

CLOSET MANIAC

LIVING IN DUBAI MAKES CONQUERING THE CAPSULE WARDROBE EVEN HARDER, SAYS KERRY MCDERMOTT

Creating a functioning capsule wardrobe, like writing a hit screenplay, befriending Taylor Swift, or renovating a rustic French gîte, is one of my ultimate life goals. It is also, I am beginning to fear, an impossible dream.

It's partially my fault – instead of crisp white shirts, cashmere and designer denim, I gravitate mostly towards Breton stripes, grey marl, things a six-year-old girl might wear (no one was happier than me about the return of dungarees), and things I plain can't afford – but lately I've decided I can lay the lion's share of the blame at Dubai's door. Because what use is the perfect leather jacket when it's 40°C? And you'll be ready to rip off all that expensive cashmere, Hulk-style, once humidity levels top 80 per cent. In the UAE, you might as well take the conventional capsule wardrobe rules and throw them out of the window. Only the window would be sealed shut. Because it's so hot.

Our unique desert home requires a whole new set of guidelines, which is why, in flagrant defiance of my evident lack of expertise in this area, I've identified a few key components in a UAE-specific capsule wardrobe:

Sunglasses (multiple pairs)

If like me, you're from the UK, you're probably innately suspicious of sunglasses. Britain's three days of sunshine per year meant scrabbling in a drawer for the Ray Bans you bought for Ibiza the previous summer. Also whipping them off the second you hit shade, lest anybody think you were... you know, a bit up yourself.

In Dubai, they're essential, and not just because of the squint factor. The constant glare means we're effectively living our lives in HD – those oversized Prada frames will pay for themselves on Saturday mornings.

Swimwear (and plenty of it)

Far from being an annual concern come holiday time, bikinis and all associated accoutrements are a near daily necessity in Dubai, so the successful capsule wardrobe demands a substantial swimwear collection. From water parks (one-piece recommended) to beach days to boat trips, not only will you be bikini clad on the reg here, chances are you'll be tagged on social media in all your glory too. Too many repeat wears just won't do.

Showstopper gowns

Statement dresses are not a staple of the traditional capsule wardrobe, which is



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all about getting maximum use out of a relatively minimal collection. And how many opportunities are you going to get to wear that floor-length backless number, really? Well, in Dubai, probably quite a few.

Cocktail dresses on a Monday, skyscraper heels for a mall trawl, trophy bags dangling from trollies in the Spinneys aisle... none of this merits so much as a second glance in the Sandpit. Here, more is more and there's no such thing as overdressed, so embrace it. Buy that dream dress you spied on Net-a-Porter, safe in the knowledge you won't have to wait for someone to get engaged

for a chance to actually wear it. **Coat** (lined, ideally woollen)

As discussed, it's boiling. But at least one coat is vital for providing protection against excessive AC. Research recently revealed that the design of office air conditioning systems is based on the resting metabolic rate of a 40-year-old man – vindication for women here in the UAE, who are forced to do battle with their male colleagues over the thermostat all year round. As if the gender pay gap weren't enough to contend with.

So, to sum up: bikinis, ball gowns, shades and shearling. Way more fun than a white shirt. ■

WHAT'S IN YOUR #DUBAICAPSULEWARDROBE?
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