

What To Wear On Your Next Trip To Europe

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Catherine Hiriart
Ivan N. Miranda

Meet the woman who can help you choose the travel attire that will make you feel comfortable and confident on your next trip to Europe: Catherine Hiriart is better known to her clients as “Catherine H,” the name of her boutiques in Katonah, New York and Westport, Connecticut.

This successful entrepreneur has been able to attract a loyal following beyond the geographic boundaries of those leafy towns because of her ability to curate clothes and accessories that women really want to wear. In addition, she and her team provide personal service (an art that seems on the verge of retail extinction) that enables fashion-forward women to make good choices.

About Catherine H: Born into fashion

“Raised in the Basque region of France, I grew up surrounded by elegant women starting

with my grandmother,” says Catherine. My aunts worked in high fashion and were always well put together and able to use color in a way that flattered them. They also knew how to complete a look with just the right accessory.”

Her mother was a major influence, too, nurturing Catherine’s sense of style and lifelong passion for fashion: She noticed that her mom had an uncanny ability to modernize classics without minimizing their elegance or timelessness.

After raising her own children in the U.S., Catherine opened a fitness studio in Connecticut but found herself perpetually searching for sustainable clothing that combined comfort and fit with the European elegance to which she was accustomed.



Catherine H in Westport, Connecticut
Ivan N. Miranda

When she couldn’t find any shops in her area that offered that mix, she recognized a niche waiting to be filled and bravely changed career directions. She launched her first boutique in Milford, Connecticut in 2008, followed by the Katonah location in 2011, and then a men’s store in the same town in 2015. Her latest outpost, the store in Westport, opened in July 2019. Not only does Catherine dress working women and suburban moms but also their 20-something daughters and a number of celebrities who live in the region.

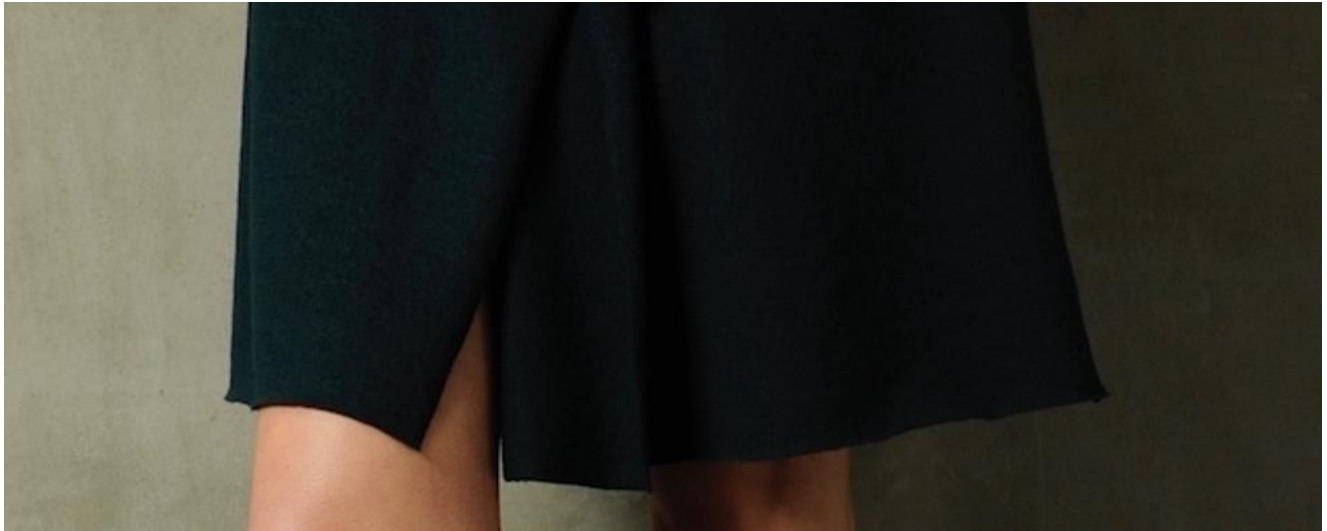
Forbes.com spoke to Catherine to ask her advice about composing a wardrobe for a spring or fall

trip to Europe:

What type of outfit would you suggest for a spring or fall trip to Europe?

Catherine H: We love the chic, simple lines and luxury fabrics used by Hamburg-based designer, [Katharina Hovman](#). She makes a very light merino wool coat that's unlined; essentially, it is like wearing a wrap with sleeves and it can even be worn over a little black dress on a chilly evening.





A merino wool coat by Katharina Hovman
Katharina Hovman

Another jacket by the same designer that's a great choice for a long-haul flight, when the cabin temperature can drop, is shown in the photo below.



Easy to wear and easy to pack
Marsha L. Miranda

I would pair the jacket with a 100% cotton top and bottom from designer [GRP1](#). These beautiful, two-ply cotton pieces travel well and don't stretch out when sitting on a plane for hours. Manufactured in Los Angeles, the fabrics are uber-convenient for travel because they're washable and fast-drying. The pieces are thoughtfully designed, versatile (in terms of suitability for pairing with either casual or dressy pieces) and lightweight, so they don't add weight or bulk to a suitcase.

A colorful scarf helps complete the outfit. This one in the photo above is by [Suzi Roher](#), a Canadian accessory designer whose scarves are inspired by travel, art and culture: She describes them as a marriage between fashion and art. They come in limited-editions that are digitally printed in Italy.

A pair of leather [Softinos](#) sneakers are great, too! Made in Portugal, the buttery soft leather makes them feel like slippers. The rubber soles are flexible, ensuring comfort at the airport or at your destination.



Comfy Softinos sneakers made of a buttery leather
Softinos

What about your purse?

CH: I carry a small cross-shoulder wallet/purse by [Calleen Cordero](#) (also shown) that becomes a clutch for fine dining. I also bring a lightweight cross-body leather bag that's big enough for travel with but light enough to carry over my shoulder while walking around a

city.

What else is on your packing list for a 5- to 7-day trip?

CH: Here are a few suggestions:

- A pair of nice, clean-looking jeans
- A pair of leggings, pants or a skirt
- A classic black dress that can pack easily and doesn't wrinkle (I especially favor one by [Sarah Pacini](#))
- A few long and short sleeve tees, and
- A tank top and a tunic for the leggings.

By the way, Katharina Hoffman also makes a perfect shirt for travel. It can be worn with jeans or to a black-tie event. It is lightweight, packable, can be rinsed out, and air dries in no time. Finally, another travel essential is a light and very soft sweater that can be used either layering or worn as a scarf.



Some take-along suggestions

Marsha L. Miranda

In addition to my Softinos, which are stylish and comfortable for walking, I pack a nice pair of heels or dress shoes for evenings.

Since you are a frequent traveler, any packing advice to share?

CH: Limiting myself to a 27" suitcase helps me avoid overpacking, I consider how many days I'll be away, lay clothes out and start coordinating outfits. As I look at them, I edit (remove) pieces that are too similar and pack the ones I love at the moment. Once you do that, narrowing down "keepers" becomes simple.

Also, when curating a seasonal collection for your boutiques, what do you look for?

CH: I consider the range of women that come into my shops: Of course, they are my inspiration. Each season, I compose a collection by selecting timeless pieces from designers that we are able to mix and match.

I don't follow trends. Rather, I look for high quality-soft, natural fabrics, and original designs, and I always consider sustainability and the process by which our garments are manufactured.

What are your goals for the women you dress?

CH: My goal is to help each client make the best selections from the seasonal collection I've curated. The first step is finding a garment that's the right shape for her body, one that not only will make her feel good but, more importantly, will allow her to feel like herself.

Then, we work on mixing and matching the pieces, demonstrating how she can change the look of an outfit with different accessories, helping her look at the pieces creatively so she can get more wear out of each item.

Note: This conversation has been lightly edited and condensed for clarity.

For more information, including store locations, see the [Catherine H. website](#).