# Flip-flops step into high fashion with luxury brands sparking demand surge



Flip-flops, once relegated to the status of communal shower footwear and post-pedicure slip-ons, are experiencing a remarkable renaissance, moving into the realm of high fashion. No longer merely associated with practicality, these summer staples have been embraced by both luxury designers and everyday consumers alike. Libby Jane Page, executive director of Vogue Shopping, encapsulates this shift, noting their “endless appeal,” a sentiment echoed across the fashion landscape.

The catalyst for this revival can be traced to a pair of £670 flip-flops introduced by The Row, the luxury brand founded by the Olsen twins. This pair, distinguished by its sophisticated black fabric thong and striking red rubber sole, sparked both outrage and intrigue. Despite the astronomical price tag, they sold out quickly, igniting a waiting list and signifying a burgeoning appetite for high-end flip-flops. The trend is only further reinforced by their presence on elite runways, including jelly varieties showcased by Chloé and smart leather iterations from Ferragamo as well as a rubberized platform style from Coperni.

On the high street, the impact has been undeniable. Retailers are reporting a surge in demand, with searches for flip-flops soaring by 44% at John Lewis. Bestsellers include a £14.40 model from Ipanema, featuring a stylish tortoiseshell thong, and a £9.95 rubber pair from Muji is touted as a budget-friendly alternative to more expensive lines. The democratization of luxury has rendered flip-flops stylishly versatile, showcasing how the right design can elevate even the most casual footwear.

The flip-flop's resurgence is also reminiscent of the rise of other “ugly” footwear such as Birkenstocks and Crocs, which have shed their previous derogatory associations. Now, the flip-flop embodies a state of relaxed chicness that appeals to consumers eager to showcase individuality. Fashion writer Liana Satenstein remarks on this trend towards toe exposure, asserting that we are indeed in a “phalangeal era.” The exposure of feet through flip-flops reflects a broader societal shift towards embracing all forms of beauty and expression.

Yet, as flip-flops ascend the fashion hierarchy, it is crucial to consider their practicality. Helen Branthwaite, the chief clinical adviser for the Royal College of Podiatry, warns that while flip-flops can be a trendy choice, they may not be suitable for everyone. They primarily benefit those with strong feet; excess wear may lead to injuries or complications, particularly when transitioning back to more structured footwear come autumn. Branthwaite advises variation in shoe choices to maintain foot health.

Beyond their historical roots, with origin stories tracing back to ancient Egyptian models, the flip-flop’s evolution in the 1960s marked its integration into Western fashion, spurred by advances in rubber production. Today, their duality as both a fashion statement and summer staple is unparalleled. The trend can also be linked to stylist Allison Bornstein’s so-called “wrong shoe theory,” which embraces unexpected styles in fashion pairings, allowing for a more relaxed yet polished appearance when styled with tailored trousers or even formal gowns.

As summer approaches, the flip-flop offers a blend of comfort, style, and individuality. Whether adorned with embellishments or worn as minimalist designs, this once-maligned shoe has definitively stepped off the sidelines and into the spotlight. With both the fashion-forward and the casual consumer eager to adopt them, the humble flip-flop may yet redefine summer footwear in a way that is both accessible and visually impactful.

## 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), [[4]](https://www.harpersbazaar.com.sg/fashion/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend), [[3]](https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/shopping/designer-sandals)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend), [[5]](https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/fashion-week/a41435992/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), [[6]](https://www.whowhatwear.com/fashion/shoes/french-girl-shoes-with-dresses-uk)
* Paragraph 6 – [[7]](https://www.instyle.com/fancy-flip-flops-summer-shoe-trend-7554295)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/newsletters/2025/may/29/fashion-statement-flip-flops-ugly-shoe-trend)

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

## 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 association with communal showers and nail salons. It highlights the influence of luxury brands like The Row, which introduced £670 flip-flops in their latest collection, leading to a significant increase in popularity. 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 high street's embrace of the trend, with a 44% increase in searches for flip-flops at John Lewis.
3. <https://www.marieclaire.co.uk/fashion/shopping/designer-sandals> - This article highlights the prominence of designer sandals in the Spring/Summer 2025 season, noting that luxury brands are offering a wide array of stylish options. It mentions that flip-flops, though sometimes divisive, are embracing luxury through brands like Christian Louboutin and A.Emery, indicating a shift in the perception of flip-flops from casual to high-fashion footwear.
4. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com.sg/fashion/spring-2023-fashion-week-flip-flop-trend/> - This article discusses the unexpected appearance of flip-flops on the runway during the Spring 2023 fashion shows, including at Burberry and The Row. It notes that flip-flops were featured in various styles, from casual to elevated designs, indicating a shift in their fashion status.
5. <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 month. It highlights instances where models and celebrities paired flip-flops with gowns and suits, challenging traditional fashion norms and showcasing the versatility of flip-flops in high-fashion settings.
6. <https://www.whowhatwear.com/fashion/shoes/french-girl-shoes-with-dresses-uk> - This article observes that French women are embracing a variety of footwear styles to pair with dresses in the summer of 2025, moving away from traditional espadrilles. It highlights the inclusion of fancy flip-flops among the nine prominent shoe trends seen on fashionable Parisians, indicating a shift in the acceptance of flip-flops in stylish ensembles.
7. <https://www.instyle.com/fancy-flip-flops-summer-shoe-trend-7554295> - This article discusses the rise of fancy flip-flops as a summer trend in 2023, noting that celebrities like Jennifer Lawrence, Zoe Kravitz, and Elle Fanning have been spotted wearing them. It emphasizes that the material of the flip-flop, such as leather, elevates the footwear from purely functional to fashionable, reflecting a broader acceptance of flip-flops in stylish settings.