



Jeans, jackets, and boots, oh my! Fall is here and it's time for the luxe looks of the season. Though you may want to, getting into your most indulgent apparel doesn't mean buying out the mall. Let's go item by item, so you can have a chic wardrobe and a flush wallet.

Jeans: Le Premier de Style:

Jeans are a part of every style season, but in the fall they get the star treatment they deserve. Though the search may be more daunting than American Idol auditions, you're going to have to give everything a try to find the style that suits you best.

Now, before you go dropping serious sums on designer denim, consider these tips.

- **Don't get lost in sea of blue.** Finding jeans can be an overwhelming task. For a little help narrowing your search try sites like www.truejeans.com or www.zafu.com for brand recommendations based on your measurements.
- **Go ahead and Google.** There are different types of denim, so research before you hit the store. Selvedge denim is less prone to fraying, but much more costly. Common denim (as opposed to selvedge) is more affordable, but less durable.
- **It's not about the pockets!** You may *think* I just endorsed selvedge, but au contraire! It's a risky investment. Are you absolutely certain you're going to be the same size for the next few years? Do you really think skinny jeans are in it for the long haul? Me neither. Buy something that's going to look good on you before you worry about buying a trend or designer label.
- **When is as important as what.** Once you know what you want, wait until October to scoop up post back-to-school savings.

The bottom line when it comes to jeans is that *you* need to look good. Your true show stoppers are going to be well fitting, versatile, and made of natural fibers and you can find those at almost any price point.

Leather Jackets; No Faux!:

Leather (never ever pleather) jackets are sophisticated and edgy, and when you pay attention to quality they can last forever. As you might guess, when it comes to getting the best price on a new jacket, the best time to buy is mid-winter. Patience isn't your virtue? Then you have two choices.

- **Option One- spend your money.** A moderately priced jacket will run \$200 to \$300. If that sounds like a bargain to you already, by all means, don't hesitate. Get it- tout de suite!
- **Option Two- get it used.** Yes, I said it. Used. If spending more than a single Benjamin puts you on the verge of hypertension, then this is the option for you. Good- quality, well cared for leather can maintain its value longer than an individual maintains his/her taste or body shape, which means that the ideal jacket can be found for far less than retail.

Going new? Don't just hit the mall. Try boutiques and specialty shops. Not only will you find more options, but you'll also get the "custom" glow we all crave. Used is the way for you? Venture into a consignment shop or flea market. Not only can you find killer styles, but you'll come away with the "good deal" buzz too. There are also plenty of online options for new and used jackets, and while the instant gratification of the web can be alluring, without actually feeling and trying on the jacket, you can't be sure that you're not just throwing your money in the trash, so click with caution.

Whether you're buying new or used, here are three things you need to know.

- **The Animal.** Cow and sheep skin are common and therefore less expensive. Lamb skin is lighter and more comfortable, but also more expensive.
- **The Country.** Choose something made in the U.S. or Italy to get better quality.
- **The Feel.** A comfortable, durable lining is just as important as supple leather.

Jacket favorites:



Izod Women's
New Zealand
Lamb Leather
Cycle Jacket
Overstock.com
\$124.99



Bagatelle
Scuba Jacket
shop.nordstrom.com
\$268



Central Park
West Griffin
Leather Jacket
Piperlime.gap.com
\$375

Boots; True Joie de Vivre:

What can I say about boots except, J'adore? These little gifts from the footwear gods are comfy, warm, convenient, and sexy.

Naked adoration aside, there are some *very* serious issues when it comes to boot buying.

- **Don't believe the "I can break them in" hype.** Nothing matters more in a boot than comfort. If boots hurt in the first lap around the shoe department, the most you can hope for is to get through a few hours without bloody feet. Not exactly a strong case for lasting love.
- **The colder the weather, the hotter the deal.** The best time to purchase new boots is in the middle of winter when everyone is anxious for spring. Waiting through the fall season premiers will leave you with a much healthier wallet. Think of it as buying early for next year.
- **Must have = Must have NOW? Go online.** Once you've found what you want in the store, take down the brand, shoe name, and size, and search for a better deal. Just make sure you're shopping with a reputable online retailer and that they have a consumer-friendly return policy.

Style options in this department are many, but if you don't have classic leather knee highs yet, then the a la mode shoe booties and the above-the-knees will just have to wait. And speaking of those knee highs- my advice here is spend, girl, spend! This doesn't mean you should give yourself carte blanche to spend thousands on designer boots when what you can afford is in the hundreds. What it does mean is this: if these are missing from your closet, spend what you can on a high quality pair (i.e. made of natural materials, with sturdy construction). That way, not only are you filling a major gap in your wardrobe, but also next year's budget can go to something else. C'est bon?

Boot favorites:



Steve Madden
Gental in
Brown Leather
stevemadden.com
\$129.95



Coconuts Kesha
Leather Boot
In Tan
Dsw.com
\$139.95



Fossil Maddox
Tall Boot
Fossil.com
\$168

These few simple shopping strategies will help you beat wardrobe ennui while keeping enough cash in your wallet to be the bon vivant you've always dreamed of being.

It should go without saying, but it sometimes doesn't, so I'll say it- never feel pressured to spend more than you have. Even if other people can't see it, knowing that you are comfortably in control of your own finances will give you far more confidence than couture anything ever could. Bonne chance!