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Bring out the Sun in a Summer Dress by [Sean Burke](#)

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Dresses are hands-down the best look for summer. Not only are they flattering, feminine and comfy, but they're just so easy to wear as well. Unlike separates, dresses represent an entire outfit in just one single garment. They embody the effortlessness of summertime fashion while maintaining an elegance that just can't be replicated with trousers or shorts. Read on to discover what dress silhouettes are set to be popular in Summer 2012.

Making a big statement this summer is the maxi dress, which has returned for yet another season- this time in bigger, brighter and bolder prints. The maxi dress is the quintessential holiday look, particularly if you pair it with a wide-brimmed beach hat and opened-toed wedges. The maxi dress is the ideal day-to-night look, as it works for both a day at the beach with the girls and an evening dinner date with your fella.

Also popular is the snug-fitting body con dress. Perfect for ladies night out, this sexy silhouette is a wonderful way to show off your figure. Unique to this season has been body con dresses with geometric cut-outs in the neckline and, of course, bold colour-blocking in bright pinks, purples and turquoise. In contrast, the soft pastel palette is another great option in this dress style. Pair the figure-hugging dress with tall platform pumps to really make a statement.

For a more bohemian approach to your summer wardrobe, the 70s-inspired tunic dress is a great option. This simple shirt-like dress is a great way to channel your inner earth-mamma, particularly when you pair it with soft leather sandals or ankle moccasins. Wear your hair down and wavy and go for minimal makeup to really embrace this look.

The skater dress is another great look for summer, particularly if you're after that flirty "girl next door" look. With its fuller skirt and high neckline, this simple dress is extremely versatile. Pair it with canvas plimsolls for a preppy 50s-inspired look a la Sandra Dee. Or channel everyone's favourite girly girl, Zooey Deschanel, by wearing it with a polka-dotted cardigan and some chunky-heeled pumps.

As you can see, there are so many options when it comes to chic summer dresses. The best way around this is to cycle through a variety of styles, choosing certain looks for certain events. And remember how much accessories can transform the same dress into a range of different looks. The simple addition of a denim jacket, a fitted blazer, a cardigan, flip-flops, or a pair of heels showcases just how versatile a dress can be.

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