



A BRIEF
HISTORY
of
WIGS

The who, what and wearing of wigs

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*HAIR TODAY, GONE TOMORROW.
WIGS HAVE BEEN A BEAUTY STAPLE
THROUGHOUT THE AGES. HERE'S WHY.*

Rooted in nobility

Crack open the tomb of any ancient Egyptian royal or noble, and you'll find the owner's prized wig. These pieces indicated rank and sex appeal and were off-limits to lower classes. Later, France's King Louis XIV turned to wigs as a solution for balding, bringing large powdered wigs into fashion across Europe.

The rest is drag

Wigs are a must-have in the drag community, which has its roots in nightclubs in the mid-1900s. Drag wigs are often intricately constructed, colorful and supersized to call attention to the performer's onstage personality.

"It was just what [drag queens] did. Now it's evolved, and you see people applying those [wig-making] techniques to everyday wear," says Isaac Davidson, who has created wigs for "RuPaul's Drag Race" alums, SIA, Debbie Harry and more.

The celebrity effect

The secret to picture-perfect red carpet hair: wigs. A-listers have always embraced hair pieces and often turn to them to bring their public personas to life. "When I suggest a wig to a celebrity, I try to create a hairstyle that


emphasizes their real character. But sometimes they are not afraid to turn into totally different characters," says Akki Shirakawa, whose clients include Lady Gaga and Brooke Candy. Today, stars use wigs not just to change up their onstage looks, but also to make a splash on the red carpet.

A divisive do

The black community has a long and controversial relationship with wigs. Seen by some as fun while also as a way to protect the health of their natural hair, others view wigs as an attempt to conform to a straight-haired beauty ideal. One thing is for sure: Black women have helped move wig culture forward. Icons paved the way, starting with Diana Ross and her beehive in the 1960s and continuing today with Beyoncé sporting the lace-front style.

Everyday wear

Manufacturing improvements mean that wigs today are cheaper than ever to purchase while also more realistic, giving more and more people the chance to reimagine their hair. The trend will likely only continue to grow, partly thanks to social media, which has given wig-wearers a platform to share tutorials and reviews and build community.



**WIGS HELP THEIR
WEARERS LIVE OUT
THEIR FANTASIES**