

GOING LOCAL

How couples can benefit from hiring local vendors

January 2018

A Special Supplement to

the Oneida Daily Dispatch

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BUILDING YOUR BUDGET

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& Naked Cakes

Frosting-free cakes a growing trend

Weddings

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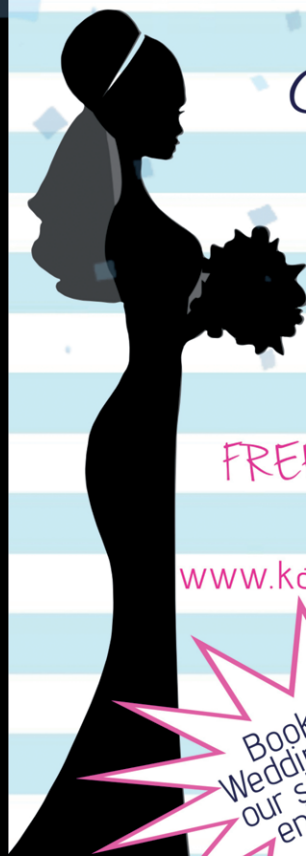
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WEDDING COSTS: WHAT TO EXPECT



Newly engaged couples may experience an array of emotions when they sit down to plan their weddings. Some couples cannot wait to jump into planning and want to catalog every aspect of the process, while others may proceed with caution because they don't know what to expect — particularly in regard to cost.

Many couples find it difficult to create their wedding budgets because they have no previous experience to draw on. The wedding planning advisor CostofWedding.com indicates the average wedding cost in the United States is \$26,720, with most people spending between \$20,000 and \$34,000. Seventh Heaven Event Catering states that, in Canada, the average wedding costs around \$30,000. Such costs can vary greatly depending on couples'

preferences, including where they hope to tie the knot. By breaking down wedding expenses, couples can get a clearer picture of how much they may need to pay for their weddings and where they may need to cut costs.

Reception site: According to The Knot, a premiere wedding planning resource, couples can expect their receptions to eat up the largest chunk of their wedding budgets. Wedding reception venues may cost between \$10,000 and \$15,000. The average price for catering per person is roughly \$70. Bar service may be around \$2,000 for a three- to four-hour party. Some reception sites combine the room cost with the food and beverage costs, while others have à la carte fees.

Cake: Wedding cakes tend to

be multitiered intricate designs, so they will cost more than birthday cakes. According to Statistics Brain, wedding dessert will come in around \$390.

Music: The Knot says wedding bands cost around \$3,500, which is more than twice as much as hiring a deejay (\$1,200). Soloists or ceremony musicians may cost around \$650.

Wedding planner: Many couples employ wedding planners to make planning their weddings easier. Wedding planners cost an average of \$1,300, says Thumbtack, a company that matches professionals with people who require their services.

Transportation: Limousines and other transportation prices vary depending on the

vehicle(s) couples choose. The Knot notes that budgeting between \$400 and \$500 for transportation might be wise.

Wedding gown: Brides-to-be should expect their gowns to cost around \$1,100 and the veil or headpiece to be roughly \$120, according to the Association of Bridal Consultants.

Photography and Video: Preserving wedding day memories costs around \$2,800 for video and photography services, based on data from Statistics Brain.

The smaller details, such as accessories, gifts, officiant fees, stationery, spa services, and favors can quickly add up as well. Couples should be sure to leave some wiggle room in their budgets for incidental expenses that may pop up.

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How couples can benefit from hiring local wedding vendors



their weddings, they can begin exploring the benefits of working with locally-based vendors.

Familiarity

Local vendors will be familiar with the area and possibly even the location where the wedding will be held. That can help couples avoid having to give directions, discuss venue protocols, and handle other tasks that must be worked out with non-local vendors. For example, local photographers familiar with a particular venue will know all of the best places to get shots, and some vendors may have preexisting relationships with venue representatives that could ensure wedding day operations go smoothly.

Local vendors are often a go-to choice when couples are planning their wedding ceremonies and receptions. As the "shop local" movement grows in popularity, weddings present a prime opportunity to embrace this movement.

Couples may have different ideas regarding where to tie the knot, but local vendors can be hired regardless of geography. Brides magazine says the biggest factor influencing wedding location is the size of the guest list and the number of people who wouldn't be able to attend if the wedding was in a particular locale. Hometowns might be the traditional choice regarding wedding location, but the XO Group says one in four couples now host destination weddings. Once couples choose a town or city to host



Local vendors have intimate knowledge of the areas they serve, and that can make for a more personalized, eco-friendly wedding.

Proximity

Local vendors can meet with brides and grooms more readily throughout the planning process, making things less stressful on the happy couple. This also makes it easier to drop off deposits, attend meetings, make fitting appointments, or attend styling sessions.

Savings

Couples who travel for their weddings and employ local vendors will not have to pack as much. Using local vendors eliminates the need to bring along bulky dresses, decorative items, flowers, and much more. Plus, couples needn't pay to transport and house vendors brought along from back home.


Environment

Individuals who take great strides to conserve resources by reducing their energy consumption and protecting the environment often find that shopping local is beneficial. Local vendors are more likely to source their materials from other local businesses, reducing their carbon footprints along the way. For example, local caterers may rely on local farmers for their foods, affording couples the chance to host eco-friendly or even farm-to-table weddings.


Customization

Working with local vendors often translates into getting more personalized service and attention than mass retailers or merchants can provide.

Going local when choosing wedding vendors is an increasingly popular choice among couples about to tie the knot.



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Unconventional wedding menu ideas

Taste reigns supreme at weddings featuring creative menus.



Traditionally, one of the more memorable aspects of wedding receptions is the food. Whether it was fun, tasty or something entirely new for guests, food tends to leave a lasting impression.

The experts at Boho Weddings say that, more than ever before, couples are seeking menu ideas that reflect their personalities as a couple as they seek to make a statement at their events. Celebrating with delicious, unique foods can make receptions that much more amazing.

Bite-sized bursts

Tapas and a movement toward small bites has started to take hold at wedding receptions. Such a choice allows guests to try many different flavors without filling up too quickly. From sliders to mini grilled cheese to soup shots to bite-sized pizzas, many of these small bites feature flavors borrowed from familiar comfort foods — just presented on a miniature scale.

Comfort stations and bars

Couples who love comfort food can put it on display with a crostini station, a mashed potato bar, a chicken and waffles station, a



gourmet popcorn snack station, or a ramen noodle bar.

Food trucks/carts

Outdoor weddings can be enhanced with the addition of trendy food trucks. These restaurants on wheels can inject burgers, sandwiches, international delights, crêpes, noodles, and so many more flavors into a wedding.

High-end options

Couples may want to give guests a taste of the lavish with olive oil and vinegar tasting stations, whiskey bars, French hors d'oeuvres, Kobe beef sliders, lobster tails, risotto stations, and more.

Childhood favorites

When it comes time for dessert, some couples opt to avoid or downplay wedding cakes in favor of something simpler. A cookie-and-milk bar, doughnut holes, soft pretzel stations, pie pops, or dessert shot jars push creativity and sweetness to new levels. Do-it-yourself dessert stations, such as s'more-making and ice cream sundae stations, also can be big hits.

Couples are increasingly feeling less beholden to traditional wedding reception menus as they look to infuse their personal tastes into the foods they plan to serve their guests. Many catering managers and chefs welcome the chance to work with couples looking to create unique reception menus.

Frosting-free cakes the latest trend



A new trend is taking hold both in North America and on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Cakes are being pared down so that frosting and fondant coverings are now nearly absent from the confections.

They're called "naked cakes," and these simplified desserts showcase the texture of the cakes and their fillings. According to culinary experts, the idea for the naked cake came from Christina Tosi, owner of Momofuku Milk Bar. It's an award-winning bakery with locations across the United States and Canada. Now many other pastry chefs and bakers are hopping on the naked cake bandwagon, with the trend being highlighted by the likes of Martha Stewart and the respected wedding resource The Knot.

Just because these cakes may be short on exterior buttercream doesn't mean they fall flat on flavor or visual appeal. Cakes can be embellished with fresh blooms, gum paste-molded flowers, edible pearls and gems, fresh berries, and much more. The Knot notes many naked cakes are garnished with flavors that are included in the cake, such as chocolate chips, crumbs, cookie dough, or candy sprinkles.

Couples who are stripping down their weddings to include more basics and natural effects may be drawn to these naked cakes. They're also an option for those who find frosting, buttercream and fondant too sweet for the palate. Naked cakes enable the interior flavors to really shine.

How to handle seating wedding guests



Receptions may be big or small, lavish or casual. But regardless of their size or style, receptions all share a common element: They will require couples set up seating arrangement for guests. Even though assigned seating isn't mandatory, selecting seats for a sit-down dinner makes things simpler and reduces confusion. Some reception venues may even require assigned seating so that catering staff can service tables accordingly.

Seating guests can be tricky, but employing a few strategies can make the process go quickly and smoothly.

Use a seating chart. A seating chart, whether it's venue-specific or one couples make themselves, is essential. If you using a self-made chart, inquire with the venue about the shape of tables, how many guests each table can seat, and the location of tables around the space.

Start with the wedding party table. Couples can ease themselves into the task of seating by doing the easy tables first. The primary one is the wedding party table. This traditionally can be a dais or a sweetheart table flanked by the wedding party. According to Martha Stewart Weddings, the table should be centrally located and the wedding couple should sit in the middle. A male-female pattern follows on either side

of the couple, consisting of the ushers, bridesmaids, best man, and maid of honor. If much of the wedding party is already married, couples may opt to have the wedding party sit with their spouses instead of at the dais.

Organize family tables. Tables for parents, grandparents and immediate family members of the bride and groom also are high priority. Both families can be combined at one table, or they can be separated into two tables. These tables should be the closest to the bride and groom.

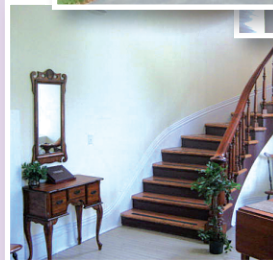
Consider mobility issues. Next seat guests who have specific needs at tables. Elderly guests may want to be away from the band, deejay or speakers. Guests in wheelchairs may need an accessible seat near the exit.

Get some help. Enlist the help of parents to seat their friends and extended family members. Parents may know best who gets along and who should be separated.

Seat dancers near the dance floor. To encourage dancing, place guests who tend to be lively close to the dance floor so others can see them getting up to dance and join in.

Couples can use apps, lists or self-made charts to plot their reception seating arrangements. Create place cards or a central chart so guests can find their seats promptly and easily.

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Rustic bouquets add natural flair to wedding celebrations



Couples opting to get back to basics, streamline their nuptials and create more intimate and less superficial affairs often gravitate toward rustic celebrations to showcase their ideals. Rustic weddings also may appeal to environmentalists and men and women who want their weddings to be as eco-friendly as possible.

Rustic weddings may include those ceremonies and receptions that take place outdoors or in abodes, such as barns, wineries, castles, or converted silos or town factories. In fact, *Bridal Guide* says that barn weddings have never been more popular — among both urban and rural couples alike.

Coordinating a rustic wedding may mean letting go of perceived notions of how everything from food to favors to flowers should be. In fact, one way to describe rustic weddings — and especially the floral arrangements that adorn them — is “purposely imperfect.”

Rustic wedding bouquets may seem like they were plucked right out of the garden or grabbed through a stroll in a meadow. They’re rarely symmetrical or feature the customary



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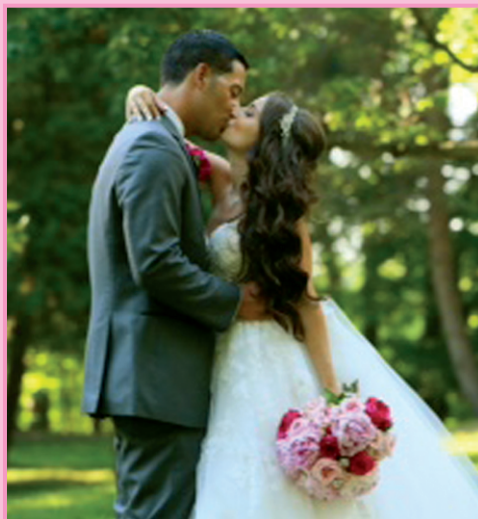
flowers of more formal wedding celebrations.

When designing rustic bouquets, florists may keep the stems of wildflowers or other blooms untethered for a relaxed feel. Long stemmed arrangements are quite popular, and trends point toward bouquets that are loosely tied with raffia, twine, vines and other natural materials rather than more refined ribbon.

Another way rustic bouquets set themselves apart is with the introduction of other elements into the arrangements. Not

merely blooms and greenery, rustic pieces may feature twigs, vines, berries, scabiosa pods, ivy, and feathery ferns. The heights of elements in the bouquet are varied, and the bouquets will not have an overly uniform shape. Rustic bouquets are far from pretentious, and brides shouldn't feel that these bouquets are delicate or will fall apart when handled.

When planning a rustic wedding, couples can work with their florists to create bouquets and arrangements that fit with their visions.



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Wedding tools make planning easier

Ensuring an event goes on with minimal hiccups takes patience and thorough planning. This is especially true for weddings, when many elements must merge together for a memorable day. Today's couples have a bevy of new resources at their disposal to facilitate wedding planning.

The internet makes vetting vendors and reading reviews that much easier, but wedding-related apps also can simplify wedding planning. The following are some top picks as culled by Wedding Shoppe, Inc., The Knot and Lifehacker.

Wedding Spot: Couples can search for their ideal wedding venue based on location, budget, styles, and capacity. The website enables users to

plan their ideal weddings and get cost estimates based on guest list and options. Users also can access discounts and exclusive deals.

Wedding LookBook: This app enables couples to browse through thousands of dresses, accessories, jewelry, and much more. The app will help customers find products in their area.

Shutterfly: This photo, invitation and image-sharing tool can be an inexpensive place to create save-the-date stationery, invitations, and photo memory books.

Appy Couple: This app and website helps couples manage their budgets, timelines, wedding parties, and seating charts, while also allowing them



Phones, tablets and computers can give couples access to many different wedding planning resources.

to share photos. There is a free version and basic packages that allow access to more features.

iWedding Deluxe: In addition to managing timelines, to-do lists and vendors, this app offers inspiration ideas for gowns, manages and tracks gifts, and offers first dance suggestions from iTunes. However, it is only available to iPhone users.

AllSeated: This tool can help couples figure out seating arrangements by creating 3D floor plans of the event, and

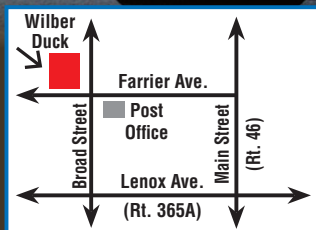
couples can pull contacts from email and social networks to establish a guest list. If floor plans are unavailable in their database, they can be drawn.

The Knot's Marketplace: With the click of a button, couples can search for wedding vendors in all different categories, read reviews, and directly connect with those businesses.

HitchSwitch: Brides or grooms who may be changing their names can do so in one convenient place. Three different packages cater to various name-changing needs.

Vistaprint: These stationery specialists offer an array of services, from cards to invitations to personalized envelopes. Once a design is chosen, Vistaprint will offer add-on suggestions for coordinating items, helping to create a cohesive look for the festivities.

Wedding websites, apps and more can streamline wedding planning.



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'Plus one' etiquette for weddings



Couples tying the knot typically want to share their excitement with as many friends and family members as possible. Preliminary wedding guest lists can be quite extensive, but many couples ultimately shorten such lists in adherence to their budgets.

One fuzzy area in regard to guest lists is whether or not to include a "plus one" on the invitation for single friends or family members. A "plus one" refers to single guests' dates. Party planners may extend the courtesy of giving single guests the choice of whether they would like to bring someone along to the event or attend solo. The rules concerning plus ones are flexible, and ultimately, it may be up to the couple to create their own plus-one rules. The following tips can help couples determine which way to go.

Length of relationship

One way to set limits on plus ones is to look at invitees on a case-by-case basis. Think about unmarried guests and the type of relationship status they currently claim. For example, a cousin who has been dating someone for several months can be encouraged to invite this serious boyfriend/girlfriend.

Recently divorced or widowed guests may not feel comfortable bringing a date along, but because this person was in a committed relationship so long, it may be well worth the courtesy to allow these types of guests to bring someone along so they can feel more comfortable.

Etiquette experts at The Knot

say that, whenever possible, all guests should be addressed by name on the invitation. Couples can ask single friends whether they plan to bring a date to the wedding and who their dates might be.

Number of single friends

Another consideration is how many single people will be invited to the wedding. If it's a small number, a blanket plus-one rule can be established. However, if many guests are single, which tends to happen when young couples are getting married, the cost can be prohibitive. Single friends and family can be seated together so that they can converse and have fun.

For the guests ...

It's important for people on the receiving end of a wedding invitation to understand some key plus-one rules as well.

- If the invitation does not say "plus one" or "and guest," that means you have been invited alone. It is rude to bring a guest unexpectedly.
- Avoid asking to bring someone to the wedding if you were not originally given the option.
- If you were given plus-one status, be sure to respond with your guest's name. If you can't confirm who you will be bringing or don't know if you will have a date for the evening, it is better to come alone.
- Don't use the plus one as a chance to bring a friend only for the free food and drinks.

Weddings can be complicated to plan, and negotiating plus ones for single guests is part of that planning.



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Choosing wedding color palettes



Some brides may feel beholden to the color white on their wedding days, at least in regard to their gowns. Those who do often embrace the opportunity to showcase their personal styles and set the mood for their nuptials by embracing various colors throughout their ceremonies and receptions.

Color can be a critical component when establishing the ambiance for a wedding. Color can evoke certain moods and set the tone for the day. Some colors work better together than others, so while choosing a color scheme may seem like an easy undertaking, some couples may find it requires more careful consideration than they first imagined.

According to the bridal guide *A Practical Wedding*, wedding colors can give couples a starting-off point for all of the other details of their weddings. This ensures the wedding ultimately has a cohesive look. Colors need not necessarily match, but borrowing on similar hues can make it easier to plan wedding party wardrobes, flowers, table linens, and much more.

Colors can come from anywhere, but many couples try to coordinate their color schemes with the season in which the wedding takes place. In fact, couples who are finding it difficult to decide on a palette can look to seasonal colors for inspiration. For example, pastels and blooming flowers can set the scene for spring weddings, while jewel tones and rich reds and greens may be fitting for winter ceremonies.

Some couples opt for more loosely defined color palettes, such as neutral and natural colors. Country and garden weddings can borrow ideas from the landscape, with natural linens paired with wildflowers. Using whites, grays and beiges enables couples to add a pop of color without overwhelming the setting.

Brides magazine suggests that couples avoid choosing too many colors. A maximum of three with one metallic can ensure that things look cohesive without being over-the-top. Also,



brides and grooms needn't feel pressured by the "hot" colors of the moment. As with clothing and hairstyles, trends change. It is better to select colors that will stand the test of time and look good for years to come.

Couples may have to incorporate colors already at their wedding venues into their style. Fortunately many reception sites are outfitted in neutral tones to enable customization.

The wedding resource *The Knot* also says having a basic knowledge of the color wheel can help. Typically, colors that pair well together are those that are opposites on the color wheel. Also, colors that share proximity on the color wheel will have similar tones and play well together. Examples of opposite colors include purples and yellows, reds and greens, and oranges and blues.

Couples should not be afraid to take some chances with their color palettes, especially if they want to make a bold and modern statement.



According to TripSavvy, 99 percent of couples who choose to have traditional weddings take a honeymoon. Around 1.4 million couples in the United States depart for honeymoons around the world each year, spending an average of \$4,466 on the trip.

Though not nearly as pressure-filled as wedding planning, honeymoons do require some planning to ensure a fun and memorable trip. In a *Bridal Guide* survey, wedding couples indicated they were most likely to worry about wardrobe, swimsuits, sunglasses, sunscreen, and luggage when getting ready to depart.

Couples who want to look their best on their honeymoon and in their honeymoon photos should not forget to pack the following items.

Sunscreen: Sunscreen is a must whether you're traveling to the pink beaches of a tropical island or the slopes of a ski resort. Choose a product that protects against both UVA and UVB rays, and be sure to reapply every 80 minutes or so, especially after perspiring or swimming. Sunscreen will help prevent damaging and painful sunburns that can adversely affect a trip.

Makeup-remover wipes: Even high-end resorts may not provide the correct face bar for removing makeup and refreshing skin. Makeup-removing wipes can offer deep cleaning in a few convenient swipes.

Hair refresher: Brides who want to get a few extra days out of a wedding day hairstyle should pack a hair refreshing spray to tame static and add UV protectors that keep locks pampered until they're ready to wash. Dry shampoos also allow for a little refreshing of

hair between daytime adventures and evening dinner.

Eye cream: There may be a few late nights while you're enjoying romantic, candlelit meals or hitting up the hot spots around a resort. Ensure honeymoon photos do not show tired eyes with an eye cream that can reduce puffiness and dark circles.

Tinted moisturizer or BB cream: A high-quality tinted moisturizer or BB cream will hydrate skin and add just a sheer wash of color to even out skin tone. Pair with lip balm and a waterproof mascara and your honeymoon face will be ready.

Teeth whitening treatment: Couples who invested time and money into achieving whiter teeth for their weddings don't want to let all of that hard work go to waste. Brush on whitening product after eating and drinking to prevent stains and freshen breath.

Blotting papers: Humid climates may cause perspiration and oils to leach out of the skin. Tame shine and that greasy feeling with blotting papers purchased from a cosmetics retailer.

Light fragrance: Heavy perfumes have no business on breezy honeymoon escapes. Find a light, flowery scent or something tied to nature, like citrus in a travel-sized atomizer.

Stick-on bra cups: To feel more stylish and comfortable in strapless and/or backless dresses on their honeymoons, brides can use stick-on bra cups that offer support and lift.

Travel brow kit: Keep brows tamed and looking great with mini-tweezers, brow filler and gel.

Honeymoon beauty is easy to achieve if the right supplies are brought along on the trip.



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