

US EDITION

WHO WHAT WEAR

SHOP WITH ISA



BEAUTY BEAUTY

SHOPPING SHOPPING

EDITORS IN RESIDENCE

LIVING LI

HOME > BEAUTY > SKIN

I've Had Dark Circles Since Birth—These Are the Only Eye Creams That Make a Difference

Shadows, begone.



BY ALYSSA BRASCIA PUBLISHED LAST WEEK IN [BUYING GUIDES](#)

When you purchase through links on our site, we may earn an affiliate commission. [Here's how it works.](#)



(Image credit: @alyssabrascia)

Jump to category: [The Best Eye Creams for Dark Circles](#)

[What to Look For](#)

[Causes of Dark Circles](#)

[Share](#)

[Follow us](#)

If you have a stressful job, have had a few too many bad nights of sleep, or even just the right genetics, you likely deal with dark circles under your eyes. In fact, most people experience them—even the poreless celebrities and glowy supermodels you see on your Instagram feed. To combat this, many people (including my fellow beauty editors and me) reach for eye creams, which work hard to hydrate, smooth, and re-energize the under-eyes. When it comes to battling dark circles, a certain kind of formula is required.

“Several factors can contribute to the appearance of under-eye dark circles,” says board-certified dermatologist Debbie Palmer, MD. She cites exhaustion, dehydration, allergies, and aging as some of the most common causes. But she also has good news: a good eye cream with vitamin C, retinol, niacinamide, plus hydrating ingredients like hyaluronic acid can turn those shadows around.

After testing dozens of eye creams for dark circles, we found the 11 best for everything from brightening to depuffing and wrinkle-smoothing. Keep scrolling for our list of winners, starting at just \$9.



(Image credit: [@alyssabrascia](#))

The Best Eye Creams for Dark Circles, at a Glance

- **Best Overall:** [Versed Advanced Retinoid Eye Balm](#)
- **Best Budget:** [The Ordinary Caffeine Solution 5% + EGCG Depuffing Eye Serum](#)
- **Best Hydrating:** [Dieux Skin Auracle Eye Serum](#)
- **Best Brightening:** [Olehenriksen Banana Bright+ Vitamin C Eye Crème](#)
- **Best Lifting:** [Dr. Diamond's Metacine Contour EyeLift](#)

BEST OVERALL: VERSED ADVANCED RETINOID EYE BALM



VERSED SKIN
Advanced Retinoid Eye Balm

\$18

SHOP NOW

Pros: Gentle on irritable skin, plumps skin, diminishes dark circles

Cons: None we can think of

Key ingredients: Granactive retinoid, shiitake mushroom extract, vitamin E |

Frequency: Every night

WWW beauty editor Kaitlyn McLintock doesn't hesitate to recommend Versed's Advanced Retinoid Eye Balm, specifically made for sensitive skin, when recounting her favorite eye creams for dark circles. "Retinoids are known to resurface the skin, bringing brighter, fresher skin cells to the surface. They're also known to cause

irritation,” she says. “This one accomplishes the former without any of the nasty effects of the latter.” Infused with granactive retinoid—a gentler version of standard retinol—plus fortifying mushroom extract and nourishing vitamin E, this formula has all the makings of a shadow eraser. “Over time, I’ve found that it minimizes the look of dark circles and plumps the fine lines around my eye area,” she adds.

Customer review: “So, I’ve used more eye creams than the number of years almost all of you have been alive (not collectively). This is my all-time favorite, and it’s so incredibly affordable (for some people). The texture is kind of waxy. Gently tap it around your eyes. It will keep that delicate skin hydrated throughout the day. It also imparts a dewy glow, which you may not want, so bear that in mind. I’ve used outrageously expensive eye creams. This is the one I choose.”

BEST BUDGET: THE ORDINARY CAFFEINE SOLUTION 5% + EGCG DEPUFFING EYE SERUM



THE ORDINARY

Caffeine Solution 5% + EGCG Depuffing Eye Serum

\$9

SHOP NOW

Pros: Low-priced, works quickly, supremely lightweight

Cons: Not as moisturizing as a cream

Key ingredients: Caffeine, EGCG | **Frequency:** Morning and evening

If you discuss The Ordinary with friends, it's only a matter of time before this viral dark circle-blasting serum comes up. While not technically a cream, I'd be remiss to leave it off our list due to its tangible, fast-acting results at a relatively low price. The solution, which is made with water, caffeine, and EGCG (a chemical compound with a very long name that targets dark circles), is extremely lightweight and helps take down the puffiness and shadows under your eyes after just three weeks of consistent use. Plus, it's only \$9.

Customer review: "I have been using this for over a year, and it now has a permanent position in my skincare routine. I have always had dark circles, and I feel like this minimizes this issue. My skincare drawer has two bottles....ALWAYS! I don't want to run out."

BEST HYDRATING: DIEUX SKIN AURACLE EYE SERUM



DIEUX SKIN
Auracle Eye Serum

\$44

SHOP NOW

Pros: Moisturizes dry under-eye skin, noticeably lifts and firms

Cons: Doesn't plump the skin much

Key ingredients: Glycerin, 3% tripeptide complex, 1% algae complex | **Frequency:** Morning and night

Beauty contributor Shawna Hudson recommends this eye cream from the brand that makes the internet-beloved [Dieux Angel Cream](#) for several reasons. She got “hooked” on the serum’s hydrating, smoothing, and plumping powers—courtesy of a complex blend of glycerin, peptides, and algae—it was game over for her other

lotions and potions. “My under-eye area feels so hydrated after using it; it immediately perks me up,” she states. We love that it’s chock-full of renewable ingredients and offers noticeable firming effects, too.

Customer review: “This is the only eye cream I’ve used that I actually notice a difference with when I use it under an eye mask. My eyes look brighter and less puffy.”

BEST BRIGHTENING: OLEHENRIKSEN BANANA BRIGHT+ VITAMIN C EYE CRÈME



OLEHENRIKSEN
Banana Bright+ Vitamin C Eye Crème

\$46

[SHOP NOW](#)

Pros: Instantly and long-term brightening, smooths fine lines, and hydrates dry skin

Cons: Vitamin C content may be too strong for those with sensitive skin

Key ingredients: Triple vitamin C complex, orange extract, bioflavonoids, light-reflecting pigments | **Frequency:** Morning and night

If you want to banish those dark shadows from your eyes without paying an arm and a leg for super-luxe formulas, this lightweight cream from Olehenriksen is what you'll want to add to cart. This fragrance-free formula is full of brightening vitamin C, which delivers noticeable results with consistent use, and nourishing antioxidants that deeply hydrate the skin and smooth fine lines. While most people see long-term results after eight weeks, you get an instantly brightening effect thanks to the light-reflecting pigments diffused inside the product.

Customer review: "This product really works! It's easy to apply and creates a good base for makeup application. It smells really good and a little goes a long way with this product. It leaves my skin glowing and hydrated throughout the day, and I look and feel more refreshed!"

BEST LIFTING: DR. DIAMOND'S METACINE CONTOUR EYELIFT



DR. DIAMOND'S METACINE
Contour Collection Eyelift

\$225

SHOP NOW

Pros: Minimizes appearance of dark circles and puffiness, plumps under-eye skin, cooling applicator

Cons: Quite pricey

Key ingredients: HA-retinoid complex, peptide complex, hyaluronic acid, chestnut seed extract | **Frequency:** Morning and evening

Dark circles are enough of an obstacle, but puffy or sagging skin is a double whammy. However, they are completely normal, and doctors like Jason Diamond, M.D., F.A.C.S (plastic surgeon to the stars and renowned brand owner) have created

eye serums to help combat these setbacks. I've been personally testing the Contour Eyelift for several weeks and have noticed a difference in the shadows (or general lack thereof) below my lids, plus a plumper, more hydrated look overall. Its featherlight formula absorbs quickly and doesn't cause my makeup to pill, which I can't say about most serums, and you can safely use it on the entire upper and lower eyelids. (Yes, even those with sensitive skin... aka me).

Customer review: "Fantastic product! Absolutely worth it. I've been using it for a few weeks now, and I can already see a difference. I introduced it slowly into my routine because my skin is sensitive and I wanted to better understand how it performed. It worked perfectly. If you have sensitive skin, I would recommend doing the same. Start by using it every other day, then gradually increase to once a day and then to twice daily. I love the roll-on applicator, it's perfect for use around the eyes, and it feels so relaxing."

**BEST DEPUFFING: HERBIVORE SUPER NOVA 5%
VITAMIN C + CAFFEINE BRIGHTENING EYE CREAM**



HERBIVORE

Super Nova 5% Vitamin C + Caffeine Brightening Eye Cream

\$48

SHOP NOW

Pros: Brightens under-eyes, depuffs, helps even skin tone

Cons: May not be right for very sensitive skin

Key ingredients: 5% vitamin C, caffeine, turmeric | **Frequency:** Morning or evening

If you want to quickly take down the puffiness of your under-eyes and brighten at the same time, McLintock recommends this cream from Herbivore. "My dark circles have hung around since high school. After trying a million different eye creams to help brighten them up, I can say with certainty that this is one of the most effective

ones,” she states. “It uses 5% vitamin C, as well as caffeine and turmeric root, to visibly brighten the skin and even out discrepancies in tone.” Thanks to the addition of caffeine, your eyes will also look brighter and more awake.

Customer review: “I’ve been using this eye cream for a few weeks and really like it so far. It’s lightweight, absorbs fast, and makes my under-eyes look more awake. The combo of vitamin C and caffeine helps with puffiness and gives a subtle brightening effect that builds over time. It wears great under makeup and doesn’t crease much. A tiny bit goes a long way. My eyes definitely look less tired in the mornings. Only downside is [that] it can feel a little dry if you have super sensitive skin.”

BEST LUXURY: LA PRAIRIE WHITE CAVIAR LIGHT INFUSION EYE SERUM



LA PRAIRIE
White Caviar Light Infusion Eye Serum

\$445

SHOP NOW

Pros: Intensely hydrating, day-of results, plays well with makeup

Cons: Extremely expensive

Key ingredients: Cellular complex, niacinamide, caviar, brightening molecules |

Frequency: Morning and night

It pains me to share the link to an eye cream that could pay a quarter of my monthly New York City rent, but trust that I wouldn't recommend a nearly \$450 eye serum if I didn't believe in its results. La Prairie's White Caviar Light Infusion Eye Serum is a delicate, yet deeply nourishing formula that not only offers day-of brightness, but also fast de-puffing and plump, wrinkle-smoothed skin. I began noticing very fine lines in my under-eye area earlier this year, but they've slowly faded ever since incorporating this luxury formula into my routine. (Bonus points for not pilling when I apply concealer on top.) If you won't miss the money, go for this high-powered serum with lightning-fast results. If not, there are plenty of others to try.



(Image credit: [@alyssabrascia](#))

BEST DRUGSTORE: CERAVE EYE REPAIR CREAM



CERAVE
Eye Repair Cream

\$16

SHOP NOW

Pros: Gentle on sensitive skin, safe for those with eczema, effective at a low price

Cons: Can take up to 12 weeks to notice results

Key ingredients: 3 essential ceramides, hyaluronic acid, niacinamide | **Frequency:** Morning, night, or both

On the very opposite side of the spectrum is CeraVe's Eye Repair Cream: a drugstore elixir that clocks in at \$16 and gets the job done without too many frills. With consistent use, this simple formula—fortified with ceramides, hyaluronic acid, niacinamide, and plant complexes—can reduce the appearance of dark circles and

deflate puffy under-eyes, all while delivering an extra dose of hydration. It's even earned a stamp of approval from the National Eczema Association, making this a great one for anyone with sensitive or eczema-prone skin.

Customer review: "I am totally impressed with CeraVe eye cream. It has softened all lines around my eyes, and some have disappeared... people have even commented. Thank you."

BEST FOR WRINKLES: MAD HIPPIE EYE CREAM



MAD HIPPIE
Eye Cream

\$27

[SHOP NOW](#)

Pros: Minimizes appearance of crow's feet, helps brighten the under-eyes, revitalizes skin

Cons: Not yet ophthalmologist-approved

Key ingredients: Caffeine, niacinamide, peptides | **Frequency:** Morning, night, or both

Palmer personally recommends this eye cream for anyone who wants to do more than just brighten dark circles. “This cream has 17 actives and contains some of my favorite ingredients, including vitamin C, niacinamide, and licorice,” she explains. The formula not only reduces the appearance of deep shadows, but also helps minimize crow's feet and re-plump the skin. Palmer also makes a point to call out that it's fragrance- and paraben-free, meaning it works well on anyone with sensitive skin.

Customer review: “I have very sensitive, acne-prone skin. I've used so many different eye creams—high-end/luxury and affordable—and have never noticed a difference in my 31-year-old eyes (fine lines). This stuff is magic! My eyes look so youthful and plump. I absolutely love it. The first couple times I tried it, I had to start slow because I did feel a slight burning. But now I've been using this [for] a few months and have no sensitivity to it. Will be re-purchasing!”

BEST APPLICATOR: DR. ALTHEA RETINOL FLAT IRON EYE ROLLER



DR. ALTHEA
Retinol Flat Iron Eye Roller

\$22

SHOP NOW

Pros: Soothes under-eyes, resurfaces fresh skin, brightens skin, minimizes fine lines

Cons: People with sensitive skin may not be able to tolerate retinol

Key ingredients: Retinol, bakuchiol, hyaluronic acid, centella, madecassoside |

Frequency: Every other day for 2 weeks, then daily

Okay, another non-cream! But hear me out. This retinol-infused serum is a great way to go if you want to see real change in the appearance of your under-eyes without investing too much into a spendy formula. While I love the lightweight formula—a refreshing, cooling blend of gentle retinol, bakuchiol, cica retisome, and hyaluronic

acid—it’s the cooling metal applicator that makes this product such a treat. Each pass of the tube is like a gua sha treatment for your under-eyes, which helps make a difference quite instantly.

Customer review: “What stood out to me first was how gentle it feels on the skin. Retinol products can sometimes be irritating or drying, but this formula is surprisingly soothing. It glides on smoothly, absorbs well, and doesn't leave any sticky or heavy residue. After consistent use, I noticed my skin looking firmer and more refined. The texture became smoother, and there's a subtle improvement in overall elasticity. Compared to other retinol products I've used, this one strikes the perfect balance between effectiveness and gentleness. It delivers visible results without the typical irritation, which is honestly hard to find. Out of all the retinol creams and essences I've tried, this is definitely the best so far and one I plan to keep using.”



(Image credit: @alyssabrascia)

BEST COOLING: COCOKIND REVITALIZING EYE CREAM



COCOKIND
Revitalizing Eye Cream

\$19

SHOP NOW

Pros: Soothing to irritated and dry skin, cooling metal applicator

Cons: None we can think of

Key ingredients: Persian silk tree, hibiscus flower acids, oat extract | **Frequency:** Morning or night

Cocokind, a brand known for democratizing skincare with great formulas at reasonable prices, has struck gold yet again with this cooling, refreshing, and brightening eye cream. "This is literally my favorite thing right now!" Hudson

exclaims. “It does all the things—brightens, hydrates, and smooths out the eye area so I don't look like a zombie in the morning. Can't recommend it enough.”

Customer review: “The amount of benefits and perks this one product has has changed the game for me when it comes to under-eye care. A soothing cream with a cold-to-the-touch eye applicator that feels so nice when rubbing the product around. I feel so relaxed after applying it to my eyes. In the mornings, it helps my tired eyes depuff and look less tired, and at night, it helps them relax and feels soothing for bed. Best of both worlds. Definitely a product I cannot recommend enough.”

What to Look For in Eye Creams for Dark Circles

- **Effective ingredients:** “As a dermatologist, I look for specific ingredients in eye creams for dark circles that are effective in targeting pigmentation and under-eye hollows,” says Palmer. “Some of my favorite ingredients for fading hyperpigmentation and building collagen are **vitamin C, retinol, and niacinamide**. I also recommend **hyaluronic acid** in this area for hydration and plumping.”
 - **Vitamin C:** “This is an antioxidant that helps to fade hyperpigmentation and increase collagen production, which thickens the skin to hide underlying vessels and fill in under-eye hollows,” Palmer explains.
 - **Retinol:** “Increases skin cell turnover and collagen production.”
 - **Niacinamide (vitamin B3):** “This ingredient is anti-inflammatory, boosts collagen production, and reduces hyperpigmentation,” she adds.
 - **Hyaluronic acid:** “Hydrates and plumps the skin to help fill in under-eye hollows.”

WHAT CAUSES DARK CIRCLES?

“Lack of sleep can make the skin appear paler and allow the under-eye blood vessels to become more apparent. Genetics can contribute, with some people naturally being more predisposed to thinner skin or having more prominent blood vessels under the eyes,” says Palmer. However, we know aging also plays a part, as the skin eventually produces less collagen past the mid-twenties, resulting in thinner skin and pronounced blood vessels. “Allergies also contribute because they

can cause dilated blood vessels under the eyes,” she adds. Oh, and drinking enough water never hurts. “Lifestyle adjustments can lead to some improvement,” she concludes.

Why Trust Us

At Who What Wear, we know that beauty isn't one-size-fits-all. Over the years, our editors have tested thousands of products—including skincare, makeup, haircare, and nails—while also working closely with trusted experts, like renowned dermatologists, celebrity makeup artists, and other leading industry insiders. Together, this ensures every guide is well-researched, inclusive, and relevant to *you*.

We focus on formulas that deliver, whether they're affordable favorites or luxury investments. Our product selection is based on tangible results, ingredient know-how, and what we'd truly recommend to our closest friends and family members.

EXPLORE MORE:

[Anti-aging](#)



ALYSSA BRASCIA Associate Beauty Editor, Who What Wear



Alyssa Brascia is an associate beauty editor at Who What Wear. She is based in New York City and has 3+ years of industry experience. Brascia has personally tested more than a thousand beauty products and services—from the hottest new eye shadow palette to the buzzy manicure sweeping New York Fashion Week. Brascia graduated with a BS in apparel, merchandising, and design from Iowa State University. She was formerly a shopping writer at [People.com](https://www.people.com). Her earlier work can be found

at *InStyle*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Shape*, and more. When Brascia isn't writing, researching, or testing new beauty products, you can find her watching the latest movie to generate Oscar buzz, taking a workout class with friends, or updating her wardrobe post-shopping spree in her beloved city.

READ MORE



SKIN

I'm a Night Owl, and My Tired Eyes Reveal It —17 Holy Grail Eye Creams That I Swear Work Miracles



MAKEUP

Makeup Artists Say These 11 Concealers Immediately Cancel Out Dark Circles



SKIN

These Expert-Approved Retinol Creams Pump the Brakes on Visible Signs of Aging



MAKEUP

I Have Dry Skin, But People Can't Stop Complimenting My Fresh Glow Since I Started Using This Concealer

LATEST IN SKIN



SKIN

"No Stigma, No Shame": F1 Driver Carlos Sainz Talks Skincare, Off-Duty Grooming Essentials, and Race-Day Prep



SKIN

Spicule Skincare Is Everywhere, But Experts Are Begging You to Mind This One Tip



SKIN

UV Protection Minus a White Cast: Osea's New Mineral Sunscreen Is a Summer Beauty Game Changer



SKIN

Meet Maderoterapia: The Colombian Wellness Ritual that Banishes Bloat, Sculpts the Skin, and Stimulates Lymphatic Drainage

LATEST IN BUYING GUIDES



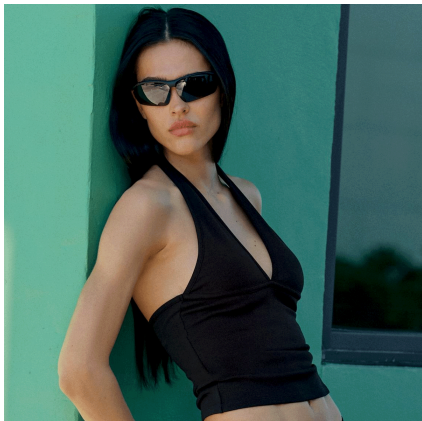
VACATION

My Vibe Is Nancy Meyers in Provence—18 Pretty Summer Pieces That Feel Right



FASHION

Who What Wear Editors Told Me Their 20 Best Fashion Finds This Month



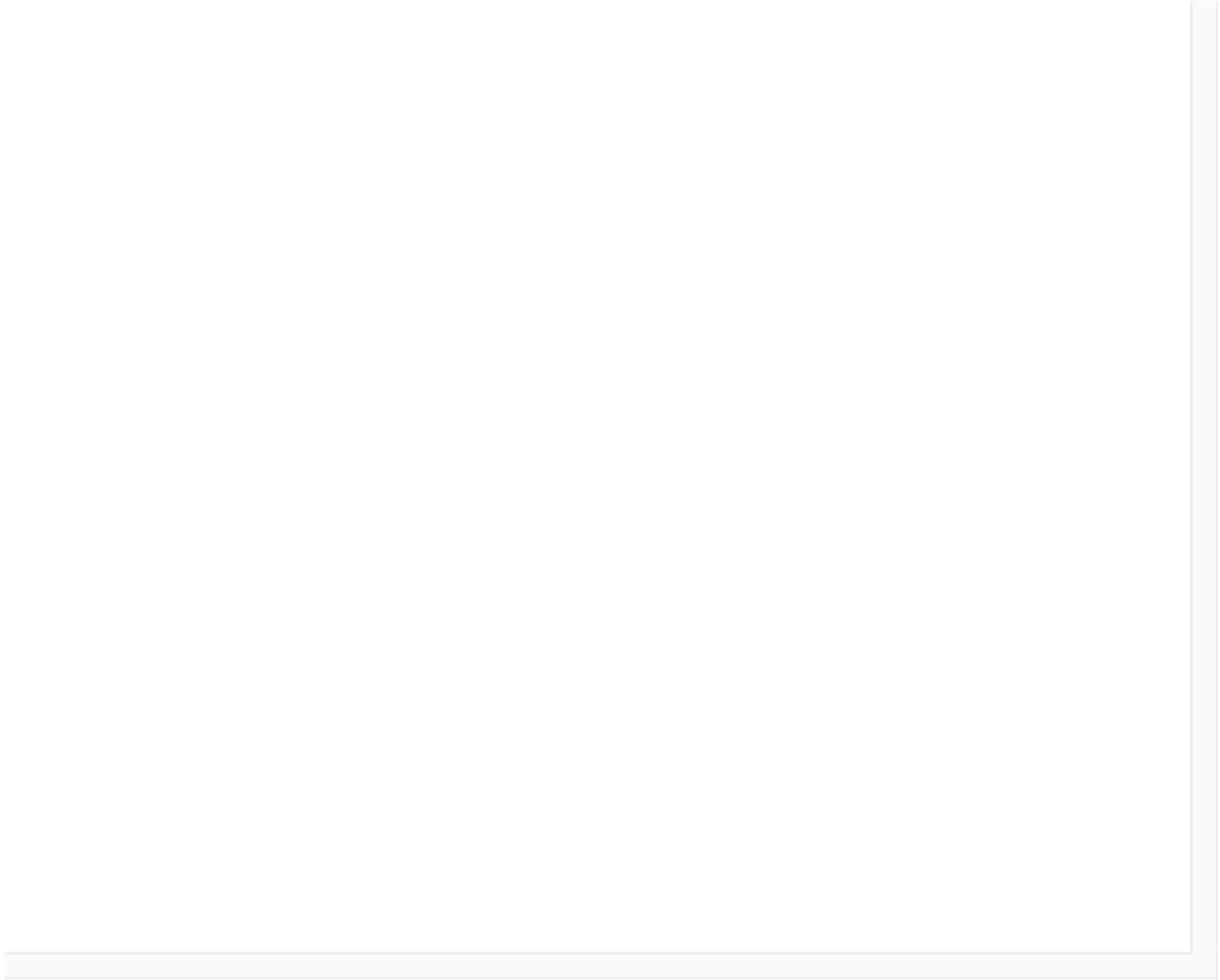
SHOPPING

The Best Zara Pieces for Summer 2026, Period



SHOPPING

If Striped Pants and Colorful Totes Are on Your Summer Wish List, Don't Miss These 4 Memorial Day Sales

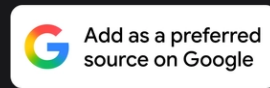


WHO WHAT WEAR

[ABOUT US](#) [CONTACT FUTURE'S EXPERTS](#) [TERMS AND CONDITIONS](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#) [COOKIES POLICY](#)

[CAREERS](#) [CONTACT US](#) [CONTACT FUTURE'S EXPERTS](#) [ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT](#) [ADVERTISE WITH US](#)

[DO NOT SELL OR SHARE MY PERSONAL INFORMATION](#)



Who What Wear is part of Future US Inc, an international media group and leading digital publisher. **Visit our corporate site.**

© Future US, Inc. Full 7th Floor, 130 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036.