MIND THE GAP: TINDER TACKLES THE SWAG GAP BY APPOINTING ITS FIRST DATE STYLIST

Tinder is stepping in to help singles bridge the "Swag Gap" by teaming up with celebrity stylist Rhea Francois as its First Date Stylist





Tinder is teaming up with stylist to the stars, Rhea Francois, to help young UK adults bridge the Swag Gap without losing their authentic style. This comes as new Tinder research highlights the “Swag Gap” - the style mismatch between two people when dating - and how it’s impacting connection for young UK singles.

Tinder surveyed 2,000 British adults aged 18-34 and found that nearly a third of young UK adults (29%) say they’ve cut a date short or decided against a second date altogether because they didn’t like how the other person dressed, even when the conversation or initial chemistry was good. This comes as six in ten (60%) say they notice a “Swag Gap” within the first twenty minutes of meeting.

It’s Not Just You, It’s Also Me

The “Swag Gap” is not just about their dates’s fashion choices, for many young UK singles it can shape how confident they feel showing up as themselves on a date. The research also revealed that 52% of respondents say choosing what to wear causes more stress than deciding what to talk about, while 59% admit they’ve changed an outfit multiple times before a date because they were worried about being “off-vibe”. More than half (56%)[1] also say they run their date outfits past their group chat for reassurance.

Over time, that pressure can chip away at authenticity. 27% of respondents say they’ve toned down their real style to better match a date’s perceived aesthetic, while 19% have left a date early simply because they felt out of place or underdressed.

And for those who don’t feel confident in their fashion sense, many look to make up for it in other ways, most commonly by leaning into their personality (50%), kindness (45%) and humour (44%) to make a strong impression.

Serving Looks Or Serving Confusion?

The “Swag Gap” is far from rare, with 45% of respondents saying they’ve either been in this type of relationship or know someone who has. And it’s not just harmless mismatch - nearly half (49%) admit they’ve felt less attracted to someone after seeing their outfit in real life, while over two-thirds (65%) say the way someone dresses speaks volumes about their personality and lifestyle.

When asked how they can tell someone is in a “Swag Gap” relationship, young UK adults admitted a few tell-tale signs:

- One person made a real effort, while the other didn’t even try (31%)
- One person shows up “date-ready”, the other is pure “sofa energy” (30%
- One person is ready for the met gala, while the other one is heading to a football match (29%) - resulting in a total energy clash
- The aesthetics clash – one’s polished, the other is doing the bare minimum (23%)

To help young singles bridge the “Swag Gap” and level up their style while still feeling like themselves, Tinder is teaming up with Rhea Francois – stylist to the stars and expert in turning first-date panic into confidence - to create a style checklist that helps take the guesswork out of dressing for a date.

Paul Brunson, Global Relationships Insight Expert at Tinder, said: “The Swag Gap isn’t about right or wrong fashion - it’s about how style shapes perception. Tinder’s research shows outfits are influencing dating decisions more than people realise. We want to help singles feel confident in what they wear, whether that means bridging the Swag Gap or embracing it and letting the contrast create chemistry.”

Rhea Francois, Tinder’s First Date Stylist, added: “You don’t need to dress like your date to impress them. Bridging the Swag Gap can be as simple as understanding the setting, owning your personal style and avoiding extremes. And sometimes, leaning into differences is exactly what makes a date memorable.”

Here are Rhea’s top tips for navigating the Swag Gap:

- **Start with fit, not flex**: well-tailored basics beat loud statements every time, especially on a first date.
- **Wear it in your profile**: include one photo on your Tinder profile where your style is clear (good lighting is key here).
- **Adjust, don’t audition**: evolve your look to invite connection, not to cosplay someone cooler than you.
- **Comfort is key:** If you are comfortable in what you’re wearing, you’ll feel more confident, leading to better connection.
- **Polish is the great equaliser**: clean shoes, intentional hair, and polish read as confidence online and in real life

Despite this, young Brits admit that a Swag Gap is fine if both people feel good (18%)[1] and that different styles can still mean shared values (17%). Showing that even if their real-life style feels miles apart from

Through this partnership Tinder is encouraging young singles to focus less on pairing aesthetics and more on making meaningful connections.

END

Notes to editors

[1] Research carried out by Censuswide between 30th January to 3rd February 2026 of 2,000 general respondents aged 18-34 years old in the UK

About Tinder

Launched in 2012, Tinder® revolutionized how people meet, growing from 1 match to one billion matches in just two years. This rapid growth demonstrates its ability to fulfill a fundamental human need: real connection. Today, the app has been downloaded over 630 million times, leading to over 100 billion matches, serving approximately 50 million users per month in 190 countries and 45+ languages - a scale unmatched by any other app in the category. In 2024, Tinder won four Effie Awards for its first-ever global brand campaign, “It Starts with a Swipe™”.

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