s dove-adorned hoop skirt symbolizing peace. Model Alessandra Ambrosio wore a design with volume focused on her sleeves rather than a long train. Meanwhile, jury member Halle Berry revised her original plan to adhere to the new rules, supporting the nudity restriction. Juliette Binoche’s jury group also appeared to follow the guidelines. The policy’s enforcement, however, remains ambiguous, as no actions were taken against those who defied it. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/598f63831e619b5aa8129daa55ab554d?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/halle-berry-had-change-cannes-red-carpet-dress-last-minute-due-dress-code-2025-05-13/> - At the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, Oscar-winning actress and jury member Halle Berry revealed she had to change her planned red carpet outfit due to the festival's newly updated dress code. The revised guidelines prohibit nudity and voluminous attire, including dresses with large trains that could obstruct other guests or complicate theater seating. As a result, Berry could not wear a designer dress by Gupta and had to opt for a less extravagant ensemble. She expressed understanding for the nudity restriction. The changes come as celebrities have increasingly pushed the boundaries of red carpet fashion with provocative and oversized garments. Organizers emphasized that access to the red carpet could be denied for noncompliance. Additionally, elegant flat shoes are now explicitly allowed, a shift welcomed by jury president Juliette Binoche, who praised the comfort-focused adjustment. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/halle-berry-had-change-cannes-red-carpet-dress-last-minute-due-dress-code-2025-05-13/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.festival-cannes.com/en/2017/dress-code-required/> - The official Cannes Film Festival website outlines the dress code requirements for attendees. The guidelines specify that formal attire is mandatory for evening screenings at the Grand Théâtre Lumière. Men are expected to wear tuxedos or dark suits, while women should opt for elegant dresses or pantsuits. The dress code aims to maintain the festival's prestigious image and ensure a cohesive and respectful atmosphere during events. Attendees are advised to adhere to these standards to gain access to screenings and official functions. ([festival-cannes.com](https://www.festival-cannes.com/en/2017/dress-code-required/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.apnews.com/article/2655d4d76dab30f5bba075b63221cf5c> - Ahead of its 78th edition, the Cannes Film Festival has reinforced its red carpet dress code by officially prohibiting nudity. This update clarifies previously unwritten norms, stating that full nudity is banned both on the red carpet and within the festival grounds. The policy, according to Cannes press officers, is intended to align with the festival’s institutional standards and French law, rather than to police fashion overall. The move has garnered attention due to a recent rise in revealing outfits, like those worn by Bianca Censori at the Grammys. Additionally, the festival has reiterated restrictions on large, voluminous outfits that impede movement and seating. Historically, celebrities such as Bella Hadid and Kendall Jenner have pushed the boundaries of the dress code, which mandates black tie and formal wear for evening screenings at the Grand Théâtre Lumière. Cannes has also maintained a selfie ban since 2018, although it is not always strictly enforced. The 2025 Cannes Film Festival begins Tuesday. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/2655d4d76dab30f5bba075b63221cf5c?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/live/cannes-film-festival-red-carpet-dresses-2025> - The Cannes Film Festival 2025 continues its legacy as a premier fashion and film event since its inception in 1946. This year's festival introduced a new dress code banning 'naked dressing,' signaling a shift from the traditionally risqué red-carpet ensembles to more covered, yet still glamorous attire. Notably, Bella Hadid embraced a classic Audrey Hepburn-inspired look, a departure from her previous bold fashion statements. Zoe Saldana brought a modern edge pairing an oversized leather bomber with a sleek black slip, and actor Tramell Tillman showcased sartorial elegance in a sharp single button double-breasted suit. Other stars making memorable red carpet appearances included Maria Borges, Cristine Sun, Julia Garner, Nava Mau, Irina Shayk, Diane Kruger, Natalie Portman, Kristen Stewart, Angelina Jolie, Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, Emma Stone, and Alexa Chung. The Croisette remains as stylish as ever, transforming the staircase of the Palais into a runway for fashion history. The live coverage celebrates the evolving aesthetics, elegance, and flair that define Cannes, emphasizing both timeless glamour and contemporary trends. ([marieclaire.co.uk](https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/live/cannes-film-festival-red-carpet-dresses-2025?utm_source=openai))