

# SPICE WORLD

The title 'SPICE WORLD' is written in a large, bold, pink, blocky font. Several small, colorful stars (yellow, light blue, green, and purple) are scattered around the letters. A green circular graphic with a smiley face is positioned to the right of the word 'WORLD'.

*The story from A-Z of the world's biggest female music group.*



BY HANNAH ZIPF

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## INTRODUCTION

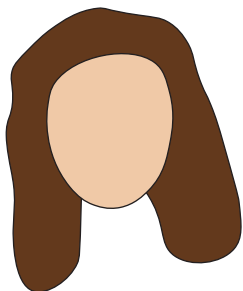
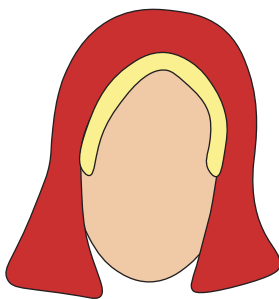
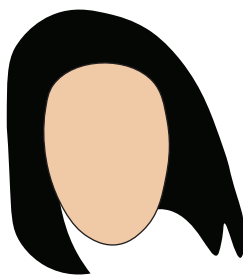
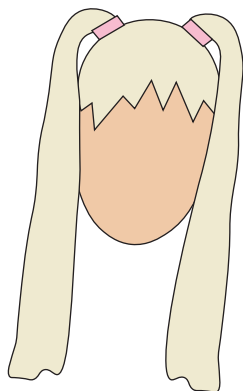
The Spice Girls were the first major British pop music phenomenon of the mid-'90s to not have a debt to independent pop/rock. Instead, the all-female quintet derived from the dance-pop tradition that made them the most popular British group of the early '90s, but there was one crucial difference. Spice Girls used dance-pop as a musical base, but they infused the music with a fiercely independent, feminist stance that was equal parts Madonna, post-riot grrrl alternative rock feminism, co-opting of the

“GOOD  
TIMES  
ALL THE  
TIME”

stance of England's new lad culture. Their all-girl image and catchy dance-pop appealed to younger crowds. Their colorful, sexy personalities and sense of humor appealed to older music fans, making Spice Girls a cross-generational success. They were chart-toppers in Europe in 1996, before concentrating in the U.S. in 1997.

# A UNIQUE IDENTITY

Every member of Spice Girls was given a specific identity by the British press from the outset. Each label was an extension of their own personality and a marketing tool. Geri Estelle Halliwell was named "ginger Spice"; Melanie Janine Brown was "scary Spice"; Victoria Adams was "posh Spice"; Melanie Chisholm was "sporty Spice"; Emma Lee Bunton was "baby Spice." Each persona was exploited in the group's press articles and videos, which helped send "Wannabe" to the top of the charts upon its summer release in 1996. Each girl was active in England's entertainment industry before coming together. They all responded to an ad requesting five "lively girls" for a musical group in 1993. A manager chose each member of Spice Girls, but they rejected his plans and set out together on their own.



# STEPPING INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

For the next two years, the girls fought to get a record contract. Most record labels insisted the band pick one member as leader, which they refused. Eventually, Spice Girls signed a contract to Virgin Records. They were without a manager which made recording a debut album nearly impossible. All five members moved into a house and searched for a manager. By the end of 1995, the group had signed with Annie Lennox's manager Simon Fuller, and began writing songs with Elliot Kennedy. Their first single "Wannabe" was released in summer 1996. "Wannabe" became the first debut single by an all-female band to enter the British charts at number one. It remained there for seven weeks. By the end of the year it had hit number one in 21 other countries. Following the success of "Wannabe," Spice Girls became media icons in Britain. All of this helped to further their careers. Their second single, "Say You'll Be There," entered the charts at number one in the fall, selling 200,000 copies a week.

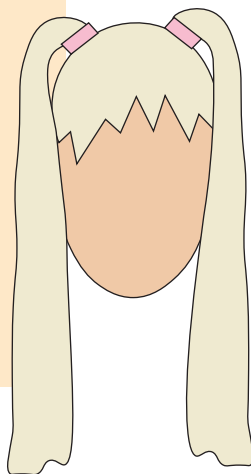


# BABY SPICE

**B**orn on January 21, 1976, in North London to a milkman dad and karate instructor mom, Emma loved to perform in front of her family.

**“I REMEMBER DANCING AROUND THE FRONT ROOM PRETENDING TO BE ONE OF THE SUPREMES”**

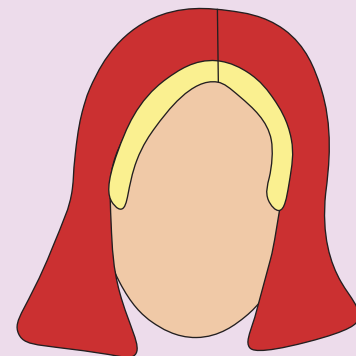
she once recalled. At four she asked her mom for dancing lessons, which were paid for by her modelling work. She earned a scholarship to London's Sylvia Young Theatre School and continued her training with a degree in performing arts. After finishing her studies, Emma landed small roles in *The Bill* and *EastEnders*, making it down to the last six for the role of Bianca in the latter, a part which eventually went to Patsy Palmer. She eventually answered a call to become a member of the Spice Girls. At 18 she was the youngest of the group and dubbed the name Baby Spice.



# GINGER SPICE

**G**eraldine Halliwell was born on August 6, 1972, to a Spanish mother and a half-Swedish, half-English father. After high school, she travelled round Europe, picking up jobs as a dancer, a TV hostess, a model, an aerobics teacher and waitress. Fame on a large scale eluded her until she answered a small ad in 1997 for a girl music group. After the group split, she sold her Spice Girls' memorabilia at Sotheby's, raising \$250,000 for charity in the process and was asked to be a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations, freeing her from her old Ginger Spice image. In 1999, her first solo single was released, entitled "Look At Me." Of all the five girls, Geri has had least luck in the love stakes. She is said to have dated Robbie Williams, who was once linked with Sporty Spice. In 2006, she gave birth to her daughter after a brief romance with British screen writer Sacha Gervasi.

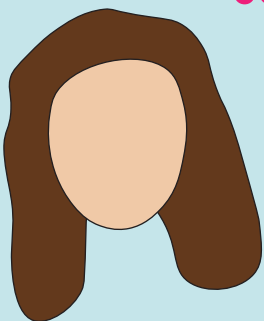
**“WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IS THAT I CAN NEVER SAY NEVER.”**



It was inevitable that Melanie Jayne Chisholm, born in Widnes, Cheshire, on January 12, 1974, would have a career in showbiz. Her mother was a singer with a rock band and as a youngster Mel would attend her gigs. "I thought all mums were singers when I was a kid," she recalls. "I was so proud of her. I used to love seeing her on that stage." Mel soon realised she wanted to perform, too, even though she lacked confidence. Naturally sporty, she trained in ballet as well as karate, and initially went down the dance route, getting accepted at The Doreen Bird Dance School in Kent when she was 16.

She nearly missed the audition for Spice Girls due to sickness. She became known for doing back-flips across the stage. She was called Sporty Spice in recognition of her tomboyish image. She was also recognised as the best singer of the five. After nine UK number-one singles and two number-one albums, the girls went their separate ways. Looking back on her time with the group, Mel C says she fell victim to eating disorders in an effort to maintain her public image, and suffered from depression.

“I WAS LIVING OFF ADRENALINE AND WASN'T TAKING CARE OF MYSELF.”



## SPORTY SPICE

Melanie Janine Brown was always a live wire. Born on May 29, 1975, she grew up in a mixed-race household in England and was the daughter of Andrea and Martin, who were formerly from the Caribbean island of Nevis. As a young girl, the wannabe pop star frequently skipped school to attend auditions and dance rehearsals. After studying performing arts in high school, Brown went on to become a songwriter, dancer, actress and author. She sang "Greatest Love of All" at her Spice Girls audition after responding to the newspaper ad. The group enjoyed incredible success. Melanie was known as Mel B and Scary Spice. In 1998, Mel married dancer Jimmy Gulzar, and became pregnant with the couple's daughter. Their relationship ran into trouble, however, and a year later they went their separate ways.

“THE WAY I LIVE MY LIFE IS ON SPONTANEITY”



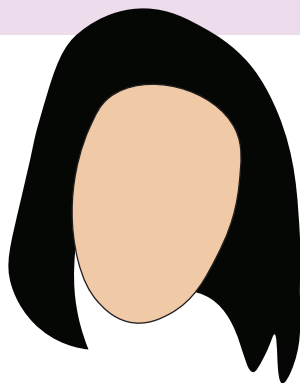
Meanwhile, in 2000, the Spice Girls continued recording and performing together but in February 2001 they finally announced their split. Mel enjoyed a degree of solo success following the group's break-up, snagging the number one spot with Missy Elliot R&B collaboration I Want You Back. She also released her first solo album Hot and afterwards relocated to Los Angeles. Although she released another album, LA State Of Mind in 2005, Mel's interests were moving on. Looking to new horizons, she ventured into presenting and is highly sought after as a talent search judge across the globe. She has appeared on America's Got Talent, The Voice Kids in Australia and the X Factor in Britain.

## SCARY SPICE

# POSH SPICE

**V**ictoria Adams was born April 17, 1974. She wanted to be a star from the age of eight after seeing the film 'Fame'. Victoria attended Jason Theatre School in London where she studied until she was 17. She then moved on to Laine Arts Theatre College in Surrey, taking dancing lessons on the side. She answered a magazine ad looking for five girls who could sing and dance. It was her ticket to fame. The female quintet went on to become The Spice Girls. The girls were all given nicknames. Victoria was known as the 'Posh Spice' because of her refined attitude and designer clothes. In 1997, The Spice Girls were at the peak of their popularity and starred in their own movie Spiceworld. Victoria then met football player David Beckham and today they have 4 children. In 2006 she created her DVB fashion label. It was named brand of the year at the Brit Fashion Awards. Her collection has grown as major celebrities.

**“I DREAMED OF MY OWN CLOTHING LINE BEFORE I WAS A SPICE GIRL”**



# TRENDSETTERS

**T**he Spice Girls celebrated DIY fashion: hair streaks, ribbons, scrunchies, crop tops and Union Jack. They represented a style that any girl could relate to and epitomised 90s fashion. As Anna Wintour said when she put them on the 1998 cover of US Vogue,

**“LOVE THEM OR HATE THEM, THEY HIT A NERVE.”**

Each Spice had an individual identity that was an exaggeration of her personality, each playing up to their characters. From Mel C's Liverpool football shirts and Emma Bunton's pastel dresses and high ponytails, to Victoria's LBD and Mel B's leopard print catsuits, Simon Fuller, a manager, recognised the new dawn of image-control and product placement within media. He promoted the band as a branded commodity represented by their clothing. In 1998, Ginger Spice's Union Jack dress was auctioned at Sotheby's for charity, bought by Peter Morton on behalf of the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas for \$66,214.

## ANIMAL PRINT

Calvin Klein, Tom Ford and Victoria Beckham all paid homage to animal print in their respective autumn/winter 2018 shows, but Mel B was early to the game on this one, always showing a committed propensity towards leopard and zebra prints.

## FEMINIST MESSAGING

Long before Maria Chiuri Grazia launched her 'We should all be feminists' cult T-shirt, the Spice Girls were singing about girl power and female solidarity, politics and ideals that they often communicated via their clothes.

## RETRO SPORTSWEAR

Get off the overground at Peckham Rye on a Saturday night, head into the Bussey Building and you'll see that pretty much everyone under 25 is dressed like Mel C, complete with retro branded sportswear. Not all go in for the full tracksuit combo so popular with Mel, but the rise of athleisure is undeniable.

## LITTLE BLACK DRESS

Victoria Beckham appreciated the value in a classic look. Her signature style was a little black dress and fuss-free strappy heels. She always very sophisticated and was the only Spice member to show an understanding that sometimes less is more.

## DAD SNEAKERS

An extension of the athleisure trend, dad trainers are now officially a thing. Balenciaga's chunky, futuristic styles never stay in stock for long, and are often seen on the feet of fashion editors and influencers. Mel C saw the potential in the spongy, colourful shoes long before the luxury fashion world did.



# AWARDS

- ★ Brit Song of the Year, *Wannabe*, 1997
- ★ Billboard Award Top New Artist, 1997
- ★ Billboard Award Top 200, *Spice*, 1997
- ★ American Award Favorite Pop Album, *Spice*, 1998
- ★ American Music Award Favorite Pop Artist, 1998
- ★ Juno Award Album of the Year, *Spice*, 1998
- ★ American Music Award Favorite Group, 1998
- ★ Capital FM, London's Favorite Concert, 1999
- ★ Juno Best Selling Album, *Spice*, 1999
- ★ Brit Awards, Music Contribution, 2000

# TOP HITS

- ★ *Wannabe*, 1996
- ★ *2 Become 1*, 1996
- ★ *Viva Forever*, 1997
- ★ *Stop*, 1997
- ★ *Too Much*, 1997
- ★ *Spice Up Your Life*, 1997
- ★ *Say You'll Be There*, 1999
- ★ *Goodbye*, 2000

# LEGACY

- Despite their cartoon qualities, there was a sense of realism and vulnerability to the Spice Girls. They were feisty, emotional and wore their hearts on their PVC sleeves, leaving behind a lasting legacy and a cultural stamp on Britain. Their attitude was borderline anarchic, their music was unapologetically camp but their message was always clear; girls rule. Yet the most extraordinary thing about the Spice Girls is not the lightning flash of their success, but its peculiar longevity. They have built an unwavering audience. Members of the Spice Girls generation are the only people in history to have both grown up with the internet and to retain childhood memories that predate it. Born primarily in the mid-to-late 1980s, they are human bridges between two eras. In 2019, they embarked on their reunion tour. Though Victoria Beckham declined to participate. They are currently planning a 25th anniversary tour for 2021.



