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The
STYLE
STRATEGY

A LESS-IS-MORE
APPROACH TO STAYING CHIC
AND SHOPPING SMART

Nina Garcia

New York Times bestselling author of THE ONE HUNDRED and THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK OF STYLE, and from the hit show PROJECT RUNWAY

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The Style Strategy: A Less-Is-More Approach to Staying Chic and Shopping Smart

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From Nina Garcia—fashion judge on Bravo's hit *Project Runway* and the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The One Hundred* and *The Little Black Book of Style*—comes *Style Strategy*: a perfect primer on achieving the best fashion look possible, with a strong emphasis on saving money in the process.

The Style Strategy: A Less-Is-More Approach to Staying Chic and Shopping Smart Details

Date : Published August 25th 2009 by It Books (first published 2009)

ISBN : 9780061834011

Author : Nina García

Format : Hardcover 192 pages

Genre : Couture, Fashion, Nonfiction



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Dorothy says

This book was a very fun read and had lots of good tips for strategic shopping and maintenance of quality clothing. At the end of the book there is a handy list of stores and websites for every budget that the author favors. This book is a must-have for the bookshelves of ladies who want to live green and spend responsibly while maintaining great style and paying attention to trends!

Polly says

This is a very weird and disorganized book. At a guess, I'd say her publishers wanted another book, she grabbed many pages of random notes and threw them together to make a book. That's how it reads, anyway. One minute you seem to be embarking on a list of nice-but-not-necessary shoes and boots to have, and then suddenly she starts going on about how great trench coats are. Theoretically, this is one of those "evaluate what you have, fix/discard/alter, then buy" style plans, but it just doesn't work. The only decent thing about it is the list of recommended websites in the back. I expect style books to either be fun or helpful (and ideally both), and this is neither.

Suzanne says

I have completed Nina Garcia's 4-volume tome on all things fashion. Why? Because that's who I am now. The person that did that. I don't like it either.

In her final (please, Nina) book, Nina sets out a way to stay stylish in lean times. Employ a highly skilled tailor to rework your tired Chanel. Reconsider and ultimately redefine the terms "splurge" and "investment". A splurge is just an investment that never pays you back, after all. C'est la vie! And finally, who needs groceries? You're already too fat. Take the money you would have used to buy calories (you can survive on 300 of these a day if you're ambitious) and put it toward those Manolos.

When in doubt, ask yourself, "What Would Michelle Obama Wear"?*

Also, blahblahblah global warming yada repurpose humuhnuh humuhnuh Manolos.

Yeah. That about covers it.

*Something colorful with an enormous belt. The bigger the better.

Rachel Heu says

I liked it. It's not news that you don't have to spend a lot of dough to end up looking stylish and well-dressed,

but Nina Garcia gives her take on it and doles out some good advice based on her own experiences. I have to say that Ruben Toledo's illustrations are so cool. I love looking through the book just to see those... and then there are little fun fashion and life-related quotes throughout. A light, fun read.

Phyllis says

This book is supposed to be about carving down your wardrobe to the most essential, classic pieces all in the name of temperance and frugality in the wake of the global financial crisis, but to be honest the whole thing comes off as reheated leftovers of outtakes from the first three Nina Garcia style books. Even though it was totally unnecessary I found it endearing in a dorky way that this book has an annotated playlist of songs she likes to jam out to when she's cleaning out her closet. If nothing else, this book will give you the amazing mental image of Nina Garcia listening to "She Will Be Loved" by Maroon 5 while she's sorting out her old belts and purses.

The best thing about all of Nina Garcia's style guides are the beautiful Ruben Toledo illustrations. Can Ruben Toledo please publish a book of his fashion illustrations to spare fans of his work the indignity of Nina Garcia telling them to buy a white shirt?

Sarah Hannah says

The illustrations in this, by Ruben Toledo, are fantastic. The writing? Meh.

If I compare this to other books about style that I've been reading lately, it's much more of a fail. Nothing really concrete, for one, whereas in Clinton Kelly's book, and in lots of magazines and other books, they will actually tell you specifically that if you are a pear shape, this or that looks terrible on you, etc. Also, Garcia has zero voice, so this is just dull to read. She keeps claiming that style is free, about being you, etc, but her examples of cheap things and of budgeting are still about buying at Macy's (and I'm assuming she means NOT the sale racks, which is what I have always perused at Macy's) and then springing for Balenciaga, whereas I buy at clearance sales and spring for things at flash sales on Hautelook as my big buys.

Basically the only concrete, useful things Garcia tells you are what fabrics are going to last longest (and since my mother refused to buy me polyester as a kid, I already knew that) and that tailoring is great (which everyone will tell you, but at least others will tell you in a way that acknowledges that you're going to buy things off of clearance racks and then make them fit you, not that you're going to revitalize your Chanel by getting new buttons and turning the pants into capris).

Anyway. There are better books out there about how to minimize your closet and maximize your budget and style, but this isn't really one of them.

Sophia says

It has great tips to get that timeless look for fewer dollars. Nina Garcia guides you in from how to decide what to keep or throw out in your closet to the building basics that all women should own, from how to be more economical about clothing/makeup/etc. purchases to how to keep your beloved pieces in spectacular

shape.

Sonja Isaacson says

Nina talks too much and should just cut to the chase. I don't think she addresses much about defining one's personal style. Really what will inventorying one's wardrobe accomplish? Determine how many belts you have? (I have one... I wear it almost every day with my cell holster attached) And then she doesn't write enough about caring for items and fabrics after saying how important it is. She did have some good ideas about fixing up items and again different things that can be done to a garment when it needs repair or updating. And really, I am not reading HER book to find out more about Michael Kors or Christian Siriano. If I did, I would read things by them. Write your own stuff lady. She did have a lot of store suggestions and websites at the back, and I wish I had bothered to check out a couple of the sites before returning the book to the library. Oh well. No doubt she lists them in other books as well.

J says

Quick read. Nina's voice can be heard through the pages. It is very readable. Nina's writing skills from *Marie Claire* are evident.

At first I enjoyed the quotes and female empowering vibe, but it quickly became too much. By page 30, I was definitely annoyed. The quotes often seemed unclear and unrelated to the text. Michelle Obama (ughh) was mentioned multiple times. And yoga.

The author has a shopping obsession, which she references repetitively. It seems a bit unhealthy. She also has a strong high fashion bias. She talks about her "less is more" strategy, but she assumes you are buying less high fashion items. She calls Macy's low-fashion. I found her tone a bit patronizing at times. Additionally, she assumes the reader has sewing skills when she discusses altering clothing.

She also assumes every women dyes her hair when she states a high-quality cut and dye job is necessary every 6-monthes. Does she think I'm old with grey hair? Or a bottle blond?

~Geektastic~ says

Though I prefer her first two books (*The Little Black Book of Style* and *The One Hundred*), I like to break this one out whenever I'm in a closet-cleaning mood. Nina is a decently engaging writer, though she name drops too much (but hey, she's a fashion editor, it's in her job description). I appreciate her perspective on how to make what you already have work, even if her jeans could pay off my student loans. I'm a hardcore thrift store shopper, so the litany of brand names that run through all of her works mean very little to me in any practical sense, but I do like occasionally imagining what it must be like to buy Prada or Jimmy Choos, sort of like pretending I could be an astronaut or a lion tamer.

Cheyenne says

This was an alright enough read. A lot of common sense things I've read/heard before about streamlining what you really need in your closet and learning to stop buying on impulse and focus on quality, timeless items. It's just kinda so-so but if nothing else, it'll make you want to clean out your closet and go shopping.

Relyn says

I've already written about how much I like Nina Garcia's books. This one is no different. It's full of great tips and is a fun, light read. It's kind of like spending the afternoon with your most stylish girlfriend.

Nina's writing style is approachable and friendly. Kind of like having a stylish, gorgeous aunt who's willing to share all her tips. As much as her advice, I picked this one up for Ruben Toledo's illustrations. I love his work and they make a great pair.

Kiran says

A bit of a disappointment overall with about fifty-percent of the book useless illustrations and another twenty-percent irrelevant or useless information. When Garcia is not waxing on about inspirational music playlists or the importance of hanging out with the girls, there is some really solid, helpful information on what to look for when purchasing investment pieces. On the upside with a huge chunk of the book illustrations a slow reader can easily finish this book in under an hour.

Jess says

[This post was originally uploaded to <http://www.theageofintimacy.com/nina-...> as part of a blogging/social media internship.]

“New York taught me that being chic isn’t about the most expensive dress or the latest trend. It’s about being you. And being you costs nothing.”

The Style Strategy is Nina Garcia’s manual for being chic on the cheap. Her mantra for women everywhere is “Shop smart, stay chic, and make it last.” And I have to say, I agree with this mentality. Why should we drop hundreds of dollars on clothes, only for them to last a few months before the trends change, and we’re then stuck with clothing that a) dates us, and b) isn’t necessarily very flattering on us.

The basis for Nina’s mantra is six very simple questions to shop smart and weed out unnecessary/frivolous spending:

Do I already own something like it?

Can I alter something I already own to look like it?

Where will I wear it?

Do I really need it?

I want THIS dress NOW – but what did I want before I left the house?

What will I have to forgo later because I spent money on this?

As discussed in my review of Paris Street Style, I sometimes have trouble making my wardrobe interesting. As a consequence, I have a LOT of unnecessary bits and pieces, and a lot of things that don't go together. For people like me, Nina offers a very sage piece of advice to tack onto the questions above – don't buy anything that doesn't go with at least three things in your closet.

The main premise for Nina's book is to keep things that make you feel fabulous, using them as the foundation for your wardrobe. From there, you can supplement with classics that may cost you a little bit more, but are designed to last forever (providing you take good care of them). She then goes into much more detail about garment construction, and what you should be looking for in well-made garments which won't necessarily break the bank.

I enjoyed reading this book, but I didn't find it quite as useful as Paris Street Style, in terms of things to suit everyone. While Nina has much along the same lines in her list of "this is what everyone should own", she has very limited ideas on how to express yourself outside the basic structure of her advice, which was a little disappointing.

Gaile says

If you have a job and live in a big city like New York City this book will help you a lot. However if you live in the upper midwest, Canada or Alaska, I doubt this will work.

I live in Minnesota and here is how we dress.

Basics:

Nina Garcia: Classic high heeled pump Minnesota: Carried in a shoe bag

NG: ballet flats Minnesota: sneakers

Ng: Trench coat Minnesota: Puffy, down jackets or coats. Never seen a trench coat.

NG: Little Black Dress Minnesota: Only worn at funerals with a string of pearls.

NG: Classic white shirt Minnesota: Seatshirts, all kinds, all designs.

NG: Cashmere cardigan or turtleneck Minnesota: I have seen turtlenecks a plenty. A cardigan almost never!

NG: Denim Minnesota: Now that is a Minnesota classic!

Michelle Dee says

I love Nina Garcia, but of all her books, I think this is the least must-read one. There's some good

information, but it's pretty basic. It's still great to read and have for a fashionista, or someone like me who is trying to pare down. Her best tip (in my opinion) was to keep a clothing inventory of what you have, as well as what you need. Keep the list with you, and that way, when you go shopping, you don't end up buying another grey cardigan, even though you already have 3 at home and you buy what you can really use and need.

Krizza says

After reading the very long author's note, I kind of had the feeling that I wouldn't learn much- and I didn't! Nina talks too much about setting up clothing swap parties but she doesn't explain enough about how to cultivate your own style or where to find inspiration for it. There are a few good tips in this book but overall it was a shallow, fluff excuse for a book. I really expected more from a fashion magazine director, but you can't win 'em all. Look on the bright side, at least the pictures are cute (and possibly are more entertaining).

Emma Hodge says

The title of this book should really be "More for Less" instead of "less is more". I was excited to hear about a well-known and respected fashion executive talk more about the importance of sustainable consumerism and buying less, but the author advocated for companies like H&M and Gap which are both destroying the environment with excessive manufacturing and pollution in underdeveloped countries, not to mention, taking advantage of their garment workers. The book gives a very surface level how-to about cleaning out your closets, what you need in your closets, how to shop, and how to mend clothes. It's all very basic level writing and it's targeted towards people with money even though she says the words "on a budget" a million times. She obviously doesn't know what it's like to really be on a budget and shop for nice clothes. I gave it two stars because I found the beginning to be a little helpful when she discusses minimizing your closet, and the rest was just really frustrating and repetitive.

P.S. She has a section titled "fair trade" and didn't mention fair trade AT ALL.

MaryannC. Book Fiend says

Being a big fan of Project Runway I was excited to hear about this book from Nina Garcia and I did like it. It's a bright, colorfully illustrated guide to shopping for certain items that will continue on with or without trends. Nina has her little pithy comments through out the book which I appreciated. I did garner some interesting ideas from this book that I use now in helping me keep my "Fashion Sense" in order.

Theresa says

Since I've read Nina Garcia's past two books, I figured I'd go along with this one. It skips talking about what basics to have (okay, it briefly mentions it), but it sets out a plan for you to clean your closet, make do with what you can afford and re-imagine a tired wardrobe. Albeit, you can't get much style inspiration from a book - photos/looks are bound to be dated in a year, and I think she wants her book to be more timeless.

Perhaps she could've talked more about where to find inspiration to remix your wardrobe - for me, it's blogs and people watching in the city. However, she does offer good information about how to tailor old clothes and salvage them into new looks.

A new tip that I had never considered in cleaning out one's closet was to literally inventory what you wanted to keep. Actually write a list of what you own. Though it seems tedious, for visual learners and list keepers like me, it sounds like a brilliant idea to "see" your closet in a condensed word form. And it will remind you of what you own and that you can "shop in your closet" and not buy new things.

Now as to whether or not I will make time to inventory . . . probably for a cold afternoon.

I'd recommend this book as well as her other two books. Nina's writing is to the point and I think her advice is sound.
