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Fashion in Impressionist Paris

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Even before the advent of haute couture, Paris was a great centre of fashion. During the second half of the nineteenth century, when the capital was transformed by an ambitious urban plan, its residents responded in kind, wearing styles as polished and modern as the city itself in order to participate in the exciting new social scene. Featuring famed paintings by such Impressionist masters as Degas, Cassatt, Manet, Monet and Morisot, this delightful book revisits the world of Parisian fashion through the eyes of first-hand observers. Thematic chapters present a gallery-like ensemble of paintings that follow in the footsteps of stylish Parisians as they stroll in the parks and boulevards, meet friends at cafés, take in the theatre, relax at home and go on holiday. In an extended narrative-style caption to accompany each image, fashion and art historian Debra N. Mancoff offers a detailed discussion of what men and women wore and how their dress defined them. To complete the picture, illustrated interludes, providing glimpses into dressmaking, corsetry and millinery, the origins of couture and the rise of the department store, reveal how Paris became the fashion capital of the world.

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