

Say no to knockoffs: 5 ways to spot sneaker fakes this festive season

As the festive season approaches, the South African Police Service (SAPS) is cracking down on counterfeit goods, seizing R3bn worth of fake designer items in Gauteng and R100m in knockoffs in the Western Cape.



Image by [Jason Goh](#) from [Pxabay](#)

"However, more fakes will likely find their way into the hands of unwitting consumers wanting to spoil the sneakerheads in their lives over the holidays," says Wandile Sibisi, co-founder of RareStep, a South African online store for exclusive, authentic, limited-edition sneakers, and high-end streetwear.

"With the demand for rare sneakers skyrocketing, so does the risk of being duped," he points out. "And, as the festive season is a prime time for scammers, especially with South Africans stocking up on gifts both online and offline, it's crucial for consumers to be extra cautious."



SA's battle against fake goods

Mohamed Khader 7 Nov 2023



So, how do you ensure those kicks are legit?

1. Know your authentic sneaker features: If the stitching appears irregular, with blurred or misaligned logos should also be crisp, it's best to avoid the purchase. The material of authentic sneakers should also have a distinct premium touch unlike the stiffness found in fake counterparts. Colours should be vibrant and consistent, with no shady deviations. Lastly, genuine sneakers boast well-crafted soles with accurate brand detailing.

2. Take care online: Only opt for purchases from trusted stores with a reputable standing.

3. Receipts, please: Buyers should request original purchase receipts or authenticity cards and be cautious if the seller avoids providing these or questions about the product's authenticity.

4. Secure payments only: Use only secure, traceable payment methods like credit cards, PayPal, and PayGate to ensure buyer protection.

5. Double-check with the pros: While RareStep employs in-house authenticators and provides a lifetime return policy with a 100% refund for any discovered fakes, not all sellers follow the same approach. For an extra layer of assurance, utilise third-party authentication services like CheckCheck, which employ artificial intelligence and trained authenticators in a two-step process to assess sneaker authenticity.

In case of still falling victim to counterfeit purchases, Michael Zahariev, co-founder of Luxity, shares valuable advice.

"Contact the seller immediately, as many platforms have policies for dealing with fakes and may offer refunds or replacements. Document all details, including pictures, receipts, order confirmations, and conversations, as they are crucial for any claims or reports. If payment was made through a credit card or payment service, dispute the charge with the service provider and provide all gathered evidence. Leave a detailed review to assist fellow sneaker enthusiasts in identifying counterfeit products. If the seller is unresponsive or refuses to rectify the situation, and if the financial loss is significant, consider legal action."

"Amidst the joy of gift-giving, it's crucial to be vigilant against the imitation game and ensure that your presents are as legitimate as your love for those fire kicks," concludes Sibisi.

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