

Socially Yours

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MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL:

WHAT SHALL I WEAR-IST TO THE BALL?

Holidays are already upon us and that usually means dressier events through New Year's. Deciding what to wear is sometimes confusing. And depending upon what part of the country you're in, dress codes will vary according to tradition, decorum and weather.

Usually, dress codes are actually defined by the man's required apparel, as women's styles are subject to fashionable flexibility.

But let's keep it simple – there are basically two dress codes to follow, with one cardinal, the less popular, rule for men – jackets at White Tie and Black Tie affairs should never be removed for dancing.

"If a woman walks into a room and sees another woman wearing the same dress, it can be considered a disaster. When a man walks into a room and sees all the other men wearing the same thing, they know they got it right!"

DRESS CODE #1. Typical Formal Events To Celebrate The Holidays or Occasion.

White Tie – this means a very formal evening affair. Men normally wear tails and white tie. Women wear long gowns.

Black Tie – Tuxedo or dark suit for men, although during the summer, a white dinner jacket may be substituted. Ladies do not need a long gown.

Dressy Casual – Sports coat; tie is optional.

Casual – Very few restrictions apply.

DRESS CODE #2. Special Formal Events (Often Charity or Holiday Balls, Fundraisers, Grand New Year's Events)

White tie – Means Ultra-Formal. Men wear full formal attire with white tie, vest, shirt and cummerbund. Women wear long gowns.

Black Tie – Means formal. Men wear tuxedos, women wear cocktail, long dressy or dressy evening separates.

Formal – Usually means the same as a black tie, but in some trendier cities like New York or Los Angeles, it could mean a black shirt, no tie with a tux. Women wear cocktail, long dresses or dressy evening separates.

Ultra Formal – Means White Tie. Means wear full dress... white tie, vest, shirt and cummerbund. Women wear long gowns.

Black tie Opt – Means you have the option of wearing a Tuxedo, but it should clue you into the formality of the event, meaning a dark suit and tie should be your other option. Women wear cocktail, long dresses or dressy evening separates.

Black Tie Invited – Means you have the option of wearing a Tuxedo, but it should clue you into the formality of the event, meaning a dark suit and tie would be your other option. Women wear cocktail, long dresses or dressy evening separates.

Creative Black Tie – Leaves room for trendy interpretations of formal wear. He can go more modern with a tux – maybe a black shirt, no tie. Ladies wear long or short dresses or evening separates (maybe lace or sequined skirt with a sleek cashmere sweater.)

Semi-Formal – The trickiest of all dress codes. Usually it means that neither tuxes nor long dresses are required. An evening event (after 6 pm) would still dictate dark suits for men, and a cocktail dress for the ladies. Daytime Semi-Formal events mean suits for men and appropriate short dresses or dressy suits for her.

Cocktail Attire – Means short, elegant dresses for her and dark suits for him.

Dressy Casual – Here definitely means no jeans or shorts. Similar to business casual, but a tad dressier.

Casual – Again, generally means most anything respectful goes.

Informal – Can mean the same as casual; however, when associated with a special event, good taste should prevail. A dress for her or a nice pair of slacks and shirt for him are informal, but respectful of the event.