

Section 1

Mothers Only



Yes, this section is for you. What I've tried to do is cover as many of the areas of buying online for expecting mothers as I can. Inevitably at the start you may well think you'd prefer to go round the stores and see what's there. The trouble is that (for most people) when you feel like doing that you probably won't have grown very much (bumpwise, I mean) and it may seem silly to buy maternity clothes for the size you'll almost certainly become.

Luckily for you it doesn't matter. In my day (don't I sound old?), if you left it until you couldn't wear your clothes any more you usually ended up going somewhere - anywhere - convenient and quick just to find something to fit. Now you can find everything online and most retailers offer next-day delivery, so whether you're looking for business suits, little black dresses, designer jeans or sportswear, it won't take you long to click and browse.

Beauty products, I think, fall into two categories: those you buy anyway that you don't want to have to bother to go out for any more and those specially designed for pregnancy. You'll find a good choice of both here, organic or otherwise.

Finally, there are some really attractive websites offering gifts for your friends when they produce (and hopefully for them to give you), so make sure to leave the book open at the right page when they come round (only joking).

Chapter 1



Designer Maternity Wear

There is a wonderful selection of luxury/designer maternity wear to be found online. The web is a great place to view different looks and work out where you'll buy your basics from and where you'll select your investment pieces.

You may think you don't want to spend too much, it's only for a short while after all (hmmm), but as this is the time when you really want to look great and it's not always so easy to do so (you can't just slip into those skinny size 8 jeans and a pair of heels), I'd like to tempt you to think again. Yes, go for those well-priced basics and essentials you'll wear over and over again, but buy something special now as well, before you desperately need it, so you know that whatever happens – wherever you're invited and whoever you need to meet – you'll have something tucked away that makes you feel fantastic, no matter how big your bump.

Throughout the maternity clothes sections you'll find websites based in the US, offering a sophisticated range of clothing at reasonable prices and willing to ship to you wherever you are in the world. Because, unlike other clothes, maternity fashions need to provide a certain amount of room, these are great websites both to buy from and to get ideas. You'll find that delivery can be a bit pricy, but for the quality you'll be getting very good value for money, so give them a try.

Sites to Visit

www.apeainthepod.com

This is without a doubt one of the most well-known US-based maternity stores, offering both its own well-priced range and designer selections by Tocca, Lilly Pulitzer, Juicy Couture, Diane von Furstenberg, Betsey Johnson and lots more, plus premium denim brands such as Citizens of Humanity and Paige. Take a look at the Celebrity Red Carpet, which includes actresses such as Holly Hunter, Maggie Gyllenhaal and Diane Farr wearing the gowns, then choose something for yourself.

Site Usability: ★★★★★

Product Range: ★★★★★

Price Range: Luxury/Medium

Delivery Area: Worldwide

Based:

US

Express Delivery Option? (UK) No

Gift Wrapping Option? No

Returns Procedure: Down to you

www.bellydancematernity.com

As you'd expect, with such a large market (no pun intended) some of the US maternity wear stores are excellent. This one is no exception, with designs by Diane von Furstenberg, Olian, Susana Monaco and Paige and a fab selection in all areas, from dresses to jeans, lingerie, nightwear and swimwear. Order a couple of pieces early to check on the sizing, or email them with any queries. Delivery is expensive, but with a choice like this it's well worth having a good look.

Site Usability: ★★★★★

Product Range: ★★★★★

Price Range: Luxury/Medium

Delivery Area: Worldwide

Based:

US

Express Delivery Option? (UK) No

Gift Wrapping Option? No

Returns Procedure: Down to you

www.blossommotherandchild.com

Blossom caters for the fashion-conscious expectant mum, with a collection of glamorous dresses and separates, which combine high-end fashion with comfort and functionality. You'll also find customised jeans by brands such as Rock and Republic and James. The company uses an assortment of luxurious fabrics, such as silk-cashmere, voile and jersey, and expands the collection continuously.

Site Usability: ★★★★★
Product Range: ★★★★★
Price Range: luxury/Medium
Delivery Area: Worldwide

Based: UK
Express Delivery Option? (UK) Yes
Gift Wrapping Option? No
Returns Procedure: Down to you

www.duematernity.com

If there's a maternity designer that Due doesn't stock, it's probably not worth looking for it. This is a superb range of maternity clothing from a company based in the US. There are lots of brands I haven't heard of, but with C & C California, Chip and Pepper and Paige Premium Denim in there, I'm sure you'll find something. Obviously you need to be more careful when buying from so far away, but the choice of easier-to-fit items and nursing tops and lingerie is vast and most of it you won't find available in this country. Give it a go.

Site Usability: ★★★★★
Product Range: ★★★★★
Price Range: Luxury/Medium
Delivery Area: Worldwide

Based: US
Express Delivery Option? (UK) Yes, worldwide express
Gift Wrapping Option? No
Returns Procedure: Down to you

www.fortyweeks.co.uk

The aim of maternity designer basics retailer Forty Weeks is to offer you contemporary, streamlined design combined with great fabrics to create a wardrobe that can be worn before, during and after pregnancy. There's a wide selection of colours and styles which would work perfectly with the more formal pieces of your new wardrobe and, unlike many things you buy now, you'll almost certainly want to wear them afterwards. Take advantage of the home visiting service within the London area.

Site Usability: ★★★★★
Product Range: ★★★
Price Range: Luxury/Medium
Delivery Area: Worldwide

Based: UK
Express Delivery Option? (UK) No
Gift Wrapping Option? No
Returns Procedure: Down to you

www.hommemummy.co.uk

This is where to come if you're looking for simple, elegant maternity wear that will travel well and look great all the time, as everything is made

from soft, comfortable, luxury jersey, stretch lace and cord, from tops to trousers and skirts. You can also buy the Essential Maternity Wardrobe here, which includes a go-anywhere trouser, elegant wrap top and glamorous, versatile dress. There are excellent line drawings of all the items to go with the photos, so you can see the shapes more clearly.

Site Usability: ★★★★★

Product Range: ★★★

Price Range: Luxury/Medium

Delivery Area: Worldwide

Based:

UK

Express Delivery Option? (UK) Yes

Gift Wrapping Option? No

Returns Procedure: Down to you

www.isabellaoliver.com

Isabella Oliver is a maternity wear company for pregnant women who love clothes. The sexy designs in soft jersey fabrics have signature-style details such as ruching and wrapping to flatter new curves and the website includes style tips to pick up on the season's trends. You can see each item as a model shot or drawing and also using the clever catwalk animation. As well as day and evening separates you can buy lingerie, loungewear, sophisticated sleepwear, chic outerwear, sun and swimwear.

Site Usability: ★★★★★

Product Range: ★★★★★

Price Range: Luxury/Medium

Delivery Area: Worldwide

Based:

UK

Express Delivery Option? (UK) Yes

Gift Wrapping Option? Yes, automatic

Returns Procedure: Free

www.prettypregnant.co.uk

An addition to the South London, Northcote Road boutique, the Pretty Pregnant website offers a mixture of fashion, from excellent dresses for day and evening to casual separates, jeans, lingerie and swimwear. Brands include Bellybutton, Queen Mum, Fragile, Paige Premium Denim, Coralou and Boob. There is a lot to choose from, so take a look round. You can also buy gifts, hosiery and nursing wear here.

Site Usability: ★★★

Product Range: ★★★★★

Price Range: Luxury/Medium

Delivery Area: UK, but call for overseas enquiries

Based:

UK

Express Delivery Option? (UK) No

Gift Wrapping Option? No

Returns Procedure: Down to you

www.pushmaternity.com

The Push boutique in Islington specialises in designer maternity wear and a high level of customer service. Now you can buy the collection online from labels such as Earl Jean, Tashia, Alex Gore Brown, Cadeau, Citizens of Humanity, Leona Edmiston (gorgeous jersey dresses) and Juicy Couture. There's maternity hosiery and chic baby bags here as well. Select from next-day or standard delivery (UK, though they ship overseas as well) and if you have any queries don't hesitate to give them a call.

Site Usability: ★★★★★

Product Range: ★★★

Price Range: Luxury/Medium

Delivery Area: Worldwide

Based: UK

Express Delivery Option? (UK) Yes

Gift Wrapping Option? No

Returns Procedure: Down to you

www.tiffanyrose.co.uk

Here you'll find smart and unusual maternity wear, including dresses and chic separates. It's quite a small range but stylish, so if you're looking for something for a special occasion you should have a click around. There are also beautiful maternity wedding dresses and a sale area where there are usually some good discounts. The company delivers worldwide and offers a next-day and Saturday delivery service for the UK.

Site Usability: ★★★★★

Product Range: ★★★

Price Range: Luxury/Medium

Delivery Area: Worldwide

Based: UK

Express Delivery Option? (UK) Yes

Gift Wrapping Option? No

Returns Procedure: Down to you