

STYLE

- For Masquerade -

GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for downloading this Masquerade Ball Style Guide from Italy Mask.

Whilst attending a masquerade event is becoming more common, it is still not necessarily something you do frequently and we often find ourselves advising our customers on apparel, style and make up choices for a masquerade ball, making sure it all works together with the choice of mask.

Being confident and wearing something you feel good in adds to the enjoyment of the event considerably, which is why we have created this Masquerade Ball Style Guide. We hope you find this guide helpful as you prepare for your event.

Enjoy.

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MASK TYPES AND TERMS

[*click names to view our website](#)

● Feminine ● Masculine

BAROQUE: ●
Masks of the Baroque category are of a certain style, often a mask of simple colors, with elaborate ornamental feature above the eyes. (Above, middle)

BAUTA: ●
Bauta is a masculine type of mask, where the lower face area below the nose points outwards. It is remarkably larger than the typical eye mask, and well suited for men when a full face mask is required. It is an ancient Venetian design, intended to allow the wearer to eat and drink

CIGNO: ●
Cigno is a type of eye mask where one side of the mask above the eye extends up and over the forehead. 'Cigno' is the Italian word for 'swan' and this mask shape can also come with feathers attached for a dramatic look.

CIUFFO: ●
'Ciuffo' means feather in Italian, so Ciuffo masks are feather masks. These masks are often quite eye catching as they tend to be vivid in color and the feathers can stretch up to 40cm.

COLOMBINA: ●
Colombina is a common term for eye masks, and covers most evening masks, so it is a common term in the names of many masks, from feather to Filigree.

FILIGREE: ●
Filigree masks are laser cut from metal and contain intricate detail. Well suited for nights of dancing as they are very comfortable. Be wary of buying cheap imitations of these, as they are often made of nickel, and can cause an allergic reaction, which is likely to be the last thing you want on such an evening.

JOLLY/JOKER: ●
Jolly and Joker masks are more exuberant in their appearance, as they are often decorated with an elaborate headpiece of stiffened fabric and Jester's bells.

LEATHER: ●
Leather masks are usually simple Colombina masks, but cut out of Italian leather. (Top left corner)

MACRAME: ●
Macrame masks have lace decoration features, usually with pearl beads and crystals, which is why they are particularly well suited for women. (Top right corner)

VOLTO: ●
A Volto mask is a full face mask. These are larger and as the name suggests, cover the entire face. They are suited for evenings where anonymity is a priority, and serve well when making a grand entrance - but are less suited for evenings of eating and drinking, as they do cover the mouth.



MEN'S GUIDE

LESS GLITTER PLEASE

CONSIDER THE EVENT

FIT IN OR STAND OUT

Consider the nature of the event carefully before selecting your outfit. Different styles may apply depending on the type of the event as the level of formality may vary - and your choice of mask needs to match the outfit.

Is it a:

- Formal Masquerade Event, such as a wedding?
- Christmas or New Year's Eve party?
- Birthday celebration or prom?
- Halloween or other event that requires more elaborate attire?
- Business function?

FORMAL EVENTS

Formal events will require you to wear a full tuxedo or a dinner suit. If you attend such events regularly, you might already have one, otherwise our advice is to hire one, as this is easier and cheaper than buying one or having one made.

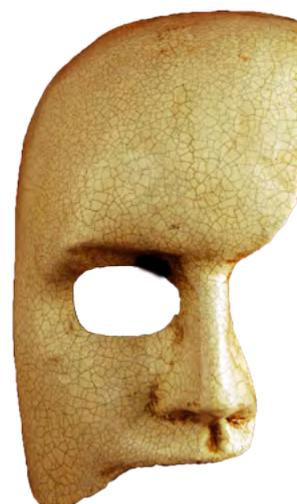
To fit in perfectly with the formal dresscode, you will need a formal shirt, bow tie, cuff links and nice shoes with matching black socks. These items are not nearly as expensive, but are usually also available for hire (except the socks of course).

More recently it has become fashionable to vary the color of the shirt from the traditional white shirt of men's tuxedos, with colors such as deep red or dark blue for example. These can look great, and add a bit of panache to the attire - especially if it is not strictly formal and a more upbeat event.

Matching the masks here gives you 2 choices. Either choose a highly visible mask, one that has clear colors, but is only of a moderately complex design - no bells and whistles - no frills.

The second choice is by far the most popular one - a choice of mask in a classical design and color. Again, go for as simple design, in a plain color such as gold, silver, black etc - or in the same color swatches such as black/gold or blue/white.

If you are wearing a strong colored shirt choose a mask of a similar color, to achieve maximum impact.



BUSINESS EVENTS

Your choice of outfit for a business event will depend on:

- You seniority in the organisation
- How the company is positioning the event
- The purpose of the event

In general, the safest choices are to go more formal. However, check with the organisers if it is not explicitly stated. It is usually more appropriate to wear a formal business suit rather than a tux to a business event.

If you like to fit in with the crowd, choose a white shirt and a tie to go with your mask. Good formal shoes that match your suit (black or brown) and cuff links will be a nice touch, and stand you in good stead.

If you are seeking to stand out a bit more, you can do it through the color of your outfit - or if you are wearing a conservative outfit, you can add to the character of your attire with a slightly more elaborate traditional Venetian mask.



WEDDINGS

Masquerade theme weddings are becoming more and more popular and can add a real dimension of difference to a wedding.

In choosing your mask and outfit for the wedding, be careful not to 'upstage' the bride and groom, as they are the center of attention, so the choice of a less ornate mask for a wedding is usually wise. In saying that, you can still look great by complementing your mask and outfit with your partner's colors, so that you both look great in those wedding photos.

Remember that the bridal couple might have special requests for the event, and your attire.

For examples of masks well suited for couples go to www.italymask.com/shop/couples



COSTUME PARTIES

When attending an event that is clearly a 'Costume event' you have a carte blanche to venture into "Elaborate Land".

For a man, this can mean the combination of a traditional Venetian mask such as a Bauta or a Traditional 'Zanni' mask. To complement this look, wear a traditional 'Tricorn' Venetian hat and cape. This combination is the traditional, extraordinary look - and it takes commitment.



OTHER EVENTS

For other events, have a look at the invitation for instructions on the dress code, or contact the organizer. Don't leave it to chance.

As with earlier directions, unless it is a costume party, a classical simple choice of mask with a classic attire such as a tux or suit, is the safest bet. Use either the color of the mask or your shirt to stand out from the crowd - and if you choose both to be of strong colors, make sure they are the same.



WHAT MASKS ARE FOR ME?

There are a number of categories well suited to men. These include: Baroque, Bauta, Colombina, Joker (Jolly are for women) Leather and Volto. In matters of simplicity, Leather, Colombina, Bauta and Baroque are the simplest, whereas Joker and Volto are more elaborate.

CHOOSING YOUR MASK

MATCH IT

The mask you choose needs to match the event and your attire. Simple masks are Eye Masks (Colombina) or leather masks. If the event is formal, or there will be eating and drinking, a Colombina or 'Eye Mask' is what you should wear.

Remember that if you use strong colors in your outfit, to match them with the mask color. A strong red shirt might go well with either a strong red mask or a black mask.

One step up is the phantom masks, which cover half the face vertically. These may be suited for an elegant masquerade event, but be a bit too much for a business event.

Next step up is Baroque masks. They are more elaborate, and well suited to men. These come strictly in bronze, gold or silver colors.

Third step is Bauta masks, which are strictly for men. They are full face masks, but because of their shape, they give you a bit more breathing room than other full face masks. They allow room for some eating and drinking too and are the ancient traditional mask worn by men in the Venice Carnival.

If you are going to an event which requires more elaborate costumes, the choices are quite wide, as both Joker and half masks are well suited. Joker half masks combine the extravagance of the more complex full face Joker masks which are usually used for decorations, but still allow you to eat and drink as they do not cover the mouth. Wear this at a proper costume event.



To view masks suitable for men, go to www.italymask.com/shop/for-him

GLASSES AND ACCESSORIES

SPECTACLES, TESTICLES, WALLET AND WATCH

If you wear glasses you have some choices. If you can get by without wearing them, we strongly recommend you just wear lenses or tie your glasses around you neck or bring them in your pockets in case you need them, but wear a normal mask.

If you absolutely need to wear your glasses, do not buy a leather mask, or any mask that you tie on for that matter, believing you can wear it over the top of your glasses. It does not look smooth or remotely concealable. Your choice is to get a stick mask.

Stick masks are a bit less convenient as one hand is committed to holding the mask at all times, so you only have one hand to hold your drink and greet people. We have yet to see a stick mask with a cup holder!

However, if you have found a mask you like and it is not mounted on a stick, you can do this yourself. You can purchase Venetian mask sticks from Italy mask in a variety of colors ([here](#)). All you need is some good glue, some dicreet tape, and the certainty that the stick matches.

As for other accessories, if you can access a fob watch or pocket watch, that will look great with the chain displayed.

QUICK FIX: If you absolutely need to wear glasses during the evening, get a **STICK MASK**. It does not look good wearing a mask over or under your glasses.



WOMEN'S GUIDE

MORE GLITTER PLEASE

INTRODUCTION

Wearing masquerade masks to an event can be great fun and very exciting! Every mask has an identity, a kind of personality that can be seen in the details and design.

It can be a good idea to come up with guiding terms or key words; party queen; sultry and curvy; sparkle and shine, etc. You can try to match your own personality with the mask or go in the completely opposite direction – both can be successful! Once you work out the general overview of your desired 'look' or personality, let the rest of the elements of your outfit follow suit.

To view mask especially suited women go to www.italymask.com/shop/for-her

CONSIDER THE EVENT

MATCH ACCORDINGLY

For women, it is most important to be aware of the dress code. You should know this before deciding on your 'look,' as it will ensure you are dressed appropriately and feel comfortable amongst other guests.

Understanding the level of formality is the first step to creating your entire look. If it is black tie or a school prom, you know that the upper limit of formality can include everything from a full length gown and gloves to a horse and carriage ride home! If it is a cocktail event, such as a birthday or work function, then a less-formal approach to the evening's attire is more appropriate. When you discover the dress code, keep it in mind as the look begins to come together.

QUICK FIX: If you are not sure how formal the event will be, go for a **FILIGREE**. They have enough detail to be eye-catching at a formal event but can also be played down with a simple outfit.



CHOOSING YOUR MASK

GO FOR THE EYES

There are so many ways to choose your mask: it could be the right choice for a particular dress you want to wear; it could be a mask in your favorite color; it could be simply that you think it is beautiful.

This is why the use of guiding terms or an over-arching look is helpful, particularly once you know the dress code. There are, however, a few basic guidelines for your mask decision-making:

- *Is the color of the mask right for my skin tone?*

Most women will know whether they suit gold or silver jewelry so simply apply this to the masks. Most will have a base of gold or silver, black or white and in some cases, other tones of metallic colors.

- *Would the shape look right on my face?*

The masks are generally quite flattering on everyone, but in order to find the one that will make you look your best, consider your face shape. Rounder faces should go with more angular masks; faces with stronger lines can go with rounder edged masks.

- *Can I wear this again?*

If you are still having trouble finding just the right mask, look for versatility. This means you can feel good about your purchase in knowing it will be of further value. The most versatile masks feature a pattern or design rather than a strong color or mix of colors.

QUICK FIX: LEATHER masks tend to match anything and will wear very well – you just need to choose between black, gold and silver.



LAYING YOUR MAKE UP

LAYERS OR LAY LOW?

It is important to be guided by the mask. Heavily detailed and colored masks do most of the work for you, so in these cases you do not have to be too elaborate with makeup. However when dealing with mono-colored masks, such as a full gold or silver mask, it is important to inject color through the use of makeup. You can be creative with the makeup but there are general guidelines which go for all masks.

- *The base*

Most masks cover eyebrows and the apples of the cheeks so use contour and illuminator in visible areas of the face to give definition. Try to finish the whole look with an iridescent powder – this will help you to avoid printing your foundation onto the inside of the mask (and if you know it is going to be a big night, choose a **filigree** mask as they are metal so can be wiped clean easily).

- *The eyes*

There is no doubt that masks make a feature of the eyes. Based on your overall 'look' and the mask itself, decide how strong you want to do your eye makeup. The minimum would be eyeliner and mascara. Make a thick, clean line on the upper eyelash line (and lower if desired) followed by lashings of mascara. If you want more, continue the eye liner to parallel the cut-out shape of the eye hole. No matter whether you want to go for a neutral or colored eye shadow, be sure that you place the inside corner and that the hue is the deepest at the outer corner of the eye – this will open and brighten eyes. If finishing with false eyelashes, check the length from inner to outer corner is a little less than exact for the sake of the mask.

- *The Lips*

Lipsticks should always be worn with masks, even in a light shade. A medium rose is the safest color but depending on your 'look' you may want to go bolder! Remember that masquerade balls are often more documented with photos than just any old un-themed party and a stronger lip will finish the whole outfit.



QUICK FIX: Choose a multi-colored COLOMBINA (with or without feather is fine) as after the base, you will only need a) eyeliner, b) mascara, and c) lipstick. For the lipstick, you might even be able to choose a color that is already in the mask, like a strong red or burgundy.

DRESSING UP

Masquerade events place a focus on the mask so there is less pressure when it comes to your outfit. Your dress should aim to complement the beauty and elegance of the mask. Nowadays there is such a range of dresses out there that it can be quite straightforward and reasonably inexpensive to get your hands on exactly the dress you have in mind.

- Present a shape

Your best dress is one that fits you well so consider the shape and cut carefully. The curvature of the masks will follow the line of the face and eyes and so the curvature of the dress as it holds or falls down the body becomes highlighted when wearing a mask. Mask-wearing traditions have an essence of mystery and intrigue, so the body plays a key role in communication – consider the curvature of the mask and put your best body shape forward.

- Consider your fabric

Because of the formality of the masks, try not to wear a plain or stretch cotton fabric. Silk, satin, brocade, lace, tulle, velvet, something with special event written all over it, these are your go-to fabrics. Venetian mask makers carefully consider the texture of their masks – whether it has glitter in mass or in a swirl; whether the swirl is finished with a pearl or a crystal; whether the detailing results in an image or just a motif repetition. So these textures should be echoed in the dress. A **macramé lace** colombina needs to be paired with a heavy lace or strong brocade motif in the dress, not a micro lace or floral/paisley soft brocade fabric dress.



COLOR COMBINATIONS

The next most obvious question would be: Does this dress match my mask? There are a couple of ways to treat “matching” queries and these are primarily dependent on color.

- Same Color?

Be careful when your mask is the same color as your dress. Make sure there is some detail on the dress or the mask to break up the mass of color. Accessories can always be used for extra accents. And if you choose to wear the same color, ensure the shades of the dress and the mask match.

- Different Color?

Consider your base colour, then use the supplementary colors for matching purposes. The mask that you see to the right has a base of gold, so it is best not to wear a gold dress. Instead look for a strong blue, green or orange to match one of the supplementary colours as shown.



- *Too Many Colors?*

If you have your heart set on a particular dress which has a lot of colors, a very particular texture, or is a bit avant garde, your mask is clearly going to play a less prominent role; nevertheless it will be in a relationship with the dress once you put it on. The best way to match up with a tricky dress is to choose a mask with a subtle texture and little variation, leather masks, the metallic gold or silver colombinas or one of the more simple metal filigree pattern masks.

QUICK FIX: What's your favourite colour? Let's say blue. So, one blue mask + one black dress = one matching combination. And there is still room for accessories!

GLASSES & ACCESSORIES

Women have a lot of choice in accessories and the world is your oyster! If there is ever an opportunity to over-do accessories, it is a masquerade ball. So have some fun with it, but as usual, ensure that it suits the personality and essence of the mask, make up and dress... in other words the 'look' you have been putting together bit by bit. There are many options in accessories for women at formal events:

- *To Have and to Hold*

Bag options start and end with the clutch bag. But have a look around – clutch bags can take many appearances. Only have a strap when it is necessary for convenience, as a strapless clutch bag will look more demure. You can choose the clutch for its similarity to the mask ie. You find diamantes on the mask and on your clutch. Consider the size for how prominent it will be, ie. a small clutch bag has less bearing on the outfit, a large clutch bag must match the outfit more intimately. A clutch can also present the opportunity for the injection of color. An eye-catching outfit often plays with color relationships, so another color can be introduced by the clutch; but try to limit this to 3 prominent colors.

- *Razzle Dazzle'em*

Jewelry, much like dresses, has become very easy to access and at low cost. Replica pearls and diamantes will stand the test of one night out with sparkle and shine (they may not last much longer afterwards...) Go glitzy if your look is glitzy – micro diamante necklace and matching drop earrings; go sultry if your look is sultry – black chandelier earrings with a black bead or ribbon necklace; go regal if your look is regal – three strings of pearls and a pearl bracelet.



- *Best Foot Forward*

A long dress will eliminate a challenge in deciding on shoes as they will not be seen. Shoes are one of the last things to consider so scale them to the rest of the outfit: if you have put together quite an elaborate look, keep it simple with the shoes, and if your outfit is lacking variation, play around with the outfit by choosing an interesting shoe (if you are in a shorter dress)

- *Finishing Touches*

Other accessories are optional. There is the possibility of wearing gloves, hats, coats and fur stoles, silk shoulder wraps, boleros, belts and more. As you might have guessed, these need to align with the 'look' – your look! The guiding terms can come in handy here. Does a fur stole look right on a glamour queen? Probably. Does a long black glove look good with 'sweet and fun'? Probably not.



QUICK FIX: The quick fix for accessories is black. Black mask, black shoes, black bag black bolero (if its cold) etc. But make sure your dress is a bright color in this case.

WEARING GLASSES

Unfortunately, masks do not sit comfortably on glasses. For those with glasses, your best option is to wear contact lenses, which nowadays can be cheaper for use on just one day or night. You could also choose a stick mask which is held up to the face.

If this is your choice, remember that one of your hands will be occupied for the entire evening, as well as moving between the face and away. The risk here is that you end up looking like you don't in fact have a mask and that you are not in fact at a masquerade ball. But it can be a convenient option for glasses wearers.

QUICK FIX: If you already have your heart set on a mask which is not a stick mask, note that it is possible to add a Venetian mask stick yourself, as these are sold separately. All you need is some good glue, a bit of discreet tape and the certainty that the stick matches. You can buy them [here](#).



HAIR

In most evening events, the hair options are vast and intricate. For masquerade events, the options are more limited and should have the purpose of featuring the mask. Creativity is welcome but there are a few key courses of action:

- Fringe Benefits:

Masks look best on a clear face, so if you have a fringe, the best option is to pull it back or to the sides. Short blunt fringes can be worn down but consider a side sweep or a cute hair pin to eliminate contact between the fringe and the mask. A slight quiff at the center front can direct people's attention towards the elegance of the mask.

- The Long and Short:

The mask's ribbons are tied up at the back of the head. If you are choosing to wear your hair down for the event, it is best to pull the upper hair from the crown together with pins or an invisible hair-tie and just leave the lower part to fall onto the shoulders. Short hair should fall comfortably under the ribbons but if you have long straight hair, consider curling it with a round barrel tong or straighteners as the mask tends to appear more glamorous with a bit of volume. See our video on how easy it is to tie your mask [here](#).

- Up-do or up-don't?

Up-dos are ultimate for formal occasions. If you are considering going to a salon for an up-do, be sure to bring the mask with you as your hairdresser can use this for inspiration. If you are giving it a go yourself, one option can be to place the hair up bit by bit in sections and conceal the ribbon inside. A looser up-do is a more natural combination with the mask so styles like softly held buns (pre-curled) and relaxed French rolls will create cohesion within the entire head area – and make a great feature of your chosen earrings!

QUICK FIX: Section the top half of the hair into 3 areas – the two sides and the top. Twist each section and pull them together in the center at the back. Thicken and soften the lower part simply with your fingers and finish with the mask. Voila!



HELP US IMPROVE THIS STYLE GUIDE

We would love to hear your thoughts on this guide; have we given you information you already knew or did you find this information valuable?

Your opinion on what you would like to see in here, and what you wouldn't, is most welcome. Send us an email, a post-card or carrier pigeon, and we promise to return it.

Thank you for reading.

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