







Silk shirt, £275 part of set (libertylondon.com) Black jeans, £232 (frame-store.com) Prada sandals, Charlie's own

appropriate”, is my mother’s advice; “you need your clothes to be your friends in stressful situations.” Hence the leopard print dress: definitely not a safe choice, but it’s something I’d wear to dinner, or even the pub. If you love stripes, florals or bright colours, then why hide that on a first date?

“Specific outfit choices definitely send messages,” says Berkeley, “so if you want to say you are fun and creative, choose print, or yellow.”

As for what to avoid, Whitney Wolfe, founder and CEO of dating app Bumble, suggests that “if you’re someone that has never worn heels, don’t choose your first date to wear those stilettos for the first time”.

Money-Coutts suggests avoiding “colours which show up sweat patches if you, like me, sweat an alarming amount when nervous. And probably just don’t go along to a first date, or even a second or third date, in a wedding dress.”

If all this seems like a lot of faff, bear in mind, the seven second rule applies to your date, too. Hopefully, in a bathroom not too far from your own, your prospective date is going to the same pains. And if not? I don’t think you should rule someone out over a dodgy pair of trainers, but we each must draw a line. Mine is short-sleeved shirts. If you’re dating men, the latest concern in the online sphere is “hatfishing” (a play on catfishing, or posing as someone else online) when men cover dodgy haircuts and bald patches under hats on their profiles.

According to Jonathan Heaf, features director at GQ, “there’s only one cardinal sin for men on first dates. Or, forever, in fact. The square-toed shoe. If a woman (or man) sees this underneath the pub table on the person they may well be three pints away from sleeping with I can strongly advise they do one thing: run. Run and never look back. Delete his number, unfollow, repent and try to forget the whole sorry episode.”

If you’re dating women, that’s a different kettle of fish altogether – and possibly one that calls for the aforementioned “paper bag waists, furry shoes and oversized everything.” One of my housemates, dating a woman for the first time, admits she takes more care to dress stylishly now than when she’s dated men. “With guys, you want to look good, obviously, but you can be relatively safe in the knowledge that they probably have a limited idea of what’s fashionable or ‘on trend’ for women at the time – or that they don’t care.”

Since you’re likely to go on more than one first date, you can try out a few options to see what you feel both sexy and comfortable in, and what makes the best first impression. And here’s the best bit: once you’ve found that outfit, you can wear it time and again; your next date won’t know the difference.

GETTING DRESSED (WITHOUT THE FUSS)

Krissy Turner Girl on a budget

In between seasons, bright colours will give your wardrobe a lift

Until a friend questioned my all black outfit in last weekend’s 24C heat, I hadn’t realised I’d been wallowing in a sea of darks and neutrals all summer. Granted, this was semi-deliberate; I’d been going for a chic, grown-up approach to summer dressing, pairing floaty navy dresses with cream slingback flats and my black crossbody bag. I’d definitely been feeling more elegant, but it was a bit, well, boring, and I missed my once-signature bright colours.

September creeping up signals change, albeit a late one, and I’m more than making up for lost time, not just by pulling out my lighter summer pieces, but also by adding new colour-block tops to my wardrobe. Since a change in seasons isn’t far away, a bright dress might soon look out of place, but a coloured blouse

could be worn with dark separates and a light polo neck underneath to get maximum wear when the weather cools down. My favourite so far is a lemon frilled number from Danish brand, Baum und Pfergarten.

My yellow blouse appears considered. Its classic white counterpart would be simple and easy to wear, and go with everything, but a yellow one? That definitely took some thought and planning – or at least you’d think so. Because that’s the great thing about a colourful blouse: such is their statement-making, scene-stealing prowess that everything else

Printed styles work too, so long as the print is bold rather than delicate

requires minimal effort. I wear my yellow number with navy trousers or dark denim, my trusty crossbody bag and those cream slingback flats. Apart from the blouse, not much has changed. A pop of colour slips right into your everyday uniform, because it’s just that: a pop that brightens everything up.

Start with silkier fabrics; they drape nicely and tuck into trousers and skirts well. I

Pink print, £25.99 (zara.com)



Yellow, £69 (stories.com)



Blue, £35.99 (mango.com)



Pale pink, £29.99 (hm.com)



Red, £25 (laredoute.com)



Mint, £69 (kitrystudio.com)



love structured styles in crisp cottons, but being slightly busty means I often end up looking boxy. However, if these work for you, head to COS and Finery for the best ones. Printed styles work, too, so long as the print is bold rather than delicate – H&M’s Trend section has great printed options. For 100 per cent silk without the luxury price tag, & Other Stories does a lovely straight fit shirt in nine different prints and block

colours for £69. Ignore the dry clean only label, too – I throw mine in on a hand-wash setting and it remains unharmed.

If you can spend a little more, a bright colour (like the catwalk trend for red) won’t fall “out” of fashion as quickly as a print, so it’s worth splurging a bit on a colour and fabric you love knowing that you can just pair it with something different next season.

Is this the new skin saviour?

Probiotics could be the answer to solving problem skin. *Sonia Haria* looks at the growing popularity of a new kind of beauty product

Probiotics have long been known to have a positive impact on digestive health, but when it comes to skincare, there have been very few beauty products to harness that impact. But that’s all changing. Of all the skincare labelled “probiotic” launched globally in the past three years, 27 per cent was introduced in 2014, 34.4 per cent in 2015 and 38.7 per cent in 2016.

It’s an incline that data insight group Mintel predict will continue as part of the £1.13billion facial skincare market in the UK.

When the skincare brand Aurelia launched in 2013, it was one of the first to hail probiotics as skin saviours. “Probiotics as a category is growing, which is testament to the efficacy of this innovate ingredient,” says Claire Vero, the brand founder, whose label has become a pioneer “in harnessing

this new, natural technology”. In developing the brand, Vero wanted to help the skin regain its natural balance in the same way that probiotics help to rebalance the gut; within two years of launch, Aurelia has won more than 20 beauty awards.

The idea is that by applying probiotics to the surface of the skin, or adding them to products that repair the skin at a cellular level, good bacteria will help to strengthen the skin’s own immunity and calm any existing inflammations. This is especially exciting for people who suffer with acne or very sensitive skin.

It was because of her own “hyper-reactive, dry and blemished” skin that Dr Marie Drago, the French pharmacist, founded her brand Gallinée in April last year. She wanted a targeted alternative to strong disinfectants on the market that killed all the bacteria on the skin – including the good. “The use of probiotics is revolutionary for problem skin,” she says. “They help to rebuild the skin barrier, which is hugely beneficial for skin conditions like eczema. Probiotics can also have a purifying effect, so the way we treat acne is going to change totally in the next few years. We are switching to a strategy where we help

the good bacteria to grow, naturally filling the space occupied by the P. acnes [the bacteria responsible for acne].” The appeal for skincare that works within the skin’s own ecosystem can be seen as natural skincare 2.0.

Many of these new brands have robust clinical data to back up their results, which are achieved while still keeping the skin in a natural, calm state. Interestingly, the beauty giant Johnson & Johnson has recently expanded its Innovation portfolio to include two companies that focus on research in treating skin conditions with good bacteria.

The L’Oréal Group, which owns skincare heavyweight Lancôme, has also pushed research in this new field of skincare. Today, Lancôme launches its latest innovation, Advanced Genifique Sensitive. The brand describes this £59 serum as an “emergency response” product, to be used for one month when your skin is going through a bout of sensitivity. The mix of lactobacillus bacteria and the potent antioxidant ferulic acid aims to treat the skin and reduce sensitivity, and is designed to be used at night when the skin is in “repair mode”.

Although big corporations are

**‘Bacteria is the ultimate natural beauty ingredient. It’s a game-changer’**

increasingly investing in probiotic research, it is still largely a market led by niche beauty brands. Last month saw the launch of new luxury vegan skincare brand Orveda, stocked in Harvey Nichols. It was founded by Sue Y Nabi, coincidentally the ex-president of Lancôme (a position she held for four years, as part of 20 years in total at the L’Oréal group). For the launch of her brand, Nabi wanted to create a version of renewal energy for the skin.

“By using bacteria, yeast and enzymes, we cause no harm to the natural environment – but crucially, the products have a proven efficacy in a way that is kind to skin, by considering it as an ecosystem.” In developing the products, Nabi conducted more than 20 clinical tests on 330 participants globally, to prove the products work.

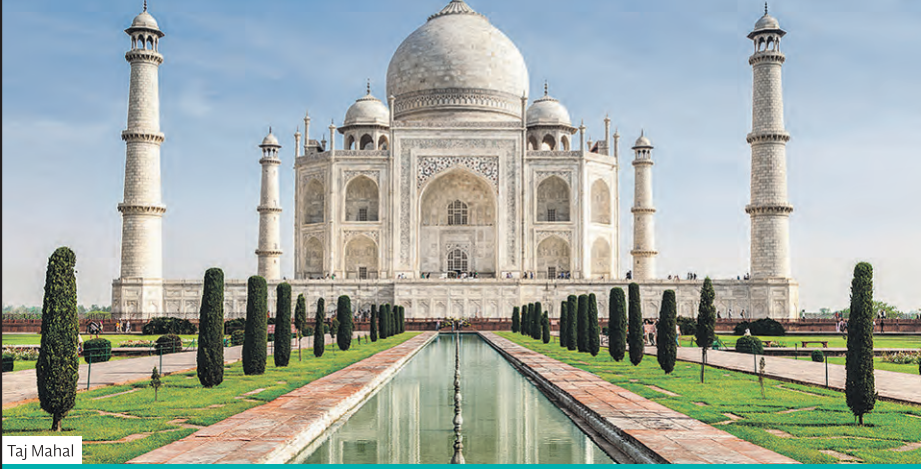
Nabi sees the future of beauty as about being kind to the skin and its natural form, and Dr Drago agrees. “I see the industry as moving from ‘ingredient beauty’, where you bring a foreign agent to your skin, such as retinol or alpha hydroxy acids, to ‘ecosystem beauty’, where you help to support a living and breathing ecosystem. Bacteria is the ultimate natural beauty ingredient. It’s a game-changer.”

Face value: the popularity of probiotic beauty products is expected to increase further in the years to come



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