

*The A to Z Guide to*

**FRENCH  
CHIC**

*Marie-Anne Lecoœur*



# The A to Z Guide to French Chic

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by

Marie-Anne Lecoœur

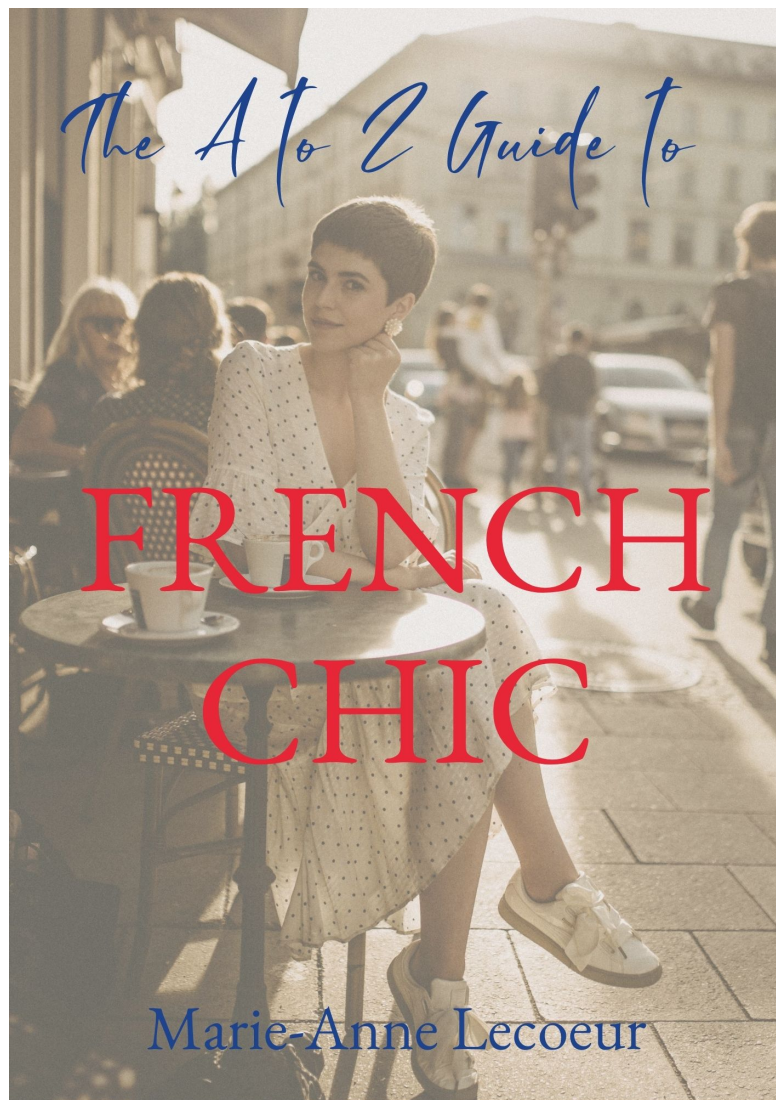


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*“Fashion changes, but style endures.”*

*Coco Chanel*

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Born and raised in France, and now back living in my beloved Normandie, I have been steeped in French Style and French Chic all of my life. Although the essence of this manner of dressing and behaving is very simple, it is still very hard to define, let alone put into practice.

I would define this style as classics that never go out of fashion, yet do not follow fashion. It embraces simple lines and great cuts. It is about understatement and simplicity. But, and this is most important, it is about high standards, not just of dress but also of behaviour, even if that appears to be no longer the norm.

Just dressing the outer woman does not make what you are wearing French Chic, no more than putting on a kilt makes you Scottish. Showing respect to yourself and others is an essential part of French Chic.

It is so much more than clothes. Above all, it is about you.

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French Chic requires constant attention until it becomes a part of you. Once achieved however, it is immediately apparent. It is what gives French women their well earned reputation for effortless chic. This certain 'je ne sais quoi' attracts women worldwide to emulate this style.

My dearest wish is to help women who desire to embrace French Chic to achieve it. The road maybe hard, it may require consistent effort, but the results are worth it. And, I make the transformation simple.

As the founder of [The French Chic Academy](#) and author of two Amazon best-sellers '[How to be Chic and Elegant: Tips from a French Woman](#)' and '[The Tidy Closet](#)', I would like to introduce you gently to French Chic with this FREE A to Z.

There is so much more to French Chic than a list of 26 points but this guide is certainly enough to get you on the right track. Throughout this guide, I give you links to even further free information on my website and, occasionally, my courses which will deepen your understanding and practice of French Chic.

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## A

### Age

As in ‘dressing your age’. Please don’t get me wrong. I don’t advocate that you start dressing like an old aged pensioner on your 65th birthday. Nor should you stop wearing bikinis in your thirties. As in all things French Chic, common sense is the key. You should not dress too old for your age and neither should you dress too young. Refrain from borrowing clothes from your fifteen-year old daughter. Enjoy your own classic, elegant, classier garments instead. You will look sooo much better for it. Although revamping your grand-mère’s vintage Chanel suit could be a definite hit.

One of the essentials of French Chic is to look timeless and hence ageless. As the lead quote from Coco Chanel says ‘Fashion changes but style endures’. By being stylish rather than fashionable, people will find it hard to guess your true age.

My course here, [Look 10 Years Younger](#) , will give you an in depth knowledge of how to dress and look younger the French Chic way.

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## **B**

### **Bra**

French women are renowned for their love of exquisite lingerie. We love matching sets, rather than mis-matched odds and ends. If any piece gets frayed or greyed then it is definitely adieu.

Luxurious lingerie brings a spring to your step, makes you feel special and sexy. Bras are especially important, in order to give comfort and a smooth foundation for your clothes. A bust that hangs low will add at least a decade to your silhouette. Getting measured for a bra should happen regularly, especially after weight loss or weight gain.

[Minimise a Big Bust](#) is my course that will show you how to manage and visually reduce the size of your bust so that you, not “they”, dominate your outfits and your style.

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## C

### **Coco Chanel**

Without Madame Chanel, French Chic would not be what it is. I am well known for my admiration for La Grande Dame de La Mode. Coco Chanel had a sartorial vision that is still alive today in the streets, not only of Paris but the whole world. Who doesn't love a little black dress, a classic black jacket or a stylish string of pearls?

With the above in mind, you may agree that Coco Chanel is the very foundation of modern French Chic.

Coco Chanel knew how to dress for her Petite size so that her clothes didn't overwhelm her silhouette. My [French Chic Petite](#) course teaches you the principles that La Grande Dame de la Mode used herself.



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## D

### Declutter

As I mention often in my [Youtube videos](#), the ‘Pareto or 80 / 20 principle’ works in mostly everything. It is a pretty safe bet, therefore, to conclude that you wear 20% of your clothes 80% of the time. Of course, this means that 80% of your clothes are hardly ever worn. If this rings true for you, it is high time to declutter, madame. Tout de suite. Remove all unwanted, unworn garments, shoes and accessories too. Get rid of them either by giving them away, selling them or donating them to charity.

What is left after decluttering should only be what you love and which looks great on you. No ifs, no buts. Chic women know that having only select, high quality pieces makes putting together an outfit très facile.

[The Tidy Closet](#) gives all the motivation and know-how you’ll ever need for your next declutter session.

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## **E**

### **Elegance**

Chic and elegance go hand in hand, like lovers walking in the park. Elegance is the attitude of grace and poise. Raising your standards in how you present yourself is part of looking and being chic, both in the way you dress and how you behave.

Want more? My Amazon number one best seller '[How to be Chic and Elegant, Tips from a French Woman](#)' gives you many of the dos and don'ts, tips and how to's.

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## **F**

### **Full Length Mirror**

A full-length mirror is a must in every chic woman's home. The top half of your outfit may look great in the bathroom mirror. However, once you have a full view of your whole ensemble, it may be a different story altogether. A full length mirror is the only way to ensure you look your best from head to toe before setting out.

[Video: Your Indispensable Style Accessory](#)

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## G

### **Generous Busts**

If you are blessed with a large embonpoint, I suggest wearing tops that are not too revealing. In French Chic, busts are usually discreet and not the sole focal point. Remember that your breasts are not the sum total of who you are. You are so much more. One of the secrets that French women know is that, by playing down your physical sexuality, your inner sexiness is vastly increased. Blatant is brash but alluding is alluring.

[French Chic Plus Size](#) is an amazing course for my Plus Size French Chic

Ladies full of tips and advice as well as resources to acquire the French Chic look. French Chic is a way of being: it is for every woman of every shape and size and not the sole preserve of gamine, runway models.

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## **H**

### **Hair**

Keeping your hair in good condition is part of the foundation of French Chic.

Get your hair cut regularly to avoid split ends. A short but healthy-looking hairstyle looks more chic than long hair with split ends. Have your colour refreshed, especially at the roots. Don't spoil your gorgeous locks with hair extensions that can damage your scalp and hair. Use what you have naturally to your best advantage.

Your hair is your crowning glory. Look after it well.

[Video: French Women's Hairstyles - Over 40](#)



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## I

### **Impulse Buy**

You may agree that your impulse buys, that seemed genius at the time, prove themselves to be a waste of money. “Buy in haste, repent at leisure”, they say.

This is never so true as for clothing and accessories. Especially if you go shopping without a list of what you need. The result is that you buy pieces that don't fit your style or are unwearable with anything else that you have.

[Shopping like Chic French women](#) can teach you how to avoid buying on impulse and will introduce you to the Secrets of how we French Women fill our wardrobes with only the very best.

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## **J**

### **Jeggings**

Jeggings are thin, tight leggings in a floral, cosmos or denim-like print, even with pretend pockets. Jeggings are, in my view, a worse invention than leggings, if that is possible. Women look as if they are going out wearing only tights, or pantyhose. French Chic they are not. If you own a pair of these, purge your closet of this monstrosity. Immédiatement.

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## **K**

### **KISS**

KISS as in Keep It Simple Sister. This is one of my most popular French Chic tips of all time! If you are into complicating everything, then please look away now. The truth is, if you are not into keeping it simple, you certainly won't embrace French Chic.

French Chic is really all about simplicity. Simplicity of style, design, colour, print AND approach. Outfits are always put together simply. If you understand this, you know the "secret" to French Chic. There is beauty in simplicity. You notice the person beneath the clothes. You make your own appearance. You stand out for you, the woman, not just for your clothes.

For accessories, add a scarf. For colour, add a pop of red. For jewellery, add pearls. That is it. So ladies, KISS to your heart's content!

[The French Chic Academy](#) is the ultimate, extensive guide to French Chic, containing over 20 courses on every aspect of authentic French Chic.

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## L

### **Less is More**

‘Less is more’ helps to reinforce the point I made above with KISS. Keep it simple; think less is more. Adding this, that and the other only serves to complicate your look. This will mean that you’ve probably spent ages getting ready. French Chic is about looking great without seeming as if you tried too hard. So, remove one bracelet or two. Tone down your makeup, especially for daytime. Stick to no more than three colours in your outfit. More is not more.

[Video: 5 Style Mistakes French Women Never Do](#)

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## **M**

### **Maintenance**

Maintenance of yourself, your clothes and accessories shows that you care and love yourself. It is a practice chic French women cultivate from an early age.

It shows respect for what you own. Look after yourself, physically, intellectually and spiritually. Look after your clothes and accessories. Work from the inside out by putting yourself first, then your belongings. Above all, treat yourself well by raising your standards in everything. Always keep yourself in high regard. Buying quality pieces will then become easier for you. You deserve the best.

[Video: How French Women Care For Cashmere & Wool Sweaters](#)



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## N

### Navy

The colour navy is prominent in French Chic. You will find it everywhere, in every chic quartier de Paris, on every French woman. When you know French people, you know that we love navy.

In style, navy is kinder to the complexion than black. It is dark, therefore complimentary, but not so dark as to be dreary. We love the combination of navy and white. You can see this in our classic striped “marinière”, also called Breton top by people outside France.

[Wear Colours Like a French Woman](#) is the ultimate Masterclass in wearing the 7 timeless French Chic colours. With over 100 styles boards it will be easy to create your very own colour-perfect French Chic outfits.

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## O

### **Organised Closet**

French women know this: in order to always find something to wear, you need an organised closet. If all your clothes are crushed against each other in a messy closet, they will get damaged quickly. They will also be unappealing, to say the least. It will be nigh on impossible to distinguish what is worth wearing and what is not. You will forget what you own, as many garments will be pushed to the bottom or the back of your closet. How can you hope to look chic and elegant in this situation? So, please get organised, get tidy, get streamlined. Your style will improve tremendously as a result.

In [The Tidy Closet](#), you'll get all the help you need to achieve a closet you can be proud of.

[Video: This French Woman's Home Studio Tour - Clothes & Accessories](#)

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## P

### Prints

As in all things French Chic, simplicity and streamlining are key. Prints are no exception. Heavy, busy prints will turn you into a sofa. Simple, subtle prints will bring you to the fore.

Beware of animal prints. Use them sparingly, on only one small, discreet piece, such as a belt, scarf or shoes. Any more than that would be over-kill.

[Wear Prints Like a French Woman](#) will help you navigate the minefield of wearing prints. Learn all the elegant secrets we French Women understand to make you, not your outfit, the centre of attention.

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## Q

### **Quality not Quantity**

Chic French women prefer to own a few select pieces of great quality and style, over a large quantity of cheaply made clothes. Good quality does not have to equate with ultra expensive or designer labels. Cultivating an eye and feel for quality will pay dividends.

Is the garment made of natural fabric? This is the main question to ask yourself before investing good money in clothes. This is especially important for the hottest and coldest seasons. You want to wear wool or cashmere in winter, cotton or silk in summer.

Think quality.

[Video: My Top 10 Tips To Choose Quality Clothes](#)

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## **R**

### **Role Model**

Take inspiration from well-known, well dressed women for how to wear the right combination of chic clothes. Think Inès de la Fressange, Audrey Tautou and Juliette Binoche.

French Chic is a classic with longevity. Even long-gone style icons can be an inspiration to you. Think Coco Chanel, bien sûr. They don't even have to be French. Think Audrey Hepburn and Jackie O.

[A Touch of Class-ic](#) will teach you how to be Classy in every sense of the word. Fill your wardrobe with class and you can't help but elevate your style.



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## S

### Shapes

Knowing your body shape is vital for great style. Once again French Chic keeps it simple. The five main body shapes are apple, hourglass, inverted triangle, pear and rectangle.

The following is a simple explanation of body shapes. Click the linked header of each section to get more information on my Body Shape Masterclasses created for each shape and that reveal the style objectives to keep in mind:

#### [Apple](#)

You are round in the middle with comparatively slim arms and legs and smaller breasts.

#### [Hourglass](#)

Your upper body and lower body are in proportion, with curves in the bust and bottom areas and a well-defined waist.

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## Inverted Triangle

You are wider at the shoulders and torso and smaller at your hips and thighs.

## Pear

You are slimmer on top with a wider lower body.

## Rectangle

You are fairly straight up and down, with hardly any waist definition.

Investing in your [body shape ecourse](#) will give you an extensive guide to your own body shape. It will show you how to emphasise your best assets and conceal your least favourite, and of course how to dress flatteringly for your silhouette.

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## T

### Trends

I refer you to the Coco Chanel quote at the beginning of this guide that says “Fashion changes but style endures”.

The essence of French Chic is that it is based on classics. This style does not follow trends. The advantages to this are many. It's economical. You can relax knowing your classics will see you through another ‘fickle fashion’ season. No need to traipse up and down the high street or in and out of shopping malls looking for trendy pieces, that will hardly be worn. You can safely rely on your classic and good quality clothes that will always look great on you. With classics, you are always prepared for anything.

By following trends, aren't you essentially lagging behind and always trying to catch up?

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## U

### **Underwear**

The next thing after determining your body shape (see S above) is to wear the right underwear. Lingerie is the foundation on which to base your French Chic style. Choose every piece wisely in order to give a smooth look to your outfit.

If you need extra help to contain your voluptuous curves, investing in shapewear is a good idea.

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## V

### **Vulgarity**

Everywhere we look in the media, we notice vulgarity. Whether in music, movies, TV, or celebrities themselves, vulgarity is the order of the day. This is foisted upon us, whether we like it or not. This dulls our senses and lowers our standards of decency.

But please think about it. Don't you agree that all this vulgarity not only shows disrespect to the viewer but also to the person being vulgar?

The refreshing thing about French Chic is that we don't do vulgarity. We do elegance, good manners and poise. French Chic is about what you wear of course, but also about you as a person. How you conduct yourself is important. Raise your standards. Respect yourself. Show you care.

In need of a style upgrade? [The French Chic Daily](#) subscription will send you an email a day on different aspects of French Chic for a whole year, so that you can remain chic and elegant.

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## W

### Weight

French women do not eat to excess. We do not eat quickly and in large amounts in one sitting. We prefer to savour our food. We take time to savour and appreciate the taste of our food. We enjoy and are mindful of every delicious mouthful. This way, we tend to eat less. Our predilection is for quality ingredients that our taste buds linger on.

Sometimes, we put on a couple of pounds, due to celebrations or 'our vacances'. We prefer to nip this weight gain in the bud. This way, we are more likely to succeed with our little 'régime'. So we make little adjustments here and there to our daily eating habits, instead of cutting out whole food groups. We may opt for instance to eat only one slice of baguette for lunch instead of two. We choose between 'un morceau de fromage' or 'un petit dessert'. This only has to be for a week or two until the extra weight is gone.

[Eat Like a French Woman: The No-Diet Diet](#) is my bestselling course and community group. Nowhere else will you get so much information and support on how we French Women “Don’t Get Fat”! Redefine your relationship with food the loving way.

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**X**

**XOXO**

As we saw previously, self-respect is essential to French Chic. If you don't show yourself love and self-respect, you will not take care of your appearance. This will show in what you wear and how you wear it.

So, please look at yourself in your full-length mirror. Now, tell yourself: I love you. Believe it or not, this little exercise may be difficult for some of you.

There may be a part of you that you don't fully love or accept. Please try again until you can say 'I love you' to every part of your reflection and mean it.

XOXO here is for love. Give yourself plenty.

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## Y

### Yoga

I like yoga. I also enjoy horse-riding and swimming. What I don't have a penchant for is wearing yoga pants throughout the day. I only wear these on my way to and from yoga classes. Many of you may disagree with me on this point, I know. You will say "but they are so comfortable to wear all day long and everywhere I go". Well, so are my jodhpurs and bikinis but I don't wear these other than for the activities they were made for.

If you truly follow French Chic, you will agree that wearing sports clothing or accessories other than for these activities is a non-non. A bit harsh, sorry my lovely. You can be comfortable in clothes that show you off too.

Raise your standards. This bears repeating ... often!



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## **Z**

### **Zebra**

As you read earlier, stripes, particularly navy on a white background or white on navy, are beloved by the French. Zebra stripes, however, are not so cherished. I refer you to the letter ‘P for Prints’ of this guide.

As French Chic favours subtlety to anything too obvious, keeping zebra stripes to a small area of your outfit will indicate your understanding of this style.

As always, less is more.

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## **Conclusion**

There is so much more to say on French Chic than outlined above; however this guide will give you a taster for it. The main principles of French Chic to remember are simplicity, beauty and elegance. This is a style that loves classics, quality and understatement. As you have discovered it is so much more than little black dresses and flat pumps or wearing a beret and saying “Oh là là”.

I hope you enjoyed reading this A to Z guide. If you love French Chic, or would like to find out more, please refer to my books, [programs](#) and [website](#) for authentic French Chic advice from a French Woman living in France.

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*"Elegance is usually confused with superficiality, fashion, lack of depth. This is a serious mistake: human beings need to have elegance in their actions and in their posture because this word is synonymous with good taste, amiability, equilibrium and harmony."*

*Paulo Coelho*

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Marie-Anne Lecoeur

Marie-Anne Lecoeur is the French author of five books on French Chic. Her books include “How to be Chic & Elegant” (Amazon No1 Best-seller), “How to Be Chic & Elegant: Plus Size” and “How to Be Chic & Elegant: Pear Shape”.

She added to her répertoire of self-help books with her two organisational titles related to French Chic, namely “The Tidy Closet” (Amazon No1 Best-seller) and “The Tidy Kitchen”.

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Born and raised in France, Marie-Anne has grown up among chic French women and learned about chic and elegance from a young age. This first-hand education, practice and exposure gave her the essential foundation for her high level of expertise in French Chic.

She is one of a very few French authors writing about French Chic for English-speaking women.

Marie-Anne loves helping women just like you to discover the style secrets of French Chic. She gives her readers the skills to choose the right clothes for their body shape. Above all, she shares her in-depth knowledge of French Chic, revealing her passion for simplicity and elegance.

She coaches women on how to raise their style standards and upgrade their lives, even [how they eat](#), via her many ecourses. She created one exclusive program that teaches you how to think, shop and dress like a chic French woman: “[The French Chic Academy](#)”

Marie-Anne is a member of the Federation of Image Professionals International and lives in a sweet 300-year old stone cottage in Normandie, France.

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