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A LOCAL GUIDE TO PLANNING YOUR PERFECT DAY

Details on wedding rehearsals and dinner



There is quite the process involved in bringing a show to the stage on Broadway in New York or The West End in London. Lines and songs are tweaked, actors may be swapped out, and sets may be redesigned.

Often these shows are tested out in regional theaters before they are finalized for the true opening night. “Practice makes perfect” is an adage that continues to be relevant today. Those involved in theater recognize the value of rehearsals, and it also should be an important component for couples planning their weddings.

Weddings involve a lot of moving parts, and that includes people. The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study indicates the average wedding party contains eight people.

Add in four parents, individuals doing ceremony readings, people participating in unity rituals, ushers, and others of recognition, and there may be a dozen or more people responsible for knowing their places and understanding their responsibilities. The wedding rehearsal helps to corral these individuals and tame nerves by showing everyone what is expected of them on the big day.

Who is in charge of the wedding rehearsal?

Various people may take the lead at the rehearsal. In some instances, it is the officiant who will guide everyone. More often it is the responsibility of the coordinator at the ceremony site or a wedding planner who handles the cues so

that everyone enters and exits properly. Some couples will also ask an organized friend or family member to assume the role of rehearsal leader.

What do you rehearse?

According to Ceremony Officials, Rev. Laura Cannon and Associates, the wedding rehearsal does not run through the entire ceremony, only the key spots. A rehearsal typically focuses on the “walking in and walking out” and ensuring participants know where to stand and what to do.

A generalized outline of the wedding ceremony timeline will be reviewed, helping participants understand when they will be called upon to fulfill their responsibilities. Running through the processional, recessional and other key moments in the ceremony two to three times is usually enough practice.

Who attends the rehearsal?

Only a select number of people need to attend the rehearsal. This includes the couple, their parents, the wedding party, anyone serving a special role in the ceremony (such as leading a prayer), and the wedding coordinator or the rehearsal leader.

How long does the rehearsal last?

Typically a rehearsal should not take longer than 30 minutes to one hour. It’s generally held the evening before the actual wedding when everyone should be in town for the festivities.

What happens after the rehearsal?

It’s traditional to attend a rehearsal dinner directly after the rehearsal itself. This intimate meal gives the key players in the wedding ceremony an opportunity to chat and mingle before the big day. It’s also a chance for the couple to offer gifts to the wedding party, parents and others in appreciation of their participation in the wedding. Sometimes speeches are given, but the rehearsal dinner tends to be a low-key, low-pressure opportunity to spend time with special people.

What is the dress code?

The dress code for the rehearsal and the dinner is totally up to the couple. Many opt for business casual, but the restaurant chosen for the dinner may guide couples on what everyone should wear.

Additional tips

Couples may instruct people to bring along the shoes they will be wearing at the wedding to get a feel for them walking into the ceremony site.

While it is traditionally the groom’s parents’ obligation to reserve and pay for the rehearsal dinner, couples who do not want to place all of that responsibility on them can discuss contributing.

A wedding rehearsal and rehearsal dinner brings together the key participants in the wedding ceremony prior to the main event.



The benefits of choosing a local wedding venue

Wedding planning requires coordinating a laundry list of details that ultimately come together to make for a memorable ceremony and reception. Couples tying the knot have their work cut out for them, and one of the biggest decisions they will have to make involves choosing where to hold the ceremony and reception. Religious couples often opt for ceremonies at their churches, synagogues and mosques. Secular weddings can occur just about anywhere, with couples sometimes utilizing ceremony spaces adjacent to their reception rooms.

As brides and grooms narrow down their venue options, they may want to give strong consideration to the benefits that sticking close to home can offer. Certainly there are advantages to be had hosting a wedding at venues many miles away or even in international locations, but there are unique perks to keeping festivities local. The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study indicated six in 10 couples chose to get married in a place where they currently live; 23 percent opted for a hometown venue; and 18 percent decided on a destination wedding. Here's a look at some of the perks of staying local.

- **Convenience:** One of the biggest benefits of a local venue is convenience for both the couple and their guests. Local venues tend to be easily accessible for those who live nearby, minimizing travel time and reducing any barriers brought on by a lack of familiarity with distant locales.

- **Familiarity:** Couples who love their hometowns and close environs may want to get married in a familiar and comfortable atmosphere. Plus, they may already be familiar with venues in the area and what they offer.

- **Expertise:** Venue staff likely live in the area or are familiar with other services close by. They can offer valuable recommendations and insights on other vendors, including what has worked before and what to avoid.

- **Familiarity with clergy:** Couples who get married in a local house of worship likely know the religious leaders there and any support staff. This can add a particularly personal component to the ceremony.

- **Easy payments:** Many venues require some sort of payment plan that consists of a deposit at the time of booking and a

series of payments culminating with the last installment upon learning the final head count. Choosing a local venue makes it easy to stop at the reception site in person and provide such payments with ease, while getting confirmation and receipts in real time.

- **Reduce delivery fees:** If florists and other vendors have to drop off items, they may not charge the same delivery fees if the reception site is close by.

- **Ease returning home:** Chances are the couple will arrive at the ceremony and reception by hired car. Once the wedding is over, they'll have to find transportation back home, especially if there is a gap in time before departing on a honeymoon. Utilizing a local venue can make it easier to get home.

- **Support of local businesses:** Choosing a local venue keeps dollars in couples' own communities, which is a great way to support businesses in the town and the people that work for them.

There are notable advantages to getting married close to home. When planning to tie the knot, couples can give ample consideration to local venues.

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Unique elements to include at your wedding reception

Couples who are currently planning their wedding undoubtedly hope the day will be one they remember forever. Weddings will be memorialized in people's minds and on film and video, and setting an occasion apart from other weddings and big events may come down

to some creative touches that truly make it unique.

Here are some interesting elements that merit consideration, many of which involve interactive entertainment.

Photo booth

There is a reason why photo booths complete with entertaining props and various backdrops are so popular.

A photo booth is a great way for guests to capture the day and take home a memento. Couples can review the photo booth images and enjoy snippets of unscripted and unposed moments from the party.

Live painter

Hiring an artist to capture the festivities can be a truly unique feature. While photography packages and wedding albums come with some turn-around time, a painting will be done at the end of the reception and can give couples a glimpse of the evening right away.

Interesting sweets display

Couples can elevate their wedding receptions by offering guests something that's a cut above a piece of wedding cake. A "Viennese Hour," also known as a "Venetian Hour," is a popular wedding tradition, particularly in some states.

This hour features a lavish dessert buffet presented after the cake cutting.

Couples need not have a traditional Venetian Hour, however. They can offer a table filled with various candies, cordials, doughnuts, cupcakes, or whatever special sweet they want to showcase. Serve with monogrammed napkins.

Entertaining performance

Performers can run the gamut from cultural dancers celebrating a couple's heritage to magicians to even a specialized singer.

In addition to a band or DJ, this performer can engage the audience and provide them with a bona fide show.

Signature cocktails

Whether a couple chooses an entire open bar or has select alcoholic offerings for guests, a signature cocktail can make the reception even more special.

Tie the drink ingredients or theme into something that pertains to the couple's interests or history.

For example, if the couple sipped Moscow Mules on their first date, serve a First Date Mule to guests at the wedding reception.

Couples can embrace various extra special touches to make their wedding receptions more memorable.



Details on the roles played by the maid of honor and bridesmaids

During a wedding, the couple tying the knot certainly gets to shine, but so, too, do other ceremony participants. From the parents of the bride or groom to the officiant to the ring bearer, there are many roles beyond bride and groom.

A bridal party typically includes a soon-to-be-bride's close friends and family.

The bridesmaid tradition may trace its origins to ancient times, when bridesmaids would be selected to dress like the bride and confuse vengeful spirits or warring rival clans who might want to harm the bride.

A special individual gets to enjoy a higher-level job within the bridal party, serving as maid of honor, if she is unmarried, or matron of honor if she has already walked down the aisle.

Bridesmaids lend support and provide help as needed, but it is the maid of honor who will serve as the right-hand woman to the bride. Here is a deep look at the unique rolls these women play both before and during a wedding.

Bridesmaids

A significant amount of planning goes into a wedding and bridesmaids may be called upon to help brides make various

decisions. Bridesmaids also offer support to the bride, who may be feeling a tad overwhelmed.

It is important for bridesmaids to calm the bride and care for her while she tackles the tasks necessary to host such a momentous occasion.

Bridesmaids can lend support and opinions when visiting with vendors like florists or musicians. A bride-to-be also may ask certain bridesmaids to come to dress appointments.

Collectively, bridesmaids will plan and help pay for the bridal shower and bachelorette party. They also can assist the mother-of-the-bride with whatever extra help she may need.

Maid of honor

The maid of honor does all of the above and more. She will attend wedding dress shopping appointments and serve as a trusted source of honest feedback.

The maid of honor also may be called in to mediate any conflicts within the bridal party, as these ladies may not all know each other prior to the nuptials. She will check in with the bridesmaids to be sure they are on task and fulfilling any responsibilities in a timely manner.

She will be the main point of contact for the bridal shower and bachelorette party. She will keep track of gifts so that the couple can follow up with thank you notes. She also may help assemble and mail out wedding invitations.

The maid of honor will help the bride get dressed on the wedding day and attend to any needs she may have, including providing snacks and water.

In the event the bride's gown is cumbersome, the maid of honor may need to assist the bride by adjusting the dress while seated or when visiting the restroom.

During the ceremony, the maid of honor will hold the bride's bouquet and she will give a toast at the reception. She also may make music requests to keep the party upbeat and fun.

There is no minimum or maximum number of people who can be part of a bridal party, but it is important to choose people who can be relied upon and who will enhance the experience.

The bride-to-be can discuss her expectations from bridesmaids and the maid of honor at the start of the wedding adventure to ensure that everyone can help ensure the day is a momentous occasion.

Did you know?

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Getting engaged is a momentous occasion worthy of celebration. However, soon after, people in the couple's lives tend to start asking when the big day might be. Newly engaged couples may feel pressured to rush into setting a wedding date, but enjoying one's engagement for however long it may last is an option for brides and grooms. Some couples want to run to the altar in a month, while others are happy to stay engaged indefinitely. The Knot, a trusted wedding resource, surveyed nearly 170,000 American couples in 2024 to gauge how long most were waiting to wed. The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study found that the average engagement length is 15 months. This number has held steady the past few years. Event Source in Canada says the average engagement length for couples in Canada also is 15 months. In general, couples across North America are waiting just over a year to tie the knot after getting engaged.

Love story

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Wedding hair for every style

Weddings are one of the most-photographed and documented days in couples' lives. From the moment the question is popped to the final goodbye before setting out for the honeymoon, all eyes (and cameras) will be carefully trained on those vowing to share their lives together.

French Touch Photography says wedding photographers take an average 50 to 100 pictures per hour.

That means couples ultimately may appear in 600 photos before the night is through. Is it any wonder that brides, grooms and everyone in between want to ensure they are presenting the best versions of themselves come the big day?

The hairstyle chosen for a wedding can affect how couples view these photographs in the years to come. It can take some trial and error to find a wedding day hairstyle that is perfect, but these popular styles are good starting points.

- **Bouncy blowout:** Many brides choose to leave their hair down for the wedding, and this style looks bouncy, smooth and approachable. The blowout can be straight, or stylists can add curled

edges for a luxurious look.

- **Messy bun:** A messy bun is another hairstyle that appears effortless. An imperfect bun with some tendrils escaping and a decorative hair pin is both elegant and fun.

- **Boho braids:** Whether a hairstyle is mostly down and free-flowing or pinned back into a loose bun, adding bohemian style braids can impart whimsy to any look. This hairstyle may be best for informal weddings and to match gowns that are flowing and ethereal.

- **Top knot:** This style is a practical choice for warm weather weddings, when heat and humidity can attack a polished style. The look is made by winding the hair into a bun at the crown of the head. It can be enhanced with a crown or headband.

- **Half-up, half-down:** Brides who want their locks down with voluminous waves but without hair in their faces often opt for a half-up, half-down style. This pulls the front portion of hair back and away from the face, which can be braided, twisted or even just loosely pinned, depending on preference.

- **Side-swept:** This look pulls tresses over to one side, where they cascade in waves over the shoulder. It is elegant and classic.

- **Chignon:** From the French *chignon de cou*, which means "nape of the neck," a chignon is a wrapped bun hairstyle pinned low on the head where it meets the neck.

While it's the bride's hairstyle that often draws the most attention, the groom also may want to experiment with hairstyles.

- **Pompadour:** This style is characterized by a voluminous top that is swept back from the face.

- **Quiff:** Like a pompadour, this hairstyle also features volume but with natural curls offering a full, defined look.

- **Classic side part:** This look is classic and polished. A clean parting that is either slightly off from the middle or even deeper on the side completes this look.

- **Undercut:** This hairstyle features hair buzzed on the sides and back with a longer top.

Everyone can be wedding-ready with classic or trendy hairstyles that complete a finished look.

Variables to consider before picking a wedding date

After announcing their engagement, couples may need to get used to being asked if they have chosen a date to tie the knot. Friends and family members who are thrilled for the happy couple may want to know when the partnership will become official, but choosing a date is not always so simple.

A host of variables must be considered before couples pick a wedding date. Though the choice of date is ultimately a couple's decision to make, consideration of the following variables can help engaged individuals make the most informed choice.

- **Season:** Time of year is an important consideration when picking a wedding date. Summer was once the season-of-choice when tying the knot, but data from the online wedding resource The Knot indicates that has changed a little in recent years. The most popular day to get married in 2024 was Saturday, Sept. 21, which the experts at The Knot note reflects a notable shift in couples' preferences that began in 2015.

Since then, fall has been the most popular season to tie the knot. Moderate temperatures and less rainfall likely contribute to that popularity. Before

picking a date, couples can consider which time of year they prefer to get married.

- **Convenience:** The convenience of a particular date won't be the same for everyone, but couples may want to consider a date or season that is amenable to as many bridal party members and guests as possible.

Couples planning to invite children to the wedding may learn from parents that fall, winter and spring are tough times of year due to youngsters' hectic school and activities schedules. Summer may be more convenient, but it's also likely that some guests with preexisting vacation plans may not make it if the date chosen coincides with their trips. There's no way to accommodate everyone, and couples should make their own preferences their top priority. But those with no such preference may want to look for a time of year when traveling to and from the wedding is convenient for as many guests as possible.

- **Holidays:** Holidays are another variable to consider. Travel and accommodations tend to be more expensive on holiday weekends, and roadways also can be crowded during

three-day weekends. In addition, many people look forward to their own traditions during the holiday season and other notable events, such as July Fourth and Labor Day. Before choosing a wedding date that coincides with a holiday, it might be a good idea to get some feedback from bridal party members and other trusted confidantes.

- **Local event schedule:** It's common for couples to inquire about other events a wedding venue may be hosting when shopping for ceremony and reception sites. But it can be equally important to consider events in the area where you plan to get married on and around the days you're considering.

For example, tying the knot on the same weekend as the Super Bowl in the city where the event is taking place may not be wise, as hotel availability will likely be limited and room rates may be much higher than normal. Even more localized events like harvest festivals may affect the availability of accommodations, so this important variable merits consideration.

These are just a handful of variables couples should consider before choosing a date to tie the knot.

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A wedding begins with a tender exchange of vows and culminates with a celebratory reception that often stretches into the late hours of the evening. According to The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study, the average wedding in 2024 hosted 116 guests. Friends and family members who have been dining and drinking for five or more hours will need a place to stay, and couples planning a wedding will need to arrange lodging options for their out-of-town guests.

Couples thinking about making arrangements with hotels for a block of rooms for their wedding guests should consider the following amenities and tips when shopping around.

- **Does the reception hall have a relationship with a particular hotel?**

Quite often reception centers enter into agreements with nearby hotels to provide their clients with wedding accommodation packages. Couples who book with a certain reception hall may be

bound to use their vendors, including a partner hotel.

- **Consider proximity to the venue.**

Seek hotels that are within a 15- to 20-minute ride from the wedding venue to limit the amount of driving that guests will have to do.

- **Arrange for transportation.** Offering safe passage to and from the hotel will reduce the risk of wedding guests driving under the influence. Couples can arrange to have a bus shuttle guests to and from the hotel.

- **Look for group rates.** Hotels typically offer a discounted group rate for wedding guests. Booking multiple hotels gives guests a choice and can help ensure there are enough rooms available.

- **Think about complementary breakfast.** Some hotel chains offer a complimentary breakfast to their guests, which can be a great value.

- **Negotiate additional perks.** It may be possible to negotiate with hotels to offer late check-out times or stocked snacks for the rooms.

- **Ask about a complimentary room for the couple.** Some hotels may be amenable to offering a free hotel room to the newlyweds who have a certain number of guests booked at the property.

Having a hotel available to wedding guests is a touch that can prioritize comfort and safety after a long day of celebrating.



Can't-miss photos of your big day

Couples who hire a professional photographer to capture their weddings may end up with anywhere from 400 to 600 images, with some photographers promising even more. Although it is likely that a wide array of shots will be taken, couples who do not want to leave things up to chance should sit down with their photo professionals and discuss the key shots they want to capture.

Once the big day has passed, there will be no opportunity to go back and arrange missed shots. This list of must-have photos can ensure that the wedding album has all the shots couples desire.

Before the ceremony

- Wedding day outfits hanging in the wardrobe or placed over a chair
- Wedding invitation surrounded by bouquets
- Wedding rings side by side
- Outfit accessories, such as shoes, jewelry, a veil, and cuff links
- Bride and bridesmaids getting hair and makeup done
- Groom and groomsmen laughing
- Bride getting zipped in her dress

At the ceremony

- Guests entering the ceremony site
- Ushers escorting a variety of guests to their seats
- Close-ups of the couple separately waiting to see their soon-to-be spouse
- Cute kids participating in the ceremony coming down the aisle
- Parents of the couple coming down the aisle or seated prominently awaiting the start of the ceremony
- Shots of all members of the wedding party
- Guests of honor, such as grandparents
- Partner coming down the aisle and the partner's reaction
- Exchange of rings
- First kiss
- A wide shot of the guests at the ceremony
- Signing the marriage certificate
- The processional with the newly hitched couple beaming
- Couple in the limo backseat
- Portraits
- Couple with bridesmaids and groomsmen

- Bride and maid/matron of honor
- Groom and best man
- Couple with each set of parents and siblings

At the reception

- Couple's first entrance
- Special signs, decorations or photos of the scenery
- Wedding cake details
- Toasts and speeches from key people as well as reactions to them
- First dance as a couple
- Father/daughter, mother/son dances, if applicable
- Couple mingling with guests
- Guests dancing and having fun
- Shots of the musicians or any special entertainers
- The cake cutting
- The couple's grand exit and wave

These are some of the customary images that couples will want to request. Photographers likely will cover most of them without prompting, but couples should be sure to point out any special photographs they'd like captured throughout the day.



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Songs fitting for a first wedding dance

Traditions abound during weddings, from wearing something blue to a couple not seeing each other the night before the nuptials to a bride tossing the bouquet to eager singletons in the crowd.

A couple's first dance is another enduring and popular tradition. The first dance harkens back to centuries ago when royalty or prestigious families would hold balls and it was customary for the guest of honor to engage in a first dance to start the festivities with a grand opening. Today, lavish balls have all but disappeared, but with weddings are still important events, and the first dance lives on during many of these parties.

Choosing a song for a first dance is among the decisions couples make when planning their weddings. All genres and eras can be considered. Couples who prefer something a little more modern can consider the following songs for their first dance.

1. "All of Me," John Legend

Special lyrics: Give your all to me, I'll give my all to you. You're my end and

my beginning. Even when I lose, I'm winning.

2. "All My Life," WILD

Special lyrics: Oh, I will keep you safe for all my life. And you will have my heart for all time.

3. "Somebody Like You," Keith Urban

Special lyrics: Yeah, I wanna feel the sunshine shinin' down on me and you. When you put your arms around me you let me know there's nothing in this world I can't do.

4. "Perfect," Ed Sheeran

Special lyrics: But darling just kiss me slow, your heart is all I own. And in your eyes you're holding mine.

5. "Joy of My Life," Chris Stapleton

Special lyrics: Some may have their riches, some may have their worldly things. As long as I have you, I'll treasure each and every day.

6. "Marry Me," Train

Special lyrics: Marry me today and every day. Marry me if I ever get the nerve to say hello in this café.

7. "Ho Hey," The Lumineers

Special lyrics: I belong with you, you belong with me, you're my sweetheart.

8. "Rewrite the Stars," Zac Efron, Zendaya

Special lyrics: What if we rewrite the stars? Say you were made to be mine. Nothing could keep us apart. You'd be the one I was meant to find.

9. "You Look Like You Love Me," Ella Langley feat. Riley Green

Special lyrics: Excuse me, you look like you love me. You look like you want me to want you to come on home.

10. "Beautiful Things," Benson Boone

Special lyrics: And I hold you every night, and that's a feeling I wanna get used to. But there's no man as terrified, as the man who stands to lose you.

11. "Birds of a Feather," Billie Eilish
Special lyrics: I knew you in another life. You had that same look in your eyes. I love you, don't act so surprised.

12. "Until I Found You," Stephen Sanchez

Special lyrics: I would never fall in love again until I found her.

Consider wedding flowers carefully

Although many decorative elements help to create ambiance for a wedding celebration, perhaps none is more awe-inspiring than beautiful floral arrangements. Flowers offer visual appeal, captivating aromas and texture that can make a space more welcoming.

Engaged couples typically go to great lengths when planning their weddings, but flowers may not be as micromanaged as other elements. Some are content to let florists design their arrangements, but the average cost of wedding flowers in a recent study was \$2,800, according to The Knot Real Weddings group.

That price tag merits some input on the part of couples. Floral experts say couples should budget for floral arrangements coming in at 10 percent of the overall wedding budget, which is the industry standard. Therefore, for a \$60,000 wedding a couple should assume their florals will cost \$6,000.

It's important to note that the cost of wedding flowers has been steadily increasing over the last few years due to inflation and climate change, says The Knot. So couples may need to be

even more involved in floral decisions to maximize their dollars spent.

Here are some variables to consider when selecting wedding flowers.

- **Greenery:** Adding greenery to fill in spaces in floral arrangements can save some money. Centerpieces and bouquets that are floral-heavy will certainly cost more.

- **Symbolism:** Consider the meaning behind flowers to make choices even more personal. You also may want to select flowers that will complement the theme of the wedding. For example, traditional spring blooms like tulips and daffodils will coordinate with spring weddings.

- **Flower varieties:** Hardier varieties of flowers, such as daisies, mums, carnations, and protea, are less likely to wilt quickly in bouquets or centerpieces than some other blooms, even when they are cut. Such blooms can hold up in any weather and last the entire day so that arrangements will be picture-perfect no matter the hour.

- **Venue:** Couples may find that some venues already have faux flowers or

other decor. That may mean couples do not need to have as many flowers or any elaborate arrangements.

- **Size:** A particularly large floral centerpiece can overwhelm a table, and a bouquet that is overly cumbersome may detract from the bride or her bridesmaids. Choose the correct scale for comfort in bouquets. For table arrangements, select a size that will not discourage conversation or block guests' view, nor take up too much real estate on the table.

- **Allergies:** Although they are cut, flowers in arrangements can trigger allergic responses in some people. Others may be bothered by overly aromatic flowers. Work with the florist to find blooms that will be best.

- **Color scheme:** Although white flowers always coordinate, many couples like some color in their arrangements. Be sure the flowers pick up the hues used in bridesmaid dresses or even the season of the year.

Couples should take an active role in deciding what to include in floral pieces for their weddings.



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How to remember and honor loved ones at a wedding

A wedding is a happy day in a couple's life together. Couples who have lost loved ones in recent years, whether it's parents, grandparents, close friends, or siblings, may find their happiness mixing with feelings of loss. It can be challenging to fully celebrate in the absence of a beloved

loved one who was supposed to be there joining in the happiness.

Responding to feelings of grief and loss on a wedding day can be challenging, but there are ways couples can pay homage to late loved ones during wedding celebrations to make the loss a little easier to bear. Here are different ways to remember the special people who are there in spirit.

- *Save a seat.* Reserve a seat at the ceremony and reception with a small placard that reads something along the lines of "In loving memory of the mother of the bride. She is forever present in our hearts."

- *Include a note.* Include an In Memoriam note in the wedding program with special words about the person who is missed.

- *Light a candle during the ceremony.* The officiant can say a few words and invite someone to light a candle in honor of a late relative or friend.

- *Carry a special memento.* Whether in the bouquet

or in the pocket of a tuxedo, carrying a small souvenir that represents the deceased loved one. If there is an item that belonged to the loved one, it can be worn during the wedding. It could be a dress, a piece of jewelry, a pair of cufflinks, or even an embroidered handkerchief.

- *Toast with a drink.* The atmosphere at a reception is more lively than during a ceremony. Offer a toast to the person who is missed or serve their favorite food at the buffet.

- *Play a special song.* If the deceased loved one would be featured in a signature dance, like the father/daughter, mother/son traditions, play a song that was meaningful to that person and enlist someone to stand in for the absent person.

- *Request donations.* Set up a memorial table and make mention of the person's favorite charity. Ask guests to donate in the loved one's honor.

Remembering a special person who has passed on at a wedding can ensure that individual is honored and included in a couple's big day.

Tips on managing the wedding reception menu



Wedding receptions are the culmination of a lot of planning. Though there may not be any insignificant decisions when planning the post-ceremony party, some choices will loom larger than others, including which foods will be served.

When planning a wedding reception, couples can choose a venue that provides the food, such as a traditional reception center; otherwise, the reception may take place at an outdoor location or a venue that is not equipped to prepare and serve food.



In the latter instances, couples will contract with an outside caterer. In both situations certain factors can help determine who to use for reception food services.

Planning

A traditional reception center/catering hall is likely a wise choice for couples who prefer simplicity in wedding day meal planning. These facilities are experts at addressing all of the components that go into a reception. Such venues offer access to a cocktail area and banquet room, and the facility likely has a staff of chefs at the ready to dish up meals.

While many reception centers offer restaurant-quality offerings, scouting venues and sampling dishes will provide an idea of how foods taste and help couples narrow down their choices.

Preferences

Some receptions are multi-course events starting from the moment guests arrive and snack on hors d'oeuvres to the dessert display served as a final course. Others are low-key and may not have full sit-down service.

If you prefer a cocktail atmosphere only, certain venues may make more sense than others. Identifying how much food to have and the type of service desired can help pinpoint caterers to interview.

Chef access

Having a specific chef or cuisine in mind may require separating the food from a venue. Reception centers likely will not allow couples to bring in their own food. Therefore, you will have to find a venue where outside food is possible. Then you can work with a favorite chef for catering services.

Location

Some couples prefer to combine their ceremony and reception at one spot. This may be at a beachside location or in a converted country barn. If this seems like a scenario you are considering, then the venue will take priority and you'll have to find an outside caterer to service the wedding.

Allergies

Food allergies and intolerances are on the minds of many nowadays. It is important to be mindful of food restrictions when speaking with caterers. Take careful inventory of work-arounds so that every guest at the wedding can enjoy a safe, delicious meal.

The wedding reception menu is an important variable for engaged couples to consider. A host of factors may come into consideration as couples try to determine how to feed their guests come their wedding day.

Did you know?

Brides-to-be make many important decisions when planning their weddings, and one of the more notable ones is the choice of wedding gown. According to a recent The Knot Real Weddings Study, the average wedding dress cost \$2,000. Despite that hefty price tag, gowns remain a pivotal component of a wedding, as 98 percent of women who responded to The Knot survey indicated they wore a dress for their nuptials. If the sizable price tag is a cause for concern to some aspiring brides, The Knot notes that customization can drive up the final price tag by a significant amount, which undoubtedly affects the median price of gowns. Brides who opt for no or minimal customization can likely find a dress that costs significantly less than the \$2,000 average price.



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