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BRIDAL

guide



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BRIDAL GUIDE

12 wedding tricks add ease to planning and fun

Brides and grooms understandably feel a little stress when planning their weddings. Adding to the pressure is the fact that, according to a WeddingWire.com report, the average couple in their 30s spends \$32,000 on their wedding. That is a lot of money riding on one day.

But planning a wedding can be even more fun than it is stressful, especially for those couples who employ a few tricks of the wedding planning trade.

1. Fake the cake. Save some money by asking the bakery cake artist to decorate a foam-tiered "mock" cake for pictures and display, and serve guests from an inexpensive sheet cake in the kitchen.

2. Use labels. Once the guest list is finalized, create a database of guests' addresses. Print out two sets of labels: One for addressing the invitations and the other to address the thank you cards.

3. RSVP tricks: Number the back of RSVP cards and correspond the numbers to the guest list. If one or more responses is illegible, refer

to the number to figure it out.

4. Embrace inexpensive décor. Dollar stores and craft stores are great places to find inexpensive decorative items. Empty wine bottles can be painted or glazed to serve as vases. Candle lanterns can be picked up at low cost at many retailers.

5. Create an email address. To have all of the wedding-related details in one place, create a separate email address exclusively for wedding correspondence.

6. Use veil weights. These weights can be sewn into veils to prevent fly-aways during outdoor ceremonies or photoshoots.

7. Keep bugs at bay. Spray chair and reception table legs with insect repellent. Dryer sheets also can be tucked into inconspicuous spots to keep bugs away.

8. Save money on favors. Unless the favor is something to eat or something especially practical, you may consider skipping the favors altogether, as many guests tend to forget to take them home anyway.

9. Use page markers for

seating. Use multicolored, self-sticking page markers to create easy seating arrangements. Each color can represent a category: His, Hers, Friends, Work.

10. Make a photo clothesline. A clever and inexpensive idea is to pin photos of the couple to a string, cataloging how they met and their time together leading up to the wedding.

11. Use loose flower centerpieces. Loose flowers in a vase are easier to sort and transport home for guests who want a memento. Make pre-cut butcher's paper or cellophane available to make bouquets.

12. Stock up on string lights. Lights can be wrapped around trees outdoors, strung indoors around windows or draped along buffet tables to create a romantic ambiance.

Weddings can be expensive and stressful; therefore, couples can use all the tips they can to corral their expenses and tame their nerves.

Article courtesy of MetroCreative



PHOTO COURTESY OF METROCREATIVE

Wedding tips can help keep stress minimal and reduce expenses.

BRIDAL GUIDE

Wedding transportation trends

Couples planning their weddings routinely rely on professional transportation to bring them to and from the ceremony and reception. According to The Knot Real Weddings Study 2016, roughly half of all engaged couples will hire a transportation service such as a limousine or a party bus for their weddings.

Wedding transportation options abound, and some are more popular than others. The following are some

of the ways couples are getting to the altar on time.

▪ Shuttles and buses: Investing in the guest experience means couples are seeking ways to provide comfort and convenience for their guests and wedding party members. Rather than asking guests to get themselves to and fro, couples may employ buses or shuttles stocked with amenities to transport a greater number of people. The Real Weddings

Study indicates this type of transport has grown considerably more popular in the last six years.

▪ Exotic limousines: The chauffeur-driven limousine continues to be one of the most popular methods of transportation. However, to set their weddings apart, couples are trending away from traditional stretch limousines and renting something more trendy, such as limos built

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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 to 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, brides-

maids, 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, DJ 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.

*Article courtesy of
MetroCreative*



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BRIDAL GUIDE

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 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 pop-

ular, 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

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 flowers of more formal wedding celebrations.

bouquets and arrangements that fit with their visions.



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Affordable bachelor, bachelorette party ideas

Weddings can be expensive. Various sources estimate the average cost of weddings is anywhere from \$26,000 to \$31,000. Couples and their parents may bear the brunt of wedding expenses, but those who have accepted a role in the wedding party also can expect their share of expenses.

Taking into account gifts, wardrobes, makeup, bridal showers and travel, including getting to and from the bachelor/bachelorette party, bridal party members are on the hook for a lot of money when their friends or family members tie the knot. Many men and women like to travel for their bachelor/bachelorette parties, and cost-conscious bridal party members may be concerned about how expensive such parties can

be. Pulling out all the stops can be exciting, but there's no guarantee these types of parties will be more enjoyable than simpler soirées.

Taking steps to control costs can help cost-conscious couples and their friends. The following are some affordable ideas that can be fun for all involved.

- **Bar or winery crawl:** Partygoers typically want to enjoy a night out on the town, and traveling from one establishment to another can be a fun way to do just that. Everyone invited can set themselves apart with a signature item (hat, T-shirt or colored clothing) and make the rounds.

- **Attend a group event:** Group events include sporting events, concerts, theater shows or a night at a comedy club. Investigate dis-

counted tickets for large groups.

- **Belt out the tunes:** Open mic nights at restaurants, bars and other establishments around town may make for a fun way for friends to share a few laughs together. Participants need not be professional singers to join in on the festivities.

- **Camp out:** Get in touch with nature by enjoying a camping trip, complete with a campfire and a few brews. Spending time in the wilderness can restore focus and let stress melt away.

- **Poker or game night:** Groups can gather around the poker table to test their skills in poker and other card games. With some free-flowing beverages and snacks galore, games can get pretty animated.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METROCREATIVE

BRIDAL GUIDE

Serious wedding style for short-haired brides

On a day when all eyes and cameras will be trained on them, it's natural for brides and grooms tying the knot to want to look their best. As a result, many couples invest a portion of their budgets into spa and beauty treatments,

with many even hiring salon stylists to ensure their wedding-day looks are flawless.

Women with short hair may lament that they do not have many options when styling their hair for their wedding days. Some may

even consider growing out their locks. However, plenty of creative styles exist for ladies without long locks.

Experiment with color

One way to "tress to impress" is to experiment with some color. Well-placed highlights, balayage treatments, ombre or peek-a-boo underlights can add an extra spark to a bride's normal hairstyle. Speak with a qualified stylist about what you plan to achieve with a wedding-day look, so color can be applied correctly.

Retro glamour

Brides may want to harken back to an era when glamour reigned supreme. Replicate one of the short styles of the 1940s or 1950s, paying homage to Audrey Hepburn, Marilyn Monroe, Lauren Bacall or Judy Garland.

Braids and plaits

Braids can add whimsy to shoulder-length or shorter hair. In addition, braids can anchor short locks when an up-do is desired. Braids can be placed into the front or rear crown of the head to look like a hair halo or crown.

Use embellishments

If short hair cannot

be gathered into a braid or bun, you can opt for adorned pins, barrettes or headbands to add a touch of sparkle to the look. Ask a stylist to tease the crown of your hair to achieve a little more height and impact.

Half-up style

Many women with short hair find that using bobby pins to pin up select areas of their hair can help achieve a partial up-do look without the need for longer locks. Experienced stylists will know how to manipulate hair effectively to create this look. Small tendrils of hair can be left free and curled for a less structured, more natural



PHOTO COURTESY OF METROCREATIVE

Photo courtesy of MetroCreative

effect.

Brides-to-be with short hair do not need to fret nor make drastic changes to their hairstyles to look beautiful on their wedding days. Short hair can be manipulated into many camera-ready creations.

Article courtesy of MetroCreative

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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 re-

quires 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.



PHOTO COURTESY OF METROCREATIVE

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.

Article courtesy of MetroCreative

BRIDAL GUIDE

Unconventional wedding menu ideas



PHOTO COURTESY OF METROCREATIVE

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.



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