

= Bikini =

A bikini is a two-piece swimsuit with a bra top and underwear. Bikini bottoms can range from full pelvic coverage to a thong or G-string.

The name for the bikini design was coined in 1946 by Parisian engineer Louis Réard, the designer of the bikini. He named the swimsuit after Bikini Atoll, where testing on the atomic bomb was taking place. Fashion designer Jacques Heim, also from Paris, released a similar design earlier that same year, the Atome.

More revealing than a one-piece swimsuit, the bikini was slow to be adopted, and in many countries it was banned from beaches and public places. The Vatican declared it sinful. While still considered risqué, the bikini gradually became a part of popular culture when film stars like Brigitte Bardot, Raquel Welch, Ursula Andress and others began wearing them on public beaches and in film.

The bikini design had become common in Western countries by the mid-1960s as beachwear, swimwear and underwear. By the late 20th century it had also become common as sportswear, particularly in sports such as beach volleyball and bodybuilding. By the early 2000s bikinis had become a US \$ 811 million business annually, and boosted spin-off services such as bikini waxing and sun tanning.

= Etymology and terminology =

While the two-piece swimsuit as a design existed in classical antiquity, the modern design first attracted public notice in Paris on July 5, 1946. French mechanical engineer Louis Réard introduced a design he named the "bikini", taking the name from the Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean, which is Marshallese for coconut place. Four days earlier, the United States had initiated its first peacetime nuclear weapons test at Bikini Atoll as part of Operation Crossroads. Réard hoped his swimsuit's revealing style would create an "explosive commercial and cultural reaction" similar to the explosion at Bikini Atoll.

By making an inappropriate analogy with words like bilingual and bilateral containing the Latin prefix "bi-" (meaning "two" in Latin), the word bikini was first back-derived as consisting of two parts, [bi + kini] by Rudi Gernreich, who introduced the monokini in 1964. Later swimsuit designs like the tankini and trikini further cemented this false assumption. Over time the "kini family" (as dubbed by author William Safire), including the "kini sisters" (as dubbed by designer Anne Cole), expanded into a variety of swimwear, often with an innovative lexicon, including the monokini (also numokini or unikini), seekini, tankini, camikini, hikini (also hipkini), minikini, and microkini. The Language Report, compiled by lexicographer Susie Dent and published by the Oxford University Press (OUP) in 2003, considers lexicographic inventions like bandeaukini and camkini, two variants of the tankini, important to observe. Although "bikini" was originally a registered trademark of Réard, it has since become genericized.

Variations of the term are used to describe stylistic variations for promotional purposes and industry classifications, including monokini, microkini, tankini, trikini, pubikini, bandeaukini and skirtini. A man's brief swimsuit may also be referred to as a bikini. Similarly, a variety of men's and women's underwear types are described as bikini underwear.

= History =

= In antiquity =

Archaeologist James Mellaart described the earliest bikini-like costume in Çatalhöyük, Anatolia in the Chalcolithic era (around 5600 BC), where a mother goddess is depicted astride two leopards wearing a costume somewhat like a bikini. The two-piece swimsuit can be traced back to the Greco-Roman world, where bikini-like garments worn by women athletes

are depicted on urns and paintings dating back to 1400 BC .

In Coronation of the Winner , a mosaic in the floor of a Roman villa in Sicily that dates from the Diocletian period (286 ? 305 AD) , young women participate in weightlifting , discus throwing , and running ball games dressed in bikini @-@ like garments (technically bandeaukinis in modern lexicon) . The mosaic , found in the Sicilian Villa Romana del Casale , features ten maidens who have been anachronistically dubbed the " Bikini Girls " . Other Roman archaeological finds depict the goddess Venus in a similar garment . In Pompeii , depictions of Venus wearing a bikini were discovered in the Casa della Venere , in the tablinum of the House of Julia Felix , and in an atrium garden of Via Dell 'Abbondanza .

= = = Bikini precursors in the West = = =

Swimming or bathing outdoors was discouraged in the Christian West , so there was little demand or need for swimming or bathing costumes until the 18th century . The bathing gown of the 18th century was a loose ankle @-@ length full @-@ sleeve chemise @-@ type gown made of wool or flannel that retained coverage and modesty .

In 1907 , Australian swimmer and performer Annette Kellerman was arrested on a Boston beach for wearing form @-@ fitting sleeveless one @-@ piece knitted swimming tights that covered her from neck to toe , a costume she adopted from England , although it became accepted swimsuit attire for women in parts of Europe by 1910 . In 1913 , designer Carl Jantzen made the first functional two @-@ piece swimwear . Inspired by the introduction of females into Olympic swimming he designed a close @-@ fitting costume with shorts for the bottom and short sleeves for the top .

During the 1920s and 1930s , people began to shift from " taking in the water " to " taking in the sun " , at bathhouses and spas , and swimsuit designs shifted from functional considerations to incorporate more decorative features . Rayon was used in the 1920s in the manufacture of tight @-@ fitting swimsuits , but its durability , especially when wet , proved problematic . Jersey and silk were also sometimes used . By the 1930s , manufacturers had lowered necklines in the back , removed sleeves , and tightened the sides . With the development of new clothing materials , particularly latex and nylon , swimsuits gradually began hugging the body through the 1930s , with shoulder straps that could be lowered for tanning .

Women 's swimwear of the 1930s and 1940s incorporated increasing degrees of midriff exposure . Teen magazines of late 1940s and 1950s featured similar designs of midriff @-@ baring suits and tops . However , midriff fashion was stated as only for beaches and informal events and considered indecent to be worn in public . Hollywood endorsed the new glamor in films like Neptune 's Daughter in which Esther Williams wore provocatively named costumes such as " Double Entendre " and " Honey Child " .

Wartime production during World War II required vast amounts of cotton , silk , nylon , wool , leather , and rubber . In 1942 , the United States War Production Board issued Regulation L @-@ 85 , cutting the use of natural fibers in clothing and mandating a 10 % reduction in the amount of fabric in women 's beachwear . To comply with the regulations , swimsuit manufacturers removed skirt panels and other attachments , while increasing production of the two @-@ piece swimsuit with bare midriffs . At the same time , demand for all swimwear declined as there was not much interest in going to the beach , especially in Europe .

= = = Modern bikini = = =

With the fabric shortage still in place and in an endeavour to resurrect swimwear sales , two French designers ? Jacques Heim and Louis Réard ? almost simultaneously launched their new two @-@ piece swimsuit ranges in 1946 . Heim launched his two @-@ piece swimsuit in Paris which he called the atome , after the smallest known particle of matter . He advertised the Atome as the world 's " smallest bathing suit " . At about the same time , Louis Réard created a competing two @-@ piece swimsuit design , which he called the bikini .

Although briefer than the two @-@ piece swimsuits of the 1930s , the bottom of Heim 's new two

@-@ piece beach costume still covered the wearer 's navel . Réard 's bikini undercut Heim 's atome in its brevity . His initial design consisted of a bra and two triangular pieces of newspaper @-@ type print fabric connected by strips of material . He sliced the top off Heim 's bottoms . The Bikini , with a total area of 30 square inches (200 cm²) of cloth , was advertised as " smaller than the smallest swimsuit " . When he was unable to find a model willing to showcase his revealing design , Réard hired Micheline Bernardini , a 19 @-@ year old nude dancer from the Casino de Paris . Bernardini received 50 @, @ 000 fan letters , many of them from men .

Réard said that " like the [atom] bomb , the bikini is small and devastating " . Fashion writer Diana Vreeland described the bikini as the " atom bomb of fashion " . In advertisements he declared the swimsuit could not be a genuine bikini " unless it could be pulled through a wedding ring . " French newspaper Le Figaro wrote , " People were craving the simple pleasures of the sea and the sun . For women , wearing a bikini signaled a kind of second liberation . There was really nothing sexual about this . It was instead a celebration of freedom and a return to the joys in life . "

Heim 's atome was more attuned to the sense of propriety of the 1940s and a bigger hit than Réard 's design but Réard 's was the design that won the public 's imagination over time . Though Heim 's design was the first worn on the beach and sold more swimsuits , it was Réard 's description of the two @-@ piece swimsuit as a bikini that stuck . Modern bikinis were first made of cotton and jersey .

= = = Social resistance = = =

Despite the garment 's initial success in France , worldwide women still stuck to traditional one @-@ piece swimsuits , and , his sales stalling , Réard went back to designing and selling orthodox knickers . In 1950 , American swimsuit mogul Fred Cole , owner of mass market swimwear firm Cole of California , told Time that he had " little but scorn for France 's famed Bikinis . " Réard himself would later describe it as a " two @-@ piece bathing suit which reveals everything about a girl except for her mother 's maiden name . " Fashion magazine Modern Girl Magazine in 1957 stated that " it is hardly necessary to waste words over the so @-@ called bikini since it is inconceivable that any girl with tact and decency would ever wear such a thing " .

In 1951 , Eric Morley organized the Festival Bikini Contest , a beauty contest and swimwear advertising opportunity at that year 's Festival of Britain . The press , welcoming the spectacle , referred to it as Miss World , a name Morley registered as a trademark . The winner was Kiki Håkansson of Sweden , who was crowned in a bikini . After the crowning , Håkansson was condemned by the Pope , while Spain and Ireland threatened to withdraw from the pageant . In 1952 , bikinis were banned from the pageant and replaced by evening gowns . As a result of the controversy , the bikini was explicitly banned from many other beauty pageants worldwide . Though some regarded the bikini and beauty contests as bringing freedom to women , they were opposed by some feminists as well as religious and cultural groups who objected to the degree of exposure of the female body .

The bikini was banned on the French Atlantic coastline , Spain , Italy , Portugal and Australia , and was prohibited or discouraged in a number of US states . The United States Motion Picture Production Code , also known as the Hays Code , enforced from 1934 , allowed two @-@ piece gowns but prohibited the display of navels in Hollywood films . The National Legion of Decency , a Roman Catholic body guarding over American media content , also pressured Hollywood and foreign film producers to keep bikinis from being featured in Hollywood movies . As late as 1959 , Anne Cole , one of the United States ' largest swimsuit designers , said , " It 's nothing more than a G @-@ string . It 's at the razor 's edge of decency . " The Hays Code was abandoned by the mid @-@ 1960s , and with it the prohibition of female navel exposure , as well as other restrictions . The influence of the National Legion of Decency also waned by the 1960s .

= = = Rise to popularity = = =

Increasingly common glamour shots of popular actresses and models on either side of the Atlantic

played a large part in bringing the bikini into the mainstream . During the 1950s , Hollywood stars such as Ava Gardner , Rita Hayworth , Lana Turner , Elizabeth Taylor , Tina Louise , Marilyn Monroe , Esther Williams , and Betty Grable took advantage of the risqué publicity associated with the bikini by posing for photographs wearing them ? pin @-@ ups of Hayworth and Williams in costume were especially widely distributed in the United States . In 1950 , Elvira Pagã walked at the Rio Carnival , Brazil in a golden bikini , starting the bikini tradition of the carnival .

In Europe , 17 @-@ year @-@ old Brigitte Bardot wore scanty bikinis (by contemporary standards) in the French film *Manina , la fille sans voiles* (" Manina , the girl unveiled ") . The promotion for the film , released in France in March 1953 , drew more attention to Bardot 's bikinis than to the film itself . By the time the film was released in the United States in 1958 it was re @-@ titled *Manina , the Girl in the Bikini* . Bardot was also photographed wearing a bikini on the beach during the 1953 Cannes Film Festival . Working with her husband and agent Roger Vadim she garnered significant attention with photographs of her wearing a bikini on every beach in the south of France .

Similar photographs were taken of Anita Ekberg and Sophia Loren , among others . According to *The Guardian* , Bardot 's photographs in particular turned Saint @-@ Tropez into the beachwear capital of the world , with Bardot identified as the original Cannes bathing beauty . Bardot 's photography helped to enhance the public profile of the festival , and Cannes in turn played a crucial role in her career .

Brian Hyland 's novelty @-@ song hit " Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini " became a Billboard No. 1 hit during the summer of 1960 : the song tells a story about a young girl who is too shy to wear her new bikini on the beach , thinking it too risqué . Playboy first featured a bikini on its cover in 1962 ; the *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue* debut two years later featured Babette March in a white bikini on the cover .

Ursula Andress , appearing as Honey Rider in the 1962 British James Bond film , *Dr. No* , wore a white bikini , which became known as the " Dr. No bikini " . It became one of the most famous bikinis of all time and an iconic moment in cinematic and fashion history . Andress said that she owed her career to that white bikini , remarking , " This bikini made me into a success . As a result of starring in *Dr. No* as the first Bond girl , I was given the freedom to take my pick of future roles and to become financially independent . "

The bikini finally caught on , and by 1963 , the movie *Beach Party* , starring Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon , led a wave of films that made the bikini a pop @-@ culture symbol , though Funicello was barred from wearing Réard 's bikini unlike the other young females in the films . In 1965 , a woman told *Time* that it was " almost square " not to wear a bikini ; the magazine wrote two years later that " 65 % of the young set had already gone over " . Raquel Welch 's deer skin bikini in *One Million Years B.C.* , advertised as " mankind 's first bikini " , (1966) was later described as a " definitive look of the 1960s " . Her role wearing the leather bikini raised Welch to a fashion icon and the photo of her in the bikini became a best @-@ selling pinup poster .

Stretch nylon bikini briefs and bras complemented the adolescent boutique fashions of the 1960s , allowing those to be minimal . DuPont introduced lycra (DuPont 's name for spandex) in the same decade . Spandex expanded the range of novelty fabrics available to designers which meant suits could be made to fit like a second skin without heavy linings . " The advent of Lycra allowed more women to wear a bikini , " wrote Kelly Killoren Bensimon , a former model and author of *The Bikini Book* , " It didn 't sag , it didn 't bag , and it concealed and revealed . It wasn 't so much like lingerie anymore . " Increased reliance on stretch fabric led to simplified construction . It allowed designers to create the string bikini , and allowed Rudi Gernreich to create the topless monokini . Alternative swimwear fabrics such as velvet , leather , and crocheted squares surfaced in the early ' 70s .

= = = Mass acceptance = = =

Réard 's company folded in 1988 , four years after his death . By the end of the century , the bikini had become the most popular beachwear around the globe . According to French fashion historian Olivier Saillard , this was due to " the power of women , and not the power of fashion " . As he explains , " The emancipation of swimwear has always been linked to the emancipation of women " ,

though one survey indicates 85 % of all bikinis never touch the water . By 1988 the bikini made up nearly 20 % of swimsuit sales , more than any other model in the US , though one @-@ piece suits made a comeback during the 1980s and early 1990s .

In 1997 , Miss Maryland Jamie Fox became the first contestant in 50 years to compete in a two @-@ piece swimsuit at the Miss America Pageant . Actresses in action films like Blue Crush (2002) and Charlie 's Angels : Full Throttle (2003) made the two @-@ piece " the millennial equivalent of the power suit " , according to Gina Bellafonte of The New York Times ,

According to Beth Dincuff Charleston , research associate at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art , " The bikini represents a social leap involving body consciousness , moral concerns , and sexual attitudes . " By the early 2000s , bikinis had become a \$ 811 million business annually , according to the NPD Group , a consumer and retail information company , and had boosted spin @-@ off services like bikini waxing and the sun tanning industries .

= = = Outside the Western world = = =

The 1967 film An Evening in Paris is mostly remembered because it featured Bollywood actress Sharmila Tagore as the first Indian actress to wear a bikini on film . She also posed in a bikini for the glossy Filmfare magazine . The costume shocked a conservative Indian audience , but it also set in motion a trend carried forward by Zeenat Aman in Heera Panna (1973) and Qurbani (1980) , Dimple Kapadia in Bobby (1973) , and Parveen Babi in Yeh Nazdeekiyan (1982) .

Indian women wear bikinis when they vacation abroad or in Goa without the family . Despite the conservative ideas prevalent in India , bikinis have become more popular . In summer , when women take up swimming , often in a public space , a lot of tankinis , shorts and single @-@ piece swimsuits are sold . The maximum sales for bikinis happen in the winter , the honeymoon season .

By the end of the first decade of 21st century , the Chinese bikini industry became a serious international threat for the Brazilian bikini industry . Huludao , Liaoning , China set the world record for the largest bikini parade in 2012 , with 1 @,@ 085 participants and a photo shoot involving 3 @,@ 090 women .

For most parts of the Middle East , bikinis are either banned or is highly controversial . In 1966 , In 1973 , when Lebanese magazine Ash @-@ Shabaka printed a bikini @-@ clad woman on the cover they had to make a second version with only the face of the model . In 2011 , Huda Naccache (Miss Earth 2011) , when she posed for the cover of Lilac (based in Israel) became the first bikini @-@ clad Arab model on the cover of an Arabic magazine .

= = Bikini variants = =

While the name " bikini " was at first applied only to beachwear that revealed the wearer 's navel , today the fashion industry considers any two @-@ piece swimsuit a bikini . Modern bikini fashions are characterized by a simple , brief design : two triangles of fabric that form a bra and cover the woman 's breasts and a third that forms a panty cut below the navel that covers the groin and the buttocks .

Bikinis can and have been made out of almost every possible clothing material , and the fabrics and other materials used to make bikinis are an essential element of their design . Modern bikinis were first made of cotton and jersey . DuPont 's introduction of Lycra (spandex) in the 1960s completely changed how bikinis were designed and worn , as according to Kelly Killoren Bensimon , a former model and author of The Bikini Book , " the advent of Lycra allowed more women to wear a bikini ... it didn 't sag , it didn 't bag , and it concealed and revealed . It wasn 't so much like lingerie anymore . " Alternative swimwear fabrics such as velvet , leather , and crocheted squares surfaced in the early 1970s .

In a single fashion show in 1985 , there were two @-@ piece suits with cropped tank tops instead of the usual skimpy bandeaux , suits that resembled bikinis from the front and one @-@ pieces from the back , suspender straps , ruffles , and deep navel @-@ baring cutouts . Metal and stone jewelry pieces are now often used to dress up look and style according to tastes . To meet the fast

pace of demands , some manufacturers now offer made @-@ to @-@ order bikinis ready in as few as seven minutes . The world 's most expensive bikini was designed in February 2006 by Susan Rosen ; containing 150 carats (30 g) of diamond , it was valued at £ 20 million .

= = = Major variants = = =

Bikini variations have grown to include a large number of more or less revealing styles ? string bikinis , monokinis (topless or top and bottom connected) , Trikinis (three pieces instead of two) , tankinis (tank top , bikini bottom) , camikinis (camisole top , bikini bottom) , bandeaukini (bandeau top , bikini bottom) , skirtini (bikini top , skirt bottom) , " granny bikini " (bikini top , boy shorts bottom) , hikinis (also hipkini) , seekinis (transparent) , minikinis , microkinis , miniminis , slingshots (or suspender bikinis) , thong bottoms , tie @-@ sides (a variety of string bikini) and teardrops .

= = Bikini in sport = =

Bikinis have become a major component of marketing various women 's sports . It is an official uniform for beach volleyball and is widely worn in athletics and other sports . Sports bikinis have gained popularity since the 1990s . However , the trend has raised some criticism as an attempt to sell sex . Female swimmers do not normally wear bikinis in competitive swimming . The International Swimming Federation (FINA) voted to prohibit female swimmers from racing in bikinis in its meeting at Rome in 1960 .

= = = Beach volleyball = = =

In 1994 , the bikini became the official uniform of women 's Olympic beach volleyball . In 1999 , the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) standardized beach volleyball uniforms , with the bikini becoming the required uniform for women . That regulation bottom is called a " bun @-@ hugger " , and players names are often written on the back of the bottom .

The uniform made its Olympic debut at Sydney 's Bondi Beach in the 2000 Summer Olympics amid some criticism . It was the fifth largest television audience of all the sports at the 2000 Games . Much of the interest was because of the sex appeal of bikini @-@ clad players along with their athletic ability . Bikini @-@ clad dancers and cheerleaders entertain the audience during match breaks in many beach volleyball tournaments , including the Olympics . Even indoor volleyball costumes followed suit to become smaller and tighter .

However , the FIVB 's mandating of the bikini ran into problems . Some sports officials consider it exploitative and impractical in colder weather . It also drew the ire of some athletes . At the 2006 Asian Games at Doha , Qatar , only one Muslim country ? Iraq ? fielded a team in the beach volleyball competition because of concerns that the uniform was inappropriate . They refused to wear bikinis . The weather during the evening games in 2012 London Olympics was so cold that the players sometimes had to wear shirts and leggings . Earlier in 2012 , FIVB had announced it would allow shorts (maximum length 3 cm (1 @. @ 2 in) above the knee) and sleeved tops at the games . Richard Baker , the federation spokesperson , said that " many of these countries have religious and cultural requirements so the uniform needed to be more flexible " .

The bikini remains preferred by most players and corporate sponsors . Competitors Natalie Cook and Holly McPeak support the bikini as a practical uniform for a sport played on sand during the heat of summer . Olympic gold medal winner Kerry Walsh said , " I love our uniforms . " According to fellow gold medalist Misty May @-@ Treanor and Walsh it does not restrict movement .

A feminist viewpoint sees the bikini uniform as objectification of women athletes . US beach volleyball player Gabrielle Reece described the bikini bottoms as uncomfortable with constant " yanking and fiddling . " Many female beach volleyball players have suffered injuries by over @-@ straining the abdominal muscles while many others have gone through augmentation mammoplasty to look appealing in their uniforms . Australian competitor Nicole Sanderson said about match break

entertainment that " it 's kind of disrespectful to the female players . I 'm sure the male spectators love it , but I find it a little bit offensive . "

Sports journalism expert Dr. Kimberly Bissell conducted a study on the camera angles used during the 2004 Summer Olympic Games beach volleyball games . Bissell found that 20 % of the camera angles were focused on the women 's chests , and 17 % on their buttocks . Bissell theorized that the appearance of the players draws fans attention more than their actual athleticism . Sports commentator Jeanne Moos commented , " Beach volleyball has now joined go @-@ go girl dancing as perhaps the only two professions where a bikini is the required uniform . " British Olympian Denise Johns argues that the regulation uniform is intended to be " sexy " and to attract attention . Rubén Acosta , president of the FIVB , says that it makes the game more appealing to spectators .

= = = Bodybuilding = = =

From the 1950s to mid @-@ 1970s , men 's contest formats were often supplemented with women 's beauty contests or bikini shows . The winners earned titles like Miss Body Beautiful , Miss Physical Fitness and Miss Americana , and also presented trophies to the winners of the men 's contest . In the 1980s , the Ms Olympia competition started in the USA and in the UK the NABBA (National Amateur Body Building Association) renamed Miss Bikini International to Ms Universe . In 1986 , the Ms Universe competition was divided into two sections ? " physique " (for a more muscular physique) and " figure " (traditional feminine presentation in high heels) . In November 2010 the IFBBF (International Federation of BodyBuilding & Fitness) introduced a women 's bikini contest for women who do not wish to build their muscles to figure competition levels .

Costumes are regulation " posing trunks " (bikini briefs) for both men and women . Female bodybuilders in America are prohibited from wearing thongs or T @-@ back swimsuits in contests filmed for television , though they are allowed to do so by certain fitness organizations in closed events . For men , the dress code specifies " swim trunks only (no shorts , cut @-@ off pants , or Speedos) . "

= = = Other sports = = =

Women in athletics often wear bikinis of similar size as those worn in beach volleyball . Amy Acuff , a US high @-@ jumper , wore a black leather bikini instead of a track suit at the 2000 Summer Olympics . Runner Florence Griffith @-@ Joyner mixed bikini bottoms with one @-@ legged tights at the 1988 Summer Olympics , earning her more attention than her record breaking performance in the women 's 200 meters event . In the 2007 South Pacific Games , the rules were adjusted to allow players to wear less revealing shorts and cropped sports tops instead of bikinis . At the West Asian Games in 2006 , organizers banned bikini @-@ bottoms for female athletes and asked them to wear long shorts .

String bikinis and other revealing clothes are common in surfing , though most surfing bikinis are more robust with more coverage than sunning bikinis . Surfing Magazine printed a pictorial of Kymberly Herrin , Playboy Playmate March 1981 , surfing in a revealing bikini , and eventually started its annual bikini issue . The Association of Surfing Professionals often pairs female surf meets with bikini contests , an issue that divides the female pro @-@ surfing community into two parts . It has often been more profitable to win the bikini contest than the female surfing event .

= = Bikini body = =

In 1950 , American swimsuit mogul Fred Cole , owner of Cole of California , told Time that bikinis were designed for " diminutive Gallic women " , as because " French girls have short legs ... swimsuits have to be hiked up at the sides to make their legs look longer . " In 1961 , The New York Times reported the opinion that the bikini is permissible for people are not " too fat or too thin " . In the 1960s etiquette writer Emily Post decreed that " [A bikini] is for perfect figures only , and for the very young . " In The Bikini Book by Kelly Killoren Bensimon , swimwear designer Norma Kamali

says , " Anyone with a tummy " should not wear a bikini . Since then , a number of bikini designers including Malia Mills have encouraged women of all ages and body types to take up the style . The 1970s saw the rise of the lean ideal of female body and figures like Cheryl Tiegs . Her figure remained in vogue in the 21st century .

The fitness boom of the 1980s led to one of the biggest leaps in the evolution of the bikini . According to Mills , " The leg line became superhigh , the front was superlow , and the straps were superthin . " Women 's magazines used terms like " Bikini Belly " , and workout programs were launched to develop a " bikini @-@ worthy body " . The tiny " fitness @-@ bikinis " made of lycra were launched to cater to this hardbodied ideal . Movies like Blue Crush and TV reality shows like Surf Girls have merged the concepts of bikini models and athletes together , further accentuating the toned body ideal .

One survey commissioned by Diet Chef , a UK home delivery service , reported by Daily Mail and The Today Show and ridiculed by More magazine , showed that women should stop wearing bikinis by the age of 47 . Yearly Spring Break festivities , which mark the start of the bikini season in North America , trigger many with eating disorders because of the over @-@ promotion of the bikini body ideal .

In 1993 , Suzy Menkes , then Fashion Editor of the International Herald Tribune , suggested that women had begun to " revolt " against the " body ideal " and bikini " exposure . " She wrote , " Significantly , on the beaches as on the streets , some of the youngest and prettiest women (who were once the only ones who dared to bare) seem to have decided that exposure is over . " Nevertheless , professional beach volleyball player Gabrielle Reece , who competes in a bikini , claims that " confidence " alone can make a bikini sexy .

= = Bikini underwear = =

Certain types of underwear are described as bikini underwear and designed for men and women . For women , bikini or bikini @-@ style underwear is underwear that is similar in size and form to a regular bikini . It can refer to virtually any undergarment that provides less coverage to the midriff than traditional underwear , panties or knickers , especially suited to clothing such as crop tops . For men , bikini briefs are undergarments that are smaller and more revealing than men 's regular briefs . Men 's bikini briefs can be low- or high @-@ side that are usually lower than true waist , often at hips , and usually have no access pouch or flap , legs bands at tops of thighs . String bikini briefs have front and rear sections that meet in the crotch but not at the waistband , with no fabric on the side of the legs .

Swimwear and underwear have similar design considerations , both being form @-@ fitting garments . The main difference is that , unlike underwear , swimwear is open to public view . The swimsuit was , and is , following underwear styles , and at about the same time that attitudes towards the bikini began to change , underwear underwent a redesign towards a minimal , unboned design that emphasized comfort first .

= = History = =

As the swimsuit was evolving , the underwear started to change . Between 1900 and 1940 , swimsuit lengths followed the changes in underwear designs . In the 1920s women started discarding the corset , while the Cadole company of Paris started developing something they called the " breast girdle " . During the Great Depression , panties and bras became softly constructed and were made of various elasticized yarns making underwear fit like a second skin . By 1930s underwear styles for both women and men were influenced by the new brief models of swimwear from Europe . Although the waistband was still above the navel , the leg openings of the panty brief were cut in an arc to rise from the crotch to the hip joint . The brief served as a template for most all variations of panties for the rest of the century . Warner standardized the concept of Cup size in 1935 . The first underwire bra was developed in 1938 . Beginning in the late thirties skants , a type of skanty men 's briefs , were introduced , featuring very high @-@ cut leg openings and a lower

rise to the waistband . Howard Hughes designed the push @-@ up bra worn by Jane Russell in The Outlaw in 1943 . In 1950 Maidenform introduced the first official bust enhancing bra .

By the 1960s , the bikini swimsuit influenced panty styles and coincided with the cut of the new lower rise jeans and pants . In the seventies , with the emergence of skintight jeans , thong versions of the panty became mainstream , since the open , stringed back eliminated any tell @-@ tale panty lines across the rear and hips . By the 1980s the design of the French @-@ cut panty pushed the waistband back up to the natural waistline and the rise of the leg openings was nearly as high (French Cut panties come up to the waist , has a high cut leg , and usually are full in the rear) . As with the bra and other type of lingerie , manufacturers of the last quarter of the century marketed panty styles that were designed primarily for their sexual allure . From this decade sexualization and eroticization of the male body was on the rise . The male body was celebrated through advertising campaigns for brands such as Calvin Klein , particularly by photographers Bruce Weber and Herb Ritts . Male bodies and men 's undergarments were commodified and packaged for mass consumption , and swimwear and sportswear were influenced by sports photography and fitness . Over time , swimwear evolved from weighty wool to high @-@ tech skin @-@ tight garments , eventually cross @-@ breeding with sportswear , underwear and exercise wear , resulting in the interchangeable fashions of the 1990s .

= = Men 's bikini = =

The term men 's bikini is sometimes used to describe swim briefs . Men 's bikinis can have high or low side panels , and string sides or tie sides . Most lack a button or flap front . Unlike swim briefs , bikinis are not designed for drag reduction and generally lack a visible waistband . Suits less than 1 @.@ 5 inches wide at the hips are less common for sporting purposes and are most often worn for recreation , fashion , and sun tanning . The posing brief standard to bodybuilding competitions is an example of this style . Male punk rock musicians have performed on the stage wearing women 's bikini briefs . Former Australian prime minister Tony Abbott was a fitness fanatic noted for wearing " speedos " or " budgie smugglers " . The 2000 Bollywood film Hera Pheri shows men sunbathing in bikinis , who were mistakenly believed to be women from a distance .

Swimsuits shown in men 's wear collections by Giorgio Armani , Dolce & Gabbana and Paul Smith have tended to be throwbacks to the designs of the 1930s and ' 40s . Gianni Versace 's ads contain heroic depictions of Miami bathers . The Greek designer Nikos Apostolopoulos makes his bathing suits (for both sexes , but with the focus on the male) anatomical creations , cut and stitched to outline the body . Male bikini tops , a visual gag , also exist . A mankini is a type of sling swimsuit worn by men . The term is inspired by the word bikini . It was popularized by Sacha Baron Cohen when he donned one in the film Borat .

= = Bikini waxing = =

Bikini waxing is the epilation of pubic hair beyond the bikini line by use of waxing . The bikini line delineates the part of the pubic area covered by a swimsuit bottom . In the context of waxing , it is generally understood to describe any pubic hair visible beyond the boundaries of a swimsuit .

= = Bikini tan = =

The tan lines created by the wearing of a bikini while tanning are known as a bikini tan . A 1969 innovation of tan @-@ through swimwear uses fabric which is perforated with thousands of micro holes that are nearly invisible to the naked eye , but which let enough sunlight through to produce a line @-@ free tan .

As bikinis leave most of the body exposed to potentially dangerous UV radiation , overexposure can cause sunburn , skin cancer , as well as other acute and chronic health effects on the skin , eyes , and immune system . As a result , medical organizations recommend that bikini wearers protect themselves from UV radiation by using broad @-@ spectrum sunscreen , which has been shown to

protect against sunburn , skin cancer , wrinkling and sagging skin . Certain sunscreen ingredients can cause harm if they penetrate the skin over time .