

Wedding Guide

2018

**Tips for planning
your wedding**



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Once couples have tied the knot, hit the reception dance floor and thanked their friends and family for joining them, their thoughts might start looking ahead to their honeymoons. Statistics vary in regard to how much couples spend on their honeymoons, but those heading overseas can expect to pay thousands of dollars on such getaways. Couples planning their honeymoons want to get the most for their money while also ensuring their first trip together as newlyweds is as memorable as possible. The destination couples choose can go a long way toward making that happen, and couples can consider various factors as they work together to choose a locale for their honeymoons.

ACTIVITY LEVEL
 Some couples might want their honeymoons to be filled with activities, while others might prefer more low-key trips spent



relaxing at seaside resorts. Couples can discuss which types of trips they prefer and be willing to compromise if their desires differ.

TRAVEL
 Some couples may prefer to travel throughout their honeymoons, while others may want to stay at the same resort for the duration of their trips. Couples who want to travel may find a backpacking trip to Europe is a romantic way to indulge their sense of adventure, while those who prefer something more quiet may find a beach resort more to their liking.

BUDGET
 Budget is a strong consideration for many couples as they plan their honeymoons. Because honeymoons can be expensive, couples who don't want to sacrifice on their first trip together as a married couple can begin planning their trips early, even looking for ways to cut costs on their ceremonies and receptions if their honeymoons are a bigger priority.

When planning their honeymoons, couples also can take steps to save money. For example, delaying a trip until a few months after the wedding can help covers get back on their financial feet and enjoy their dream getaways. Couples visiting resorts also may want to opt for all-inclusive packages, which can provide great value, particularly on food and beverages.

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Employ Helping Hands During Wedding Planning

Accepting the honor of being in a friend or family member's wedding means more than dressing in the fancy clothing and showing up on the designated date. The wedding party, particularly the bridesmaids and groomsmen, should understand that standing alongside the happy couple generally means doing some work during the planning period as well as on the big day. It's the wise wedding couple who can recognize the strengths of their family and friends and put those attributes to work in productive ways. According to The Knot.com, the average wedding party includes four people on each side. That means eight extra people who can lend their eyes, ears and hands to the bounty of tasks that comprise the wedding planning to-do list. Here's how to delegate with flair.

- Ask and ye shall receive. First off, it is never safe to assume that the wedding party will be taking on extra work. Even if tradition suggests wedding party

members lend a hand, it's in the best interest of the couple to graciously ask for help. This helps establish good will at the start.

- Be specific when assigning tasks. Rather than just asking for generalized help, make a list of the tasks that seem the most challenging and then delegate accordingly. If a member of the bridal party is excellent at getting travel deals, have him or her help arrange the honeymoon. Someone with an intimate knowledge of cuisine can come along to food tastings and help plan the reception menu. Friends with a flair for organization can be in charge of disseminating information to the entire wedding party or keeping a running list of gifts given at various parties so thank-you notes can be sent.
- Make wardrobe suggestions. Couples can rely on their most honest bridal party members when picking out wedding attire. These no-holds-barred individuals can set them straight on fit,

look and comfort. Trust these people in helping to make the entire wedding party look stylish and feel confident.

- Extend the host/hostess duties. It can be tiring for couples to tend to the needs of all their wedding guests. Couples can enlist the help of their wedding party to ensure that elderly or disabled guests get the assistance they need. The wedding party can also step up to serve as stand-in dance partners or to help grab drinks or escort people as needed.
- Get the party started. Couples can usually count on their wedding parties to help fill the dance floor at the wedding reception, even when others have not yet built up the courage to showcase their dancing skills. Those bold and loveable friends and family members will help keep the energy up and make the wedding a blast. Planning and hosting a wedding is a large undertaking. With the help of the wedding party, it can be that much more enjoyable.

Successful Toasts Help Shape Social Events

A toast is a drink raised in the health or honor of someone. Such salutes are typically accompanied by some heartfelt words or tokens of advice. Toasts are a common component of social gatherings, including retirement parties, milestone birthdays and weddings.

TOAST OF THE TOWN - It's difficult to pinpoint who originated the practice of toasting. Several ancient societies would raise a glass in honor of deities or special guests. Ancient Greeks offered libations to the gods as a part of ritualistic practices and also as a point to drink to each other's good health. Ancient Romans at one point instituted a practice that all people must drink to Emperor Augustus at each meal.

The term "toast" has an interesting history. Dating back to the 16th century, "toast" refers to a piece of toasted bread. A piece of toast was commonly added to wine during this time because wine was quite inferior in quality then compared to modern vintages. Stale bread was placed

into the jug to soak up acidity and improve the flavor. The wine also improved the palatability of the old or spiced bread. According to National Geographic magazine, by the 18th century, the term "toast" had been transferred from the floating piece of bread to the person honored by the toast. Eventually, "toast" represented the drink raised or the words offered with the gesture.

PREPARE FOR A TOAST - Toasts can be off-the-cuff remarks shared in the moment, but for many special events, they should be prepared well in advance. Nowadays, some toast-givers devote extra time to preparing toasts, particularly because they know these sentiments can live on indefinitely on social media. Giving a toast can induce anxiety, but some nerves can be relieved simply by doing one's homework and not procrastinating.

WRITING TIPS - A person giving a toast is trying to gain the attention of a group of people who may not be very attentive.

These tips can improve the content of the toasts and their delivery.

- Keep 'you' out of it. This toast is not about you. It's about the person you are honoring. Therefore, do not put any self-congratulatory messages in the toast. Make it all about the person, even beginning the toast with that person's name.
- Hook people in. Open the toast with a good joke or anecdote that will help introduce the person of honor.
- Tell a story. Reference the person in the toast, other audience members, and even yourself if you can be painted in a self-deprecating light.
- Keep it short. This is a toast, not a monologue. Be brief so that the audience doesn't lose interest. Set a five-minute limit.
- Wrap it up. Conclude the toast by tying the story back to the introduction and making sure to include the audience once more. This will help you get the biggest laughs and applause.

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How Couples Can Benefit From Hiring Local Wedding Vendors

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 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.

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.



Affordable Bachelor And 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.

- Some groups 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 discounted 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.
- Dinner party: Hire a chef to visit your house and prepare a meal for guests. Serve a signature cocktail and let the conversation flow. Bachelor and bachelorette parties can be affordable without sacrificing fun.

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Unique Groomsmen Gift Ideas

Weddings are steeped in tradition, and one of the more enjoyable ones is the custom of gifting members of the bridal party. With regard to picking out tuxedos and planning the wedding, grooms may not spend as much time with their groomsmen as brides do with their bridesmaids. But that does not mean grooms don't want to go above and beyond when gifting their groomsmen. The following are a handful of unique groomsmen gift ideas.

- **Guys' day out:** While it's customary to gift groomsmen with mementos of the wedding that they can keep for years to come, there's no law forbidding grooms from gifting an experience. Grooms can book a guys' day or night out for after the wedding, buying each groomsmen a ticket to a ballgame and paying for dinner for the whole crew. Or consider a more adventurous outing, such as a group bungee jump or whitewater rafting trip. Provide a memento by ordering a handful of specially designed commemorative T-shirts.
- **Commemorative photo:** Many grooms ask relatives and friends they have known for much of their lives to be their groomsmen. So it's not uncommon for groomsmen to know each other very well. If each member of the party has known one another for years, grooms can try to find a photo of all of them together when they were much younger. Have the photo professionally framed, noting the date of the wedding with an engraving on the frame. If each groomsmen is from a different period in the groom's life, then the groom can find a photo from early in each relationship to present as a gift.
- **Commemorative beer:** Many grooms and groomsmen bond over beer, so grooms who have raised many a pint with their groomsmen might want to create their own commemorative beers to show their love and appreciation for their best guy friends. Many craft breweries offer brewing classes that teach beer aficionados the finer points of making beer. Grooms can attend such classes on their own and create their own batch specifically for their groomsmen or pay for the whole group to attend the class together.
- **Movie poster:** Grooms with a creative side and a love of movies can create movie posters that mimic those of iconic guy films like "Goodfellas" or "Animal House," swapping out images of the film's stars with likenesses of themselves and their groomsmen. Have the finished products framed before presenting one to each groomsmen.

Questions To Ask Before Hiring Your Wedding Photographer

(NewsUSA)- Sponsored News - Some moments are simply too important to trust to a camera phone. Your wedding will be one of the most memorable times of your life, and no one can capture it better than a professional photographer. So how do you find the right one? As you interview photographers, ask them these questions to help you determine if he or she is the right photographer for you.

1. Do you have a portfolio I can review?
Reviewing sample work allows you to see the photographer's style. Is it more formal or candid? Look for images you can see yourself in. Think of three words that describe you and share those with your photographer.
2. Will you create a detailed shot list?
This list will ensure no important photo is missed during your wedding. You should be able to create that list together. Take an honest look at what images really matter and fill your photographer in on situations he or she might need to be aware of in order to prevent awkward moments.
3. Do you belong to any professional associations, like the Professional Photographers of America?
You want to work with the best, and PPA photographers do more than just snap pictures. They have the technical expertise and artistry to make you look your best and bring your vision to life.
4. Do you have backup equipment?
You've prepared contingency plans for every other aspect of your wedding; your photographer should as well. A true professional will always bring one or two backup cameras, lenses, flashes, lighting equipment, extra memory cards and batteries.
5. Do you have liability insurance?
Accidents happen, and if one of your guests trips over your photographer's light stand, it's good to know you both are protected. Your reception venue may even ask the photographer to submit a certificate of liability ahead of time.
6. What happens to my images after the wedding?
Will your images be backed up to a hard drive or the cloud once processed? How long will your photographer keep the images afterward? If you have any concerns about losing your photos, knowing what the photographer plans to do with your images after your wedding is important.
7. When will I get my photos?
Printed photos usually take several weeks, but your photographer may be able to get you some images for social media quickly. Just ask. You won't be able to see everything that happens at your wedding. The right photographer will capture moments you never knew existed. To learn how you can find the perfect photographer for your wedding, visit PPA.com/WeddingPhotos.




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Let Them Eat Wedding Cake

Wedding receptions culminate when the happy couple stands before their tiered and towering wedding cake to cut the first slice. The tradition of wedding cakes has endured since ancient times, and cakes have been presented in many incarnations since their introduction. In fact, some have not been cake at all. One of the first wedding "cakes" was made in ancient Rome and was comprised of bread. This bread was broken over the bride's head to symbolize future fertility and good luck for the couple. Until the 19th century, wedding cakes were actually bridal pies. A "bride's pie" was made of flaky pastry and filled with oysters, pine kernels, cockscombs, lambstones, sweetbreads, and spices. According to Gastronomia, a journal of food studies, humble versions of wedding cakes were also created with mutton and mincemeat.

Bridal pies eventually gave way to sweeter offerings, including fruited cakes that served as symbols of fertility and prosperity. Today, wedding cakes run the gamut from all-white, fondant covered confections to simple sheet cakes. Some couples even opt to serve their guests



cupcakes or cookies. Although white is the preferred color of wedding cakes, couples may opt for hues that evoke the color schemes of their weddings. Queen Victoria of England was one of the first people to have pure white icing on her wedding cake. It is believed that this is how "royal icing" received its name. Wedding cakes are usually priced by the slice, and prices can range anywhere from \$1.50 per slice and upward. Couples can budget around \$300 to \$500 for moderately priced wedding cakes for parties with 150 to 200 people. According to the wedding resource The Knot, the most expensive wedding cake commissioned to date was made by Buddy Valastro of Carlo's Bakery. At the request of New York City socialite Deborah Rose for her diamond gala event, the \$30 million cake was topped with jewels.

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