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Featured: **Be spot-on with style**

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Funky polka dots are back in vogue. But you don't have to restrict polkas to that itchy-bitsy-teeny-weeny-polka-dot bikini. **Sheetal Anand** gets experts to help you sport this playful yet chic retro-trend with a dash of defiance

Trend-spotting

Polka dots have metamorphosed from their girlie Minnie Mouse days to sexy and sophisticated. "Ranging from celestial tiny dots to bold graphic ones, from innovative textured ones to hand painted abstract ones, they are ruling the roost, not in a conventional way though. It is important to understand that polka dots are very powerful in terms of their visual imagery," says designer Nida Mehmood.

Spotted on runways and on fashionistas at red carpet events, they have seeped into all genres of clothing. Thanks to the imagination of high-profile designers, they are showing up on skirts, trousers, cocktail dresses, party wear, tops, shorts and formal shirts. Not to mention, a score of accessories.

Dots get Indianised

Inspired by Bollywood, polka dots are also the new rage in saris, lehenga-cholis and salwar-kameez. "To make this print work, choose a red sari with blue dots and a lovely blouse in solid or contrasting coloured dots. For a more formal look, the sari could have zardosi spots," says Mumbai-based couturier, Sapna Hariani.

Instead of going dots all over, you can also have them in the border like Nida Mahmood's saris. Or else, choose a polka dotted dupatta over a solid kurta and vice versa.

Putting the dots together

Polka dots can flatter many body types and if worn correctly can even mask your flaws and emphasise your pluses. Work them as per your body frame. "If you're petite, stick to smaller polka dots so that the print doesn't overpower you. If you are hip heavy, wear polka dots on your top half and vice-versa," says celeb designer Nishka Lulla.

Nail the spots

Polka dots need to be worn carefully! "They can be very overwhelming and therefore it is easier to carry off smaller dots or neutralise their effect with leggings, jackets or even jeans," says celebrity designer Masaba Gupta. "For a feminine look, Nida suggests romantic billowy tops in polka teamed with fitted skirts or trousers as they work perfectly for both day and night.

Nishka warns, "Polka dots can't be worn with more polka dots. Choose one dot element only and break the monotony with a bright contrast coloured accessory like footwear or bag." Just don't keep it boring! Delhi-based designer duo Parvesh and Jai recommend, "Wear polka dots in funky colours instead of the usual drab black and white. For a more bold and funky look, add embellishments, tassels and the likes."

Accessorising your dots

Since polkas are high on detail themselves, they need simple accessories. "So if your dress is black and white polka dots accentuate it with a couple of black or white pieces of jewellery and then add a scarf or handbag in the colour of your choice. Narrow down your accessories as well. For larger polka dots, stick to one or two large pieces and for smaller ones, wear 2-3 small accessories and a large one," suggests Sapna.

Nishka adds, "You can choose to follow this trend on details and accessories too." Be it dotted clutches and matching ballerinas or even a dotted scarf, a sexy belt or a cute hair-band, dots in accessories look playful yet incredibly chic!



Masaba Gupta's dotted creations

Whatever you choose to don, apparel or an accessory, have fun with dots.

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Dotted fun and flirty dress by Nishka Lulla

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