

# Styling by the Sea

## 140 Years of Fashion on Galveston's Beaches

### Beach Style 2000-2020

#### Introduction

The first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century were a time of significant highs and lows on a global level. The development of the Internet greatly expanded access to information and made nearly instantaneous communications possible. Despite these advances, which facilitated everything from trade to improved access to medical treatment globally, terrorism, the expansion of nuclear weapons, and rapid climate change threatened the world like never before.

In America societal changes in the period from 2000 to 2020 have grown out of the country's increasingly multi-cultural population. This has thrust diversity into the forefront of the nation's consciousness. Fashion at the beach embraced many styles at the same time as a result of this multiplicity during the first 20 years of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century.

#### Women's Swimwear

The evolution of women's swimwear in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century was so remarkable that it is hard to envision how it could change much more than it already has. In the years since 2000 most of the variations that have occurred are associated with nostalgic reworking of previous styles.

*Harper's Bazaar* published an article in July 2018 entitled "The Most Popular Swimsuit The Year You Were Born". It covers the period from 1956 thru 2017. A number of the images included here appeared originally in this exposé. Others are taken from periodicals such as *Sports Illustrated* and *Women's Health*, and *Cosmopolitan*.



Angelina Jolie (2001)  
*Tomb Raider*



Kate Bosworth (2002)



Eva Mendes (2003)  
*Stuck on You*



channeled the classic California beach girl in a sternal bikini while filming *The Shallows*.

Blake Lively, 2016

One of the trends in the early 2000s was the re-appearance of bikinis with boy short style bottoms. Examples worn by celebrities Angelina Jolie, Kate Bosworth, and Eva Mendes appear in the photographs above.

The mix-and-match movement that began in the 1990s and continued into the 2000s is also illustrated in the bathing suits worn by Bosworth and Mendes. This fashion continued to maintain a hold on a segment of the market into the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century. A picture of Blake Lively from 2016, attests to this fact.



Beyoncé



Irina Shayk



Kate Upton



Ashley Graham



Trya Bank

Since the beginning of the new millennium, bathing suits worn by models presented on the covers *Sports Illustrated's* annual swimsuit issue have generally been too extreme to appeal to the tastes of American women. They generally provide inadequate coverage and are impractical for swimming. They even look as if they would be difficult to keep in place while sunbathing. Many of the covers in the first 20 years of the new century portrayed women turned away from the camera or clutching a necklace or other prop to their bare chests. These magazines resemble copies of “girlie” publications like *Playboy* in their heyday fifty years ago.

Two of the five *Sports Illustrated* covers reproduced above stand out, however, as refreshingly different from the others. They are the one from 2007 featuring Beyoncé, and the cover from 2016 on which Ashley Graham appears. In the first the singer looks radiant, and comfortable in her wearable bikini. We get the idea that she would relish a day of sun and sand. In the second Ashley Graham is presented in the ocean’s surf, tussled by its waves. Her full figure does not conform to the narrow boundaries generally set for fashion models. She is stunning and sexy, and affirms the fact that beauty comes in different shapes and sizes.



a barely-there metallic blue bikini  
g that tiny swimwear was still the move.

Riley Steele 2010  
*Piranha*

As noted earlier, the changes we see in bathing suit styles between 2000 and 2020 are largely associated with the modifications of fashions from the 20<sup>th</sup>-century. Anything goes with a few exceptions that include Brazilian style thongs, sheer, and tan-thru designs that never developed strong followings in America.

Perhaps the most innovative change in recent years came with the introduction of “mini” bikinis. A photograph of Riley Steele in a mini is included to the left. There is not much to say about these suits other than that they cover less than bikinis worn in previous decades.



Kourtney Kardashian  
In *Agent Provocateur*

Another new sort of swimsuit is illustrated in the photo of Kourtney Kardashian above on the right. This bikini, designed by Agent Provocateur features wide bands of fabric that wrap about the body on both the top and the bottom. Parts of the hips are exposed between bands in a way not commonly seen before at the beach.



A review of women’s wellness and fashion magazines reveal that some popular styles rarely go completely out of vogue. String bikinis, pictured to the left, would fall into this category as would moderate two-piece designs, like those appearing on the cover of *Shape* magazine on page 3, in basic colors like red, black, yellow, blue and white.



In the second half of the 2000s the sarong, sometimes called a “pareo” (a unisex version of this wraparound garment) made a comeback at the beach. These were made in a variety of lengths. Sometimes they were cut short, like the version worn by the model in the photograph on the left, others were long extending to the knee, like the one worn by Kim Kardashian, also show on the left, or longer. Sarongs worked well as cover-ups on and off the beach.



Kim Kardashian 2007

Among the other variations of the bikinis that re-appeared were those with bandeau tops. These suits were popular in the 1980s and early 1990s. Britney Spears modeled one in a photograph that appeared on the cover of *Women's Health* magazine in 2015.



Another style that attests to the idea that fashion runs in cycles is the crocheted bikini. These bathing suits, which were originally popular in the 1970s, were inspired by Hippie culture that celebrated all things natural. Crafts, like crocheting, were viewed as part of a “return to nature” and simpler times. Women made their own bikinis in the 1970s and wore them at the beach. In the 21<sup>st</sup>-century, however, crocheted bikinis were high fashion items that appeared on models walking down runways.



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One-piece swimsuits, with futuristic space-age cutouts, like the one worn by model Miranda Kerr in the picture to the right, were among the newest styles to appear at fashion shows in the early 2010s. They were followed midway into the 2010s by beachwear with interesting slits and openings in either symmetrical patterns or asymmetrical designs on the covers of *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan*. While these bathing suits offered completely wearable options for time spent at the shore they had the disadvantage of leaving unusual patches of suntanned skin next to parts of the body that had not been exposed to the sun's rays.



Miranda Kerr 2012 minimalist with futuristic cutouts



Finally, timeless, classic one-piece swimsuits, sometimes with low cut backs or plunging necklines that harkened back to sophisticated looks of decades past appeared again on America's coasts. These were joined by feminine, retro styles that appealed to women who were interested in leaving more to the imaginations of their admirers than was the case with overly revealing bikinis in recent decades.



Kendall Jenner



Taylor Swift

## Men's Swimwear



Knee length board shorts ruled the beaches in the early 2000s. This fashion remained in style for a number of years and encompassed variations in styles and patterns. They were invariably cut to accentuate the abdominal lines and six packs of the men wearing them. Since the 2010s the fashion has shifted to shorter trunks extending no lower than mid-thigh in an array of colors and patterns.



Probably the most important single man's swimsuit that has made a splash since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century was worn by the movie star Daniel Craig in the role of James Bond in the film *Casino Royale* in 2007. This is not the first time the Bond franchise has spawned a major reaction in the bathing suit industry. The first instance involved the actress Ursula Andress in the 1962 movie *Dr. No*, but it is the first time the reaction was to Bond in bathing suit. His trunks from the Spring/Summer 2006 collection of La Perla Grigioperla Lodato flew off shelves soon after the first publicity shots for the movie were released. The bathing suit on display in *Styling by the Sea* produced by "Clothes to Pose" is a facsimile of Craig's suit. It is still readily available on the market.



Daniel Craig 2007  
*Casino Royale*

## ACCESSORIES

### Sunglasses

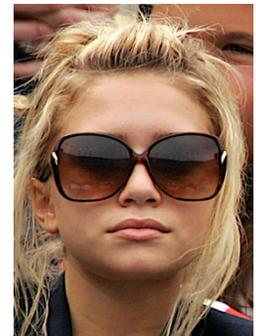


Styles popular among women have been all over the board since the year 2000. They have ranged from big "bug-eye" sunglasses to small oval tea shades, aviators with touches of "bling", large frameless styles, and cat-eye sunglasses. Many styles have been trending at the same time making it hard to differentiate the latest fashions from one year and decade to the next.



Classics such as wayfarers, aviators, and brow-line sunglasses have been popular for both men and women at the beach. One of the trends that has passed in and out of vogue is that for reflective lenses in numerous styles and colors. At the moment it appears that just about anything goes.

Most people on the seashore are selecting the less changeable classics these days for their days in the sun. In

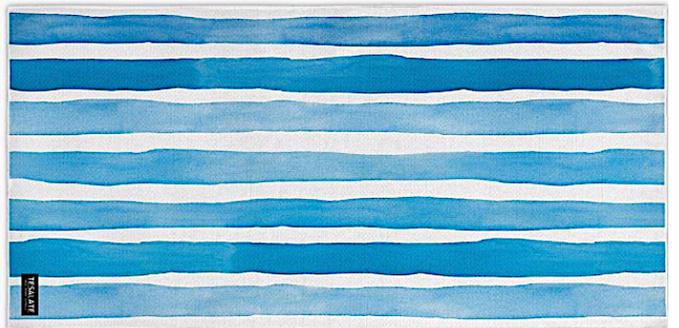




terms of what is appearing on runways, however, it looks like “preppy” shades may be the next big thing. Who knows? It has been 40 years since the preppy look was in fashion.

## Beach Towels

The first major innovation in beach towels since their invention, is a recent one. Only appearing on America’s shores in the last three years this is the sand free beach towel introduced to the market by an Australian company named Tesalate in 2017. Examples of two of Tesalate’s designs appear to the right.



Unlike traditional terry cloth towels that employ loops of fabric to capture moisture, sand free towels are made from microfiber that is a blend of polyester and polyamide. The composition of the material allows sand to slip off with ease so that it does not become lodged in towel’s fibers. At the same time the material from which the towels are made retains its ability to trap moisture then dry quickly.

An interesting feature of sand free towels to-date is that they are sold for their own qualities, and not as “billboards” for the innumerable products, schools, bands, cartoon characters, locations, and popular quotes that have found their way on to beach towels since the 1970s.

## Media

The Moving Picture Experts Group (MPEG) developed the compressed audio file format known as MP3 at the end of the 1990s. This format, which required substantially less disk space than previous methods, revolutionized the storage of sound recordings. MP3 players rapidly captured a significant portion of the market for devices delivering music to individual listeners. Of these the iPod, released in October 2001, quickly became a market leader and the prestige device among users for the delivery of individual music selections. Although the iPod Touch is still offered by Apple, MP3 players, as separate devices, have given way to smartphones in the past decade.



Original Apple iPod



Creative MuVo 2002-2009 Solid-state MP3 player in USB flashdrive form

