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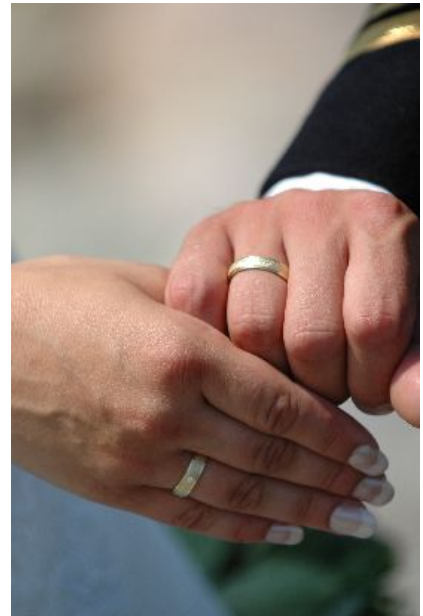
*How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach.*

— Elizabeth Barrett Browning

You have just announced your Engagement, and have started to plan your Wedding and Reception.

This can become an overwhelming time of your life, when all you really want is to make your dream wedding come true.

You will be navigating uncertain terrain over the next 12 months, as you will find every friend and family member will have their own ideas of what should be happening, what your dress should look like, who should be attending, what the catering should be, and so on.



That is why the sooner you take control and keep it that way, the better for you and your pre-wedding nerves.

To assist you in your wedding research and arrangements, we are giving you over 55 pages of helpful information, that we sincerely hope is of real benefit to you.

We have compiled here a vast selection of wedding planning resources and checklists, beginning with the [Year Long Wedding Checklist](#) to keep you on track throughout the whole process.

- Helene Malmsio

Year-Long Wedding Checklist

(For Those Who Like Organization)



Your wedding should be coming up within the next 6 to 12 months. Do you know what to do and when exactly you need to do them? Here is a guided timeline that specifically gives you the approximate time tasks that should be completed within that time frame.

Use the following list as a guide to help you get the right things done, in the appropriate order. Print this guide out and “check off” all the items that you have completed to make things less stressful and more fun for you.

Six To Twelve (6 -12) Months Before The “Big Day”!

- Announce your engagement
- Decide on what kind of wedding and the time of day. Are you prepared to feed your guests dinner or do you want a simple ceremony with cake and punch only? The time of day that you choose will dictate the food choices.
- Pick a date. Do this as soon as possible so that your bridal party and faraway family can begin making arrangements for hotels and scheduling time away from their workplace.
- Choose a location. Remember to take into consideration what the weather could be like on your wedding day. So keep an open mind. Set a budget. This is so important. Discuss it carefully between the two of you and your respective families.
- Start planning the reception. Secure a hall, hotel, lodge, or whatever suits you guys for your reception area.

- Select the bridal party. It is important to do this as soon as possible so these special people can set aside some time away from work to fulfill their duties and roles in your wedding.
- Secure the church and inquire about premarital counseling. Some churches require this for a marriage to be allowed.
- Choose your colors. Your flowers, attire, linens, and cake will reflect your choice. Since you have to shop for these items fairly far in advance, it's important that you are rock-solid on your color decision.
- Choose and order the bridal gown, bridesmaids' gowns and accessories. Choose wisely and stay within your budget.
- Start planning the honeymoon. The groom often takes the lead on this, but it should be a spot you will both enjoy.
- Begin your bridal registry. Visit your favorite stores and choose items that you will need to start your life together.
- Select and order wedding invitations and announcements.
- Select the caterer, photographer, florist, and musicians. Keep their phone numbers handy in case you need something.
- Choose and order the wedding rings.

Three Months Before The "Big Day"!

- Complete the guest list.
- Plan to have both mothers select their dresses. The mother of the groom will often wait for the mother of the bride to select her dress.
- Make reservations for the honeymoon. Remember to tell them that you will be newlyweds. You'll be surprised at how many perks you will get!
- Confirm the dates and times with the florist, caterer, photographer, musicians, and the church.
- Discuss transportation to and from the wedding and reception sites.
- Order the wedding cake.
- Choose and order the tuxes
- Schedule the bridesmaids' dress fittings. It is also a good time to choose and dye the shoes if that is necessary.
- Place engagement announcement in the local newspaper (optional).

Two Months Before The "Big Day"!

- Prepare and mail the invitations.
- Get the marriage license.
- Finalize the honeymoon reservations.
- Make transportation arrangements

One Month Before The “Big Day”!

- Reserve accommodations for the guests.
- Record gifts received and send thank-you letters to each person. Many couples think that they must wait to send those thank you notes. Get them done as soon as the gifts begin to arrive to avoid stressful times later on closer to your wedding.
- Purchase the gifts for the bridal party. Brides often buy inexpensive earrings or necklaces that the bridesmaids can wear to the wedding. Popular choices for the groomsmen are money clips, key chains, or ball caps.
- Schedule the final fittings for the bride and bridesmaids.
- Get Wedding programs printed.
- Schedule appointments at beauty saloons for attendants, if needed.
- Host the bridesmaids luncheon.
- Purchase a guest book and decide where it will go. Some couples place the book just inside the door of the church or wedding area. Some prefer to display it at their reception. In either case, have someone stand nearby to invite guests to sign the book.

Two Weeks Before The “Big Day”!

- Arrange to have names changed on the driver’s license, social security, etc..
- Finalize the number of guests with the caterer.

One Week Before The “Big Day”!

- Start packing for the honeymoon. Be sure to choose clothing that you won’t need during this very big week for you.
- Plan the seating arrangements for all guests.
- Have a beautician practice fixing your hair. You may also want to practice your make-up or make an appointment at a department store so it can be done for you.
- Make sure that the wedding rings are picked up and fit.

The “Big Day”!!!

- Congratulations! You made it to your big day! The last thing to do is to just relax.. You’ve earned it and should enjoy your entire day!**



Essential Tip 1

Selecting Your Wedding Date

You should eliminate certain dates, such as holidays, proms, sporting events and busy times of the year. You will find that prices will be higher and the availability will be limited in June and August. Saturday weddings are likely to be more convenient for your guests, but Fridays and Sundays will be more affordable. Weekend weddings that are followed by a Monday holiday are a real convenience to your guests.

- 1. Buy the engagement ring.**
- 2. Pick your wedding date.**
- 3. Reserve the ceremony and reception hall.**
- 4. Reserve the person performing the ceremony.**
- 5. Book the florist.**
- 6. Select the caterer.**
- 7. Select your bridesmaids and the groomsmen.**
- 8. Prepare the wedding budget.**



Essential Tip 2

Booking A Florist

Flowers can set the tone of your wedding and enhance any location. Select your flowers to match the style of your wedding. Seasonal flowers will be the least expensive and the easiest to obtain. When visiting a florist, know your wedding date and bring some photos of flower arrangements you like.

Choose Your Wedding Bouquet

Bouquets of flowers have always been one attraction at any wedding. Bouquets are already part of the wedding tradition on all races. A bouquet of flowers symbolizes a blossoming maiden and reflects her emotions.

Therefore, wedding bouquets should be carefully selected and planned the same way you plan for your wedding gown. Here are just a few tips in choosing your wedding bouquet:

1. It is recommended that you choose a flower that is on season to save money and time. This will not give you hard time trying to order the flower as well.
2. You can choose other alternatives like silk flowers especially if the flower you would like to use is not in season. Silk flowers are also suited in formal weddings; fresh picked flowers may not fit a very formal party.

3. Your bouquet should not drown you. Be sure that it will not cover your figure. If you are petite, the weight of the flower might be too heavy for your built and may affect your posture and how you carry your gown. Remember that your bouquet should not be too big so as not to cover your elegant gown and should be easy to carry.

4. The flowers you chose should last for the entire day. Make sure that your flowers still hold up even at the end of the day so that you will still look glamorous when taken pictures. Using a bouquet holder is suggested to keep the flowers fresh during the entire day. Also take the advice of your florist on which flowers easily wilt so that you can avoid choosing them.

5. Don't let your florist imagine the flower design you like. You may take a picture or a printed copy of the bouquet style you prefer. Also bring a sample fabric of the gowns so that the florist can choose the correct shade of flower that will match the color of the gowns. Some bouquets may be decorated with ribbons, lace and silk materials. You can advise the florist on what specific designs would you like to add for your flowers.



6. Why not choose a flower that has special meaning? That will not be difficult since most flowers have their meanings. Stephanotis stands for happiness in marriage, Rose means love and being true, and Tulips stand for perfect love and declaration of love.

7. One of the first things to consider when opting for a bouquet is the style. Choose the bouquet style that will suit you and your personality. Bouquets are more personal nowadays and reflect the brides' personalities. For Nosegays, where flowers are clustered in a round form, can vary in sophistication and will fit any personality. In Cascade bouquets, flowers are arranged in a descending form. These bouquets are voluptuous and can be the center of attention.

They are recommended for traditional weddings. There are flowers where stems are wrapped around in ribbons and they are called Hand-tied bouquets. These bouquets bring a casual aura and are recommended for garden weddings. There are also Contemporary bouquets where flowers are arranged in style but with no geometric form. These arrangements of flowers represent the individuality of a bride and are mostly used in sophisticated weddings.

8. The top wedding flowers are Rose, Lilly, Orchid, Hyacinth, Tulip, Stephanotis and Daisy. You may want to follow the trend and choose these flowers for your bouquet.



- 1. Buy Your Wedding Rings.**
- 2. Begin the guest list.**
- 3. Select the wedding music and reserve the musicians/band or DJ for the reception.**
- 4. Book the photographer.**
- 5. Book the videographer**
- 6. Register for gifts.**
- 7. Order your wedding dress and bridesmaids' dresses.**

As you are planning a beach wedding, you will probably be thinking of using a sea theme for your wedding.

A couple choosing this type of theme may want to consider holding their ceremony and reception on a beach. As always the attire can be incorporated into the theme.

If the wedding is held on a beach, the bride may choose to adorn herself in a simple white dress and may opt to be married without shoes. The groom could choose a casual linen suit and may even consider shorts with a lightweight sports jacket. He too could choose to not wear shoes.

The decoration possibilities are limitless with this theme. One very popular and appropriate centerpiece idea is to fill glass bowls with sand and seashells. This simple centerpiece is an excellent way to incorporate the theme into the decorations.

The couple could also cover the tables in a blue table cloth that is similar to the color of the ocean and layer fishing net over the table. A simple favor idea is to present each guest with a collection of seashell shaped soaps. These are relatively inexpensive and readily available.

The Perfect Wedding Ring

The wedding ring is perhaps the single most important piece of jewelry that you will give to your spouse in your lifetime. It is important that you choose a timeless ring that will not become outdated or unstylish after a length of time.

Men and women have different options available to them when choosing a wedding ring and it is not required that they choose matching rings. The couple traditionally picks out their rings together so there is no need for either the bride or groom to become unnecessarily stressed out about choosing the perfect wedding ring.

Choosing the rings together takes a great deal of pressure off of the couple because they do not have to worry that their spouse may not like the ring that is expected to last for their entire lifetime.

The material of the ring is an important consideration for both men's and women's rings. The most common materials include gold, silver and platinum although the rings can be made of any material that the couple chooses.

Gold is the most popular wedding ring material. Gold can be 14 karat gold, 18 karat gold and 24 karat gold. Of these three options 14 karat gold is the type that is most recommended for wedding rings. 14 karat gold is durable without sacrificing luster.

18 karat gold can also be used for wedding rings but because it is a softer metal it is more prone to scratches. 24 karat gold is even softer than 18 karat gold and many do not recommended creating rings out of 24 karat gold because it is so prone to scratches.

Silver is another metal that can also be used in creating a wedding ring. Silver is a soft white metal that is very soft and therefore prone to scratching. Additionally it is also prone to tarnishing and discolorations but it is still a popular choice because of its relatively low cost.

Platinum is a precious metal that is becoming increasingly popular as wedding ring material. Although platinum is considered too soft to be used in making rings, small amounts of ruthenium and iridium can be added to platinum to increase the hardness and result in a wedding ring that is extremely durable.



After choosing a metal for the wedding ring, it is time to consider the style of the ring. When it comes to style there are even more options available than there are for metals. Some of the basic wedding ring styles include flat bands, half-round bands and comfort bands.

A flat band is one that is rectangular in cross section. These types of bands are also decorated with engravings. Half-round bands are the most traditional style available. These bands are flat on the underside or against the finger and have an arched structure on the top.

Comfort-fit bands feature an oval cross section and they are heavier and more expensive than the other types of rings. If a bride intends to wear her wedding band with her engagement ring, she should consider choosing a wedding band style that matches her engagement ring so that neither one overpowers the other.

Once you have decided on a metal and style, it is time to choose whether or not to engrave your wedding ring. A good jeweler should be capable of engraving anything you want onto your ring including letters, numbers

and symbols. Many couples choose to have their names or initial along with the wedding date engraved on the inside of the ring.

This is not necessary though as the couple is not required to have the rings engraved. If the couple does opt for engraving though, they must realize that they can choose to engrave anything they wish on the rings. It could either be names and the wedding date or a phrase that has significant meaning to the couple.

The Perfect Wedding Dress

Many brides begin dreaming about the perfect wedding dress long before they are even engaged. Choosing the perfect wedding dress is critical because it is the one day that all eyes will be on you.

A dress that is beautiful without being too ostentatious and is also flattering to your figure will ensure that you are looking your best on your wedding day.

With so many style, color and fabric options available, choosing the perfect wedding dress can be a difficult task but fortunately most brides simply know when they have found the perfect wedding dress. From the moment they put on the dress, their gut instinct tells them that this is the perfect wedding dress for them.

The most important piece of advice for shopping for the perfect wedding dress is to begin shopping for your dress at least six months before your wedding date. Finding the perfect dress can take quite a bit of time and once you find the dress, it may take up to four months for the dress to be ordered and shipped to the store.



Then once the dress arrives in the store you may require several fittings to ensure that the dress fits you perfectly. You will want to take your time and enjoy shopping for your wedding dress so it is important to begin the process early so that you avoid feeling rushed and overwhelmed.

Another worthwhile piece of advice for finding the perfect wedding dress is to try on many different styles of dresses. Even though you may be convinced that you want a particular style you may find that the style that looks so appealing in magazines does not suit your body type. You may also find that a style that you would have never chosen can be flattering to your figure.

For this reason it is important to try on a wide variety of styles before ruling out any particular style. The old saying, you won't know unless you try it, holds true for wedding dresses. There have been countless brides

who have found that their perfect wedding dress turned out to be significantly different from the one that they had pictured in their mind.

Although it may sound counterintuitive, the color of the wedding dress is an important consideration in choosing the perfect wedding dress. Many people think that the only acceptable color for a wedding dress is a pure white but if you are open to other options, you may find yourself in a wedding dress that is far more flattering to your skin tone than a pure white dress.

Wedding dresses come in a multitude of colors including ivory, cream and even subtle beiges. If you are willing to consider these options it is important to try on dresses in these colors to see how they work with your complexion.

Choosing the perfect wedding dress sometimes requires reinforcements. Having a few trusted friends or family members come dress shopping with you can help you find the dress of your dreams.

They can offer opinions on each dress that you try on and can also scour the countless racks of dresses available and choose dresses for you to try on. Many brides instantly know that they have chosen the perfect wedding dress the moment they put on the dress but having trusted friends and family members along can confirm this feeling.

The moment you step out of the dressing room and reveal the dress you are wearing you may see instant confirmation that this is the perfect dress. The reactions of your assistants will indicate that you have found the perfect dress.



The first impression is the best impression. We have written this article on wedding dress in such a way that the first impression you get will definitely make you want to read more about it!

When you have found the perfect wedding dress, you will know it so now is also the time to buy the dress.

Nothing is more important than your gut feeling and the reactions of your shopping partners so if you know you have the perfect dress in your hands, don't risk losing the dress by opting to think about it for a few days before you make your purchase.

There is always the chance that the last available dress will be sold or that the company will discontinue the dress so do not allow yourself to miss out on buying the perfect wedding dress by not buying it the moment you realize it is the dress for you.

How to Capture those Perfect Wedding Moments

A wedding is undoubtedly one of the most precious moments in a person's life. Capturing it on film to be stored forever is even more important. Today, brides and grooms have so many options to choose from when it comes to choosing the kind of photography that they want for the most important day of their lives.

Here is a guide in achieving the wedding photography of a couple's dreams:

1. Choosing the right photographer

In order to select a wedding photographer, a couple must first decide on the picture style that they want.

Portrait photographers are perfectly capable to take both formal and casual pictures, but he will most likely concentrate on the formal ones.

Photojournalists take shots that are candid and not planned. This kind of photographer usually has experience in journalism photography.

Hobbyist photographers are those who are often a friend or a relative of the couple, and would likely offer his services for free or a very low price. It is hard to tell the kind of pictures that they will produce, and there is a risk that the pictures may not be as good as a professional's.

2. Getting the perfect camera

Wedding photographers usually use two basic camera types: the 35mm and the medium format. The 35mm has the tendency to produce pictures that are a little grainy, but the only person who may notice the difference are the photographers themselves.

3. Color or black and white?

Color is usually used in wedding photos, but those who want a more artistic feel may go for the black and white film. Black and white photos last longer than color ones, though color films capture the details of the event more appropriately. One option would be to take the pictures in color first, then have copies made in black and white.

4. Personality of the photographer

Most couples want a photographer who can take great pictures but who is also friendly and sociable. Set an interview with the prospective photographer, and make sure to ask effective questions. Also, make sure to ask for references, and take a look at his previous work.

All these tips can help couples in getting those perfect pictures on their special day. Make sure that these pictures can be shown proudly to families and friends, and can be passed down to future generations.

Registry Checklist

Formal Dinnerware

- 8-12 place settings
- Accent plates
- Pasta/soup bowls
- Creamer
- Sugar bowl
- Large platters
- Salt/pepper
- Large vegetable bowls
- Serving bowls
- Covered casseroles
- Medium platters
- Large platters

Formal Crystal

(same quantities as your china)

- Water goblets
- Wine glasses (red and white)
- Champagne flutes
- Iced beverage glasses
- Martini glasses

Barware

- High ball glasses
- Double old fashioned glasses
- Brandy glasses
- Pilsner glasses

Silver

- 8-12 place settings
- Extra teaspoons
- Extra salad forks
- Cold meat container
- Serving spoons
- Pierced teaspoons
- Soup spoons
- Sugar spoons
- Butter knife

Everyday Dinnerware

- 8-12 place settings
- Cereal bowls
- Creamer
- Sugar bowl
- Gravy boat & stand
- Salt/pepper

- Vegetable bowls
- Serving bowls
- Covered casseroles
- Platters

Everyday Crystal & Glassware

(same quantities as your china)

- Tall beverage glasses
- Double old fashioned glasses
- Goblets
- Wine glasses
- Flutes
- Martini glasses

Everyday Flatware

- 8-12 place settings
- Serving set
- Hostess set
- Entertainment stand

Table Linens

(same quantity as your china)

- Placements
- Napkins
- Napkin rings
- 2 tablecloths

Home Accessories

- Frames & vases
- Serving trays & bowls

Appliances

- Mixer
- Skillet/griddle
- Waffle iron
- Bread maker
- Rice cooker/vegetable steamer
- Toaster/toaster oven
- Food processor
- Blender
- Juicer
- Coffee & tea maker

Cookware

- Sauce pans
- Sauté pans
- Stockpot/Dutch oven
- Tea kettle
- Steamer/double boiler
- Wok/stir fry pan
- Lasagna/au gratin pan
- Casserole dishes
- Roaster
- Grill/griddle
- Omelet pan

Cutlery

- Paring knife
- Chef knife
- Bread knife
- Carving knife
- Slicing knife
- Steak knife
- Cleaver

Bake ware

- Casserole dishes
- Roasting pans
- Cookie sheets
- Muffin pans
- Cake & pie pans
- Pizza pans
- Lasagna/baking pans
- Bread pans

Luggage

- Upright suitcases
- Garment bags
- Duffle bags
- Tote bags



Tools For The Kitchen

- Measuring cups & spoons
- Mixing bowls
- Cooking & serving utensils
- Dishtowels
- Hot pads
- Canisters

Bedding

- (6 of each)
- Pillow cases
 - Pillow shams
 - Flat sheets
 - Fitted sheets
 - Comforters
 - Bed skirts
 - Pillows
 - Blankets
 - Mattress pads

Bath

- (6 of each)
- Bath sheets
 - Bath towels
 - Hand towels
 - Washcloths
 - Bath rugs
 - Shower curtains
 - Shower curtain rings
 - Shower curtain liners

Want a Tropical Honeymoon? The Caribbean is an Excellent Destination

Every person has a romantic side, even those persons who appear to be stiff and cold. And when you're talking about honeymoon, any couple will welcome such idea. It's a great time to spend endless moments together, without any disturbances.

The honeymoon is a special moment shared by a couple, especially the newly weds.

And one of the best destinations is a tropical honeymoon. So what's with the tropics?

A tropical honeymoon appeals to many couples because of the warm climate. You can find a lot of men, as well as women, wearing loosely worn cotton shirts and dresses, native wraps and colorful skirts, and gauze tops.



Aside from that, you can also feel more relaxed because of the dizzying display of flowers in various sizes, shapes, and colors. You can also appreciate the brilliant rainbow of colors like red, pink, blue, orange, purple, and green in the form of trees, flowers, and impressive exotic birds.

The best thing about a tropical honeymoon is that you get to enjoy the crystal clear waters, as it beckons an azure blue. And when you're far from the shore, the sight is really astounding because the waters sparkle. Beneath the deep waters you can find extraordinary, colorful, exotic, and breathtaking underwater scenes.

If you want to celebrate your beautiful love, the tropic is the best destination. This place is conducive to rest, relaxation, and romance. You can hear a lot of laughter in the tropics, and people are always smiling so it's easy to find new friends in this paradise.

When you say tropical honeymoon, you can go to the Caribbean, Hawaii, Fiji, Mexico, Tahiti, and other tropical countries. The most popular among the list is the Caribbean. The preparations do not end with the wedding ceremony. In fact, your honeymoon needs careful planning too. If you want to enjoy your honeymoon, then you can book for an all-inclusive hotel/resort in the Caribbean.

If you're looking for wild (or mild) honeymoon experiences, the Caribbean is the place to be. If you choose to stay in any Caribbean resort, you only have to pay for the up-front cost and all the necessary things that you as a couple will need are well-taken cared of.

Usually, the services offered vary from one resort to another. The common services of resorts include the following:

- for land rates only: round-trip tickets for airfare
- round-trip hotel transfers or airport
- room tax
- accommodations
- all beverages and meals
- tips
- Land sports like ping pong, tennis, volleyball, golf, etc.
- Water sports like wind surfing, scuba diving, water-skiing, kayaks, snorkeling, aqua-cycles, etc.
- Spas (some)
- Discos and other night entertainments
- All the resorts are located in beachfronts

The Caribbean is a huge place and you can choose from Antigua, Bahamas, Virgin Islands, St. Lucia, Grenada, and Jamaica. If you're unsure on how to get a booking, you can do a search online on these different places.

Even your honeymoon deserves careful planning. Make sure that you choose a place where you'll both enjoy and have intimate moments together. Remember, it doesn't end at the wedding. Spending a tropical honeymoon in the Caribbean is a great way to express each other's love and passion.

Top Island Destination to Spend a Romantic Honeymoon

The honeymoon is considered to be one of the most important parts of the wedding. You have to consider that the honeymoon is where both of you and your new spouse will spend a romantic life before you start a family. Here, you will enjoy each other's company and this is also where you will spend one of your memorable moments with your significant other.

However, you have to consider that in order to have a romantic honeymoon, you have to spend it in a great location where everyday is a romantic day.

Today, island destinations are usually considered to be the best choice for honeymooners in the world. You have to admit that there is a romantic atmosphere in islands that can never be found in other places in the world. So, if you are planning for your honeymoon, one of the best destination choices would be an exotic island resort.

There are lots of exotic island resorts in the world where you can consider spending you and your significant other's honeymoon vacation. One of the best choices and also one of the most popular is the Hawaiian Islands. The islands of Hawaii offer great honeymoon packages where you and your spouse can definitely enjoy a romantic vacation.

There are lots of activities to do and there are also lots of places to visit in Hawaii. Another great thing about Hawaii is it's just off the coast of the US

mainland and is a state of the US. This means that you can save a lot on plane tickets.

If you want to spend your honeymoon farther, you can consider spending it at the Caribbean Islands. Here you will find world class white sand beaches and luxurious accommodations. The Caribbean also offers honeymoon vacation packages where you can enjoy romantic island activities, such as scuba diving, sailing or simply watch the romantic Caribbean sunset with your significant other.

You can also consider going to the Aman Group of Islands located all over the world. Although the packages are quite expensive, you can expect world class honeymoon packages, world class beaches, and world class accommodations. People who have been to one of the Aman Group of Islands have testified that it offers great quality services and an island vacation that they will never forget.

There are also countries in Asia where you can spend you and your significant other's honeymoon vacation. In the Philippines, you can experience great tropical weather as well as world-class beaches in the Island of Boracay, and in the islands of Palawan.

Thailand and Indonesia also offers great packages and world class accommodation for honeymoon vacationers. In Thailand, you can experience a romantic honeymoon vacation in Phuket. Indonesia also offers Bali as one of the premier destinations for tourists and honeymoon vacationers.

These are just some of the top island vacation destination available in the world. All you need to do is choose where you want to go and book your reservations.

As you can see, there are quite a lot of choices that you can make when you are planning an island honeymoon vacation. By choosing the best island destination for your honeymoon, you can be sure that you and your significant other will definitely enjoy a romantic vacation that you will never forget. And, a honeymoon experience that you will definitely want to try again.

Exotic Destination to Spend Your Honeymoon

If you are getting married, you know that one of the most important parts of a wedding is the wedding ceremony. However, you also need to consider that the honeymoon is also one of the most important. Besides, the honeymoon is where you will spend a romantic getaway with your loved one.

You also need to consider that that honeymoon only happens once in your marriage. Of course, you can always go and plan a second or even a third honeymoon, but nothing will compare to the romance that you and your spouse will feel on your first honeymoon. This is why it is important to make your first honeymoon an unforgettable one.

On any kind of honeymoon, you have to consider that the location is considered to be one of the most important aspects of the honeymoon. You have to choose a location where both you and your significant other

can enjoy. So, if you want to fully enjoy your honeymoon, you should choose an exotic location to spend it.

You have to consider that there are quite a lot of exotic location available in the world where you and your spouse and definitely enjoy. It is very important that you should know where these destinations are and also be prepared to spend some cash in order for you to fully enjoy your honeymoon.

However, you have to know that spending your honeymoon in an exotic location doesn't mean that you should spend a lot of money to the point that your life savings will be spent. All you need to do is know how to choose and also know how to save money.

Before you start calling your travel agent, you first need to research about the different exotic honeymoon destination available. You can take a look at travel magazines and even take a look at a bridal magazine. By doing this, you will have an idea of where you and your spouse will spend an exotic honeymoon vacation.



You have to consider that there are quite a lot of popular and exotic honeymoon destinations located at different parts of the world. You can consider going to Hawaii, the Caribbean, Europe, and even the tropical islands in South Asia to name a few exotic honeymoon destinations.

In these locations, you will find great honeymoon packages with your travel agency. However, if you really want to save money, you should try and purchase a honeymoon package online. You will find that online booking can offer great discounts and offers with a lot of resorts.

Another great way to save a lot of money is to book a flight with an economy seat. You have to consider the fact that you will mostly be sitting in the plane the entire time you go to your destination. Economy seats may not offer comfort, but it can offer great savings that you can use once you reach you and your spouse reach your destination.

If you want a luxurious and exotic honeymoon vacation package, you can consider purchasing a honeymoon cruise package. Most cruise liners today now offers honeymoon packages with great discounts.



Planning Your Honeymoon Adventure

The wedding is just the beginning. There's plenty of excitement planning the honeymoon as well, from choosing a travel adventure to deciding on what to bring along on the journey.

And for many, planning this great "escape" is just as important as planning the actual wedding. Regardless of where you decide to go, there are some things you should know to make it the kind of experience you want it to be.

First, you must decide on a budget. If money is not an issue, bon-voyage! However, if you're like most engaged couples, you're already paying more than you anticipated. Establish a budget and use it as a guide.

You'll also need to decide whether you want an all-inclusive, one-price-does-it-all, leave-the-wallet-at-home type of trip, or a more do-it-yourself package with car rental, lodging, food, and activities on an a la carte basis. Cruises technically fall under the all-inclusive category, as do resorts.

Of course, honeymoon budgeting takes on a new meaning if you decide to do a "destination wedding". These are becoming very popular as more and more couples decide to forego the traditional wedding costs in addition to the honeymoon expense. They are especially popular with second marriages.



It's easier to get married in some countries than others, so be sure to check with a reliable source, like a country's consulate or the U.S. Department of State, before making any arrangements.

Now you need to book and pay for this trip. Many honeymoon suppliers offer special rates for early booking, which may or may not include airfare. Packages that include airfare can offer significant savings because retailers buy airline seats in at a discount, then package hotel, and sometimes car rentals as well.

Wedding Night & Honeymoon Worksheet

<p>Wedding Night</p> <p>Hotel: _____ Address: _____ Phone: _____ Cost/Includes: _____ Features of room/suite: _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Reservations made: _____ Confirmation #: _____</p> <p>Honeymoon</p> <p>Destination: _____ Departure date: _____ Return date: _____</p> <p>Travel Agency</p> <p>Name: _____ Contact person: _____ Telephone #: _____ Airline: _____ Depart. flight: _____ Return flight: _____</p>	<p>Car Rental</p> <p>Agency: _____ Location: _____ Phone #: _____ Date of pickup: _____ Return date: _____ Insurance: _____</p> <p>Hotel/Resort</p> <p>Location: _____ Phone #: _____ Confirmation #: _____ Check-in time: _____ Check-out time: _____</p> <p>NOTES:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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Your Honeymoon Budget

<p>Before You Go...</p> <p>Wardrobe necessities: _____ Luggage: _____ Passport/passport photos: _____ Inoculations/medicines: _____ Sundries (suntan lotion): _____ Extra pair of sun/glasses: _____ Child care/pet care: _____ Camera & film: _____</p> <p>Transportation To Your Honeymoon</p> <p>IF FLYING...</p> <p>Airfare for two: _____ Transportation to/from airport: _____ _____</p> <p>Long-term parking: _____</p> <p>IF DRIVING...</p> <p>Rental car: _____ Gasoline: _____ Tolls: _____ Snacks/meals on the road: _____ _____</p> <p>Other: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____</p>	<p>Travel Package <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Total Cost: _____</p> <p>Expenses while at destination</p> <p>Lodging (rate x nights): _____ Transfers form airport: _____ Breakfast for ____ days: _____ Lunch for ____ days: _____ Dinner for ____ nights: _____ Snack for ____ days: _____ Tips for ____ days: _____ Entertainment (such as shows, tours, local sights, museums, etc.): _____ Mementos from trip: _____ Other: _____ _____</p> <p>Transportation while at destination</p> <p>Rental car: _____ Gas: _____ Public transportation: _____ Taxi: _____ Rail express (Europe): _____ Inter-island transfers: _____</p> <p>Other: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____</p>
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After The Honeymoon Checklist

- Write thank-you notes for your gifts. Every gift-giver should receive a handwritten note within a month of the wedding.
- Preserve your wedding dress. Have your gown, veil and headpiece professionally dry-cleaned. Inquire about various storage methods.
- Deposit wedding gift checks, bonds, stock certificates. Pay outstanding wedding bills.
- Develop film, choose photographs & review the videos. Develop any film taken at the wedding and on the honeymoon. Review photographer's proofs; review wedding video to determine edited length and special editing techniques. Choose photos for wedding album and order wedding prints for yourselves, relatives and friends. Put other photos in albums.
- Get together with family and friends. Invite attendants, friends and family members to your home to view the honeymoon photos and video.
- Discuss a home budget and financial goals.
- Evaluate your insurance needs. Consult your agent on health, car and life insurance, which may have to be adjusted to reflect married status. Have wedding gifts appraised and insured.

Tips For Thank-You Notes

- Keep careful records of each gift. As they arrive, write down the sender, address, and a brief description.
- Name the gift in your note: "Thank you for the beautiful candle holders."
- Describe how you'll use the gift. "Richard, and I love how elegant the make our table look!"
- Add a personal thought or two about your wedding and/or your relationship with the giver: "It meant a lot to us to have such dear friends share in our wedding day."

Essential Tip 3

Finding The Right Caterer

1) Plan As Early As Possible.

If you plan in advance, you will have more negotiating power.

2) DO NOT Hire The First Caterer You Meet.

It is very important to meet with several and COMPARE their offerings and prices before making a final decision.

3) Always Insist On A "Tasting".

You want to make sure the the food that is being served to your guests meets your requirements.

4) Get A Complete Breakdown Of Costs.

Most caterers will quote by the person. You should ask them to break this down into what you are paying for food, labor taxes, etc. This will make it easier for you to compare prices.

5) Get Everything In Writing.

You don't want any mix-ups on your special day. Make sure you get the price, services and menu in writing.

1. Choose your cake.

2. Complete your honeymoon plans.

3. Order the invitations and announcements.

4. Choose the floral arrangements, corsages, and boutonnieres

5. Book the transportation for the wedding.

How to buy wedding cakes

Wedding cakes are the main attraction in any wedding reception. More than something that you can feast on, wedding cakes has become an essential decoration in the wedding venue. The first thing guests would buzz about is how magnificent your wedding cake is.

Choosing the right cake should be meticulously done. With a little patience and the quick tips below, picking the best cake should as easy as walking down the aisle.

Choose the right bakeshop

If you have an idea on where the best bakery is in your city, then head to that place immediately. You can ask suggestions from your friends or family members also. Get a reservation at once. Do not procrastinate.

The availability of cake decorators might be restricted. Be sure to drop by the bakeshop to talk about the designs, flavors and other things you wanted to add to your cake.

Be sure to give a detailed description of exactly what you want your cake to be. Give the vendor ample time to prepare, approximately six months ahead of your big day would do. You may need to pay a deposit fee for reservation.

The right taste

Aside from the look of the cake, keep in mind that cakes are made primarily for eating. They should taste good as well as they look good. The texture and flavor of the cake itself is important. When scouting for a bakeshop, don't hesitate to ask for cake samples of the flavors you want. If they do not allow this, jump to the next store.

Check on your budget

Wedding cakes range from \$300 to \$1000 or so. Cost primarily depends on the cake design you want. You have to pay for the cake decorator's fee on top of the cost of the cake itself. Know what your budget is ahead of time. Some shops may give you free delivery too.

Most bakeshop has a standard number of servings for each cake type. Know how many guests would attend your wedding so you would know more or less how much money you would allocate for the cake.

Flowers as decorations

Flowers have been a traditional thing on weddings. You can well put them in cakes too. You can either choose from fresh flowers or artificial ones. Fresh flowers are a beautiful addition to your cakes. But it is very important that you choose fresh flowers wisely. Be sure that they are free from chemicals. Just to be on the safe side, sugar flowers are safer. These are edible gum paste decorations that have wire or toothpicks on them.

Where to place the cake

Most cakes, especially in summer, might end up melted under the heat of the sun. They can also cause flowers and flavored curls to dry up. Not to mention the possibility of flies gathering on your prized cake. Just be sure, always have a back up site where you can store your cakes to preserve its look and taste.

Never place your wedding cake near the dance floor or where there is a heavy flow of traffic. You might just see your cake fall down. That's not a good sight at all! Be sure to check the sturdiness of the table you would place your cake.

Buying wedding cakes can be fun and hassle-free. Remember that your wedding cakes need to be presentable, most of the photo ops are done beside the cake. It's always nice to give out that bright smile beside your well-decorated cake that brings out your personal statement.



Wedding Cake Activities

Upon arrival at the wedding reception, many guests head for the cake table so they can admire the cake. Some time later, the bride and groom come along for a picture opportunity and the grand cutting of the cake. Then everyone enjoys cake and it's gone. Believe it or not, there are many more activities that can make the wedding cake more about fun and less about tradition.

Of course, watching the bride and groom push cake into each other's mouths is a long-enjoyed tradition, but there are many more fun - and less messy - activities to consider as well.



One new option that's gaining popularity is to have cupcakes instead of a cake. This is a method that is usually more affordable than having a cake and it can be a lot of fun. Cupcakes are decorated in alignment with the wedding theme, just as a cake is, but the cupcakes are instead arranged on tiered cake plates and displayed on a cake table until it's time to eat them. The cupcakes can be simply handed out on plates to each wedding guest.

Now, what's fun about using cupcakes instead of a whole wedding cake is you can save money, certainly, as many reception halls and caterers charge a per slice fee to cut and serve the wedding cake, but you can also build activities into the cupcake presentation. For example, the cupcakes that are for the bride and groom can have a different decoration than the ones for the guests.

As an extra touch, you can have the baker include a special prize in one or several cupcakes. A small charm or tiny toy can be baked into the cupcake. Whoever gets the charm wins a special prize. These prizes can range from a gift basket or gift certificate to a restaurant to a dance with the bride or groom.

Some brides like to use a Southern tradition and have charms baked into the wedding cake. Similar to the idea above for cupcakes, this involves baking small charms or tiny toys (but usually charms) into the cake.

Those who get one of the charms are said to have good luck. You might even consider having charm bracelet charms baked into the cake, which are then made into a charm bracelet for the bride.

Not everyone enjoys cake. How about an activity for those who won't be eating cake? They can be required to do the "Macarena" or the chicken dance during the time when everyone else is eating cake. If they manage to do the dance continuously while the other guests enjoy cake, they win a prize. Or they simply get to sit down, as now they are tired!

In keeping with the dance during cake theme, how about a requirement that in order to get cake, a guest must perform an impromptu dance first?

Or there could be trivia questions about the bride and groom or about popular culture. Guests must correctly answer the questions before getting their cake. There could be competitions among tables or individuals for most questions answered correctly.



Many people believe that once the cake is cut, they are free to leave if they wish. Since cake cutting usually comes after the meal and after dancing and other traditional celebration activities, many people take the opportunity to leave the party after the cake is cut and enjoyed.

If the bride and groom want their guests to stay after the cake is eaten, it is worth some extra effort to build some activities into the cake-cutting event so people will stick around longer. This can be as simple as telling people not to leave, or can be more subtle and fun.

For example, each person could receive a slip of paper with his or her cake. These slips of paper could be prepared ahead and provided to the catering company with instructions that one folded strip of paper be placed on each plate with the cake.

The paper might give an agenda for the rest of the evening or might ask its recipient to perform a little dance, to head over to give the groom or bride a kiss, or might ask them to take the flower girl out on the dance floor for a spin. The unknown will keep all the guests guessing and provide some entertainment as the instructions are carried out.

Reception Planning & Resources

(The A-Z Guide)



Finding the Perfect Reception Location

What exactly should you look for in your reception location, aside from that sense of rightness you know you'll have the moment you find the most perfect spot? Shopping for a site is like finding a mate, a test you've obviously mastered. You should be looking for the same sorts of things like: charm, personality, depth, more than just a pretty face or perfect body (although looks do count!).

* Roomy Fit

First, make sure the room is large enough to accommodate the number of people of your guest list. The space may look very large when it's completely empty, but not when you factor in the wedding essentials such as: tables, chairs, a buffet, the band or DJ setup, the dance floor, etc... Not to mention your guests, who'll need some elbow room.

Even if you choose an outdoor site, you'll need ample room on the lawn, or poolside. What's the best way to assess the size of a site? Ask to checkout the place when another wedding is being set up! Of course, if you decide you must have your wedding at your favorite bar (the one with only one bathroom, two booths, and 4 feet of floor space), you can always work backwards and tailor your guest list to match.

* Privacy, Please!

Privacy varies widely from place to place, as does the importance couples place on it. If you're having a daytime event in a public location, such as a park or botanical garden, be prepared for strangers to trek past your party. They may even smile, wave, and come by to offer their best wishes.

If this is okay with you (the more the merrier!), why not go for the part? If not, opt for a lovely lawn on a private estate, with a nice lake nearby. Or hold the reception at a restaurant or gallery that will post a "CLOSED FOR PRIVATE PARTY" sign.

In addition, don't think that just because you're indoors you're safe from uninvited guests! Banquet halls and hotels often hold more than one affair at a time.

If there'll be other events going on simultaneously in rooms close to yours, your party may be distracted by the harmonious sounds of karaoke-loving guests singing their hearts out the sounds of Madonna through the walls. If this bothers you, try to schedule your reception when there won't be another one next door.

If this is impossible, visit the site on a dual-party night and see how the sound carries and whether there really are any major people problems before you make your decision.

* Seeing The Light

Light can make or break the mood. If you're marrying during the day, make sure your halls have plenty of windows. Who wants to spend six hours in a dark room when the sun is shining? If it's an evening affair, make sure the room's not too dim - or that the lighting can be controlled for the big entrance, dinner and dancing.

If you're marrying outdoors, say, at dusk, will you be able to set up candles if necessary? Try to visit the site at the same time of day that you've chosen for your wedding. Even if the space looks awesome by candlelight, you may be surprised by the sight of that 25 year old carpet during the day!

* Ample Outlets

Be sure to take a thorough cruise around the room to see if it has lots of places to plug things in, especially if you're partying in a place that is not a regular spot for hosting weddings. Your main user of outlets will be the entertainment crew. Take note of where the outlets are; if their location will force your DJ to spin records in the bathroom, make sure she or he has plenty of extension cords.

* Good Vibrations

If the place is too echo-ey, it could give some weird reverb to the band, not to mention make it difficult for guests to hear one another talking. A tile or wooden floor, for example, will amplify sounds, while a thick carpet will tend to muffle them. Check out the room's sound quality during an event. And tailor your music to the acoustic conditions.

* A Place To Park

Make sure the site is near a good parking lot, garage, or big, empty (safe) street where it's legal to park. If parking is a problem, look for other ways to get everyone to the party.

Can a shuttle bus or vans take the guests from the ceremony to the reception? Inadequate parking isn't necessarily a deal breaker, but it may mean spending more time and money to figure out a viable vehicular alternative.

Your Reception Worksheet

Option 1

Reception Hall _____
Address: _____
Contact Person: _____
Phone: (Office) _____
(Home) _____

Reception Details

Date: _____ Time: _____
Number of Guests: _____
Adequate space for DJ/Band? _____
Music Begins: _____ Ends: _____
Deliveries (flowers, equipment, etc.)
When: _____ Where: _____
Liquor will be provided by: _____
Number of Bartenders: _____
Hours: _____
Bar closed during meals? _____
Hors d'oeuvres: _____
-Served from _____ to _____
Number of tables: _____
Chairs per table: _____
Linens provided: _____
Centerpieces: _____
Dinner menu:

Serving time: _____
Number of servers: _____

Miscellaneous

Ample photography settings? _____
Parking: self or valet? _____
Cost per person: _____
Total cost: _____
Deposit: _____
Balance: _____

Option 2

Reception Hall _____
Address: _____
Contact Person: _____
Phone: (Office) _____
(Home) _____

Reception Details

Date: _____ Time: _____
Number of Guests: _____
Adequate space for DJ/Band? _____
Music Begins: _____ Ends: _____
Deliveries (flowers, equipment, etc.)
When: _____ Where: _____
Liquor will be provided by: _____
Number of Bartenders: _____
Hours: _____
Bar closed during meals? _____
Hors d'oeuvres: _____
-Served from _____ to _____
Number of tables: _____
Chairs per table: _____
Linens provided: _____
Centerpieces: _____
Dinner menu:

Serving time: _____
Number of servers: _____

Miscellaneous

Ample photography settings? _____
Parking: self or valet? _____
Cost per person: _____
Total cost: _____
Deposit: _____
Balance: _____

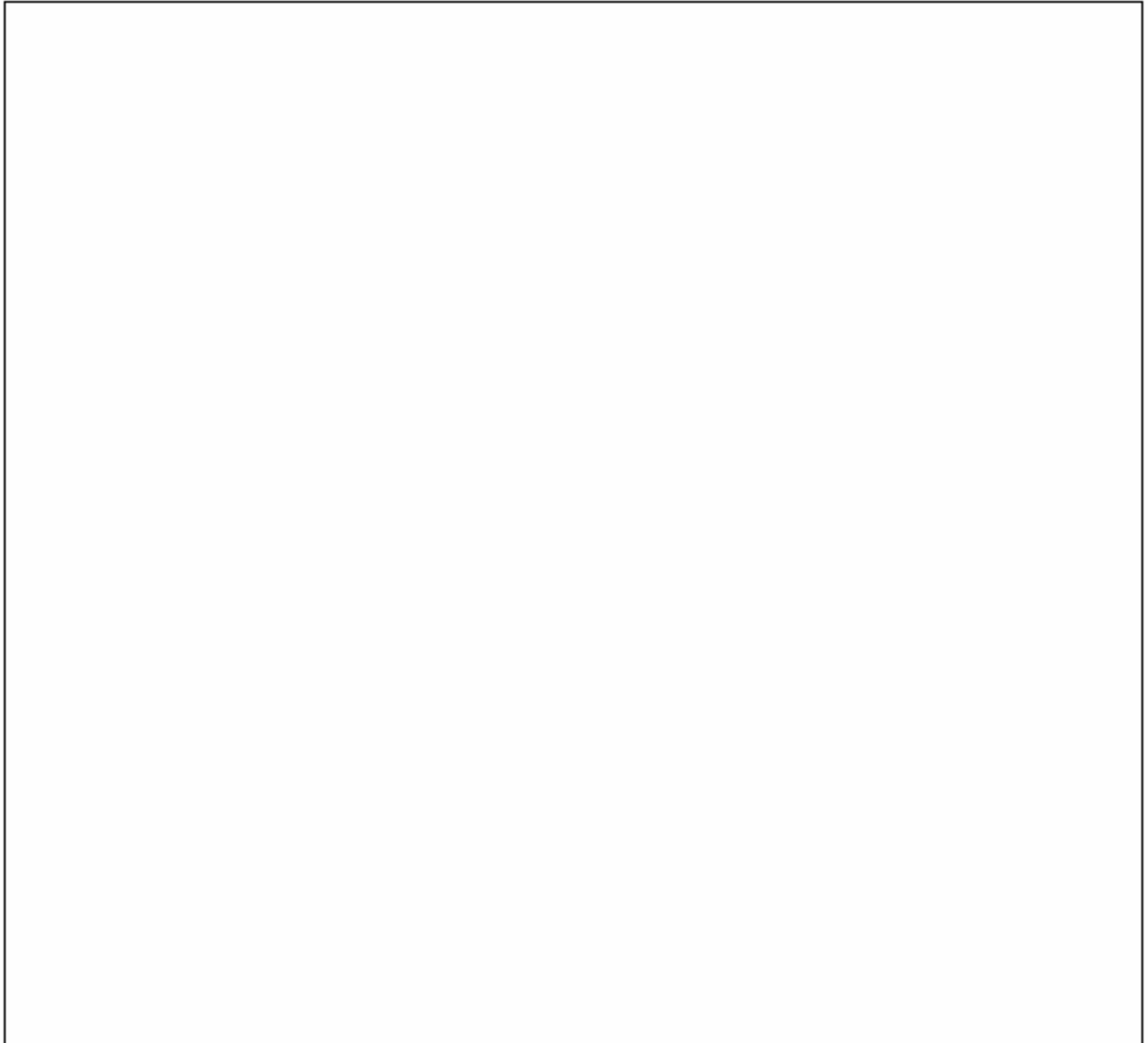
Sitting Pretty: Reception Seating Made Simple

Your wedding is about a month away. You've settled on a reception ball, menu, and table decorations. Now it's time to sit down and decide where your guests will be seated on your big day. If you are having a buffet, specific seats may not be necessary. But if you are having a seated meal, your guests will be happy knowing they have to fight over a seat when it's time to eat! And assigned seating lets them enjoy the wedding as much as you are enjoying your first hours as newlyweds. Here are some tips:

- **Make a seating chart** (use a large piece of paper or the space provided below this page). Draw big circles to represent the tables, dance floor, musical entertainment, and entrances. Then list everyone's name on an index card or sticky note so you can play musical chairs.
- **Place people in spots that suit them.** Your friends will want to be near the music, but Grandma and Grandpa will probably be unhappy with the stereo blaring in their ears. Family and friends should be closest to you. Acquaintances and parents' friends should be farther away.
- **A traditional head table** is long and straight and faces the other reception tables. The bride and groom traditionally sit front and center, with the maid of honor on the groom's left and the best man on the bride's right. But you can stray from tradition. You can have the wedding party and their dates sit at one table, while you and your new spouse have your own small table at the front of the room. You can also sit at a table with only the maid of honor, best man and their dates.
- **For family seating**, it seems obvious to sit people on the same side of the family together to guarantee that they'll be comfortable. But you might want to consider sitting the bride's cousins with the groom's cousins so they can get to know one another. Regardless, there are always relatives who don't get along. To avoid embarrassing quarrels, put family members with a history of squabbles on opposite sides of the dance floor - you'll be happier for it!
- **Seating friends** allows you more creativity. You can sit people who know each other together or you can play matchmaker by seating people at the same table who've never met before this occasion.
- Sometimes, there are just some **people who don't fit in anywhere...** Your friend from camp, your third cousin who's in the circus. Whatever the case may be, avoid seating all the random guests at one table. They'll know they're the outcasts.

Reception Seating

Use the space below to draw the floor plans of your reception hall. Be sure to leave room so you may write down your seating arrangements.



Choosing The Right Caterer For Your Reception

Questions For Caterer	<i>Caterer #1</i>			<i>Caterer #2</i>		
Company Information (address, phone, contact info)						
How many weddings of my type & size have you handled?						
What makes you better of different than another caterer						
Do you have licenses, health permits, & insurance	Yes	No		Yes	No	
If a buffet is offered, do you provide servers	Yes	No	\$	Yes	No	\$
Do you provide bartenders	Yes	No	\$	Yes	No	\$
Do you cut and serve cake	Yes	No	\$	Yes	No	\$
At what time do you arrive to set up everything						
What equipment do you provide						
When is final headcount due						
When is final payment due						
Are there any payment plans	Yes	No		Yes	No	
Is a deposit required/How much?	Yes	No	\$	Yes	No	\$
What is the gratuity/service charge						
Is clean up included	Yes	No		Yes	No	
What is included in overall pricing (ie: linens, china, silverware, etc..)						
Do you provide a written contract and a guarantee	Yes	No		Yes	No	



The Wedding Cake

The bride and the groom may be the stars of the big day, but the wedding cake definitely deserves a nod for its time honored, supporting role.

In ancient Rome, guests broke a wheat bun over the bride's head to bring good luck and fertility. Fortunately, the buns sweetened up, and in the 17th century, a creative French baker stacked and frosted them! The very first tiered wedding cake was born.

* Cake Bake Off

White cakes, butter cream frostings, columns and dazzling sugar flowers are wedding cake classics, but feel free to break away from tradition. If you prefer a trendy design, try a colorful southern red velvet cake, a mango creation that boasts Caribbean flair or even an Asian inspired creation with red frosting.

As colors go bolder, style and form are also changing. Askew cakes, whose tiers are placed off center, are gaining popularity. Even wilder, Krispy Kreme, a popular donut chain, has seen a number of requests for multi-tiered cakes made entirely of the donuts - one for each guest. Krispy Kreme Executive Chef, Ron Rupocinski, has created several templates so brides can choose the look that best fits their reception.

* Beyond The Taste Buds

So what's on top? Joining the ranks of the plastic couple, new toppers are simple and design oriented: a slim, petite vase with a single rosebud, a layer of flower petals, a plain tiny top tier. Family is in, and some couples are choosing a portrait of themselves, a sentimental keepsake like a key chain, or their initials that can be sculpted into shapes.

Cake presentation is also an important aspect at the reception. What's surrounding your cake is just as visible as the cake itself – especially in photos - so plan ahead! Possible cake surroundings include a nature inspired display of twigs spread on the table, baby photos of the bride and groom or a handmade tablecloth from Grandma.

* Cake Mistakes

Cakes are a beautiful addition to your wedding, but sometimes they can go terribly wrong. Here are several "do not's" to keep in mind:

- **Do not** frost with butter cream at a summer wedding unless you want sticky hands (the icing melts extremely quick).
- **Do not** put your cake in front of a bathroom or distracting wall ornament. It deserves center stage.
- **Do not** Forget to cut it with a knife suited to the cake's composition of texture.
- **Do not** forget to talk with your florist about safe, edible blooms if you intend to have your wedding cake decorated with fresh flowers.
- **Do not** let the photographer take distant photographs of your cake. It's an important part of your ceremony, so get up close to capture the details!

* The Cost Of The Cake

Designing the perfect dessert can leave you with a not-so-perfect budget. Save money with your cake by following these tips:

- Have a small cake to cut in front of guests, while pre-sliced sheet cakes (or cute bakers' cupcakes) wait in the back to be served.
- Not everyone will eat cake! Subtract 10 people from your guest total when calculating the slice count.
- Use fresh flowers or fruit garnishes and your own supplies as cake decorations to avoid handicraft fees from the cake designer.
- Skip a separate dessert - your wedding cake is enough.
- Serve half slices and enhance the plates with fresh fruit or sorbet.
- Forgo the fondant. Butter cream icing is less expensive (and tastier!).

* Cake Details

Give your baker as much notice as possible. Order your cake at least six to eight months in advance. Grocery store bakeries may require less notice. Your baker will need to know how many people the cake will serve, as well as flavor and decorating preferences. You may also be asked about your wedding colors and flowers. Be sure to get a receipt for your deposit, and do not forget to ask about delivery information, the balance due and if there is a contract involved.

<i>Option #1</i>	<i>Option #2</i>
Bakery: _____	Bakery: _____
Contact: _____	Contact: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Type of Cake: _____ _____	Type of Cake: _____ _____
Special decorating requirements: _____ _____	Special decorating requirements: _____ _____
Delivery date: _____	Delivery date: _____
Delivery place: _____	Delivery place: _____
Cost: _____	Cost: _____
Deposit: _____	Deposit: _____

Wedding Invitations and Etiquette

Wedding invitations do more than tell who, what, where and when. Wedding invitations set the overall tone of the event.

From the way the invitation is addressed on the outside to the font used for the text inside, a wedding invitation says whether the event will be formal, casual, grand, intimate, themed, traditional, or something entirely different.



While many of the 'rules' dictating a wedding are often broken by today's couples-to-be, don't even consider going against generally-accepted etiquette when sending your wedding invitations. In addition to providing the details and setting the tone, a wedding invitation should also convey what is and is not allowed.

And as tempting as it may be to put your guest's names and addresses into a database, select a script font and print out a sheet of stick-on labels, don't do it! If you're having a casual affair, it may be okay, but anything else requires handwriting. If your handwriting is not up to par, hire someone for this task. Many couples hire calligraphers, which is a great option if your budget allows.

It's important to include a response card and a stamped, pre-addressed return envelope in with the wedding invitation to make replying an easy task. As for addressing, here are a few of the etiquette rules. If you're allowing the invitee to bring a guest, or if children are not invited, you need to specify this. Customarily this is handled by the way the inner envelope is addressed.

Adding 'and guest' after the invited guest's name conveys the message that the guest is allowed to bring a guest. Adding the names of the guest's children, in order from oldest to youngest, indicates that their children are welcome to attend. There are other rules for addressing the envelopes of professionals, couples that live together but are not married, women who use their maiden name and others so be sure you follow them.

It's customary to mail wedding invitations at least six weeks prior to the wedding date to allow guests adequate time to respond. Guests arriving from out of state or even out of the country will appreciate the extra time to coordinate their travel so as a courtesy, it's a good idea to mail their invitations 8 – 10 weeks before the wedding.

And while you're busy selecting your wedding invitations, you'll find matching wedding stationary available for purchase. For that special day, you can order coordinating beverage napkins, match books, place cards, wedding cake box, and even a special wedding album.

You can have the menu printed up and a wedding ceremony program that can be handed out to guests. You'll also need to thank your guests for attending and for their generous wedding gifts so it's a good idea to order thank-you cards and envelopes when you're ordering wedding invitations.

Make an Impression with Your Invitations

While the main purpose of a wedding invitation may be to inform the guests of the date, time and location of the ceremony and reception, this is not the only purpose of a wedding invitation. A wedding invitation is your first chance to make an impression on your guest and to give them a hint about what to expect at your wedding.

The invitation can hint to the theme of your wedding or simply give the guests a glimpse into how formal your wedding will be. The appearance, wording and formality of your wedding invitation all contribute to the impressions that your guests form about your wedding before they even decide whether or not they will attend.

Since the most important purpose of a wedding invitation is to let guests know the particular details of the wedding it is important to ensure that these details are accurate. You will want to hold off on ordering your invitations until you have finalized all of the details to ensure that your invitations are printed with accurate information.

In order to avoid confusion that results from misinformation on your invitations, it is critical that you proofread your invitations several times to ensure that all of the information is correct. Once you have proofread the invitation a few times, you might consider having someone else proofread it as well. This is sometimes necessary because it is easy to overlook a mistake on your invitation when you know what the invitation should say.

Sometimes your mind will subconsciously fix the error making it appear as though everything is correct when it is really not. It is imperative that you ensure that the details of your wedding invitation are accurate but it is also very important to proofread the entire invitation to make sure that there are no other errors.

Check your names and your parent's names, if they appear on the invitation, carefully to ensure that they are spelled correctly and also check the spelling and punctuation of the rest of the text. Wedding information that is accurate and contains no errors is sure to make a wonderful impression on your guests and can help to avoid guests from missing parts of the wedding because they were misinformed by inaccurate information on the invitation.

The look of your wedding invitation can say a lot about your taste and your expectations for your wedding. If you are planning to have a particular theme for your wedding, you might want to incorporate your theme in your wedding invitation to give your guests a hint at what they can expect at your wedding.

If you are planning to incorporate a theme of old fashioned movie romances you might want to invest in invitations that depict a scene or make a reference to an old fashioned romantic movie such as Casablanca.

Or if you plan to have a wedding with a Hawaiian or beach theme you might choose an invitation that conveys this sentiment with a background picture of a beach or a whimsical border with a Hawaiian pattern.

While not all weddings have a particular theme, if you are planning on having a theme, it's a fun idea to purchase invitations that express this theme to your guests.

The wording that you use on your wedding invitations can also make an impression on your guests. You will want to ensure that the text of the invitation matches with the formality of the wedding.

If you plan to have a wedding with a relaxed atmosphere you can afford to be creative and original in your wording but if your wedding will be more conservative you will want to use language that will convey this sentiment. While slang and vulgarity are never appropriate verbiage on a wedding invitation it is acceptable to use more relaxed speech if the wedding is expected to be casual.

Many guests form their first impressions of a wedding based on the invitations. Since this is true, it is important to exercise caution and ensure that your wedding invitations will convey the message that you wish them to express.

If you want to maintain a degree of formality in your wedding, then your invitations should also be very formal. Conversely, if you expect your wedding to be casual with a relaxed atmosphere, it is acceptable to send out invitations that are informal.

Say Your Own Vows – Personalized Wedding Vows

Your wedding is your own. And in today's society, people have been constantly scouring every book for any way to make their wedding as personal and as unique as possible. One way to do this is to whip up your own wedding vows.

Traditionally, couples to be wed do not have much of a say in what goes into many of the words spoken during the wedding ceremony. Today, it is increasingly getting easier to personalize and influence what is said during the ceremony – within reasonable bounds, though.



If you desire to make your wedding vows unique and personal, you are not alone. Many other couples incorporate feelings, and intimate messages into their wedding vows. It has an added effect of making your wedding more touching, dramatic, and memorable.

Talk with the Officiant Ahead of Time

If you would like to personalize your wedding vows, first notify your Officiant to find out the legalities, guidelines and rules in drafting your own wedding vows. He or she will typically give pointers and examples to help you draw up your own vows. Furthermore, the Officiant will inform you of the parts of the vow that are expected to be said.

The Topic

It may include promises, such as "I will swear upon my life to do ..." or it may be heartfelt messages for each other, or even hopes for each other plans for the future and such. You may also opt to create a mixture of each to spice up your wedding vows. Although norms vary from culture to culture, as a general rule, the wedding vow should not take too long to recite. Keep it concise yet meaningful. Remember, you will have to recite this, and long recitations tend to make the memory suffer.

Make it Official

After creating a draft of the vows you wish to exchange, it would do well to meet up with the Officiant again and show him a draft of your vows. Although in the end, it is ultimately your decision that is followed, do take heed of the Officiant's advice, as it is usually sound and has been honed by experience.

Practice

It is a good idea to practice your vows before the wedding. Although there is no rule against reading vows, a thoroughly practiced, heartfelt rendition of the vow will definitely make a lasting impact on your partner and the people witnessing the ceremony. As mentioned earlier, avoid overly long vows as they tend to be less remembered and are harder to memorize, not to mention quite inconvenient to others. You may do so, however, if you feel the need is justified.

The Performance

When reciting your vows during the wedding, always keep calm. People who are tense tend to speak too fast, and since the wedding vow is a very important part of the wedding, you will want to take your time in the spotlight.

Loosen up, so that in case you forget a line or two during the exchange of vows, you will at least be able to bounce back with something from your heart. If you desire so, you may also keep a written version of your vows with you. You might want to read it surreptitiously though.

Good luck on your wedding, and may the sweet words you utter during the exchange of vows never lose their meaning for the rest of your days!

Outdoor Wedding Reception Activities

If you are having your wedding reception outdoors, that opens the door for many activities that would be hard to pull off indoors. You can plan games and activities based on the outdoor theme and carry that theme indoors if part of the reception is inside as well.

Depending on where the reception will be held, you can plan many activities based on the setting. Whether it is the park or on a farm, there are a myriad of activities you can plan.

Let's start with some basics based on popular wedding locations. One fun game for a winery wedding is a blindfolded wine tasting game. If the bride and groom are wine drinkers, this might not be a game the bride and groom should be a part of, but instead guests and wedding party members.

Blindfold perhaps a half dozen volunteers and have them do a blind taste test (provide something to clean the palate between sips). The volunteers should guess which wine is the pinot noir, which is the Cabernet, and so on. A bottle of wine is the obvious prize for the winner of this game.

Say you are having a reception at a country club on a golf course. It's possible your theme will include golf elements, so why not include golf in some reception activities or games? You certainly could head to the golf course for a "hole in one" contest, or have a driving contest to see which guest has the best stroke.

As a simple, "who gets the centerpiece game", you could have people guess how many golf balls there are in the floral centerpiece (which could decorate a plain large glass vase filled with flowers). Similarly, there could be a large vase or other clear container filled with golf balls at the reception somewhere and guests could guess how many golf balls are in the vase.

A silly game could be made on the dance floor by asking everyone to include their best golf swing into their dancing for one particular song.



Now, if your reception and ceremony are both to be held outdoors and guests will be milling outdoors, think about games or activities that can take place outdoors and still keep to your level of formality or informality. For example, if the reception is being held at a park, perhaps guests might enjoy a "walk down memory lane".

Prior to the reception, someone can use potted plants or arbors to create a little private lane, which guests can walk through. Along the path, guests will find pictures of the bride and groom at various stages in their lives. There should be a place for guests to record their thoughts and memories along the way as well.

If your wedding and reception are fairly casual, you can always tell guests ahead of time to prepare for a ball game or some other fun outdoor activity. Women can bring a pair of sneakers. Just imagine the fun photos you'll get out of a rousing game of football or baseball played by women in dresses and sneakers and men in suits and sneakers!

You can provide a challenge activity involving barefoot dancing in the grass or a Frisbee toss in the backyard. Is there a pool in the yard where the reception will be held? Or is it near the beach? Why not have a swimming activity for after the whole of the reception is done?

Essential Tip 4

Choosing Your Photographer

This may be the most important choice you will make, as this will be your record of your special day. Choose a photographer whose business is wedding photography. Have them show you a portfolio of their work. Plan shots with your wedding party and closest friends and relatives. Most important-communicate with your photographer and let them know what photos you want and get everything in writing.

- 1. Order tuxedos.**
- 2. Finalize the guest list.**
- 3. Mail the invitations**
- 4. Schedule date and time for rehearsal.**
- 5. Reserve rooms for out of town guests.**
- 6. See your doctor for blood test or health certificate if required.**
- 7. Get final dress fitting.**
- 8. Order your keepsakes.**



Selecting Wedding Favors

When selecting favors for your wedding there are a number of factors you should consider before making your final decision. Some couples do not give enough consideration to their wedding favors and this is quite unfortunate because the wedding favor is the one part of the wedding which your guests will take home as a reminder of your wedding.

A well chosen wedding favor can result in your friends and family members remembering your wedding day more fondly than they remember other weddings they have attended simply because they see or use your favor often and it automatically triggers memories of your wedding day.

However, couples who do not put much thought or effort into the favors they distribute at the wedding may find their guests discarded their favors soon after the wedding. This article will discuss some of the factors to be considered when selecting wedding favors.

These factors should include price, usefulness of the favor and appropriateness of the favor. Considering each of these elements carefully will help the couple to make a wise choice when selecting wedding favors.

Price is one of the most important factors a couple must consider when selecting wedding favors. This is so important because the price will often dictate the quality of the favors. While you can purchase some great favors at a very inexpensive price, there will likely be a great deal of comparison shopping involved to find the best deal on the favor.

There will also likely be a great deal of research involved. For example you may find that items such as picture frames are out of your budget range but you may find other great items such as candles are well within your budget.

You may also be pleasantly surprised to find out that although picture frames available from one distributor are too expensive, another distributor has enough picture frames in their closeout stock for you to purchase favors for your wedding. It is just important to remember to not be too disappointed about the items you cannot afford and to instead focus on finding the best favor you can afford.

Another factor to consider when selecting wedding favors is whether or not the favor will be useful to your guests. This is very important because favors which are useful are often much better received than favors which the guest cannot use. For example many guests will find items such as picture frames and candles to be useful but will be less impressed with favors such as figurines of a bride and groom.

These may be very pretty but many of your friends and family member likely have a collection of similar items from other weddings they have been too and may simply not have room to display these favors. As a result the favor may wind up in a box in the attic or may be thrown out shortly after the wedding.

Finally, a couple should carefully consider the appropriateness of a wedding favor when making their final decision. This is very important because you do not want to give your guests a favor which they will think is inappropriate. Fortunately, when it comes to wedding favors just about anything is considered appropriate.

From candy to office supplies and from statues to books just about anything is appropriate for the wedding as long as it reflects the theme of the wedding, reflects the underlying theme of love or is even just something which the guests can use and will appreciate. For example you can certainly give out dictionaries as wedding favors.

Your guests will not likely be offended by this favor but some of them may think it is a little strange. However, if you give each of your guests a copy of a book filled with love poems no one will think it is a strange idea for a wedding favor at all.

Perhaps the best way to determine whether or not a wedding favor is appropriate is to think about what you would feel if you were given that same item as a favor at another wedding.

Wedding Favors for a Beach Themed Wedding

If you are planning to hold your wedding on the beach or are simply planning to incorporate a beach theme into your wedding it makes sense to give out wedding favors which reflect the beach theme. This can really help to tie the theme of the wedding together and will serve as a great reminder of the wedding.

If you select a favor which is very closely related to the atmosphere of the wedding your guests are much more likely to remember your wedding

well when they see your favor in their home. If you choose to give out favors which are not closely related to your theme, the favors will not likely trigger memories of your wedding for your guests.

One great wedding favor idea which works well with a beach related theme is a gift of a votive candle in a holder designed to look like a beach pail. This really helps to convey the theme of the wedding and your guests are sure to remember your wedding fondly whenever they see the favor from your wedding.

These types of favors can be very inexpensive but they are something your guests can really use and will serve as a great reminder of your wedding.



Giving out seashells as wedding favors is another great idea for a beach themed wedding. You can find authentic shells at party supply stores craft supply stores. To further carry the theme in the favor you can purchase decorative fishing nets and cut the net into small squares.

Once you do this you can place the shells in the center of the square and use twine to tie the corners of the square together. This creates a very appealing presentation which is really representative of the theme of the wedding because both the favor itself and the wrapping material are indicative of the theme.

Magnets which are related to the beach can also make great wedding favors for a wedding with a beach theme. You can choose magnets in the shape of flip flops, starfishes, seashells or any other shape which accurately reflects the theme. This is such a great idea for a favor because it is not only a favor which will always remind your guests of the wedding but it is also a favor which is very practical.

Your guests will likely keep your favor displayed prominently on their refrigerators where they will see it every day and be reminded of you and your wedding. Hopefully will it will serve as an enjoyable reminder of your wedding.

You can also combine your place card holders and your favor to contribute to the atmosphere at your wedding and also give your guests a favor which will be a keepsake which will remind your guest of your wedding.

An example of this might be place card holders in the shape of sailboats, starfishes, seashell or even dolphins.

These can be used at your wedding to hold cards with your guests name and table number but your guests can also take them home as a favor. Once at home your guests can insert a picture and use the place card holders as a modern and elegant picture frame instead.

This allows your guests to get additional use out of your favor and also gives them a favor which will serve as a reminder of your wedding.

Bookmarks which relate to the beach are also appropriate favors for a wedding with a beach theme. This can also be a favor which is both practical and inexpensive. Simple paper bookmarks may not be appropriate as favors but you can purchase more elegant sterling silver bookmarks which are more appropriate are favors.

These favors are not only attractive but they give the impression that you really were looking for a favor which your guests will appreciate. You can even combine a beach themed bookmark with a short book of love poems as a favor for your wedding so the theme of the wedding is combined with the overall theme of love.

Edible Wedding Favors

There is one type of wedding favor which is almost always appreciated by the guests at the wedding. This is an edible wedding favor. Whether you opt for sweet or savory items you and your guests are likely to enjoy your edible wedding favors.

The downside to giving an edible wedding favor is it is likely to be consumed shortly after your wedding instead of being saved for years to come as a memento of your wedding. However, you can rest assured that your guests will greatly enjoy the gift.

One of the most popular edible wedding favors is a simple chocolate bar with a personalized wrapper. These chocolate bars can be simple milk chocolate, dark chocolate, white chocolate are can be filled with items such as almonds or raisins. There are even more options available for the wrapper of the candy bar.

This is very important because this is the first thing your guests will notice about your favor. Most brides and grooms opt to have their names and the date of the wedding printed on the wrapper and select a wrapper design which relates to love, weddings or the specific theme of the wedding.

However, some brides and grooms may even decide to have their pictures on the wrapper along with their names and the wedding date.

Tins filled with candy are another option for brides and grooms who want to give out edible wedding favors. These tins can be filled with any type of candy you wish. They can be filled with mints, hard candies, candy coated almonds, chocolates or any other favorite candy.

There is also typically the option of personalizing the tin by including the wedding date and the name of the bride and the groom. The guests may eat the candy soon after the wedding but they can keep the candy as a reminder of your wedding and use it to store other small items such as change, sewing needles, rubber bands or virtually anything which is small enough to be stored in the tins.

Candy is a very popular choice when a bride and groom are considering giving edible wedding favors. One unique way to give out candy as wedding favors is to use large glass bowls as the centerpieces for the tables and fill the bowls with the bride and grooms' favorite types of candy.

You can give each of your guests a small container which matches the theme of the wedding such as a sand pail for a beach themed wedding or anything else which is appropriate. The guests can fill the containers with some of the candy from the centerpiece at the end of the evening.

Cookies are other options for brides and grooms who want to give out edible party favors. There are a number of different options in this case. You can select cookies which are rather plain in nature but place them in keepsake boxes with the bride and grooms' names as well as the date of the wedding.

They can also give out personalized fortune cookies with each fortune depicting a quotation which is related to love. Another way to use cookies as wedding favors is to give out cookies displaying a photo of the couple. There are many bakeries that can make these cookies for you in a variety of sizes and shapes. You simply need to select a design and give the bakery a photo to use in the design process.

Cocoas, teas and coffees are still another option for couples who want to give out edible wedding favors. You can select specialty cocoas, teas or coffees or you can have the packaging customized to include your picture, an appropriate quotation, poem or other message related to loves and weddings. Putting the couple's names as well as the wedding date on the package is a good idea as well as including a picture of the couple.

Gift Ideas for Your Groomsmen

Choosing a gift for the groomsmen could be a difficult task for many grooms. Most grooms don't want to go with a gift that is too traditional or unoriginal but they also struggle with feelings that a gift that is too creative may not be appropriate. Perhaps the most important aspect of a groomsmen gift is not whether it is traditional or unique but whether or not it fits the personality of the recipient.

As long as you know your groomsmen very well and put an honest effort into finding their groomsmen gifts you are sure to find a gift that will be enjoyed by your groomsmen.

One of the most traditional groomsmen gift ideas is a flask. If this is something that you think your groomsmen will fully enjoy then by all means go out and buy them the most attractive silver or leather flask that you can find. It's important to choose a gift not because of its traditional connotations but because you know the groomsmen will cherish the gift.

If you believe that your groomsmen have a use for a flask or will be touched by receiving such a traditional gift as a souvenir and not be concerned by its lack of practicality then a flask may be a wonderful gift idea.



A CD case with a few CDs chosen specifically for the groomsmen can be a great gift idea if you know that your groomsmen enjoy music. This is a wonderful gift idea because it is sure to be used often by the recipient and your groomsmen will remember your wedding day each time they listen to one of their CDs.

This is also a thoughtful gift because including CDs that you know your groomsmen will enjoy but do not already own shows that you really put an effort into choosing the gift. Personalizing the gift for each of the groomsmen also shows that you see them as individuals and took the time and effort involved in making the gift unique for each of them.

A men's perfume or fragrance can be another unique gift idea for the groomsmen. Choosing a different fragrance for each member of the wedding party sends the message that you did not buy your gifts in a rush. Taking the time to choose a unique fragrance for each of your groomsmen lets them know that you truly appreciate their assistance and participation in your wedding.

Another idea for giving gifts for your groomsmen is to give each man a different gift. While the groomsmen are all close friends of the groom and may have certain common interests, they all still have something about them that makes them unique. You could recognize their individuality by personalizing a unique gift for each of your groomsmen.

For example you could give a journal and fancy pen to the groomsman who likes to write and an assortment of dance CDs to the groomsman who enjoys going to nightclubs and dancing. While traditionally grooms have given each of their groomsmen either the same gift or very similar gifts, it is also acceptable to give each groomsman a unique gift that suits their personality.

Bracelets or watches are another traditional groomsmen gift idea. Depending on your budget, you might want to purchase a watch or bracelet that is appropriate to wear on your wedding day.

This is a wonderful gift that not only expresses your appreciation for participating in your wedding but also gives the groomsmen a nice accessory to wear at your wedding and other formal functions.

Cuff links or tie clips are still another traditional gift idea for a groom to give to his groomsmen. These items are not very common and many groomsmen do not own either so giving them as a gift ensures that the groomsmen will have these items to wear with their tuxedo on your wedding day.

Although these are traditional gift ideas, you could make them more modern by giving each groomsman an accessory that suits their personality. For example you could give your sports loving groomsman a tie clip that is in the shape of a basketball while you could give your musically inclined groomsman a tie clip that is in the shape of a few musical notes.

Giving each of your groomsmen a variation of the same idea makes even the most traditional gift idea appear modern.

Groomsmen can be difficult to buy gifts for because many of the traditional groomsmen gifts seem boring or impractical. Traditional gifts can be made more modern with the introduction of a twist such as a variation in each groomsman's gift instead of giving them each the exact same thing.

The most important thing to consider in choosing a gift for your groomsmen is to make sure the gift will reflect the personality of the recipient.

Essential Tip 5

Choosing Your DJ

Choosing a DJ is very much like choosing your photographer, you want one who is experienced with wedding receptions. You should make a list of songs that you want played, but it should be a short list. Let your DJ be somewhat flexible in the music he plays. Not everyone at your reception will like the same music as you and you don't want everyone sitting instead of dancing.

- 1. Pick up your marriage license.**
- 2. Write the thank you notes.**
- 3. Send the wedding announcement to the newspapers.**
- 4. Mail your wedding announcements.**
- 5. Pack for your honeymoon and confirm your reservations.**
- 6. Pick up the wedding dress and tuxedo.**
- 7. Attend the ceremony rehearsal and rehearsal dinner.**



Destination Wedding Activities

As brides get more and more creative in planning their weddings, locations weddings are becoming more and more popular. Although this might result in a smaller guest list, it can also result in some fun opportunities for activities.

Many brides like to have their weddings seaside, so they move the festivities to a beach locale, either on their local coast or somewhere more exotic like Jamaica or the Bahamas. In any event, there are several activities that can be planned around this theme.

If the wedding is also a weekend event where guests will be around for more than just the wedding, the bride can plan a sailing excursion. Charter a boat for a day and bring your guests out on the water to relax, rejuvenate, and perhaps enjoy a meal.

If the wedding is in the Caribbean, how about a cooking demonstration? The bride and groom can arrange for the wedding guests to enjoy a complimentary cooking demonstration put on by the hotel or a local cook.

Since much of the food the guests eat while visiting for the wedding will be different than what they eat at home, they might enjoy learning how to prepare it for home enjoyment.

Say the wedding is in Hawaii, another popular destination wedding location. Here, you can plan several activities around the location. For example, what about a luau? This could even take the place of a more formal or conventional sit-down rehearsal dinner.



In Hawaii, guests will enjoy a hula lesson. Depending on the age of your guests, be sure there is enough time between the wedding and the lesson for the resting of aching bones, in case there are any.

At the wedding itself, there are many ways to incorporate the location into the ceremony itself. At a beachside reception, you can play "pass the shell", where a large shell is passed around and guests "listen" for some advice from the other world. Once they get a piece of advice (really something they think of themselves) they share it with the bride and groom, either verbally, or it can be written into a book for the couple.

Other pre-wedding activities can include guided tours, shopping excursions and wine tasting activities (if applicable). If you choose to include any of these activities keep in mind that the bride and groom (or their families) are expected to pay for the bulk of them.

If you arrange a sailing excursion, for example, you are expected to pick up the tab for the trip. Do not tell people ahead of time that the activity will be x dollars. It's likely that won't sit well with them.

Since one of the great benefits of the destination wedding is that only your closest friends and family will likely surround you, you can plan some meaningful activities that you wouldn't plan if the wedding were a larger event.

For example, you might plan a slumber party night with close friends that includes movies, popcorn and drinks in your hotel room, villa or cottage, depending on where the wedding is held. Of course, if you plan a destination wedding, for some people this might double as their vacation. In that event, you might not want to schedule too many activities but instead let people find their own activities and entertainment both before and after the wedding.

Essential Tip 6

Delegate And Relieve Stress

By delegating some of the smaller tasks, such as addressing envelopes, picking up the dresses, etc, to responsible members of your wedding party you can relieve some of the stress you are sure to feel as the big day approaches. One last tip--Listen to the experiences of others for helpful suggestions.

Wedding Guest Book Activities

Traditional brides don't have to have traditional guest books. Certainly you can purchase a standard guest book and ask your guests to sign it, but there are so many more guest book-like activities that are more unique.

Let's move from the popular to the less well known. One very popular option allows guests to sign a picture of the bride and groom. Simply take a picture of the bride and groom and have it matted in a mat several inches larger than the photo itself.

Place a frame around this, but don't include the glass or Plexiglas frame. You'll add this later. Some people prefer to use "bulldog" clips to keep the mat together instead of putting the picture in the frame. The picture can be framed after the wedding.

Most couples choose a nice photo of themselves for this picture/guestbook option, although if there's a formal engagement photo, this is an excellent way to preserve that photo and show it off to friends and family.

If photos are taken before the wedding with the bride and groom in their wedding attire, you can certainly use this photo. Many couples opt to either leave the mat empty or they place a temporary picture in the mat and add a wedding picture later.

Be sure to have a nice Sharpie marker handy and place the picture on either a sturdy easel or on a table where guests are sure to see it.



Another option is instead of providing a picture of the bride and groom to sign, the guests are provided with a picture of themselves! Simply provide a Polaroid camera and assign someone the job of taking pictures of the guests as they arrive at the reception.

Once the picture is dry, provide a Sharpie and they can sign the picture, make a note to the bride and groom or hand draw a silly picture. It can be whatever the guest wants it to be. This is a unique, and personal, way for guests to "sign in" at the wedding.

Whoever handles the taking of the pictures should also handle putting them in an album of some sort. A scrap booker might provide a special memory book with the Polaroid pictures in it, or the pictures can simply be placed in a nice album and presented later to the bride and groom.

Many guests don't give a great deal of thought to the guest book. They whiz by the guest book table more concerned with getting their cocktail and hitting the dance floor.

If this is a concern, provide a "traveling" guest book. Send each guest something either to sign or decorate before the wedding.

In this "traveling" guest book scenario, there are several options. One of the easiest is to send each guest a small piece of paper and ask them to write something meaningful or thoughtful for the bride and groom on it.

The pieces of paper are returned prior to the wedding (to ensure a better response, provide a self-addressed stamped envelope with the paper) and can be compiled in some meaningful way for the bride and groom and presented to them on their wedding day.

If the guest list is a creative or particularly close group, there is one other option that is even more meaningful. Again, in a scrapbook fashion, send each guest a piece of paper to sign or decorate. The paper should be the size of a photo album, so it might be a 6 x 6 piece of paper, an 8 x 8 piece of paper, or even 12 x 12, if the guests are up to that larger size.

In a letter that arrives with the paper, the guests are instructed to create a memory page for the bride and groom. They might include photos, quotes, little anecdotal stories, or combine all of these with stickers or embellishments.

It's thoughtful, meaningful and personal and it's an excellent way to include guests who might not be able to attend the wedding, but would still like to be a part of it.

Tips When Doing Wedding Toasts

Wedding toasts perform an essential role during the wedding celebration. The wedding toast serves as a link between the formal wedding ceremonies and the less formal atmosphere of the wedding reception.

The wedding toast also allows some members of the family, relatives and closest friends to express their feelings and to wish the couple well.

Having toasts started from the belief that creating some noise, such as ringing a bell, in this case, the clinking of a glass, can cast away evil spirits.



The wedding toast may follow a traditional or a non-traditional order.

In the traditional order, the first toast is the toast to the bride or the toast to the bride and groom. This is done by the best man, a relative or a friend. The groom then responds with a message to his bride, the person who made the toast, the couple's parents and a toast to the bridesmaids.

The best will then respond to thank the groom on behalf of the bridesmaids. At times, if the bride has spoken after the groom, the best man will thank the bridesmaids.

A close friend or relative may then follow with another toast. After this, the father of the bride thanks the guests on behalf of his wife and himself, and announces that they can begin with the celebration.

The non-traditional toast is done to do something different from the tradition. The order may be changed to suit the guests and the occasion.

The emcee proposes the first toast for the couple. The groom then thanks the emcee and the guests and toasts to his bride. The bride thanks her groom and the guests and proposes a toast to her parents and her in-laws. At times, a special toast may be done for her in-laws.

The father of the bride thanks the bride for the toast, thanks the guests for attending and announces that the celebration may begin. At times, the emcee may propose a toast to the bridesmaids, after which the maid of honor may respond with thanks or propose another toast.

The emcee may introduce guests who will propose their toasts, and announce the beginning of the celebration.

Here are some tips when proposing a toast.

- * The bride should be served the beverage first, followed by the groom, the maid of honor, the parents and then the best man.
- * The toast can be done with a sip of wine, champagne or a non-alcoholic drink except coffee, tea and water.
- * If you will propose the first toast, make sure that not only your glass, but also all the other glasses are filled before you start speaking.
- * When proposing a toast, raise your glass with your right hand. The glass should be held in a straight line from the shoulder.
- * It is better to compose your own wedding toast. However, if you cannot write a good one, you can try traditional wedding toast but make sure to personalize it to include your feelings and thoughts about the bride and groom.
- * Always remember to end a toast with an invitation to the guests to join you and something that tells them what to say in response.

These are some things that one should remember when proposing a wedding toast. On the other hand, if you received a toast, you do not raise your glass, stand, nor sip your drink. You just thank the toasters and although you are not required, you may propose another toast.

Wedding Toast Activities

Giving a toast is a responsibility that puts fear in the speaking hearts of most members of a wedding party. While it's not usually something that is particularly long or involved, it's public speaking (which doesn't sit well with many people) and really puts people on the spot.

If you are planning a wedding and know that most members of this wedding party are hams who won't mind the whole "public speaking" thing, then by all means keep the toasts traditional with dad, the best man and others taking their expected turns at the microphone.

But if you're looking for something different, either because you want to save putting people on the spot, or you simply want to do something different and fun, read on.

First, you can certainly take the whole toast thing off the agenda if you wish. There are no rules requiring a toast at any wedding. Weddings should be unique events and reflect the personalities of the bride and groom.

But if you want to do something a little different, there are options. You can go the video route, which asks people to essentially make a toast on camera and then the video is given to the bride and groom later. This isn't a particularly unique idea, but it does solve the issue of not wanting to put people on the spot and still gives everyone a chance to say something special to the bride and groom.

If your guest list includes many outgoing people then consider "pass the microphone". This can work in several ways. You can either be silly with it, or deadly serious. Most people like silly. Say dad takes the microphone first. His last name ends with T (so, let's say dad's last name is Smith). He must find someone whose first name begins with a T (Tom? Tony? Tina? Theresa?) and pass the microphone to that person, who then gives a toast.

This method of giving toasts does put people on the spot (certainly before the fun begins you can warn them so if they are really uncomfortable, they can escape to the restroom or bar) but it can also be a lot of fun.

Getting people when they least expect it and then asking them to remember something funny or meaningful about the bride and groom can result in interesting, funny and truthful results.



You might also decide that one person at each table be required to give a toast. Number the tables and at various intervals, have the MC or DJ call a number, which will require guests at that table to decide amongst themselves who will give the toast at that table. Certainly, more than one person can if they like, but there will likely be at least one ham at each table who will enjoy standing up and toasting the newlyweds.

Say you have plenty of public speakers in the group, and finding willing toast participants won't be a problem. But you think the subject matter might be. There's an easy solution to this problem. You can provide open-ended topics for the toast speakers.

Say you are providing an "open mike" toast arrangement, where anyone can request the microphone and offer a toast. The DJ, MC or someone else in the wedding party (perhaps the maid of honor or best man) can offer the speaker a surprise topic, which might be pulled from a champagne flute or drawn out of the floral arrangement on the head table. There might be slips of paper to choose, or just one sheet of paper with several ideas.

To learn more about planning your beach wedding, preparing the speeches and toasts, visit : <http://beachweddingideas.net>

And our Squidoo lenses giving you even more tips and strategies to plan the perfect beach wedding and reception.

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I hope you have enjoyed this Beach Wedding Planner Checklist eBook. More than anything, I hope you have learned several wedding tips that you can put into action for your big day!

I wish you both all the best that life has to offer!

Helene Malmsio

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