

## The Four Seasons of Color

To simplify the choosing of an individual's color type, we take a cue from art educators, and every color that exists is placed in one of four "seasonal" color categories that matches up with the colors of one of the four seasons of the year. Johannes Itten remarked that that there wasn't a person in the world who couldn't successfully match up the four *color* categories with the four *seasonal* categories.

Unfortunately, this is one of the areas where most other color consultants *did* get it wrong! They reversed the names for the color seasons Summer and Winter. The correct classifications are below.

The seasonal color system is both logical and efficient: the two brightest seasons of the year, Spring and Summer, contain the brightest colors; and the two seasons with less daylight contain the colors that are the least bright, i.e., Autumn and Winter.

### The two COOL categories...

**Summer**, the brightest time of the year, relates to the BRIGHT COOL category, with clear primary colors, such as true red, royal blue, emerald green, violet and magenta, all of which have subtle blue undertones. Summer's colors can be stark, like jet black and pure white, but they are never muted or grey-toned. Think of a summer sky: it is a clear bright blue, much like Chinese blue.

Some color analysts have incorrectly referred to this category as Winter. However, logically, the colors relate to the bright colors of the summer. Summer is a time when we are not inhibited by heavy clothing. Our houses are more open, and they are filled with summer sunshine. The colors of the Summer palette reflect this, and they are also filled with light. Symbolically, these colors are extroverted, open and outgoing in nature, just as we are in the summer.

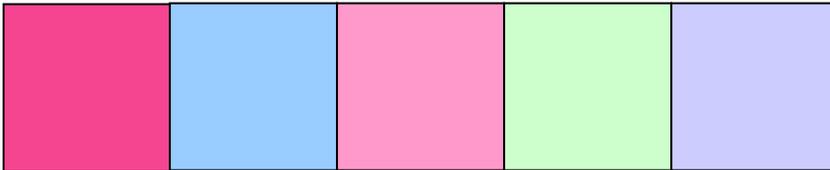
Here you see a sampling of Bright Cool colors:



**Winter**, a time when the sky is often grey, pairs perfectly with the grey-toned MUTED COOL colors, such as slate blue, winter white, charcoal, mauve, burgundy, and an endless variety of pastels and ‘icy’ colors. Winter's colors are like a snowscape: icy, muted, subtly greyed, and very subdued. Think of a winter sky: it is a grey-toned blue, much like slate blue.

Winter is a time of greyness and cold, and we often withdraw into the warmth and security of our homes. There is less light, because the days are shorter. Winter colors have less brilliancy than the colors of Summer, and their soft tones are also more introversive or reclusive as we often are in winter. When it shows, there is stillness and calm that often prompts us to speak in a whisper. The “icy” and gentle pastels of Winter reflect this tendency.

Here is a sampling of Muted Cool colors:



### The two WARM categories.....

**Spring**, with its fresh, strong burst of colors, lends its name to the BRIGHT WARM colors, such as parrot green, coral, turquoise, peach, cobalt blue, Chinese red and lemon yellow. Seasonal flowers of spring --tulips, jonquils & daffodils-- personify Spring's colors. Distinct yellow undertones symbolize the new growth that is visible everywhere in grass, trees and plants. With maturity, Spring's foliage yields its yellow-tinged *spring green* color and gives way to the cool blue undertones of Summer. Spring's colors are as daring as the first crocus that pushes its way through the frost-covered ground. Even the neutrals of Spring, like camel and champagne, have a certain zest! Spring is a time of vigor and growth, and the colors of Spring reflect this.

Here you see a sampling of Bright Warm colors:



**Autumn**, a time when the earth colors prevail, and the natural choice for MUTED WARM colors. Typical Autumn colors are rust, teal, salmon, avocado green, mustard, brick red and beige. Autumn leaves, campfires, pumpkins, and all of nature reflect perfectly the colors of the Autumn palette, and it is probably the season that is most descriptive of its namesake. Khaki trousers, Loden coats and chrysanthemums are seen all over. Envision a fall landscape or activity, and you will call up most of the colors from the Autumn palette.

Below is a sampling of Muted Warm colors:



Personal color analysis may be the key to discovering the season that makes you look radiant and dynamic. It will also give you in-depth information about developing your “signature” look. [Click here for more information.](#)

## V. Knowing and Using Your Colors

Imagine going shopping for clothes in a matter of minutes. You know exactly what colors suit you, and also the occasion. It makes shopping a pleasure when you don't have to go from department to department in frustration and doubt.

Once you find your color season, shopping for clothing - and makeup for women - will be a breeze. Never again will you have a closet full of clothes and "nothing to wear." Take the time to conjure up a visual image of the landscape for each of the four seasons. It will help you when you are shopping, because you will have a visual and logical basis from which to make decisions. For the first time, you will be able to quickly identify and eliminate the colors you *don't* want. You may still like them. They may still make you happy when you look at them. But in the mirror, they are "second best." Some colors are downright unkind in the mirror.

If you are a Summer, for example, you will remember that if garments resemble a spring bouquet of flowers, they are not for you...no matter how beautiful they look or how much they appeal to your "instincts." When you encounter an endless array of colors on the clothing racks, you will skip over everything that looks like autumn leaves or grey-toned winter skies. You will head straight for the red roses, blue skies, and the lush green carpets of summer grass! With the help of your fabric swatches, it is even simpler.

### Keep it simple

When determining which color season you belong to, it is important to know that this distinction has nothing to do with the season of your birth, nor your favorite season of the year. It is simply a determination of your skin's basic color tone. It will fall into one of the four color categories that is matched up with one of the four seasons of the year. Your hair color may change over the years, but your color category at birth remains the same throughout your life. You may hear differently from other image and color consultants, but trust me on this. Skin trumps hair!

Your hair may become more golden or red-toned with exposure to the sun, and it may grey with age, but you will always remain the same seasonal color type. Your skin tone may deepen with a suntan or become more yellow with age or prolonged sun exposure, but your color category remains the same. What *will* change is the number of colors that you wear successfully from your season. As your hair greys, for example, grey may need to be eliminated from your wardrobe if it dulls your hair.