

The Ray-Ban Sunglasses: Stylish Eyewear [B2]

Ideati per garantire la protezione dei piloti militari, gli occhiali da sole Ray-Ban sono rapidamente entrati a far parte della cultura popolare. Combinano stile e funzionalità, conferendo a chi li indossa una personalità unica.

Sunglasses are an ancient idea, but a modern fashion phenomenon. Like other premium brands, Ray-Bans are worn as much for their stylish look as the practical protection they offer from the sun. A pair of these iconic American shades can cost you anything from a couple of hundred to over three thousand dollars.

SNOW GOGGLES

The earliest sunglasses were created for [snow blindness](#). In ancient times, the Inuit, an indigenous people of the Arctic region, wore [goggles](#) made of [driftwood](#), bone or [walrus ivory](#) with [slits](#) cut into them to protect their eyes. In the 12th century, Chinese opticians made their own sunglasses using the [gemstone smoky quartz](#).

HIGHER GOALS

The story of modern sunglasses begins in the United States. Founded in Rochester, New York in 1853, Bausch & Lomb made precision optical equipment, including eye glasses, telescopes and camera lenses. As pilots were vulnerable to the [glare](#) of sunlight, the company became a [trusted supplier](#) to the US Air Force. As technology improved, and planes flew higher, the need for eye protection became more urgent.

THE AVIATOR

In 1929, Bausch & Lomb began work with veteran pilot John A. Macready to create sunglasses that reduced the [dazzle](#) of the stratosphere, and prevented the pilot's [goggles](#) from [misting up](#). These anti-glare glasses had plastic [frames](#) and green lenses the shape of [teardrops](#). In 1937, they went on sale to civilians under the name 'Ray-Ban sunglasses', so-called because they reduced UV and infra-red rays [harmful](#) to the eyes. In 1939, relaunched with a metal frame, they were named the Ray-Ban Aviator.

RETRO-CHIC

Almost unheard of until the 1920s, by the late 1930s sunglasses were a must-have product. In the US, around twenty million pairs were sold in 1937. Ray-Ban looked for celebrity [endorsement](#), and Hollywood was quick to bring their style to the big-screen. The music world quickly followed. The Ray-Ban [Wayfarer](#) with its trapezoidal lenses and shiny [rivets](#), was introduced in 1952 and worn by high-profile figures like James Dean, Audrey Hepburn and John F. Kennedy. The Ray-Ban Clubmaster, launched in the 1980s, was another bestseller; these [drew on](#) a 1950s intellectual look affiliated with cultural rebels such as Malcolm X. The 1990s brought [wraparound](#) styles, and further luxury models followed.

WHO ARE YOU?

In 1999, Bausch & Lomb sold Ray-Ban to Italy's Luxottica Group, which launched a brand-new [Wayfarer](#) model [two years on](#). However, the original Aviator, [Wayfarer](#) and Clubmaster remained in high demand, and continue to shape popular culture today. Enigmatic yet assertive, they can [conceal](#), reveal or transform character: stylish rebel, [high-flyer](#), [cool cat](#), intrepid explorer, good cop or bad cop; wear a pair of Ray-Bans, and choose your own identity.

Glossary

- **driftwood** = legname
- **walrus ivory** = avorio di tricheco
- **glare** = luccichio
- **two years on** = due anni dopo
- **goggles** = occhiali protettivi
- **shades** = occhiali da sole
- **slits** = fessure
- **frames** = montature
- **Wayfarer** = viandante
- **wraparound** = avvolgente
- **conceal** = nascondere
- **Bans** = proibire, vietare
- **gemstone** = gemma, pietra preziosa
- **smoky quartz** = quarzo affumicato
- **trusted supplier** = fornitore di fiducia
- **dazzle** = bagliore
- **drew on** = ispirarsi
- **cool cat** = figo
- **snow blindness** = cecità dovuta alla neve
- **teardrops** = lacrime
- **harmful** = dannosi
- **endorsement** = sponsorizzazione
- **rivets** = rivetti
- **high-flyer** = persona in gamba
- **misting up** = appannarsi