

Classics revisited The panama



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Unless an occasion specifically calls for one, a hat often sits at the bottom of the list when it comes to acquiring the building blocks of a wardrobe. But consider, if you will, the panama, a ray of sunshine in headgear form.

The panama actually comes from Ecuador, where it has been hand-woven since the mid-1600s from the fine fibres of the palm-like *toquilla* plant. The process is so respected that it was added to Unesco's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2012.

It picked up its misleading name in the mid-1800s, when makers attempted to increase sales by shipping their hats over to Panama, the main trade link with North America. The simple, lightweight hat proved popular in the tropical climate, and business boomed during the California Gold Rush. Its adoption by the workers digging the Panama Canal raised its profile further, and when President Roosevelt wore one to visit the site in 1904 panama-makers truly hit paydirt.

In fashion terms it has never been out of style, maintaining its classic appeal for both men and women thanks to its functionality and simplicity, whether wider-brimmed and atop the head of a sun-worshipping beauty (such as Lauren Hutton, pictured, in 1983) or traditional and topping off a dapper gent.

For the best possible panama, head to the Italian brand Borsalino or Lock & Co in London – or you could, of course, go to Ecuador, where it all began. **Bibby Sowray**

How to wear it now by Victoria Bain



Off to a party

Panama, £235, Lock & Co (lockhatters.co.uk); 14ct-gold hoops, £130, Melissa Joy Manning, from Liberty (liberty.com); sunglasses, £25, Asos (asos.com); espadrilles, £130, APC (apc.fr); tote, £325, Mansur Gavril, from net-a-porter.com; Elmington dress, £65, Finery (finerylondon.com)



Super city chic

Panama, £120, Sensi Studio, from matchesfashion.com; bracelet, £70, Made (made.uk.com); suede backpack, £32, Asos (asos.com); sandals, £70, Camper (camper.com); sunglasses, £45, & Other Stories (stories.com); linen T-shirt, £7.99, Uniqlo (uniqlo.com); linen shorts, £85, Whistles (whistles.com)



Poolside preening

Panama, £60, Pachacuti (panamas.co.uk); gold necklace, £120, Dodo (dodo.it); sunglasses, £230, Zan Zan, from matchesfashion.com; sandals, £125, Ancient Greek (ancient-greek-sandals.com); bikini bottoms, £12, and top, £25, Next (next.co.uk); leather kaftan, £109, Zara (zara.com)

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