



Louis Vuitton Men's Spring 2026: A Passage to India



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Louis Vuitton Men's Spring 2026 Ready-to-Wear Collection at Paris Men's Fashion Week
Giovanni Giannoni/WWD

With luxury spending stalled in China, brands are casting about for a new engine for growth. India, which boasts the world's biggest population and a rapidly expanding middle class, has emerged as a leading contender.

At the Louis Vuitton menswear show in Paris, the subcontinent's soft power was on full display in a collection that celebrated its craftsmanship and culture — zhuzhed up with an LV twist.

Creative director Pharrell Williams shut down the neighborhood around the Pompidou Center museum with a bombastic display staged on a life-size version of the Indian game of Snakes and Ladders. Guests including Beyoncé Knowles-Carter and Jay-Z, Bradley Cooper and Jackson Wang sent the assembled crowds into meltdown.

Williams visited India for the first time in 2018 to promote a collection of Adidas sneakers and clothing inspired by the Holi spring festival. This time, he and his team embarked on a research trip through New Delhi, Mumbai and Jodhpur to soak up the spirit of Indian sartorialism.

More than a specific item of clothing, they picked up on an allure. Model James Turlington summed it up with his loose pleated pants worn with leather flip-flops, a pajama-striped jacket and matching robe coat.

"You won't see any tunics or anything like that. What we were inspired by from India were the colors," Williams said backstage before the show. "You'll see turmeric in the line. You'll see cinnamon. You'll see 'coffee indigo' denim."

An inky shade of eggplant lent a special luster to a leather Harrington jacket worn with a cricket tie and cargo pants. It screamed luxury, as did items like an indigo crocodile



hooded bomber jacket, or a gray Prince of Wales suit with dissolving allover sequin embroidery.

Williams said hitting up local markets and suppliers — from printmaking workshops to embroiderers — was his favorite part of the trip. “What art and painting is to Paris, textiles and embroidery is to India,” he said. “The intricacies were just off the charts.”

Despite the abundance of craftsmanship, a laid-back attitude permeated everything from tailoring to sportswear, with influences that ranged from madras checks to hiking gear. Checked suiting wool was bonded with technical fabric on a windbreaker, while hoodies and puffer jackets came with bejeweled hoods fit for a maharajah.

With this elegant travel-friendly wardrobe, Williams strayed on the side of conservatism even as he explored the idea of artfully layering fabrics with a sunbleached, lived-in feel.

It felt like something of a course correction from last season, when he teamed up with his longtime pal Nigo to offer an elevated take on streetwear. The only echo of that pop-infused aesthetic was a capsule collection inspired by Wes Anderson's 2007 film “The Darjeeling Limited.”

The motif that Vuitton created exclusively for the movie — featuring animals such as cheetahs, elephants, zebras and giraffes — was plastered over bags, sneakers, denim sets and more upscale pieces, including a densely embroidered white jacket.

While some have criticized Anderson's romanticized vision of India as perpetuating colonial-era narratives, Williams said he felt legitimate in exploring the country's culture.

He collaborated with architect Bijoy Jain, the founder of Studio Mumbai, on the design of the show set, and the soundtrack featured “Yaara Punjabi,” a track co-produced by legendary Indian film composer A.R. Rahman.

“I'm personally a global citizen, so I'm always gonna give reverence to a place that's inspired me. I think people who have stepped in those types of things before probably just didn't do a good enough job storytelling. Storytelling provides context, and when you provide context, it makes it easier for people to understand what your true intentions are,” Williams reasoned.

“I always move in gratitude, so I went there with gratitude, I left with gratitude, and I am here, remotely, again saying ‘thank you’ because I've really appreciated not only my experience, but the influence that it's had on the world,” he said.

In some respects, Williams' take on India was as much a fantasy vision as the one in Anderson's film. But in telegraphing desire, it sent a clear signal that the country should be on every serious luxury player's map.

