



distant francophile

Five Secrets Of French Women: Dress With Confidence In Just One Weekend

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Are You Ready For Some French Flair?

For too many women, every day life is hampered by thoughts of not being good enough and feelings of not being comfortable. Perhaps these thoughts and emotions are due to the clothes they've chosen that particular day. But it's more likely that they've simply never felt confident about the way they put themselves together, particularly when they compare themselves to everyone else.

If this sounds like you, I'm here to tell you that life doesn't have to be this way.

Now, I understand how elusive style confidence can be. For years, I was clueless about style. As a regular traveller to France, I was desperate for just a little bit of the inherent style confidence that I saw time and time again on French streets.

I decided to throw myself at the problem and enrolled in styling courses in both Australia and the United Kingdom. But my biggest learnings came from studying French women and applying what I've learned in my own life.

Today, I believe that every woman can bring French style and joie de vivre to her life, no matter where she happens to live in the world. She only needs to know a secret or two to be on her way.

Imagine walking out your door every morning with a spring in your step, knowing that the outfit you've chosen would fit right in on any Parisian Boulevard. And think about how good you'll feel.

In this guide, I'm sharing five things you can start putting into place this coming weekend to build your style confidence and start feeling fabulous.

And the great news - they're easy and fun!

Time to get started!



Secret 1: Develop A Signature Style

When it comes dressing with confidence, devoting time to developing a signature style is definitely a good investment. Akin to a uniform, and sometimes described as such, a signature style helps to articulate your brand to the world. It also makes dressing so much easier.

The benefits of building a signature style that represents you include:

- Decisions regarding what to wear on a day-to-day basis are made with ease as you are true to your look. In a similar vein, shopping for new clothes becomes simpler, because you are not distracted by items that are not in keeping with your signature style.
- You'll cut down on orphaned clothing in your wardrobe, as everything coordinates well.
- Less money is wasted on clothes you never wear. And you won't end up feeling guilty for buying those unworn clothes in the first place.
- Increased confidence because you are comfortable and happy with your look.

French women are known for having a signature style. Happily their effortlessly chic style is not only comfy to wear but it's also straightforward to replicate. Flat shoes (boots or ballerinas). Slim jeans or pants. A well fitted, understated top. A perfectly cut jacket. And, of course, a scarf.

This look is appropriate for so many occasions. It's perfect for shopping, the school run or lunch with the girls. However, with an easy switch or two, you can take the look to the next level. Depending on the occasion you might trade the flats for heels and slip on a luxe top. Perhaps you'll upgrade the look with a velvet or tuxedo jacket. Or maybe you'd like to ditch the scarf and add a dressy clutch instead. With only a few simple pieces the possibilities are limitless.

It pays to remember your body shape when shopping for the French woman's signature style. Slightly boot cut jeans and tailored jackets with a longer line flatter a round body shape. Peplum jackets are ideal for hourglass figures as they highlight the waist while cropped jackets work well for those with a triangle body shape.

Of course, if this doesn't sound like you, there are any number of signature styles out there. It's just a matter of finding something works just right for you.

Over The Weekend:

Developing your style is easy with Pinterest. Create a board dedicated to researching your signature style. Keep the board private if you'd prefer. Then simply pin pictures of outfits that you love and that inspire you. Pay attention to patterns that emerge. In time you might see a particular colour palette come up, or maybe you'll discover that you love a good pencil skirt. Start incorporating some of these elements into your wardrobe. Eventually you'll be dressing every day in clothes that leave you feeling confident and inspired.



Secret 2: Focus On Fit

Regardless of your body shape, there is no doubt that you will look great when your clothes fit you properly. Knowing your clothes are the right fit builds confidence because it eliminates worry. You are wearing the clothes rather than the clothes wearing you, as the saying goes. You won't feel compelled to tug at or reposition your clothes all day long when you've got the appropriate fit.

It goes without saying that squeezing yourself into clothes that are too small or too tight is neither comfortable nor likely to create a good look. And while clothes that are too big and baggy might be comfy, they rarely look stylish.

Tailoring and having the patience (and stamina) to try on absolutely everything before you decide to buy it (or keep it, if you've purchased an item on-line) can ensure great fit. However, one quick way to improve the fit of everything you own is to choose the right underwear.

The French woman's obsession with pretty underthings is legendary. But it is not just for sex appeal that the French invest so much on lingerie. They understand the importance of correctly fitting lingerie. They know that it helps them to look better in their clothes because properly fitting underwear provides a better shape for outer layers.

Now, you don't have to resort to 'shape wear' to achieve better fit. Simply wearing the right sized lingerie can make a massive difference.

It is also worth considering the fabrics of your underwear. While lace is undoubtedly pretty, it can sometimes lead to less than clean lines when lighter fabrics are worn on top. It's best to save the lacy pieces for days when you are wearing heavier weighted fabrics.

Over The Weekend:

Get yourself into your nearest lingerie boutique for a professional fitting. If your budget runs to it, you might buy yourself a little something in the size that's right for your body. Getting the foundations right can make all the difference to your outfit - and to your confidence.



Secret 3: Invest In Quality

Sometimes there is more than a dash of truth to the cliches we all grew up on. And so it is with the phrase quality over quantity.

Investing in quality - which is sometimes known as investment dressing - is something that French women have well and truly sorted.

As far as I can tell, the French have nailed the 'less but better' mantra that is put forward so often in the world today. For example, they do not gorge themselves in 'all you can eat' frenzies, rather they are committed to smaller amounts of the highest standard food and wine. And when it comes to wardrobes, they are not overflowing, with the French preferring to focus on building outfits around a small number of beautifully made pieces.

For whatever reason, they've come to understand the reasons that quality wins out over quantity - and it is a contributing factor to their self assurance.

To qualify as an investment piece, an item needs to be able to be worn day in, day out, sometimes for years. It can't date and ideally, it will improve with age - either by becoming more comfortable or perhaps by developing a gorgeous patina, as a vintage handbag might do.

While a higher price can point to quality, it pays to remember that an expensive price tag doesn't always guarantee quality. Having said that, investing in quality can sometimes see you splashing out quite a bit of cash in the first instance.

However, rather than focussing on the initial investment, you will be better served to think about the eventual cost per wear. You will get far more value from a quality item that you might wear dozens of times over a decade than from a cheaper piece that you only wear a few times before discarding.

There is no simpler way to state it. Quality clothing looks better on the body. No crooked seams or wonky hem lines. No puckered zippers. No pilling fabrics. All of these factors mean you are less likely to be pulling, tugging and picking at your clothes. This in turn contributes to a poise that underpins confidence.

Over The Weekend:

Go through your wardrobe and consider the quality of your garments. Think about how the higher quality items make you feel. And what about those clothes that aren't quite up to scratch. How do they make you feel? Devise a plan to replace the clothes that make you feel less than special with quality items that you will feel good in every time you wear them.



Secret 4: Master The French Classics

There are two key reasons that a look or an item of clothing becomes known as a classic. The first is longevity. You can wear a classic for years on end and it won't date, at least not quickly. The second is that they add a touch of effortless elegance to everyone's wardrobe. Almost without thinking, every woman can throw on a classic and look just a little more chic. And I can virtually guarantee when you go with the classics you will get compliments - which of course, is a sure fire way to boost your confidence.

When it comes to dressing with more self-possession, there are three French classics I regularly recommend:

A. The Trench Coat

The trench coat is a staple in Paris almost all year round and French women know how to wear their trench coats with class and flair.

Now while I'm of the belief that throwing a trench over just about any ensemble will take it to the next level, there are a few little tricks you can employ to make sure you wear your own trench coat as well as any Parisian.

- Stick with a neutral colour. While it's tempting to choose a standout colour, Parisians tend to wear either beige or black trench coats. Adaptable enough to wear with both casual and dressy outfits, a trench in a neutral tone will result in the maximum return on investment.
- Tie your trench coat rather than buckling it. It results in a relaxed look, that isn't too formal and also allows provides a flattering silhouette, regardless of what is being worn underneath the coat.
- Go for a mid length trench coat, rather than anything that is too short or too long. Walking the middle path in terms of length offers utmost versatility if you are looking to wear your trench year round.
- Don't worry too much about brand, but do buy a quality coat that will stand the test of time. Check the buttons and the seams before purchasing and try to go for a heavier fabric wherever possible.



B. Red Lipstick

A French classic, seen regularly on the streets of Paris, red lipstick brightens the face like nothing else.

And a fabulous red lip doesn't need much else in terms of makeup. A good base and lightly made up eyes and you look polished and good to go. Ready for anything, day or night.

It took me years of practice but now I find wearing perfect red lipstick easy. And I just know that anyone can master this French staple with just a few basic tips.

- Start with lips that are in good condition. Red obviously draws attention so smooth lips are a must. It is safer to avoid red if your lips are dry and chapped.
- Choose your right red. To be honest, this is the only trick to wearing a red lip - you can't just choose any garden variety red. You need persistence at the make-up counter to find the right red for you but this piece of advice might help speed up the process. In the daylight, look at the veins in your wrists - if they have a blue tint go for a blue based red. If they are tinted green, go for an orange based or brick red. The sales assistants are generally pretty good at pointing you in the right direction.
- Use a lip brush for the first application. Using your lip brush, line your lips first then colour in the gaps. Blot, then repeat. Blot again. Voila - the perfect red lip. You'll note that I don't use any primers, liners or top coats - but that's entirely a matter of personal preference.

C. Scarves

Scarves really are synonymous with French style. In France, apart from during the height of summer, you rarely see anyone - male or female - without a scarf.

Scarves are such clever little things. They can add warmth, texture, colour and style to an outfit all in one relatively small piece of fabric.

But they can be notoriously hard to tie.

So here are my top tips for mastering this French classic:

- Get your hands on the longest scarves you can find. It is the length that ensures that the tails sit just right. Long scarves also offer a lot more versatility.
- When in doubt, go for neutral colours that compliment your skin tone. There is lots of advice out there that recommends using scarves to add a pop of your favourite colour to an outfit or trying a pattern you wouldn't normally wear. And while this is technically true, you need



to think about the colour or pattern. Scarves are designed to be worn close to your face and if you get the colour wrong, you can end up looking very washed out. Similarly, think about both your colouring and your bone structure when choosing patterned scarves. For example, if you're small boned try smaller patterns.

- A collection of neutral coloured scarves makes it easier to pick a scarf that coordinates with your wardrobe.
- If your neck is on the shorter side, think carefully about the fabric of the scarf. If it is too heavy or bulky you can lose your neck in a sea of fabric which is never a good look. Go for lighter weight fabrics that will sit closer to your collar bones.
- If you are really stuck, try an infinity or loop scarf. The lack of ends stops them from doing their own thing and you also don't have to worry about your scarf becoming unravelled!

Over The Weekend:

Spend a chunk of time investigating the classics. Play with red lipsticks or practicing tying scarves. When it comes to these two classic items, practice really does make perfect.



Secret 5: Don't Forget The Finer Details

Sometimes it is the little things that can make or break an outfit and your confidence. And more often than not, it is the little things that are so easy to forget.

You might have nailed your outfit, but you won't feel necessarily feel confident wearing it if you've forgotten to pay attention to the details.

But incorporating these all important details into your style doesn't have to be hard. In fact, it can be very easy to keep these little confidence boosters front and centre in your life, especially if you choose to keep things simple.

- Keep your fingernails short and, instead of going for polish that can chip or gel that can grow out, get your nails buffed instead. This is another way that French women look well groomed with very little effort or cost.
- Opt for fine, understated jewellery that can be worn everyday and that looks good with everything. Perhaps some would say this is a boring strategy but the word ease springs to my mind. And who wouldn't like more ease in their life?
- Discover your signature fragrance. Why not follow in the footsteps of so many French women and commit to just a single fragrance, one that you can make your own? It's another way to enhance your personal brand and it cuts out any decisions about what perfume to wear.
- Adopt an easy care hairstyle. Shiny, sexy, unfussy hair is a French woman's trademark. They seem to have a knack for getting an excellent cut and avoiding too much product. And we all feel better when our hair is looking great.

Over The Weekend:

Get just one of these confidence boosting details under control. Give yourself an at home manicure or treat yourself and entrust your fingertips to a professional. Use the internet to research hair stylists in your area that specialise in cutting hair like yours - and then make an appointment for a consultation. Spend some time testing fragrances. Make sure you test scents on your skin and not just on the cardboard swatches that perfumeries often hand out. Fragrances smell different when blended with your own chemistry. And remember, scent settles once the lively top notes have faded, so wait a while before making any final decisions. You might like to collect some samples to try at home before investing a brand new perfume.



Conclusion

Thank you for reading this short guide to building your style confidence. I really hope you found it helpful and that you've got some tips you can't wait to try out this weekend. If this is true for you, I'd be incredibly grateful if you could share this guide with anyone you feel would benefit from a few style secrets.

Thanks too for subscribing to Distant Francophile - I'm so glad you've joined our growing community. Please feel free to contact me via distantfrancophile@gmail.com if you have any questions at all. I really want to help you dress with confidence.

And until next time - au revoir.

About Janelle:

I believe that every woman can bring French style and joie de vivre to her life, no matter where she happens to live in the world. She only needs to know a secret or two to be on her way. When you join the Distant Francophile community, you'll learn the style and grooming secrets that will help you to dress with the confidence so many French women seem to have.

