

01 / THE HOUSE STORY

The people. The point of view.



THE BEGINNING

Cristóbal Balenciaga

Cristóbal Balenciaga opened his haute couture house in San Sebastián in 1917 and established the Paris house at 10 Avenue George V in 1937. The original couture house closed after his 1968 final collection; later revivals moved Balenciaga into modern ready-to-wear and accessories. That long discontinuous history explains why a 1950s couture label, a Nicolas Ghesquière-era garment and a recent streetwear tag can look unrelated. Useful anchors include 1917 San Sebastián, 1937 Paris, 1968 final Cristóbal collection, the late-1990s/2000s ready-to-wear revival, and the major creative transitions of the 2010s. For recent pieces, product references and official runway/shop archives are more reliable than a generic 'Balenciaga tag chart.'

FOUNDED

1917

ORIGIN

San Sebastián, Spain

WHY THE DETAILS MATTER

Modern Balenciaga care labels commonly include style/product information that can be matched to the exact garment or accessory. Secondary authentication references document changing wash-label layouts across the 2000s–2020s. Use the code to confirm model, color/material and era rather than assuming a number alone is a serial certificate. Before 'decoding' anything, identify what kind of identifier it is: RN/business ID, style/article number, size code, supplier/production reference, serial, date mark, season code, inventory barcode, RFID/NFC or digital passport. Different identifier types answer different questions and are not interchangeable.

Research and catalog observations are distinct. See the linked sources in this guide. Dates describe the cited records; a last recorded year does not establish a line closure.

An independent educational guide by Sui Generis. Unaffiliated with the featured designer; these references cannot establish an individual item’s authenticity.

Names, lines & relationships

|                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <div><div><div>Balenciaga Ready-to-Wear</div><div>1987</div></div><div><div>Parent luxury mainline</div><div>Women’s and men’s ready-to-wear, bags, footwear, accessories and objects</div></div></div> |  |
| <div><div><div>Balenciaga Couture</div><div>1937</div></div><div><div>Haute couture</div><div>Haute couture, exceptional accessories and objets d’art</div></div></div>                                 |  |

Balenciaga → mainline ready-to-wear, accessories and footwear; Balenciaga Couture → numbered haute couture collections revived in 2021.

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# A story in chapters

# 1917

# Balenciaga

House origins · Cristóbal Balenciaga

# 1937

# Balenciaga Couture

### Line / house introduction in the cited records

# 1987

# Balenciaga Ready-to-Wear

### Line / house introduction in the cited records

## COLLECTION CONTEXT

Cristóbal Balenciaga opened his haute couture house in San Sebastián in 1917 and established the Paris house at 10 Avenue George V in 1937. The original couture house closed after his 1968 final collection; later revivals moved Balenciaga into modern ready-to-wear and accessories. That long discontinuous history explains why a 1950s couture label, a Nicolas Ghesquière-era garment and a recent streetwear tag can look unrelated. Useful anchors include 1917 San Sebastián, 1937 Paris, 1968 final Cristóbal collection, the late-1990s/2000s ready-to-wear revival, and the major creative transitions of the 2010s. For recent pieces, product references and official runway/shop archives are more reliable than a generic 'Balenciaga tag chart.'

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## 04 / A WORKED EXAMPLE FROM OUR CATALOG

# Read the label. Find the details.



## THE COMPLETE ITEM

# BALENCIAGA Size 4 Black Crepe Pleated Satin Panelled Pencil Skirt

Marked size = the item's original label. As a US company, Sui Generis lists a US size comparison; use the relevant brand/category chart and actual measurements to check fit.

## THE LABEL / MARKING DETAIL



## 01 / WHAT YOU CAN READ

BALENCIAGA.PARIS

## 02 / HOW TO USE IT

Transcribe the punctuation and wording as photographed. Pair the woven label with the garment's silhouette and construction when comparing archived examples.

### 03 / WHAT TO CHECK NEXT

PARIS appears within the house label; it is not a manufacturing statement. A separate care label is needed for country, fibers and production references.

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SOURCES / SEPTEMBER 2026 EDITION

# Research & image credits

Based on the existing Sui Generis guide research and credited references. Catalog photographs are Sui Generis images. Brand names identify the subject; this guide is independent and unaffiliated. Share complete sheets with their credits and a link to the guide.

<https://www.genieauthentication.com/blogs/balenciaga/how-to-authenticate-balenciaga-clothing>

<https://www.balenciaga.com/en-en/crist%C3%B3bal-balenciaga>

<https://vintageclothingguides.com/tags-labels/how-to-tell-if-balenciaga-is-vintage/>

<https://www.kering.com/en/houses/fashion-and-leather-goods/balenciaga/>

<https://www.balenciaga.com/en-us/fashion-shows>

<https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/designer/balenciaga>

<https://suigenerisconsignment.com/products/balenciaga-size-4-black-crepe-pleated-satin-panelled-pencil-skirt>

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SIZING / HOW TO READ OUR CATALOG

# Marked size & your US size

The marked size is the size printed on the item’s original label. Sui Generis is a US company, so our catalog uses a US size comparison to help our customers shop. A US listing size may therefore differ from the number on the designer’s tag; it does not change the item’s original marked size.

READ THE SIZING SYSTEM

FR or F means French; IT, I or ITA means Italian; JP means Japanese; UK or GB means British; US or USA means United States. D or DE means German. EU (or UE on some labels) denotes a European size where the relevant brand and category chart uses it. French and Italian clothing numbers are not interchangeable, and a manufacturing country does not identify a sizing system.

JAPANESE & BRAND NUMBERED SIZES

Some Japanese designers use their own numbered sizes, such as 1, 2 or 3. These are brand sizes, not automatically US sizes or a universal Japanese conversion. Use the chart for the specific brand, line and item.

MATCH THE CATEGORY. CHECK THE MEASUREMENTS.

When a tag prints several national sizes, retain the brand’s own size table instead of substituting a generic conversion. Women’s clothing, men’s tailoring and footwear need different charts. Letter sizes, denim and accessories also need their own fit information. Compare the original marking, the relevant chart and actual measurements. Vintage fit, alterations and cut can change the fit; a US comparison is a guide, not a guarantee.

If the sizing system or original marking cannot be confirmed from the available photograph, we say so rather than assigning a country or inventing a conversion.

REFERENCE READING

Nordstrom: designer clothing conversion reference

Maison Margiela: category-specific size guide

Yohji Yamamoto: measuring garments

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