

Classics revisited Espadrilles

Each year, as spring chips away at the winter chill, our thoughts turn to packing away the weatherproof footwear and slipping into something altogether more elegant. It is a time when the espadrille comes into its own.

Characterised by their rope soles (traditionally made from jute), espadrilles can be traced back as far as the 14th century, but their modern-day journey begins with the Spanish Civil War, during which Republican soldiers were sent to fight in flat-soled, canvas-upper espadrilles, typically featuring ribbons that tied around the ankle.

The conflict led to one of the world's most famous espadrille manufacturers, Castañer – founded in Banyoles, Catalonia, in 1927 by Luis Castañer and his

cousin Tomàs Serra – being nationalised, as the shoes were regarded as a product of military interest. Post-war, the brand's traditional espadrilles were adopted by Hollywood A-listers such as Grace Kelly, Cary Grant and Jackie Onassis.

It was the same family-run company that helped Yves Saint Laurent bring the previously unseen wedge-heeled espadrille firmly into the fashion arena in the early 1970s, and thus etch another facet into the style's eternal appeal.

Aside from Castañer, to best do the espadrille justice look to the New York-based newcomer Soludos for a vast selection of both classic and on-trend versions, or to Chanel and its slip-on style featuring the iconic interlocking Cs. **Bibby Sowray**



Worn by soldiers in the Spanish Civil War, espadrilles were later adopted by Hollywood A-listers

Grace Kelly wearing Castañer espadrilles, with Cary Grant on the set of *To Catch a Thief* in 1954

How to wear them now by Victoria Bain

 <p>The new demure Keep it classic with an elegant shirt-dress</p> <p>Cotton-twill shirt-dress, £1,520, Rosie Assoulin from matchesfashion.com; wide-brim straw hat, £370, Maison Michel from matchesfashion.com; Perspex sunglasses, £184, Sunday Somewhere (sundaysomewhere.com); straw tote, £89, Plumo (plumo.com); canvas espadrilles, £38, Soludos (soludos.com)</p>	 <p>Origami me For an oriental twist, try with layered tops and wide-leg culottes</p> <p>Cotton wrap top, £725, Marni from net-a-porter.com; culottes, £195, Edit from Liberty (liberty.co.uk); leather pochette, £195, Nicole Farhi (nicolefarhi.com); espadrilles, £39.99, Zara (zara.com); Perspex earrings, £67.50, Bottica (bottica.com); bangle, £48, Eleanor Bolton from Darkroom London (darkroomlondon.com)</p>	 <p>Spots and stripes Team with clashing prints for a playful moment</p> <p>Cotton stripe top, £100, Comme des Garçons from doverstreetmarket.com; satin peplum skirt, £175, Edit from Liberty (liberty.co.uk); leather tote, £1,045, Balenciaga from net-a-porter.com; canvas wedges, £65, Castañer (castaner.com); plastic sunglasses, £20, Toy Shades (toyshades.com)</p>
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