

## Evolution of Philippine Fashion



In the Philippines today, you can obviously see the evident change of the original pre-colonial fashion. Before, they were ruled by Rajahs and chieftain and had a peaceful existence until the time they became a colony of Spain. It was an upheaval time for the natives and only a fortunate few were able to enjoy the fashion trend at its peak.

There was also a time in history when the Philippines were under the influence of the Americans. Hence, you can see why Filipinos have a tendency to follow everything western from lifestyles and music to fashions. This page will devolve more on the evolution of fashion in Philippine history.



For several centuries, during the colonial period, the Philippines has been severely immersed in foreign influences particularly by Spain, Japan and America. Consequently their culture, lifestyle, customs and fashion sense has been mainly defined by influences from these countries as well. However, before the colonization, Philippines has yet to establish its own identity; thus what became the Philippines' foundation

for instituting their nationalistic character was basically colonially inspired. Through the teachings and traditions shared by the colonizers to the country, the Philippines grew to be a very “foreign” country. The Filipino people however did try to determine their own Filipino character but not without incorporating the foreign characteristics they have acquired during the hundreds and hundreds of years they experienced with foreign powers.

The Spanish Colonial Era was the longest colonization the Philippines was subjected under. Naturally, the country has picked



up a lot of the Spaniard influences. Three hundred years under Spain’s rule brought about alterations and innovations to the Filipino way of life. Before the Spaniards came, the Filipino fashion style of the sixteenth century was mainly simple yet functional. During the Pre-Spanish colonization, the Filipino people were dressed up only with collarless shirts called “canga” and wraps known as “bahag” for their bottoms. However once the Spaniards came to the country, modifications were made on the Filipino fashion sense. What is now known as the Barong Tagalog is the result of the evolution of the “canga”. Laces, trimmings and adornments and collars were added to the simple collarless shirt. Embroidery and buttons also became apparent on the “canga”. While the “bahag” was then replaced with trousers. This is also the same for the female costume counterpart of the Barong Tagalog, the Baro’t Saya. The Spanish influence on the Baro’t Saya are seen in the designs and patterns of...



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