

Style

Shoes for summer events



Anna Berkeley

Ask a stylist

I've just come back from my first outdoor summer event of the year, and my mules sunk into the grass. What should I wear instead? Please don't say espadrilles.

If, like me, you've spent hours chipping mud off your beloved heels you know that a certain amount of planning is required for summer parties in the UK.

Short of packing wellies for every eventuality, I would suggest looking for solid heels, blocks, wedges (with caution) and certain flats but they should look modern and fresh.

First point of call is to find out exactly what you're dealing with. What's the terrain? Will there be a field, a lawn, a mile-long walk, cobbles, mountain climbing involved? Let's tackle grassy areas first.

Country weddings, marquee events and garden parties will invariably involve some sort of turf. Let's assume that the weather is behaving and it's not a Glastonbury mud pit.

For those of you wedded to flats, timeless Jimmy Choo ballet shoes will get you in the party mood. They'd look fabulous with a '60s mini, or fitted trouser suit (£425, printemps.com). And delicious Tory Burch ankle-tie

slippers come in a perfect metallic — they sit happily against any colour and would look sweet with a long dress if you're taller (£310, toryburch.com).

Slingbacks are flattering to the ankles and useful if you want to show a bit of flesh but not all of your foot. I love the soft texture of Ralph Lauren's sueded goatskin slingback flats (£305, ralphlauren.co.uk). The pink is almost a neutral so it will go with lots of colours. Wear these with slim or wide trousers in cream, blue, brown or other shades of pink.

Forte Forte has divine lilac slingback pumps with ankle ties — the V cut makes the leg look longer too and compliments a wide foot.

By Far, Stuart Weitzman and Giuseppe Zanotti all have great slingback options too.

Chunky block heels can handle most surfaces. Aeyde have been a go-to of mine for a while. The label could single-handedly kit you out for the entire year. The padded straps on its cream Barbara mules (£275, aeyde.com) won't start slicing through your feet like a cheese wire once the evening comes and your feet start to swell. Nothing more guaranteed to ruin a wedding than sore feet before the first song has even been played.

I have a confession. I don't like espadrilles in any form either. They bring back bad memories of Don Johnson and his *Miami Vice* footwear. I always worried he'd slip sideways when trying to apprehend a criminal. But they do have their place. Go super high or super chunky. They make any outfit more casual which is helpful in more informal gatherings — like a beach wedding for instance. Espadrille sandals team up well with midi and maxi dresses in cottons, linens and more textured fabrics. Try See by Chloé's platform wedge or its flatform sister in "goes with anything" silver.

Staud has also done a brown leather iteration which looks especially good with navy or white outfits and works for city events and parties.

Wedges are useful for adding height and giving a relatively stable sole but they are not safe on cobbles (use flats) or for long walks. They look dated easily so choose something punchy. I'm rather partial to a bit of leopard in the right setting and Russell & Bromley's Bellini wedges are pure magic (£245, russellandbromley.co.uk). They sit perfectly with white, cream, navy,



From top: Forte Forte slingback pumps, £352, farfetch.com; Porte & Paire wedge mules, £225, net-a-porter.com; See by Chloé Glyn espadrilles, £224, farfetch.com

black, brown, purple . . . you get the picture.

Porte and Paire's slick black mule is rather elegant too. Add to dresses, skirts and any trouser for a sophisticated look.

If in doubt plump for a platform sandal. They add instant inches and are pretty comfortable, all things considered. Russell & Bromley has numerous options and colours to choose from. Last, some housekeeping. If there is any chance of rain do not wear suede — they are ruined if you get them soggy — or mules. Mules will kick up tonnes of water and you'll feel like you've been on a bike without a mudguard! Good luck out there.

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For men, hats can be a headache

Accessories | Sam Leith on the tricky question of how to stay shaded and stylish this season — without turning into 'holiday dad'

Among the things I have inherited from my late father is a robust attitude to hats. He wore them only under very special circumstances, and those circumstances were two: fishing — in which a lichen-green number adorned with the odd fly was both handy and fitting — and going away for your summer holidays.

The hat on a man, in civilian life, is usually a thing to be regarded with suspicion. Bowlers have gone the way of the waistcoat fob watch. Flat caps are for farmers and hipsters. The extravagantly brimmed felt fedora, as worn by would-be raffish literary men in late middle age, tends to reek of vulgar self-advertisement. And hats while driving a car — accompanied, perhaps, by leather driving gloves on a Sunday-afternoon "spin" — are the grossest affectation. "Prat in a hat," my old man would mutter when he found himself stuck behind one on the summer lanes of my childhood.

That rhyme is to be borne in mind. Few are the men who can consistently carry off a hat in civilian life. The list is limited, as far as I'm concerned, to Indiana Jones (fedora), Del Boy Trotter (flat cap), Malcolm McDowell in *A Clockwork Orange* (bowler) and Benny from *Crossroads* (beanie) — and be it noted that all of these are fictional characters.

My austerity on this front is in part the result of an early humiliation. Inspired



Illustration by Dóra Kistelegi

Right: Cary Grant wears a fedora in the 1943 film 'Mr Lucky'; ASAP Rocky in baseball cap last year

Alamy, Robert Kamau/GC Images

by the first of these exemplars, I asked for a fedora for one birthday as a pre-teen, was given one, and still now blush to imagine how a scrawny 11-year-old wandering through Dorking town centre in the late 1980s in a fedora would have looked.

But a straw hat for summer, paired with a clean open-collared white shirt, knee-length shorts and flip-flops, is a pleasing thing. For those of us with the sort of optician's prescription that prevents us wearing contact lenses — and who neither want the expense of prescription sunglasses, the creepy look of photochromatic lenses (the sort that darken in the sunshine) or the unsatisfactory clip-on, flip-down types — a broad-brimmed hat is essential in bright sun.

For the past several years in my house, it has been the infallible sign of summer that I reach down from the top of the wardrobe the straw hat that I bought from a street market in Cuba in, gosh, 2009. It cost me \$5, has travelled all over the world and — though the black fabric hatband is frayed and faded, and the salt-tides of sweat have made little maps on the inner rim — is in astoundingly good shape.

It's the sort of hat that people will tend to refer to as a Panama, though my old dad insisted that a proper Panama hat should, like his, have a seam on top and be rollable so that you can put it in a suitcase. Mine never goes in a suitcase — but it has perched happily atop my carry-on baggage in countless overhead luggage compartments and sailed through customs aboard many a trolley.

It not only signals summer but it participates in all sorts of summer activities. You can take pleasure in the affectation of raising and lowering it slightly in greeting. You can practise the Michael Jackson-style rolling-up-your-arm manoeuvre to put it on your head in order to impress your children (angle hat downward, grasp the rear side of the brim lightly in your fingers, roll and flip). It makes a handy repository for keys and wallet when you go swimming. And, of course, it covers your whole face more comfortably and airily than anything else when you have in mind



an afternoon snooze on a sun lounger.

Warnings against male hat-wearing notwithstanding, my more style-minded colleagues inform me that hats are very much galloping back into fashion for the male of the species — and doing so just in time for the summer. Selfridges reports that hat sales are up 80 per cent from 2019. If you don't want to look like Holiday Dad, in other words, there are acceptable alternatives.

Oddly, the hottest item *du jour* — or, as they put it, "the key shape" — is actually the good old bucket hat, which, to those of us of a certain vintage inescapably connotes Mani (or Reni or Stimp or whatever he was called) from the Stone Roses and takes us back to a blur of wide trousers and blissed-out vibes and pretending to have been at the Spike Island gig.

Judging by the selection on Mr Porter these days, the bucket hat has come on since I was a lad. I was rather taken, for instance, by a black bucket hat from Endless Joy (slogan: "Free your mind and your ass will follow") splashed with cream and yellow blooms of epiphyl-lum, and the Pop Trading Company's natty and understated take on the style in dark blue corduroy. One's ravey, one's navy. Both will roll up and fit handily in your back pocket.

Isabel Marant's mauve-and-lilac Chapeau Haleyh is a handsome thing, I thought — but a little too outré for me to get away with. Fortunately, the admirably unisex nature of the bucket hat means that my 12-year-old daughter will look great in it.

And then, of course, there's baseball caps — which come in a dizzying number of varieties, from the practically disposable to something north of £500 (thank you Brunello Cucinelli). And, fashion being what it is, if you're taken with Celine Homme's mesh trucker cap you can spend £335 to look like Cletus the Slack-Jawed Yokel from *The Simpsons*.

For those of us past the first flush of youth, I should say, baseball caps are to be worn, if at all, forwards. Backwards says beef-fed American youth or, worse, Steve Buscemi saying "How do you do, fellow kids?" There's a definite semiotic divide between the adjustable baseball cap, the non-adjustable baseball cap (cloth all the way round, brim to be bent into an arch) and the mesh-crowned type which says you aspire either to be driving an 18-wheeler through the Nevada desert or opening a cereal café in Hoxton Square.

If you don't bend the brim into an arch, by the way, you're looking like either a rapper or a South Korean pro video-gamer, both of which are hard looks for middle-aged Anglo dudes to pull off.

For the likes of me, a classic style is, I think, the way to go. I have a proper Yankees cap, non-adjustable, which has had the odd non-baseball-game outing. Palm Angels and Folk clothing, for instance, both do a nice understated one-colour fabric hat without a plastic fastener and with a pleasant curve to the brim.

If you're under 30, though, you can go wild with gaudy ironic appliqué logos and bright colours (example: Central Bookings International's fun Toytown range).

Still, if all else fails — and, for instance, you leave your beloved straw hat in the overhead compartment when you leave the plane — there's always ye olde knotted handkerchief.

Modern Menswear



TRUNK

trunkclothing.com
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▲ Palm Angels cotton-twill baseball cap, £155, mrporter.com

▲ Endless Joy floral-print twill bucket hat, £120, mrporter.com

▲ Pop Trading Company cotton-corduroy hat, £55, mrporter.com

▲ New Era 9FORTY NY Yankees cap, £30, selfridges.com