

Q&A

Down-and-dirty parka care. When to go long. How to stand out in a crowd. The pros solve all your coat conundrums



Heather Graham

Q How do I clean a down parka?

A Have it cleaned professionally, and if you own a light-colored coat like Heather Graham's North Face one, "spot-treat stains as you would with any other luxe garment," says Wade Woodfill, product director for North Face. He suggests you wipe off any wet residue and let your coat dry completely before storing, then hang it with plenty of room to breathe. "The less compacted the down is, the more loft it will have," he explains.

Q What body type looks best in a long parka?

A Taller women, like 5-foot-8-inch Kate Walsh, have an easier time pulling off more length, as in this North Face coat. Even if you have the height, a belt or cinched waist can add welcome shape. "If you're petite, avoid coats that go below the knee," says Tom Kolovos, stylist for Thebestdressedlist.com. Shorter women should opt for a hip-length parka instead. Pear shapes are also helped by a shorter coat since "long ones add extra bulk on the legs."



Kate Walsh

Q How can I make my parka a statement piece?

A Look for surprising detailing, unique fabrics, and extra embellishments, such as zippers on the sleeves or a fur-trimmed collar or hood (see Teri Hatcher's emerald puffer). Stylist Tom Kolovos suggests choosing a metallic hue or deep jewel tone—like eggplant or forest green—if you want something that will stand out. "You can also pick an iridescent fabric," he adds, "or go more extreme with something like Burberry's python version." —written and reported by Meg Hemphill



Teri Hatcher