POISE & PEARL

FREE PRINTABLE

The Holiday Dress Code Cheat Sheet

Thanksgiving to New Year's



What casual, festive, cocktail and black tie optional usually mean, plus one page for every event of the season. For women 40 and over.

DRESS CODE DECODER, 2 PAGES

SEASON CALENDAR

FROM HOLIDAY OUTFIT IDEAS FOR WOMEN OVER 40

WHAT IT USUALLY MEANS

Dress codes, decoded.

Invitations rarely explain themselves. Here's what each phrase usually means and what to reach for. When in doubt, ask the host. Nobody minds.

01 Casual

MEANS Relaxed and comfortable, usually at someone's home.

REACH FOR Dark jeans or knit trousers, a soft sweater, clean leather sneakers or ankle boots.

SKIP Anything you'd garden in. Casual still means clean and put together.

02 Smart casual

MEANS One step up from casual. Restaurant dinners, daytime gatherings.

REACH FOR Tailored trousers or a midi skirt, a fine-knit sweater or silk blouse, loafers or low boots, a blazer if you like.

SKIP Athletic wear, distressed denim.

03 Festive

MEANS Dress for a party and add a holiday note: color, shine or texture.

REACH FOR Velvet, satin, sequins in small doses, jewel tones, a metallic shoe or a statement earring.

SKIP Head-to-toe novelty prints, unless the invitation says "ugly sweater."

04 Cocktail

MEANS Evening event, dressier than smart casual, below formal.

REACH FOR A knee or midi length dress, a dressy jumpsuit, or silk trousers with a dressy top. Heels, block heels or pointed flats.

SKIP Floor-length gowns and jeans.

THE DRESSIER ONES (AND THE TRICKY ONES)

When the invitation gets fancy.

05 Semi-formal / dressy

MEANS Between cocktail and black tie. Common for evening weddings and galas.

REACH FOR A midi or tea-length dress in a rich fabric, an elegant jumpsuit, or a long skirt with a fitted top. A wrap or tailored coat.

SKIP Casual cotton, daytime sandals.

06 Black tie optional

MEANS Formal. Gowns are welcome, but a dressy cocktail look also works.

REACH FOR A floor-length or elegant midi dress, a satin skirt with a silk shell, a dressy pantsuit in a luxe fabric.

SKIP Short, casual or very bright daytime looks.

07 Black tie

MEANS The most formal evening code most of us see.

REACH FOR A floor-length dress or formal separates, fine jewelry, a dressy evening bag.

SKIP Knee-length cotton dresses.

08 Themed or "come as you are"

MEANS Ugly sweater parties, cookie swaps, "cozy casual." The host wants people relaxed.

REACH FOR The theme, worn with confidence. A fun sweater with tailored trousers looks intentional.

SKIP Overthinking it. Match the energy of the invite.

Church and candlelight services: usually smart casual. Warm layers matter more than fancy pieces, because older buildings can be cold. Choose shoes you can stand in for an hour.

NOVEMBER TO JANUARY

Every event, one page.

EVENT	DATE	WHERE	DRESS CODE	OUTFIT #	READY?
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Outfit #: jot the outfit you plan, or its formula number if you have the full planner, Holiday Outfit Ideas for Women Over 40.

WANT THE OUTFITS TOO?

The full holiday outfit planner.

These pages come from Holiday Outfit Ideas for Women Over 40, the 16-page planner. The full planner adds the outfits themselves, so you know what to wear to each event on your calendar.



24 outfit formulas for 6 occasions

Thanksgiving, holiday parties, Christmas, New Year's Eve, winter weddings and visiting family, each with complete outfits.



Event cards, a prep timeline and a gap list

Write each outfit down once, prep it the week before, and buy only what fills a real gap.



Free style guides on the blog

Thanksgiving outfits, holiday party looks, New Year's Eve ideas and more at poiseandpearl.com.

SEE THE PLANNER AT POISEANDPEARL.COM

Questions? hello@poiseandpearl.com