

how to wear a sari

How to wear a sari is a skill that combines tradition, style, and grace. The sari, a timeless garment worn by women across India and many parts of South Asia, consists of a long piece of fabric, usually measuring about six to nine yards. This versatile attire can be draped in various styles, each reflecting the wearer's personality and cultural background. Whether you're preparing for a festive occasion, a wedding, or simply want to embrace this beautiful attire, knowing how to wear a sari correctly can enhance your confidence and elegance. In this article, we will explore the essentials of sari draping, the various styles, and tips to accessorize for a complete look.

Understanding the Components of a Sari

Before you dive into the draping techniques, it's important to familiarize yourself with the components of a sari.

The Basic Components

1. **Sari:** The main piece of fabric that can be made of silk, cotton, chiffon, or georgette, among other materials.
2. **Blouse:** A fitted top that complements the sari, usually tailored to fit snugly.
3. **Petticoat:** A long skirt worn underneath the sari, typically made of cotton or silk, which provides structure and support for draping.
4. **Accessories:** Jewelry, bangles, and other adornments that enhance your overall look.

Preparing to Wear a Sari

Before you begin draping your sari, it's essential to prepare properly.

Choosing the Right Sari

- **Occasion:** Consider the event you're dressing for. A heavy silk sari may be suited for weddings, while a light cotton sari is ideal for casual gatherings.
- **Color and Design:** Pick colors and patterns that flatter your skin tone and fit the occasion.
- **Fabric:** Choose a fabric that you are comfortable wearing, especially if you are new to saris. Lighter fabrics like chiffon or georgette are easier to

manage.

Gathering Your Essentials

Ensure you have the following items ready:

- Your chosen sari
- A matching blouse
- A petticoat (preferably in a color similar to that of the sari)
- Safety pins (optional, for securing pleats)
- Accessories like bangles and earrings
- A mirror for self-checking

Steps to Draping a Sari

Draping a sari can be a delightful experience once you get the hang of it. Below are the step-by-step instructions for the traditional Nivi style, which is the most common way to wear a sari.

Step 1: Put on the Petticoat

- Wear the petticoat around your waist, tying it securely. The petticoat should be tied snugly but comfortably, allowing ease of movement. The length should be such that it hides your feet when standing.

Step 2: Tuck the Sari into the Petticoat

- Take the sari and hold the end with the decorative border (if any). Tuck the sari into the front of the petticoat on your right side, ensuring that the border is at the bottom and the remaining fabric flows to the left.

Step 3: Wrap the Sari Around Your Waist

- Wrap the sari around your waist once, bringing it back to the front. Tuck it in securely at the waist after the first wrap. This will create a base for the draping.

Step 4: Create Pleats

- From the remaining fabric, gather about 5-7 inches of it at the waist and start making pleats. Each pleat should be around 5-6 inches wide. Make sure the pleats are even and aligned, and hold them together.

Step 5: Secure the Pleats

- Tuck the pleats into the petticoat at the center front. Ensure they are secure and well-placed, allowing them to fall gracefully.

Step 6: Drape the Pallu

- The pallu is the decorative end of the sari. Bring it over your left shoulder, allowing it to fall gracefully down your back. You can opt to let it drape freely or secure it with a safety pin for a more structured look.

Step 7: Adjust and Style

- Adjust the sari to ensure it fits comfortably. You can tuck in more fabric or adjust the pleats as needed. Make sure the length is appropriate, ideally reaching your ankles.

Step 8: Final Touches

- Check your look in the mirror. Make any necessary adjustments to the pleats or pallu. Once satisfied, accessorize to complete your ensemble.

Draping Styles to Explore

While the Nivi style is the most popular, there are various other draping styles you can explore:

1. Bengali Style

- Characterized by a wide pallu, the Bengali style is draped such that the pallu falls over the right shoulder instead of the left.

2. Maharashtrian Style

- In this style, the sari is draped more like a dhoti, where the pallu is tucked in at the waist and the fabric is wrapped around the legs.

3. Gujarati Style

- This draping style involves the pallu being brought from the back to the front over one shoulder, creating a more elaborate look.

4. Lehenga Style

- The sari is draped like a lehenga, with the entire fabric wrapped around in a circular manner, creating a skirt effect.

Accessorizing Your Sari Look

Accessorizing is key to elevating your sari look. Here are some tips:

Jewelry

- Necklace: Choose a statement necklace that complements the neckline of your blouse.
- Earrings: Opt for traditional jhumkas or modern studs, based on your personal style.
- Bangles: Stack bangles that match or contrast with your sari's color.

Footwear

- Select comfortable footwear that complements your sari. Traditional juttis or heels can elevate your look.

Hairstyle

- Consider hairstyles that suit the occasion. Braids, loose curls, or a bun adorned with flowers are popular choices.

Tips for Wearing a Sari with Confidence

- Practice: Don't hesitate to practice draping your sari multiple times before the occasion. The more you practice, the more comfortable and confident you'll become.
- Posture: Maintain a good posture while wearing a sari. Stand tall and walk gracefully to enhance your overall appearance.
- Comfort: Choose a sari that you are comfortable in, both in terms of fit and fabric.

Conclusion

Wearing a sari is not just about the fabric; it is an expression of culture, elegance, and femininity. By understanding the components, mastering the draping techniques, and accessorizing thoughtfully, you can wear a sari with grace and confidence. Embrace the beauty of this timeless attire and enjoy the compliments that come your way when you step out in style!

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the basic steps to drape a sari?

Start by tucking one end of the sari into your petticoat on the right side, wrap it around your waist, and then tuck the pleats in at the front. Ensure the length is appropriate, then drape the remaining fabric over your shoulder.

What type of sari is best for beginners?

Lightweight and pre-pleated saris, such as chiffon or georgette, are great for beginners as they are easier to manage and drape.

How can I keep my sari from slipping?

To prevent slipping, ensure you wear a fitted petticoat that matches the sari color, use safety pins to secure pleats, and choose a sari made from a fabric with some grip.

What accessories should I wear with a sari?

Pair your sari with traditional jewelry like bangles, earrings, and a statement necklace. Don't forget a clutch or potli bag for essentials!

Can I wear a sari casually?

Absolutely! You can wear a sari casually by choosing a lighter fabric and opting for simpler draping styles. Pair it with a chic top or a crop top for a modern look.

How long should a sari be for a perfect drape?

A standard sari is typically about 6 to 9 yards long. Ensure the length allows for ample pleats at the front and draping over the shoulder without dragging on the ground.

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