

Afghanistan Clothing

Traditional Afghanistan [clothing](#) is, and has always been, unique with beautiful Afghani designs and colors.

The Style of Afghanistan Clothing during the king Zahir Shah government (in the 1950s) was much like western clothing during that time. When it was in fashion in the west, women in the capital city of Kabul were also wearing short sleeve shirts and mini skirts!

Mens traditional clothing included several [different styles](#) of coats, hats and dress. I remember, my uncle had a nice and warm lamb skin coat which was fully lined in lamb skin (even in the arms) and the cuffs. The opening was trimmed with the softest long sheep or goat hair for [decoration](#). It was a really warm garment for the cold winter of mountainous Afghanistan. There was embroidery around the body of the coat and the sleeves.

These coats were built to last for a long time and had a very antique looking. It was fully hand stitched throughout and is also embroidered in purple and yellow silk thread in a psychedelic pattern on the front and the back. It was a really looking nice when it was worn with a *Qarakul* hat which is also made out of lamb skin. Qarakul is a unique flat able hat made of special lamb skin which most people used to wear. It was really popular back in 60s and 70s among Afghans, and it was considered as part of men's clothing. Although wearing this particular hat is still common among some Afghans including the president "Hamid Karzai", it has become more expensive than other regular style hats due to lack of [investment](#) in this business.

In Afghanistan, cotton and wool are the main materials used for dressing. Silk has also have its consumers and is mostly used in clothing and crafts including carpets, or rugs but of course it is more expensive.

During the Taliban regime women had to wear long dress with a trouser as well as a [Burqa](#) (Chadari) on top to cover them from [the head](#) to the ankle.



The length in the front of the burqa is reaches to the knee while the back is to the ankle. Women were only allowed to wear black shoes, but never white. Wearing white shoes during their regime was forbidden due to being the same color as the Taliban flag, so they believed if women wear white shoes, they are stepping on the flag and being disrespectful.

The Traditional [Men's Clothing](#) in Afghanistan is called *Perahan Tunban* with a gold or silver stitched embroidery waistcoat, and the foot wear known as *Paizar*. Perahan Tunban which literary means 'Dress & Trouser' is also known as 'Kamiz Shalwar' in some southern parts, and is the typical Afghan clothing for men. The dress became more common during the Taliban regime when they banned foreign style clothing such as suits, jeans, and pants.



During the dark period of Taliban regime, men had to wear this particular dress code which is a [combination](#) of long knee length dress with a baggy trouser. Men also had to have a hat or turban as head covering with a long beard. Young boys under the age of 15 was supposed to wear a hat, and they didn't have to wear turban except in school. For young girls under the age of 10 any long sleeve shirts and trousers was forced.

Wearing jeans or western style pants were totally forbidden for [men and women](#) under no circumstances during the Taliban, and if any one was seen in western style clothing, they were thrown in jail with punishments. Moreover, Taliban were also putting restrictions on sports by forcing players to wear long trousers even in the pool. They were not allowed to wear shorts if it was shorter than the knee length and the restriction was applied on soccer players, swimmers, etc.

After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, and the establishment of the new Afghan government, people started to forget the law which kept all men and women in a dark cage for five years. Now people, men and women, are wearing anything they like and any loosely fitting clothing which the contours of the body are less noticeable and it's comfortable for them under the Islamic law.



The Traditional [Women Clothing](#) in Afghanistan is really unique and beautiful. It is unique because of the well handmade embroidery and design. The dress is really long and made of cotton with a combination of different colors. The dress comes with a matching trouser, a head scarf, a purse and a flat pair of shoes called *Paizar*.

The style of pure Afghanistan clothing has changed during several decades of war and cultural invasions and influences of neighboring countries emerged in the region. Currently the normal clothing for women is mostly shirts with jeans, a Pakistani and Indian style dress and trouser called *Panjabi* along with its matching head scarf for covering the head. These two types of clothing that I just mentioned are mostly worn at home and in family gatherings but the formal office or governmental employees clothing may differ. Some women wear a costume made dress shirt along with long ankle length skirt with a head covering at work, while the other may wear a pair of nice back suit.

Women clothing for inside the house are usually a long knee length dress with a white, black or matching trouser which is mostly made of cotton and worn in summer. This is the basis of Afghanistan's clothing for women. In the northern areas striped material is used, and often dyed red from madder or in shades of blue and brown. Loose sleeveless, hip-length jackets are worn in full-length striped coat for warmth as well.



The typical Afghanistan clothing for men is the long knee length dress with the baggy trouser called '[Perahan Tunban](#)' or (Kamiz Shalwar), but people are wearing jeans and suits as well. Men also wear a long-sleeved, calf-length Chapan. This long length coat is typically made of silk, and comes in striped colors of [green](#) and black etc. A well made Chapan can be very expensive is normally worn over the Perahan Tunban, and only influential or rich people may afford to wear it.

Men are covering their heads by wearing different types of hats and each one has its particular name such as Qarakul, (made from lamb skin) Pakool, (made of wool) Turban, (made of silk or cotton) or regular caps which mostly come in white and black colors. The current footwear products are mostly Chinese with a small percent of consumers using the (Western made) footwear products from the second hand [market](#). People normally wear flip flops, sandals and regular shoes in the summer time while calf length boots are more common in winter due to large amount of snow and mud on the ground.

The Southern part of the country particularly in Kandahar, Helmand and Jalalabad Province in the East, people have their own most common footwear which is a black color leather sandals called *Chablee* and is a part of Afghanistan's Pashtons clothing. In the winter time people wear thick woolen, hand-knitted [stockings](#) with leather boots and warm hats due to very cold weather.

The Afghan kids clothing specially the Traditional [Afghan kids clothes](#) are almost the same as adults style or design. For boys, it's a chest piece embroidery Perahan Tunban with a golden stitch embroidery

waistcoat and a golden or silver stitch embroidery hat. However, *Perahan Tunban* as well as **t-shirts** and pants are mostly worn inside the house or outside. The Traditional girls clothing is the smaller size of women traditional clothing which is known as '*Lebassay Afghani*' or Afghani Dress and comes with a small size head scarf and shoes. Currently the normal or informal kids clothing are jeans and t-shirts or cotton pants with shirts for boys and two piece knee length dress with trouser known as *Panjabbi* for girls.

The current Afghanistan clothing for men, as shown in the news, is a mix of all types different clothing, including some interesting blends of western and Afghan styles. For people who can't afford to buy new costume made clothes, there is a second hand market called (*Bazzar-e- Lilami*) or second hand clothing market that sells clothes which comes from Western countries.

Here is **how it works**. These second hand clothing that people donate to Goodwills or other organizations make it to the third world countries and being sold by Kilograms. Basically after donation is made, clothes are gathered and packed by donation collecting organizations, then its being sold to other dealers who ships it to third world countries like Pakistan, India, Bangladesh etc. For example when it reaches to Pakistan, they open and sort out the good ones and bad ones, checking packets and then re pack and resell it to Afghan dealers who sell it individually piece by piece. There are several shops specializing in different second hand goods such as shoes, men's clothes, women's clothing, and children. It is a really big business and due to the quality of the goods being better than the Chinese poor quality new products, they are being sold in a higher price but still some people prefer the second hand goods than the new ones in the market.