10 WINTER SWAPS

A FREE GUIDE FROM NORTH OF PARIS



Élise Haugen

FREE GUIDE

BONJOUR, MY DEAR FRIENDS

Warm first. Elegant always.

My mother came from Lyon. I spent thirty winters in Bergen, where it rains, freezes and rains again, and the sun sets before half past three in December.

So I learned two things. French women know how to look elegant. Norwegian women know how to stay warm. Most winter advice gives you one or the other. I want you to have both.

These are the ten swaps I would make first if I opened your wardrobe tomorrow. No shaming. You are allowed to be warm. You are allowed to be comfortable. We only make it look like a choice.

Stay warm, stay elegant.
À bientôt, Élise

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Every swap tells you four things

- ☐ **Stop**: the piece that quietly adds years in winter.
- ☐ **Instead**: what elegant French women wear, and a before-and-after picture of the same woman on the same day.
- ☐ **What changed**: the two or three changes that make the difference.
- ☐ **The rule**: one line to remember in front of your wardrobe.

You don't need to buy ten things

Start with the swap that annoys you most. That is usually the one that will change the most. Keep what you love for the garden, the dog walk and the heavy snow days.

The pictures

The photographs in this guide are illustrations made with AI, to show each change clearly on the same woman. The advice is real, and the clothes are the kind you can find in ordinary shops.

A long, matte coat



A puffer that stops at the hip ends exactly at the widest part of you, and the shine catches every light in the room. From behind, it turns a woman into a box. Keep the down, because down is wonderful. Just choose it long and quiet.

WHAT CHANGED

1. Length below the knee, so the coat becomes one long column
2. Matte fabric instead of glossy
3. Shape at the waist: a belt or a stitched line that curves in

THE RULE

Your walking coat can be a puffer. Your everything coat should not.

> *Keep the short puffer for the dog walk. Elegance is mostly knowing which coat is for which door.*
>
> — ÉLISE

A finer scarf, looped once



Two metres of chunky wool wound three times hides the best thing you have, which is your face. It warms the throat no better than a fine scarf, and it makes the head look as if it sits on a pillow.

WHAT CHANGED

1. Cashmere, merino, or silk lined with wool
2. Long enough to loop once and let the ends fall
3. A colour that makes you look rested, chosen like a lipstick

THE RULE

If you cannot see your earrings, the scarf is too big.

> *My mother's rule, from Lyon. Stand at the mirror with your scarf on. If all you see is wool and a pair of eyes, unwind it once.*
>
> — ÉLISE

Black away from the face



Black is easy and slimming, and it never argues. But in winter light, black from head to toe can make a woman over sixty look severe, and the shadows under the eyes look deeper. Beige is not the answer either.

WHAT CHANGED

1. Navy, camel, burgundy, chocolate or winter white near the face
2. Keep black for trousers and boots
3. Something with light in it at the collar

THE RULE

Black below the waist, light near the face.

> *A cream coat on a grey day is a small act of courage, and people notice. Try one on before you say you could never.*
>
> — ÉLISE

A fine knit over a thin wool layer



The big cable knit feels like a hug, but under a coat it doubles your shape. Arms look heavier, the chest looks wider, and the coat pulls across the back. Warmth does not come from thickness. It comes from layers that trap warm air.

WHAT CHANGED

1. Fine merino or cashmere instead of a thick knit
2. A thin wool layer underneath (see the wool rule)
3. Wool, cashmere or a wool blend, not one hundred percent acrylic

THE RULE

Lift your arms in your coat. If it strains, the sweater is too thick for that coat.

> *Check the label in the shop. Acrylic looks tired by February. Wool lasts ten winters.*
>
> — ÉLISE

A boiled-wool jacket



Fleece is wonderful in the garden and on the early dog walk. In town, at lunch or at church, it says you gave up on getting dressed today, and after one winter it pills and looks ten years old.

WHAT CHANGED

1. Boiled wool: as warm as fleece, and it doesn't pill the same way
2. A proper collar
3. Navy, grey or camel, with a fine knit underneath

THE RULE

Fleece for the garden. Wool for town.

> *A boiled-wool jacket works inside a cold house too. Nobody will guess you are dressed for warmth first.*
>
> — ÉLISE

Slim boots with a real grip sole



Snow boots are made for snowdrifts and mountain cabins. In the supermarket or at a nice lunch they make the feet look enormous and cut the leg off at the calf.

WHAT CHANGED

1. A slim leather Chelsea, suede ankle boot or riding boot
2. A rubber sole with real tread: look underneath first
3. A low, wide heel or none at all

THE RULE

Elegant on top, sensible underneath.

> *Buy boots in the afternoon, and bring the wool socks you will really wear. Keep the big snow boots by the door for the heavy days.*
>
> — ÉLISE

A beret, a cloche or a wide headband



Pulled down to the eyebrows, a beanie flattens the hair, hides the forehead and makes the face look smaller and older. And when it comes off inside, we all know what happens to the hair.

WHAT CHANGED

1. A wool beret worn slightly back, showing the hairline
2. Or a soft wool cloche with a small brim
3. Or a wide knitted headband: warm ears, hair left alone

THE RULE

Show your hairline. Match the hat to the scarf.

> *After the hat comes off: wet fingertips through the ends, then lift at the roots. Ten seconds in the hallway mirror.*
>
> — ÉLISE

Wool trousers or dark straight jeans



Thin leggings on their own in winter are cold, they show every line, and with a short top they look like you came straight from the gym. Leggings are not the enemy. They belong under things.

WHAT CHANGED

1. Straight or slightly wide wool trousers to the top of the shoe
2. Or dark straight jeans with a merino layer underneath
3. If you keep leggings: thick and matte, a long knit over the hips, a long coat

THE RULE

One long line from the waist to the shoe.

> *Wool trousers with a thin wool layer underneath are warmer than leggings, and the leg looks long and steady.*
>
> — ÉLISE

One velvet piece and a brooch



Wear the reindeer with love on Christmas morning if your grandchildren gave it to you. But as your holiday outfit, in every photograph for the next ten years, it turns you into a costume.

WHAT CHANGED

1. One festive thing, never five
2. A velvet top or jacket in bottle green or burgundy
3. An old brooch near the shoulder, maybe your mother's

THE RULE

Your festive touch should tell a story, not a joke.

> *Velvet is warm, it catches candlelight, and it looks expensive even when it is not.*
>
> — ÉLISE

Colour at the face in winter light



In Bergen in December there are only about six hours of daylight, and most of them are grey. That light is flat and cool and pulls the colour out of a face. Grey hair, grey coat, grey sky, and a lovely woman suddenly looks exhausted.

WHAT CHANGED

1. One colour near the face: a scarf, a collar or a hat
2. Silver and white hair: rose, raspberry, teal, cornflower blue
3. Warm or golden hair: coral, rust, warm red, camel

THE RULE

Not sure? A clear, soft rose works on almost everyone.

> *Tomorrow, by the window: hold a grey scarf under your chin, then rose, then teal. One will make you look ill. One will make you look like yourself again.*
> — ÉLISE

THE SECRET THAT MAKES THE TEN WORK

Ull innerst: wool closest to the skin

The warmest thing a woman can wear in winter is thinner than a silk scarf. In Norway, children learn this rule before they can tie their shoes, and the Norwegian Trekking Association teaches it on every winter trip: wool against the skin, then a warm middle layer, then the coat.

A thin layer of fine merino keeps you warm even when you get a little damp from walking or from a hot shop, and fine merino does not itch the way old wool did.

Here is why it matters for elegance. When the warmth is underneath, everything on top can be thin: the fine sweater, the tailored jacket, the long coat that falls straight.

Your winter foundation

- [ ] One long-sleeved merino top, in skin colour or black
- [ ] One pair of merino leggings, to wear under trousers
- [ ] Wool socks you would actually wear with your good boots

DO THIS TOMORROW MORNING

The winter mirror test

Ten minutes at the hall mirror, near a window, in daylight. Tick each one as you go.

- [ ] Coat on: does it stop at the hip, or fall in a long line?
- [ ] Scarf on: can you see your earrings?
- [ ] What colour sits under your chin? Try grey, then rose, then teal.
- [ ] Lift your arms in your coat. Does it strain across the back?
- [ ] Look at your boots from the side. Do they cut the leg at the calf?
- [ ] Hat on, then off. What happens to your hair?
- [ ] Is there one piece of velvet, or one brooch, waiting in a drawer?
- [ ] What do you wear closest to your skin?

Write down the two swaps that surprised you most. Those are your first two.

WANT THE WHOLE WINTER?

North of Paris: the books

These ten swaps come from *The Winter Style Book for Women Over 60*: your shape and colours in winter light, the wool rule, a 20-piece winter wardrobe, 30 winter outfits and every occasion from Christmas dinner to the airport.

One book

$27

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THE FINE PRINT

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About Élise. Élise Haugen is the AI-created host of the North of Paris channel. Her stories are told for warmth. The advice is real.

Sources. Bergen daylight in December: timeanddate.com/astronomy/norway/bergen · Wool closest to the skin: Norwegian Trekking Association (dnt.no) · Hermès silk carré since 1937: sothebys.com.

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