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Tunic Tees: The Long and Short Of It

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May 23, 2006 - New York

Bare midriffs are so last summer. Stylish women of all ages have tossed their belly-baring baby tees in favor of tres chic tunic tops that hit at mid-hip - or even longer - and allow one to look sexy without revealing even an inch of abdomen.

And in an interesting twist, the tunic tee trend began among streetwise, fashion-forward hipsters across the country and then trickled up to celebrities such as Cameron Diaz, Rachel Bilson, Mischa Barton and Nicole Richie afterward, rather than the other way around, as is usually the case in these tabloid-obsessed times.

While striped tunic tees are the most popular (and ubiquitous), there are a range of styles, cuts and colors from designers both high-end and high street from which to choose, ensuring that this summer, everyone can afford to partake in the great tee coverup. Here, a few tops that go to great lengths, stylistically speaking.

The Great Coverup: Lux Extra Long Tunic, \$32

Why It Rocks: Comfortable without being sloppy, this cotton cap sleeved crew neck comes in solids (brown, black, berry) and stripes (black/white, red/white and teal/gray) and, depending upon what you wore with it, would look as right on a Lower East Side riot grrrrl as it would on a more classically inclined Midwestern mom.

Where To Find It: At Urban Outfitters stores nationwide and online at www.urbanoutfitters.com.

The Great Coverup: Lilla P. Lean and Slender Collection, \$40 - \$48

Why It Rocks: Fashioned from super soft, lightweight pima cotton in an array of mouthwatering summer shades (lilac, flamingo pink, cayenne pepper red, mojito green, oasis blue), these fitted tees are cut for grownups - pretty ballet necks, cross-front vees, and several with 3/4 sleeves - that make them suitable for work or weekend. Come fall, the company is introducing several new tunic tees that will be even longer than the Lean and Slender Collection.

Where To Find It: At Today's (in Destin, Florida), Palma and Purdy Girl (New York City), Over the Top (Highland Park, Illinois), Mitzi and Romano (Atlanta, Georgia) and online at www.lillap.com.

The Great Coverup: Mossimo Studded Empire Tunic, \$15

Why It Rocks: This thigh-grazing rayon/poly spaghetti strapped tunic comes in black or wine and is one-part tee, one-part cami and all-parts chic, thanks to its plunging v-neck, subtly studded bodice and forgiving empire waist cut, which drapes softly to hide a multitude of summer sins, allowing you to have your cake (or Double Fudge Oreo ice cream) and eat it, too - without having to suck in your gut.

Where To Find It: At Target stores nationwide and online at www.target.com.

The Great Coverup: Alternative Apparel Sheer Tunic, \$24



Why It Rocks: The perfect layering tee, this super-soft short sleeved cotton jersey tunic comes in a range of pastels (banana, mint), as well as black and white, and features a delicate scoop neck and extra-long length that looks equally cool peeking out from beneath a sweater or vest or when worn alone, scrunched up around the hips for a ruched effect.

Where To Find It: At Alternative Apparel's new flagship store in Atlanta, or at The Dressing Room and Jive Monkey (Chicago), Saint Sabrina's (Minneapolis), Noise Clothing (Houston), Boot Town/Western Wear (Dallas), FAB 208 (New York City), Intuition (Los Angeles) and online at www.alternativeapparel.com.

The Great Coverup: C and C California Trapeze Tee, \$78

Why It Rocks: This beautifully cut cotton jersey tee covers three of spring's top trends at once: It's white (check), it's a tunic (check) and it's a shirred bodice trapeze shape (check), making it the perfect topper to wear over slim bermuda shorts or drainpipe jeans. The pretty round neckline and banded puff sleeves are just icing on the stylish cake.

Where To Find It: At Anthropologie stores nationwide and online at www.anthropologie.com.

The Great Coverup: Pointelle Henley, \$48

Why It Rocks: The placket of this fitted sleeveless shell can be unbuttoned to show off one's sun-kissed décolletage to great advantage, the extra-long length is perfect for camouflaging a minor tummy bulge, and the blue/black or avocado/mint stripes lend a cool rock 'n roll edge, especially when paired with knee-length denim cutoffs. If you're feeling really daring, pair it with short shorts and ballet flats for a Kate Moss-meets-Edie Sedgwick look.

Where To Find It: At Anthropologie stores nationwide and at www.anthropologie.com.



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