

# A BRIEF HISTORY

of

# SITTING FASHIONABLY

Your guide to perching and parking *in style* through the ages.



In the beginning...

WAY BACK - BEFORE 3000 BC



## THE EARLIEST CHAIRS

The first chairs were rudimentary affairs. Benches, stools and chests were the most common seating arrangements. Design wasn't a key consideration - rather, each take on the chair was influenced by the time and environment. Without chairs, the floor or bedding was used.

### THE VERDICT

Style: 0/5  
Poor to none

Comfort: 0/5  
Sore bums all round

### THE VERDICT

Style: 4/5  
Lots of King bling on show

Comfort: 2/5  
Seats of plaited cord

## EGYPTIAN CHAIRS

Not really for the Hoi Polloi. Not yet for the masses, the best seats in the house were strictly reserved for Royalty and high ranking priests.



**MATERIALS**  
• Ebony, ivory or carved and gilded wood



**CONSTRUCTION**  
• Seats of plaited cord  
• Legs and feet resembled animals or slaves



FROM 3100BC ONWARDS

EARLIEST RECORD 700 BC



## GREEK AND ROMAN CHAIRS

Take a breather from all that empire building. Both Greek and Roman chairs were typically made of wood or ivory with elegant curves. This Roman 'curule' chair (Latin for chair) was traditionally veneered with ivory, with curved legs forming a wide X; it had no back, and low arms.



**MATERIALS**  
• Typically made with wood but Roman examples feature ivory veneers



**CONSTRUCTION**  
• Seat generally lower than top of legs  
• Curved pieces made from single piece of wood

### THE VERDICT

Style: 3/5  
Great curves & craftsmanship

Comfort: 2/5  
Don't lean back suddenly!

### THE VERDICT

Style: 3/5  
Astounding detail and craft

Comfort: 3/5  
Watch out for sharp corners

## GOTHIC CHAIRS

A bit scary looking but bags of character. Under the Gothic period, chairs were typically made with oak, walnut, rosewood and heavy woods. The elegant stylised forms were designed to echo church architecture.



**MATERIALS**  
• Made with oak, walnut, rosewood and heavy woods



**CONSTRUCTION**  
• Rich fabrics like leather and velvet

12TH TO THE 14TH CENTURIES



14TH TO THE 16TH CENTURIES

## RENAISSANCE CHAIRS

A flamboyant continental design revolution. Starting in Italy, the style was perfected in France. Renaissance chairs are characterised by ornate carvings on their arms and legs.



**MATERIALS**  
• Brass, silver and gold colours used for elegance over wooden tones



**CONSTRUCTION**  
• Ornate carvings on chair arms and legs

### THE VERDICT

Style: 5/5  
Cream of the crop

Comfort: 4/5  
Upholstery now features more widely

## ENGLISH CHAIRS

Delicately framed English refinement. These chairs were heavily influenced by Thomas Chippendale. They incorporated dark woods from gothic chairs, combined with elaborate patterns influenced by renaissance styles.



**MATERIALS**  
• Made with oak, walnut, rosewood and heavy woods



**CONSTRUCTION**  
• Ball foot is common.  
• Started very heavy before becoming lighter in colour and weight

18TH & 19TH CENTURIES



### THE VERDICT

Style: 4/5  
Renaissance with elegant British twist

Comfort: 4/5  
The perfect tea drinkers chair

### THE VERDICT

Style: 5/5  
A revolution in style & form

Comfort: 4/5  
Luxurious upholstery and back rests



EARLY 20TH CENTURY

## 20TH CENTURY CHAIRS

Out with the old, in with the new. Material and aesthetic changes took hold as Art Deco styles became popular. 'Fussy' ornate design went out as Geometric designs and metallic colours were experimented with.



**MATERIALS**  
• Leather upholstery



**CONSTRUCTION**  
• Bright, bold colours stand out but contrasting colours are also popular

### THE VERDICT

Style: 5/5  
Classic modernist forms

Comfort: 4/5  
Ergonomic thinking for your seating satisfaction

## MODERN CHAIRS

Ultra modernist chic and minimalist forms. Earthly materials take a back seat in favour of man-made resources such as chrome and steel. The Barcelona Chair, designed by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe & Lilly Reich, personifies this ultra modern look.



**MATERIALS**  
• Leather upholstery with typically steel frames



**CONSTRUCTION**  
• Leather cushions on a metal cross support

1930s TO PRESENT DAY



The end. Thank you