

People EXCLUSIVE

22-Year-Old Latina Model with Down Syndrome Says 'There Are No Limits' After Modeling at NYFW

After stunning at NYFW and starting her own brand, Sofía Jirau is ready for her next challenge: modeling in Europe

By **Tomás Mier**

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For Sofía Jirau, *no hay límites* (there are no limits).

Jirau, a 22-year-old model with Down syndrome, stunned audiences while working the runway at New York Fashion Week. She “lived her dream” of modeling in New York, but she says this is just the beginning.

“When I was little, I looked myself in the mirror and said, ‘I’m going to be a model and a businesswoman,’” she tells PEOPLE from her native Puerto Rico.

Now, she’s doing exactly that.

Modeling, photoshoots and runway looks dominate her Instagram account, which is followed by nearly 44,000 people. At NYFW, she was able to showcase her talents on an international stage, modeling for Marisa Santiago at the dress designer’s Feb. 10 show.

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sofiajirau
New York City

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7,934 Me gusta

sofiajirau

Ayer cumplí un sueño. Yo nací para esto y quiero demostrarle al mundo que tengo todo lo que necesita una modelo para brillar. 📷 @jorgeareyesphoto

#Alavett #nyfw #newyork #fashion #downsyndrome #sindromededown #dream #done #felicidad #modelo

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“I was born for this and I want to show the world that I have everything a model needs to shine,” she wrote on Instagram.

She also has all the support from her family members, who flew from Puerto Rico to see her walk down the New York runway.



sofiajirau
New York City, N.Y.

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7,820 Me gusta

sofiajirau

Un día me miré al espejo y dije “yo voy a ser modelo y yo voy a llegar a New York” y miren aquí estoy. Lo logré y ahora quiero modelar en todo el mundo.
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sofiajirau
59.7 mil seguidores

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6,752 Me gusta

sofiajirau

Gracias a mi familia por acompañarme a New York. Los quiero un montón, siempre están en mi corazón.

Pendientes todos a la 1pm que les tengo una sorpresa. 🙌🙌🙌❤️ #Alavett #family #downsyndrome #sindromededown #familia #gracias #fashion #love #nyfw #newyork.

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“I felt really good the first time,” she says about the first time she ever modeled in front of her family. “Everyone clapped for me.”

Today, Jirau is supported by a team of volunteers who help her accomplish all of her goals and work out the logistics behind her fashion and photoshoots.

Her next goal is to travel to Europe and modeling there.

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"I'm going to Europe later," she says confidently. "And to the rest of the world."

"We're trying to connect her with designers over there. If that's her goal, it's our challenge," adds Armando Lorenzo, one of the volunteers who work with Jirau. "We're working hard to take her there if that's what she wants."

Not only is her modeling career taking off, but Jirau is also living her businesswoman dreams with her own line, Alavett. The brand's name is how Jirau spelled out her favorite words to say, "I love it."

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She tells PEOPLE Alavett is her "shout of joy," and she sells everything from shirts and wallets to mugs and phone cases with the signature brand name and heart doodle.

As for her fashion icon, Jirau says it's none other than J. Lo.

"I want to meet Jennifer Lopez. I like how she dresses and how she is. I love all of her clothes," she says. "I love her songs, her CDs, her photos. Everything."

With Europe on her mind and endless support from her team, Jirau isn't letting anything get in the way between her and her modeling goals.

"Inside and out, there are no limits. There aren't," she says. "Everyone can accomplish their dreams."

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