

A C O M P L E T E G U I D E

Color Theory & The 12 Seasons

Discovering Your Personal Palette,
Your Undertone, and the Makeup That Loves You Back



A WEARABLE GUIDE TO YOUR TRUE COLORS

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A complete journey from the foundations of color to the makeup that makes you glow.

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01 · An Introduction to Color Analysis

Color analysis is the art and science of finding the colors that bring out your most luminous, healthy, harmonious self — and quietly setting aside those that don't.

You've probably noticed it before: certain shirts make you look bright-eyed and rested, while others make you look like you need a nap and a vitamin. That's not in your imagination. Every color you wear near your face reflects light onto your skin. Some colors echo your natural pigments and lift them; others fight them and pull you down.

Personal color analysis is a system for identifying which colors do the lifting. It's been used by image consultants, makeup artists, costume designers, and fashion houses for nearly a century. What started as four broad "seasons" in the 1980s has refined into a more precise 12-season system that captures the nuance of real human coloring.

What this guide will give you

- A working understanding of color theory — hue, value, and chroma — and why these three dimensions matter more than "warm vs. cool" alone.
- Reliable methods for identifying your undertone, including the often-misunderstood olive category.
- A foundation guide that helps you match shade and undertone with confidence.
- Clear descriptions of all 12 seasons and how to narrow yours down at home.
- Palettes for clothing and full makeup breakdowns — lipstick, blush, eyeshadow, eyeliner — for each season.
- The rules of borrowing: which seasons can share colors and why.

A GENTLE REMINDER

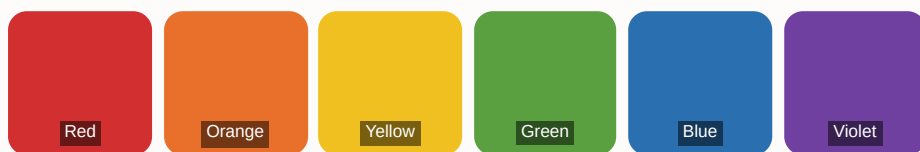
Color analysis is a tool, not a cage. Knowing your best colors doesn't mean you can never wear anything else. It means you'll know which colors will photograph beautifully, which ones to invest in, and how to make the others work harder for you. Style is still yours.

02 · The Foundations of Color Theory

Before we can talk about your colors, we need a shared vocabulary for color itself.

The Color Wheel

The traditional color wheel is built from three **primary colors** — red, yellow, and blue — which can't be made by mixing other colors. Combining two primaries gives you the three **secondary colors**: orange (red + yellow), green (yellow + blue), and violet (blue + red). Mixing a primary with its neighbouring secondary creates a **tertiary color** — red-orange, yellow-orange, yellow-green, blue-green, blue-violet, red-violet.



Warm Colors & Cool Colors

The wheel divides naturally into two halves. Reds, oranges, yellows, and yellow-greens are warm — they carry the energy of sunlight and fire. Blue-greens, blues, violets, and blue-reds are cool — they carry the energy of water, shade, and sky.

But there's a subtler truth here: *every color can lean warm or cool*. A red can lean orange (warm) or pink (cool). A green can lean yellow (warm) or blue (cool). When we talk about "warm" and "cool" colors in personal analysis, we're talking about temperature within a color, not just which side of the wheel it sits on.

Complementary, Analogous, Triadic

Colors that sit opposite each other on the wheel — red and green, blue and orange, yellow and violet — are **complementary**. They make each other vibrate. This is why a green sweater can make ruddy skin look more red, and why a blue scarf intensifies tan or peachy skin.

Colors next to each other are **analogous**. They harmonize quietly. Colors evenly spaced (three points apart) are **triadic** — energetic but balanced. You'll see these relationships at work in seasonal palettes: they're carefully built to harmonize with you, not fight you.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR YOU

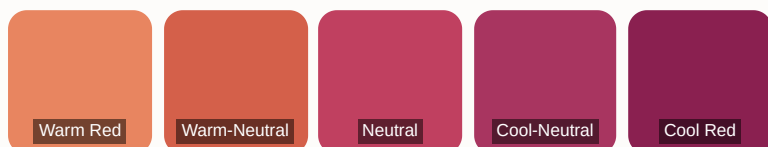
Your skin, hair, and eyes are themselves colors with hue, value, and chroma. The clothes and makeup you put against them are also colors with hue, value, and chroma. Personal color analysis is really just the question: which colors are *analogous* to you (harmonious) and which are *complementary* (clashing)?

03 · The Three Dimensions of Color

Every color in the world can be described by three things: its hue, its value, and its chroma. The 12-season system is built on these three axes — which is why it's more precise than the older four-season approach.

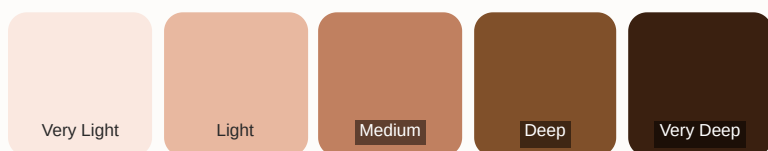
1. Hue · Warm or Cool

Hue is the color's *temperature*. Does it lean toward yellow (warm) or toward blue (cool)? Every red, every green, every brown sits somewhere on this spectrum.



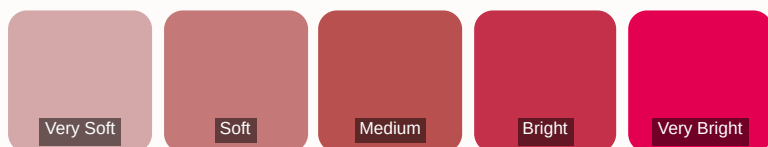
2. Value · Light or Deep

Value is *how light or dark* a color is. A pastel pink and a burgundy are both pinks — but one is high-value (light) and one is low-value (deep). Your own value comes from the contrast between your hair, skin, and eyes.



3. Chroma · Soft or Bright

Chroma (also called saturation or intensity) is *how clear or muted* a color is. A bright fuchsia is high-chroma; a dusty rose is low-chroma. Some people glow in vivid clarity; others come alive in dusty, muted, sophisticated tones.



THE DOMINANT DIMENSION

Every person has a **dominant** color characteristic — the one feature that defines them most strongly. For some, it's their warmth (an unmistakable golden glow). For others, it's their lightness, their depth, their softness, or their brightness. Your dominant dimension determines your seasonal family. The secondary dimension determines which of the three sub-seasons you fall into.

04 · Understanding Your Undertone

Your skin has two layers of color: the surface tone (what changes with sun, sleep, and stress) and the undertone (which is fixed). Color analysis is built almost entirely on undertone.

Think of your skin like a piece of paper that's been painted twice. The first layer — your undertone — is the permanent base. It's a function of the pigments your body produces (melanin, hemoglobin, carotene) and it doesn't change. The second layer — your surface tone — sits on top and shifts with sun exposure, hormones, illness, and mood. When we choose colors for you, we're working with the layer underneath.

The Four Undertone Categories

WARM

Yellow, peach, or golden undertone. Skin reads sun-touched even without sun. Veins look greenish.

COOL

Pink, red, or blue undertone. Skin reads porcelain, rose, or cocoa. Veins look blue or purple.

NEUTRAL

Balanced undertone — neither pulling strongly warm nor cool. Veins look blue-green. Both golds and silvers work.

OLIVE

A grey-green cast layered over warm, cool, or neutral. Skin can look ashy, sallow, or muted.

Why undertone matters more than surface tone

A pale person can be warm (think peachy-fair Irish skin) or cool (think porcelain English skin). A deep-skinned person can be warm (rich golden brown), cool (espresso with rosy or blue depths), or olive (a green-tinged depth). Your *visible* color is not the question — your undertone is. This is also why two people with the exact same "shade" of skin can need completely different foundations and lipsticks.

THREE QUICK CLUES YOU'RE WARM

- Gold jewelry looks better against your skin than silver.
- You tan easily and rarely burn (or you tan after burning).
- Ivory and cream flatter you more than pure white.

THREE QUICK CLUES YOU'RE COOL

- Silver, platinum, and white gold look better than yellow gold.
- You burn before you tan, or you stay fair year-round.
- Pure white and stark black flatter you more than cream and brown.

05 · The At-Home Undertone Tests

No single test is foolproof. Run three or four of these and look for the pattern.

The Vein Test

Look at the veins on the inside of your wrist in natural daylight. **Blue or purple veins** usually indicate cool undertones. **Green or olive veins** usually indicate warm undertones. **A mix of blue-green** typically points to neutral. If your veins look strikingly green and your skin looks slightly grey or sallow, you may be olive.

The Jewelry Test

Hold a piece of silver and a piece of gold (clean, untarnished) up to your bare face in natural light. Whichever metal makes your skin look **luminous, even, and rested** reflects your undertone. Gold = warm. Silver = cool. Both look good = neutral. Both look slightly off but rose gold or antique gold sings = often olive.

The White Paper Test

Hold a piece of pure white printer paper next to your bare, makeup-free face in natural daylight. Notice what your skin looks like *against* the white.

- If your skin looks yellow, peach, or golden by contrast → **warm**
- If your skin looks pink, rosy, or slightly blue by contrast → **cool**
- If your skin looks balanced (neither pink nor yellow stands out) → **neutral**
- If your skin looks slightly green, grey, or ashy by contrast → **olive**

The Sun Test

Think back to summer. Do you tan easily to a golden or olive brown (warm or olive)? Do you burn, freckle, and stay fair (cool)? Do you burn first and then tan slowly (often neutral)? This is one of the strongest clues, because sun reaction is genetically tied to undertone.

The White vs. Cream Test

Drape a piece of pure bright white fabric across your shoulders. Then swap it for an ivory or cream piece. One will brighten you; the other will wash you out or yellow you. Pure white flatters cool undertones; ivory/cream flatters warm.

The Best Friends or Honest Mirror Method

Ask two or three trusted people — ideally in daylight, makeup off, hair pulled back — to tell you whether you look healthier in gold or silver, in pure white or cream, in tomato red or raspberry red. Outsiders see your undertone more clearly than you do.

RUN THEM ALL, THEN COUNT

Don't crown yourself "cool" after one vein test. Run four or five of these tests and tally the results. If three out of five say warm and two say neutral, you're warm. If you're getting truly mixed signals — gold AND silver both fine, no clear winner — you're either neutral or possibly olive (read the next page).

06 · The Olive Undertone Decoded

Olive is the most misunderstood undertone — and probably the most common one to get wrong. If you've ever felt that "warm" foundations make you orange and "cool" foundations make you grey, this section is for you.

What olive actually is

Olive skin contains a faint green or grey-green pigment that sits over the more standard warm/cool/neutral undertone. So olive is rarely *just* olive — it's olive-warm, olive-cool, or olive-neutral. The green undertone is what makes olive skin look slightly muted, sallower under harsh lights, or "ashy" in some photos. In flattering light, it reads as a sophisticated, even, slightly Mediterranean glow.

Signs you're olive

- Your skin looks **slightly green, grey, or muted** under fluorescent or unflattering light — even when you're healthy.
- Foundations described as "warm" pull **orange or peachy** on you; foundations described as "cool" pull **pink or grey**.
- You look best in **antique gold, rose gold, or bronze** rather than pure yellow gold or bright silver.
- Pure white makes you look slightly green; pure black drains you. **Warm whites and softened blacks** work better.
- Pastel pinks and pastel blues often make you look ill, but **terracotta, sage, dusty rose, mustard, and rich teal** bring you to life.
- People can't agree on your undertone — half say warm, half say cool.

The olive undertone test

Hold a true forest green or sage piece of fabric near your face. If your skin **blends with it** (in a slightly eerie, camouflaging way), you're olive. Most warm or cool people will look *contrasted* against forest green. Olives look harmonized — sometimes uncomfortably so.

OLIVE IN THE SEASONAL SYSTEM

The traditional 12-season system doesn't have a dedicated "olive" category, which is why so many olives are mistyped. In practice, most olives land in one of the **muted, neutral, or autumn-adjacent seasons**: Soft Autumn, Soft Summer, True Autumn, Dark Autumn, or Dark Winter (for deeper olives). The deciding factor is whether the warm or cool dimension is stronger.

- **Olive-warm** → typically Soft Autumn or True Autumn
- **Olive-neutral** → typically Soft Autumn or Soft Summer
- **Olive-cool** → typically Soft Summer or, if deep, Dark Winter

What to avoid as an olive

Pure pastels (baby pink, sky blue, mint), neon brights, pure white, pure black, and anything described as "icy." These either make the green undertone read as sickly or wash you out completely. You belong in earthy, sun-warmed, slightly muted colors — the colors of dried herbs, terracotta tile, vintage wine, and faded olive groves.

07 · The Foundation Match Guide

A correctly matched foundation should disappear into your jawline and require no blending into your neck. If you can see it, it doesn't fit.

Step 1 · Identify your depth

Depth is how light or deep your skin is, independent of undertone. Most brands use a scale from **Fair** → **Light** → **Light-Medium** → **Medium** → **Tan** → **Deep** → **Rich**. The fastest way to estimate yours: stand near a window in daylight with no makeup and compare your face and neck to the inside of your forearm. Foundation should match the part of your skin you most want to even out — usually the cheek and jaw area, not the forehead (which is often slightly darker) or the under-eye (which is often slightly lighter).

Step 2 · Identify your undertone code

Most brands use letter codes after the depth number:

CODE	MEANS	LOOKS LIKE
W (Warm) / G (Gold)	Yellow, peach, or golden base	Sunny, honey, golden, beige-gold
C (Cool)	Pink, red, or blue base	Porcelain, rose, mauve, rose-beige
N (Neutral)	Balanced base	True beige, balanced ivory, balanced tan
O (Olive)	Green-grey base	Sallow-resistant, even, slightly Mediterranean

Step 3 · Test on the jawline, not the wrist or hand

The skin on your hand is usually a different undertone and depth than your face. Always swipe three potential matches along your jawline, blending lightly down toward the neck. The right shade **vanishes**. The wrong shade leaves a stripe — too pink, too yellow, too light, or too dark.

Step 4 · Check in daylight

Department store lighting is the enemy. Wear the swatch outside (or near a window) for a few minutes before you commit. Foundations oxidize within 30–60 minutes, often going **warmer and slightly darker**, so check again after an hour.

Foundation undertone cheat sheet

IF YOU ARE...	LOOK FOR SHADES DESCRIBED AS...	AVOID SHADES DESCRIBED AS...
Warm	Golden, honey, beige-gold, warm beige, sand, caramel	Rose, porcelain, pink-beige, cool ivory
Cool	Porcelain, rose, cool ivory, pink-beige, rose-beige	Golden, honey, sand, warm caramel
Neutral	Neutral beige, balanced ivory, true beige, buff	Strongly pink or strongly yellow shades
Olive	Olive-tagged shades, warm-neutral with a green correction, "Mediterranean"	Pink-toned shades, very yellow shades, anything "ivory" without olive correction

OLIVE-SPECIFIC ADVICE

Olive skin is notoriously hard to match because most "warm" foundations are too peach and most "cool" foundations are too pink. Brands that explicitly label olive shades (NARS, MAC NC ranges, Fenty olive options, Estée Lauder cool-warm, Charlotte Tilbury Medium with olive correction) are your friends. If you can't find an olive match, choose neutral and add a tiny drop of green color-corrector underneath, or mix a touch of yellow into a cool foundation.

08 · From 4 Seasons to 12: A Brief History

How a 1980s system inherited from Bauhaus color theory grew into the precise modern framework we use today.

The Origins

The seasonal color system traces back to the early 20th-century Bauhaus school, where artist Johannes Itten observed that his students' favorite color palettes corresponded to their own natural coloring. He grouped people into four "seasons" — Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter — each tied to a different temperature and clarity of color.

This four-season system reached mass popularity in 1980 with Carole Jackson's book *Color Me Beautiful*. The idea was simple: warm + light = Spring, cool + light = Summer, warm + deep = Autumn, cool + deep = Winter.

Why Four Seasons Wasn't Enough

The trouble was that real human coloring is more varied. A person could be warm *and* light *and* very bright (a clear, sunny Spring) — or warm *and* light *and* very soft (a muted, dusty Spring). The four-season model couldn't tell them apart, which led to a lot of mismatches.

By the 1990s, analysts had developed the **12-season system**, also called *Sci\ART* or "tonal" analysis. Each of the four original seasons was split into three subtypes based on a secondary dimension: a "true" version (the purest expression), and two transitional versions that lean toward neighbouring seasons.

The 12-Season Framework

SEASON FAMILY	THREE SUB-SEASONS	DOMINANT TRAIT
Spring	Light Spring · True (Warm) Spring · Bright Spring	Warm + Bright
Summer	Light Summer · True (Cool) Summer · Soft Summer	Cool + Soft
Autumn	Soft Autumn · True (Warm) Autumn · Deep (Dark) Autumn	Warm + Soft/Deep
Winter	Bright Winter · True (Cool) Winter · Deep (Dark) Winter	Cool + Bright/Deep

The Logic of the 12

Each season is named by its two defining dimensions. "Light Spring" is light first, warm second. "Bright Spring" is bright first, warm second. "True Spring" is warm first, with no other dimension pulling it. This naming logic is what tells you how a season behaves — and which neighboring seasons it can borrow from.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

You'll see slightly different naming across analysts. "Deep Winter" and "Dark Winter" are the same season. "True Spring" and "Warm Spring" are interchangeable. "Cool Summer" sometimes means "True Summer" and sometimes a sub-variant. The 12 seasons themselves are stable; the labels drift. This guide uses the most common modern names.

09 · How to Determine Your Season

Finding your season is a process of elimination. You're looking for your dominant dimension first, then your secondary.

Step 1 · Find your dominant dimension

Look at your overall coloring — hair, eyes, and skin together. Which of these four jumps out at you most?

IF YOUR DEFINING TRAIT IS...	YOU'RE LIKELY IN THIS FAMILY
Warmth — golden, peachy, honeyed, sunlit coloring	Spring or Autumn
Coolness — rosy, ashy, mauve, blue-based coloring	Summer or Winter
Lightness — low contrast, fair skin, blond or light hair, soft eyes	Spring or Summer
Depth — strong contrast, deep skin or hair or eyes	Autumn or Winter
Brightness — clear, vivid, jewel-like eyes; high contrast	Spring or Winter
Softness — muted, dusty, gentle coloring; low contrast	Summer or Autumn

Step 2 · Find your secondary dimension

Once you know your dominant trait, look for what comes *next*. A warm person who is also light is Spring; a warm person who is deep is Autumn. A light person who is warm is Spring; a light person who is cool is Summer.

Step 3 · Pinpoint the sub-season

YOU ARE...	YOU ARE...
Warm + very light, gentle	Light Spring
Warm + truly warm, no extremes	True Spring
Warm + very clear, vivid, high-contrast	Bright Spring
Cool + very light, gentle	Light Summer
Cool + truly cool, no extremes	True Summer
Cool + very muted, dusty	Soft Summer
Warm + very muted, dusty	Soft Autumn
Warm + truly warm, no extremes	True Autumn
Warm + deep, rich, high-contrast	Deep (Dark) Autumn
Cool + very clear, vivid	Bright Winter
Cool + truly cool, no extremes	True Winter
Cool + deep, rich	Deep (Dark) Winter

The Draping Method

The gold standard for confirming a season is **fabric draping**. With clean, makeup-free skin, hair pulled back, and bright daylight (or full-spectrum lighting), drape silver or white fabric over your ¹¹shoulders. Compare two contrasting fabrics at a time — pure white vs. cream, true red vs. tomato red, mustard vs. lemon yellow. The "right" color will make your skin look **even, lifted, and**

10 · The 12 Seasons & Their Palettes

A bird's-eye view of all twelve. The next eight pages cover each in detail.

SEASON	DEFINING WORDS	SIGNATURE COLORS
Light Spring	Warm, light, fresh	Peach, apricot, mint, light coral, cream, sky blue
True Spring	Warm, clear, sunny	Coral, golden yellow, warm green, camel, turquoise
Bright Spring	Warm-leaning, vivid, clear	Vivid coral, hot pink, emerald, royal blue, sunshine yellow
Light Summer	Cool, light, soft	Powder blue, lavender, rose, pale grey, mint
True Summer	Cool, balanced, gentle	Rose, raspberry, periwinkle, soft navy, sage
Soft Summer	Cool-leaning, muted, dusty	Dusty rose, mauve, slate, sage, stone, soft burgundy
Soft Autumn	Warm-leaning, muted, gentle	Terracotta, sage, camel, salmon, soft gold, dusty teal
True Autumn	Warm, earthy, rich	Pumpkin, mustard, olive, rust, brick, forest green
Deep Autumn	Warm-leaning, deep, dramatic	Burnt sienna, deep teal, espresso, wine, ochre, aubergine
Bright Winter	Cool-leaning, vivid, dramatic	Fuchsia, ice blue, emerald, true red, royal purple, pure white
True Winter	Cool, sharp, high-contrast	Pure white, jet black, true red, royal blue, magenta, icy pink
Deep Winter	Cool-leaning, deep, intense	Burgundy, navy, pine, deep berry, espresso, charcoal

HOW TO READ THE NEXT PAGES

Each season gets a profile with: physical characteristics, signature palette, neutrals, colors to avoid, and the seasons it can borrow from. The full makeup breakdown begins on page 21.

11 · Spring Family

Springs are warm, fresh, and vibrant. Their coloring evokes sunlight on petals — clear, lively, never heavy.

Light Spring

Dominant: Light · Secondary: Warm · Borrows from: Light Summer, True Spring

You look like: Strawberry blonde, light golden blonde, or light champagne hair. Skin that's fair with a peachy or golden warmth. Eyes that are aqua, light green, light hazel, or warm blue-grey. Low contrast between your features.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



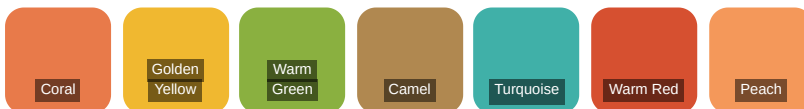
Avoid: Black, charcoal, pure white, deep burgundy, icy pastels, very muted dusty colors.

True Spring (Warm Spring)

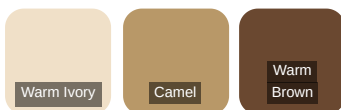
Dominant: Warm · Secondary: balanced · Borrows from: Light Spring, Bright Spring, True Autumn

You look like: Golden, honey, or copper-toned hair. Skin that's warm ivory, peach, golden beige, or warm tan with freckles. Eyes that are golden brown, warm hazel, teal, or warm green. Distinctly sunny coloring.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Black, icy pastels, dusty muted tones, blue-based pinks, pure white.

11 · Spring Family (continued)

Bright Spring

Dominant: **Bright** · Secondary: **Warm** · Borrows from: *Bright Winter, True Spring*

You look like: Vivid coloring with noticeable contrast. Hair can be warm dark brown, deep golden, or bright honey. Skin is clear ivory, peach, or warm beige. Eyes are remarkable — bright blue, vivid green, clear turquoise, or warm topaz. You photograph well; people often notice your eyes.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Dusty, muted tones; tans and beiges that wash you out; dull browns; soft pastels with too much grey.

Spring at a glance

	LIGHT SPRING	TRUE SPRING	BRIGHT SPRING
Energy	Delicate, dewy	Sunny, warm	Vivid, electric
Best metal	Light gold, rose gold	Bright yellow gold	Yellow gold, polished gold
Contrast level	Low	Medium	High
Signature	Peach	Coral	Hot coral / fuchsia

THE SPRING SECRET

Springs need *life* in their colors. Even your softer hues should look like they have the sun shining through them — fresh peach, sherbet, mint, sky. Anything too dusty, dark, or grey-tinged will mute your natural radiance.

12 · Summer Family

Summers are cool, soft, and serene. Their coloring evokes a hazy summer morning — gentle, dusty, never harsh.

Light Summer

Dominant: **Light** · Secondary: **Cool** · Borrows from: *Light Spring, True Summer*

You look like: Ash blonde, light brown with cool undertones, or light dusty hair. Skin that's fair and rosy or porcelain. Eyes that are soft blue, grey-blue, soft green, or light cool brown. Low contrast, soft features.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



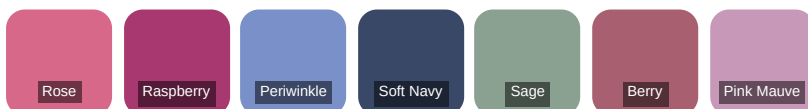
Avoid: Black, pure white, orange-based reds, mustard, burnt orange, anything earthy.

True Summer (Cool Summer)

Dominant: **Cool** · Secondary: *balanced* · Borrows from: *Light Summer, Soft Summer, True Winter*

You look like: Cool ash brown, dusty blonde, or cool dark hair. Skin that's cool ivory, rose-beige, or cool tan. Eyes that are blue, grey, soft green, or rose-brown. Medium contrast, gentle features.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Black, pure white, golden yellows, oranges, anything described as "earthy" or "rust."

12 · Summer Family (continued)

Soft Summer

Dominant: **Soft** · Secondary: **Cool** · Borrows from: *Soft Autumn, True Summer*

You look like: Mousy or ash brown hair, often with a dusty quality. Skin that's neutral-cool, often slightly olive. Eyes that are soft hazel, grey-green, smoky blue, or muted brown. Very low contrast — your colors blend into each other.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Black, pure white, neon brights, pure pastels, golden yellows.

Summer at a glance

	LIGHT SUMMER	TRUE SUMMER	SOFT SUMMER
Energy	Airy, gentle	Romantic, classic	Misty, smoky
Best metal	Silver, white gold	Silver, platinum	Brushed silver, pewter
Contrast level	Low	Medium	Very low
Signature	Powder blue	Rose	Dusty mauve

THE SUMMER SECRET

Summers need *softness* in their colors. Even your boldest reds should have a hint of blue or mauve in them — nothing strident, nothing orange. Where Winter wears clarity, Summer wears whisper.

13 · Autumn Family

Autumns are warm, earthy, and richly toned. Their coloring evokes a forest in October — golden, copper, deep.

Soft Autumn

Dominant: **Soft** · Secondary: **Warm** · Borrows from: *Soft Summer, True Autumn*

You look like: Soft golden or light brown hair, often dishwater blonde or ash with warm hints. Skin that's neutral-warm, often olive. Eyes that are soft hazel, warm grey, muted green, or light brown. Low contrast, gently warm coloring. Common landing zone for olive skin.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Black, pure white, icy pastels, neon brights, blue-based pinks.

True Autumn (Warm Autumn)

Dominant: **Warm** · Secondary: *balanced* · Borrows from: *Soft Autumn, Deep Autumn, True Spring*

You look like: Auburn, red, copper, or rich warm brown hair. Skin that's warm ivory with freckles, warm beige, golden tan, or rich warm brown. Eyes that are warm brown, hazel, amber, olive green, or teal. Classic "autumn leaf" energy.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Black, pure white, icy blues and pinks, neon, anything blue-based.

13 · Autumn Family (continued)

Deep Autumn (Dark Autumn)

Dominant: **Deep** · Secondary: **Warm** · Borrows from: True Autumn, Deep Winter

You look like: Deep brown, black-brown, or dark auburn hair. Skin that's warm ivory, golden beige, deep golden, or rich deep brown. Eyes that are deep brown, dark hazel, warm black, or deep olive. High contrast with warm undertones.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Pure white, icy pastels, neon, anything cool-blue-based, baby pinks.

Autumn at a glance

	SOFT AUTUMN	TRUE AUTUMN	DEEP AUTUMN
Energy	Muted, sun-faded	Earthy, rich	Spice, dramatic
Best metal	Antique gold, rose gold, bronze	Bronze, copper, antique gold	Bronze, brass, deep gold
Contrast level	Low	Medium	High
Signature	Terracotta	Pumpkin / mustard	Wine / deep teal

THE AUTUMN SECRET

Autumns need *warmth and depth*, not brightness. Your colors should feel like they're lit by candlelight, not fluorescent light — burnished, rich, layered. The colors of spice racks, antique books, fallen leaves, and aged whiskey are yours.

14 · Winter Family

Winters are cool, clear, and dramatic. Their coloring evokes a starlit winter sky — sharp, vivid, high-contrast.

Bright Winter

Dominant: **Bright** · Secondary: **Cool** · Borrows from: *Bright Spring, True Winter*

You look like: Dark cool brown or near-black hair. Skin that's clear ivory, cool beige, porcelain, or deep cool brown. Eyes that are vivid — clear blue, bright green, ice grey, or jewel-bright dark brown. High contrast and high clarity.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Muted, dusty, earthy tones; tans and beiges; warm browns; anything murky.

True Winter (Cool Winter)

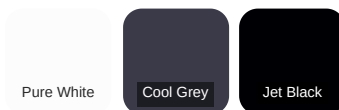
Dominant: **Cool** · Secondary: *balanced* · Borrows from: *Bright Winter, Deep Winter, True Summer*

You look like: Jet black or deep cool brown hair. Skin that's porcelain, cool ivory, cool beige, cool olive, or deep cool brown. Eyes that are deep cool brown, ice blue, or sharp green. The classic Snow White or Disney villain palette.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Warm browns, tans, beiges, golds, oranges, anything described as "earthy" or "dusty."

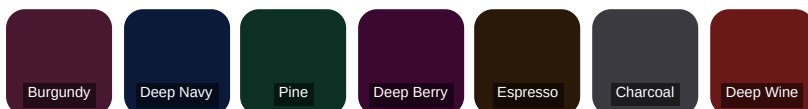
14 · Winter Family (continued)

Deep Winter (Dark Winter)

Dominant: **Deep** · Secondary: **Cool** · Borrows from: True Winter, Deep Autumn

You look like: Black, dark brown, or near-black hair. Skin that's cool ivory, cool olive, cool tan, or deep brown to ebony. Eyes that are deep brown, near-black, or dark cool hazel. High contrast and depth, slightly less brightness than True Winter. Common landing zone for deep olive skin.

PALETTE



NEUTRALS



Avoid: Pastels, muted tones, light beiges, anything washed-out or pale-warm.

Winter at a glance

	BRIGHT WINTER	TRUE WINTER	DEEP WINTER
Energy	Electric, vivid	Sharp, classic	Dramatic, sultry
Best metal	Polished silver, platinum	Silver, platinum, white gold	Silver, gunmetal, polished black
Contrast level	High	Highest	High
Signature	Fuchsia	True red on white	Burgundy / deep berry

THE WINTER SECRET

Winters need *clarity and contrast*. Your colors should feel like they were photographed in high definition — saturated, definite, never blended. The colors of jewels, gemstones, and starlight are yours. Dusty and muted will drain you faster than anything else.

15 · Makeup by Season

Makeup is where seasonal color theory becomes most useful — and most forgiving. Get the undertone right and almost any color in your palette will look intentional.

The four makeup principles

1. **Match undertone, not just shade.** A "nude" lipstick that's wrong for your undertone will look like concealer, not lipstick. A "red" lipstick in the wrong temperature will read brick or barbie depending on you.
2. **Respect your contrast level.** Low-contrast seasons (Light Summer, Soft Autumn) look styled in soft, blended makeup. High-contrast seasons (Bright Winter, Deep Winter) can carry sharper lines, defined liner, and bold lips.
3. **Eyeshadow follows your palette.** If your clothing palette is muted and earthy (Autumn), your eyeshadow should be too. The same shimmering pewter that flatters a True Winter will read off on a True Autumn — and vice versa.
4. **Blush is your tell.** Blush is the closest cosmetic to your natural undertone, so it's the easiest to get wrong. When in doubt, choose blush first and build the rest around it.

How to read the next pages

The next six pages give you a full makeup palette for each of the 12 seasons:

- **Lipsticks** — neutrals, signatures, and statements.
- **Blush** — your everyday range.
- **Eyeshadow** — neutrals for daily use plus accent colors.
- **Liner & mascara** — softer or sharper to match your contrast level.
- **Best metals** — for jewelry and highlighter/shimmer choices.

ONE QUICK RULE BEFORE WE START

If you're between two seasons, your makeup is usually where you can split the difference most safely. Lipstick borrowed from a neighbor reads as an "outfit choice," not a mistake — much more forgiving than clothing borrowed from a distant season.

Makeup · The Springs

Light Spring

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Warm brown, never black
METAL	Light gold, rose gold, champagne

True Spring

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Rich warm brown, copper
METAL	Yellow gold, polished gold

Bright Spring

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Deep brown, navy, or warm black
METAL	Polished yellow gold

Makeup · The Summers

Light Summer

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Soft grey, soft navy, never black
METAL	Silver, white gold, platinum

True Summer

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Soft navy, plum, or cool grey-brown
METAL	Silver, platinum

Soft Summer

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Smoky grey, smoky plum — never sharp
METAL	Brushed silver, pewter, antique silver

Makeup · The Autumns

Soft Autumn

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Soft brown, soft olive — softly diffused
METAL	Antique gold, rose gold, bronze

True Autumn

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Espresso, bronze, deep copper
METAL	Bronze, copper, antique gold, brass

Deep Autumn

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Warm black, deep aubergine, deep bronze
METAL	Bronze, brass, deep gold, gunmetal

Makeup · The Winters

Bright Winter

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Jet black, royal blue, sharp emerald
METAL	Polished silver, platinum, white gold

True Winter

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Jet black or sharp aubergine
METAL	Silver, platinum, white gold

Deep Winter

LIPSTICK	
BLUSH	
EYESHADOW	
LINER	Jet black, deep navy, deep aubergine
METAL	Silver, gunmetal, polished black, deep silver

Makeup · Technique by Season

The same eyeshadow can look polished or sloppy depending on how it's applied. These are the rules of finish for each family.

The Spring approach

Springs look best in **luminous, dewy, fresh** finishes. Cream products often suit you better than powder. Avoid matte foundation that flattens you — choose satin or radiant. Eyeshadow should have a soft shimmer (especially for True and Bright Springs); Light Springs can lean slightly more matte but never chalky. Lips should be glossy, balmy, or satin — never aggressively matte.

The Summer approach

Summers look best in **soft, diffused, blended** finishes. Edges should be undone, not sharp. Use a fluffy brush. Avoid heavy contouring — your features are gentle by nature, and harsh contour will look painted on. Skin should look like skin, not airbrushed. Mascara is enough; you rarely need full liner. Soft Summers in particular benefit from a slightly powdered, matte-leaning finish that mirrors their inherent softness.

The Autumn approach

Autumns look best in **rich, warm, layered** finishes. Bronzer is your best friend. Cream blush blended into a powder finish reads especially well. Avoid frost or anything icy. Eyeshadow should have warmth — copper, bronze, gold, olive, brick — and can be applied as a soft wash or a more defined smoky look depending on your contrast level. Deep Autumns can wear genuinely dramatic eye makeup; Soft Autumns should keep it gentle.

The Winter approach

Winters look best in **clean, defined, high-contrast** finishes. Your features can carry sharp eyeliner, dark mascara, bold lips, and matte or satin skin. Frost shimmer reads well on you (where it would look dated on Autumns). Avoid muddy or muted tones — they make you look tired. A bold lip with otherwise minimal makeup is a Winter signature. True and Deep Winters in particular can wear genuinely *red* red and look chic, not costume.

The universal rules

ALWAYS	NEVER
Test makeup in natural daylight before you commit	Buy lipstick under fluorescent store lighting
Match foundation to your jawline, not your hand	Test foundation on the back of your hand
Choose blush in your undertone first, shade second	Choose blush by trend or model swatch
Wear a lip color that brightens your teeth	Wear a lip color that yellows your teeth
Use one statement at a time — eye OR lip	Compete with yourself by stacking statements

The Lipstick Master Chart

A quick-reference grid for finding lipsticks in your range — useful for shopping descriptions ("warm coral," "cool berry," "muted plum").

SEASON	EVERYDAY NUDES	SIGNATURE COLOR	STATEMENT LIP
Light Spring	Peach nude, light coral, soft caramel	Warm coral	Warm bright pink-coral
True Spring	Warm beige, peach, light terracotta	Coral red	Bright warm orange-red
Bright Spring	Warm pink nude, coral-pink	Bright warm fuchsia	Bright tomato red
Light Summer	Soft rose, mauve-pink, pink nude	Cool soft rose	Cool raspberry
True Summer	Rose nude, soft berry, mauve	Rose pink	True cool raspberry
Soft Summer	Dusty rose, mauve, muted plum	Dusty rose	Soft burgundy
Soft Autumn	Warm nude, dusty peach, soft terracotta	Terracotta	Warm rust
True Autumn	Warm nude, caramel, brick	Brick red	Burnt orange
Deep Autumn	Warm mocha, brick, deep terracotta	Deep brick	Bordeaux wine
Bright Winter	Cool pink nude, sharp rose	Bright fuchsia	True blue-red
True Winter	Cool rose nude, sharp berry	True red	Pure magenta or true red
Deep Winter	Deep rose nude, cool plum nude	Burgundy	Deep blue-red or deep berry

How to translate this when shopping

Lipstick names are a marketing language of their own. Translate by undertone:

- **If you're warm:** filter for words like coral, peach, brick, terracotta, warm nude, caramel, copper, brown-red, orange-red, rust, warm berry.
- **If you're cool:** filter for words like rose, mauve, berry, plum, raspberry, cool pink, blue-red, wine, fuchsia.
- **If you're neutral:** you can wear most things — but watch for the descriptors. True neutrals look best in mid-temperature shades like "rose-beige" or "soft red."
- **If you're olive:** filter for muted, earthy, warm-leaning shades — brick, terracotta, dusty rose, soft burgundy, warm plum. Bright pure pinks and pure reds rarely flatter olive.

16 · Borrowing Between Seasons

Seasons aren't islands. Each one shares an edge with its neighbors, and those edges are where you can comfortably bend the rules.

The borrowing principle

You can almost always borrow from a season that shares **one of your two dimensions**. A Light Spring shares "light" with Light Summer and "warm" with True Spring — so it can pull pieces from both. A Soft Autumn shares "soft" with Soft Summer and "warm" with True Autumn. The further you move from your season's two neighbors, the riskier the borrow.

The borrowing map

YOUR SEASON	SAFE TO BORROW FROM	BORROW WITH CAUTION
Light Spring	Light Summer, True Spring	Bright Spring
True Spring	Light Spring, Bright Spring, True Autumn	Soft Autumn
Bright Spring	True Spring, Bright Winter	True Winter
Light Summer	Light Spring, True Summer	Soft Summer
True Summer	Light Summer, Soft Summer, True Winter	Bright Winter
Soft Summer	True Summer, Soft Autumn	True Autumn
Soft Autumn	Soft Summer, True Autumn	True Summer
True Autumn	Soft Autumn, Deep Autumn, True Spring	Light Spring
Deep Autumn	True Autumn, Deep Winter	True Winter
Bright Winter	Bright Spring, True Winter	True Spring
True Winter	Bright Winter, Deep Winter, True Summer	Soft Summer
Deep Winter	True Winter, Deep Autumn	True Autumn

How to borrow well

- **Borrow accents, not anchors.** A lipstick or earring borrowed from a neighbor is safe. An entire dress in a neighbor's color is riskier; an entire dress in a distant season's color rarely works.
- **Borrow toward your dominant trait.** If you're a Light Summer (dominant: light), borrowing from Light Spring is safer than borrowing from True Summer, because lightness is preserved.
- **Move it away from your face.** If you love a color that isn't really yours, wear it as a skirt, pants, shoes, or bag rather than near your face.
- **Add a flatter to the face.** If you wear a borrowed color, pair it with a scarf, top layer, lipstick, or jewelry in your true palette. The color near your face is what matters.

THE EXCEPTION: TRUE NEUTRALS AT THE EDGES

Cream, ivory, soft taupe, navy, and certain greys can cross seasonal lines more easily than colored pieces. A warm ivory works for nearly everyone except True Winters; a cool charcoal works for nearly everyone except True Springs. Use neutrals as your bridges.

17 · Building Your Personal Color Wardrobe

Knowing your season isn't the end — it's the start of dressing with intention. Here's how to apply it without overhauling your closet.

Step 1 · Audit what you own

Spend an afternoon pulling out everything in your closet. Sort it into three piles:

- **Compliments pile:** things people praise when you wear them, things that photograph well, things that make you feel like yourself.
- **Neutral pile:** fine, fits, no strong reaction either way.
- **Mistake pile:** items that never get worn, never get compliments, or always make you look "off."

You'll probably notice that the compliments pile shares a color story — and that story is usually your seasonal palette. The mistakes pile usually clusters in colors from a season far from yours.

Step 2 · Identify your foundation neutrals

Every wardrobe needs three to five core neutrals — colors that play well together and pair with every accent. Yours come straight from your palette. A Light Spring's neutrals are ivory, warm stone, camel, light navy. A Deep Winter's are pure white, black, charcoal, deep navy.

Step 3 · Choose three signature accent colors

From your palette, pick three colors that excite you. These become the colors of your knitwear, your statement coats, your tops, your bags. Returning to the same three or four accents (in different garments and finishes) is what creates a sense of personal style.

Step 4 · Replace, don't overhaul

Don't throw out your wardrobe. As pieces wear out, replace them with versions in your palette. Within 18 months, your closet will have quietly aligned itself.

Step 5 · Treat color as a wearable signature

Color is one of the easiest ways to be remembered. If you become the person who wears terracotta, or the person who wears soft mauves, or the person who wears jewel tones — you've built recognizable style without having to follow trends. Trends rotate every six months; your colors don't change for life.

A note on hair color

The colors that flatter you most are calibrated against your *natural* hair. If you color your hair, you can shift your season slightly — going blonder (lightens your palette), going darker (deepens it), going warmer or cooler. A good colorist can take you to a more flattering version of your existing season or, occasionally, into an adjacent one. They cannot move you across the wheel — a True Winter with bleached blonde hair still has Winter skin.

18 · A Final Word

Color analysis is a vocabulary, not a verdict.

The point of all this — the seasons, the undertones, the foundation charts, the lipstick grids — isn't to give you rules. It's to give you *language*. Once you can name why something works ("this top has the same warmth and clarity as my eyes"), you can choose better. You stop buying things hoping they'll work and start buying things because you already know they will.

You'll also start seeing it everywhere. The way a friend lights up in a particular shade of green. The way a movie costume designer dressed an actress in her exact palette to make a scene feel right. The way fashion ads gather a model's tones around her and you suddenly understand why the image works.

Color theory is one of the oldest aesthetic tools we have, and personal color analysis is one of the most generous ways to use it. The goal isn't perfection. It's harmony — the quiet satisfaction of standing in front of the mirror and recognizing yourself.

Wear your colors. Borrow gently. Break the rules when you want to. And remember: the most flattering thing on anyone is the look of a person who feels at home in what they're wearing.

A SUMMARY CARD TO KEEP

- Find your **undertone** first. Run three tests. Trust the pattern.
- Find your **dominant dimension** next — warm, cool, light, deep, bright, soft.
- Layer in your **secondary dimension** to land in one of the 12 seasons.
- Drape colors against your bare face in daylight to confirm.
- Build a wardrobe around **three neutrals and three accents** from your palette.
- Choose makeup by **undertone first, shade second** — and always test in daylight.
- Borrow from neighboring seasons. Be cautious with distant ones.
- Style is yours. Color is just the canvas underneath it.

Made with care, for anyone learning to see themselves clearly.