

1. Skirts

The history of skirts

3000 BC

Skirts were first seen around 3000 BC in the ancient Egyptian period when both men and women would and fastened a piece of cloth around their hips, or around their waist held up by a belt.

15th-16th century

16th-18th century

16th robe style with torseade

18th à la française style with panier

In the 15th and 16th centuries, techniques for incorporating darts, flare and gapes into garments were developed and the flat skirts of ancient times took on a three-dimensional shape. From this time, there emerged a difference between male and female clothing and the skirt became the basic lower-body garment for women.

The 16th and 18th centuries saw the start of ornamentation over the entire garment. Petticoats (poos, an artificial way of increasing the fullness of skirts), were used to shape silhouettes. Representative of this was the British farthingale of the 16th century and the French panier of the 18th century (a petticoat to project the sides of the garment outwards).

Semi-flared skirt

A skirt with a moderate amount of flare at the hem, that in the same way as the straight skirt, suits any age or body form, and has a wide range of applications. The drawing shows a youthful mid-length style, but a semi-flared skirt around mid-length has a more mature, refined look. Suitable fabrics include light to medium-weight woolsens, cottons, linen and synthetic fibres.

Requires: 70cm of 150cm wide outer fabric
100cm of 150cm wide outer fabric

Important points for pattern drafting

Room around the hips for movement

This example of a semi-flared skirt is fitted in the mid-hip area and separates from the body as it descends from the hipline to the hem. You should therefore add 2cm to the hip-high measurement when drafting your pattern.

Outlining the silhouette

From a point 10cm below the hipline, measure 1.5cm vertically from the side of the skirt, connect to the hipline and extend the working line at the top and the bottom to form the silhouette of the skirt.

The smaller this measurement taken at the side, the straighter the finished skirt and the slimmer the silhouette. The larger the measurement, the more flared the finished skirt. Along with changes in the side measurement, the start of the waistline, the hipline and the hemline all change (see Figure 1 on page 30) and the dart allowance also changes.

In making the drawing, raise both the front and the back waistlines by 2cm at the sides, then draw a curve for the top of the hipline. Re-draw the hipline almost parallel to the hemline. Distributing the darts

Depending on the amount of fabric for the front waist darts, you may insert one dart only, as shown in Figure 2 on page 30.

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10 Sew the hem

Front (from side of the fabric)

Back (from side of the fabric)

How to hem (enlarged view)

11 Attach the waistband

Right CF Right side CF Left side Left CF

Waistband (back side of the fabric)

Fasten along the centre of the waistband with machine stitch (1cm stitching) from the binding, on the seam-allowance.

See both edges of the waistband

Waistband (front side of the fabric)

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