

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Loungewear's big opportunity in China

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Chinese actress Song Jia is styled in cashmere sets from Italian retailer Loro Piana's Cocooning collection. Image courtesy of Loro Piana

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Before the pandemic, pajama and loungewear outfits were only part of China's niche street-style trends in fashion hubs such as Shanghai or Chengdu.

Dressed-down and casual, the look has become **more relevant** given China's quarantine and work-from-home realities today.

Across social media platforms including Xiaohongshu and Weibo, fashion lovers, key opinion leaders (KOLs) and celebrities posted their outfits styled with silk pajamas by London-founded **Silky Miracle x Basquet**, fluffy crop tops from Kim Kardashian's brand **Skims**, and cashmere sets from Italian retailer Loro Piana Cocooning collection. And backdrops featured by KOLs vary from bedrooms to living rooms, coffee shops and spots on the street.

Over the past two years of living between "**snap lockdowns**" and the new normal, Chinese consumers have learned to prepare for unexpected quarantines that might take place anywhere, anytime. Meanwhile, the spheres of home and workspaces have begun overlapping, shifting loungewear from "indoor" to outdoor use.

As loungewear continues to go mainstream, the category is expected to grow \$13.36 billion from 2020 to 2025, and 44 percent of the growth will originate from the APAC region, according to a **report** by market research firm Technavio. And China is fast becoming the key market for sleepwear and loungewear in APAC.

We take a look at Chinese consumers' expectations and changing needs for loungewear, as well as how the luxury industry can capitalize on this growing demand.

Off-duty to on-Zoom: Loungewear is the new workwear

The differences between sleepwear and loungewear were becoming less distinguishable even before lifestyle, sportswear and lingerie brands such as Neiwai and The Beast tapped into this specific category. As China's consumers spend more time at home, loungewear styles have given them new ways to style outfits at home.

Hong Kong-based lawyer and fashion KOL Pipi Chen, also known as @PePe C, says she now works from home half of the time.

"You don't need to dress formally at home, but still need to be comfortable and decent, so I started to wear loungewear very often," she said.

This mentality is common among local fashion lovers. The keyword "loungewear" has received more than 36.7 million views on Xiaohongshu at the time of publication.

Ms. Chen elaborates on her considerations for loungewear in terms of fabrics to cuttings.

As she tells *Jing Daily*, washer and dryer-safeness is the most important factor for the fabric, in addition to comfort.

"I won't choose fragile fabrics like silk," Ms. Chen said.

As for cutting, being "proper" and "not too risqu" are her requirements, "because you often need to go downstairs to pick up takeaways," she said.

This demand also drives the segmentation between sleepwear and loungewear in the local market.

Rise of premium loungewear offerings

On top of spending more time at home, Chinese consumers have more disposable income and a rising interest in domestic lifestyle brands.

In 2019, Chinese label The Beast launched a sub-brand named Naked Beast targeting the high-end loungewear market. Distinct from the cotton products of its major brand TBH, loungewear by Naked Beast features elegant silhouettes and garments such as silk.

The surging trend also attracted luxury and fashion houses to launch or expand their loungewear collections.

Dior was one of the most discerning brands to react to the trend. Launched in 2020, Dior's Chez Moi collection has introduced silk and cashmere homeware outfits with similar design patterns of its ready-to-wear and cruise lines.

These silk shirts and cashmere knits priced between \$2,800 and \$5,000 will help the house secure its top-tier customers.

In addition to typical loungewear such as pajamas, athleisure is one of the most popular categories that people opt for in-door scenarios.

In particular, sweatshirts, hoodies, sweatpants and leggings are among the top choices for its stretchy fabrics and versatility for at-home workouts as gyms remained closed throughout the pandemic.

This shifting and hybrid work model inspired athleisure giant Lululemon to create its "On the Move" collection, which comprises an array of apparel that specializes in combining comfort and performance with office-appropriate looks.

Meanwhile, U.S. designer Alexander Wang unveiled his first bodywear collection in July, with the objective to "make the brand appeal to a wider demographic," according to *WWD*.

Launched at a lower price point, Mr. Wang's bodywear competes with mass brands including Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein.

Though it is still unclear how or when China will lift its **pandemic control policies**, consumer demand for loungewear is growing, and physical and mental creature comforts such as loungewear are their priorities in a time of uncertainty and chaos.

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