

Do You Take This Man or Woman? Yes I Do



"Having the Perfect Wedding
without Going Dead Broke"!

by Terry Clark

Table of Content

1. Are Modern Weddings Replacing Tradition?
2. Best Food Ideas for Wedding Receptions
3. Choosing Clothing to Suit the Style of Wedding
4. Decoration Ideas for Outdoor Weddings
5. Exploring Wedding Reception Themes
6. Factors to Consider When Choosing a Wedding Cake
7. Getting Married on a Cruise Ship
8. Getting the Seating Right at a Wedding
9. How Can a Wedding Planner Help
10. How to Choose the Perfect Wedding Venue
11. How to Cut Down on Expensive Rehearsal Dinners
12. How to Handle Serving Alcohol at Your Wedding Reception
13. How to Save Money on Wedding Ceremony Costs
14. How to Save on a Beach Wedding Reception
15. Inexpensive Wedding Dress Ideas
16. Incorporating Overseas Marriage Traditions into Your Wedding

17. Live Band versus Wedding DJ
18. Selecting the Best Music for the Wedding Reception
19. Personal Wedding Websites - the Future has Arrived
20. Planning a Successful Wedding Reception
21. Planning Your Wedding on a Well Thought Out Budget
22. Popular Wedding Ceremony Traditions
23. Practical Wedding Gift Ideas
24. Pros and Cons of Tropical Island Weddings
25. Some Far-Out Wedding Reception Ideas
26. Successfully Planning Your Wedding
27. The Best Time of Year for a Wedding
28. The Intricate Details of Wedding Planning
29. The Pros and Cons of Different Wedding Seasons
30. Tips for a Backyard Wedding Celebration
31. Wedding Candle Centerpieces
32. Tips to Choose the Right Catering Service
33. Unusual Wedding Non-Traditions
34. Wedding Cost Savers - Stretching the Dollar
35. Wedding Day Tips for the Bride-to-be
36. Wedding Gift Ideas - Thinking Outside the Box
37. Wedding Programs - Setting the Tone of a Wedding
38. Wedding Reception Ideas that Work for You
39. Wedding Reception Mistakes that are Common

40. Wedding Receptions: The Importance of a Good Checklist
41. Wedding Speeches: Tips to Stop Your Knees from Knocking!
42. A History of Wedding Traditions and Symbolisms
43. Weddings: The Importance of Saying 'Thank You'
44. What Food to Choose for Your Wedding Reception
45. What Kind of Reception will You Have?
46. What Venue to Choose for Your Wedding Reception
47. Weddings: Where to Hold the Ceremony
48. Will Your Wedding be Formal or Casual?
49. Deciding On The Wedding Package For Your Honeymoon
50. Inexpensive Jewelry Options For Your Wedding

Resources

Are Modern Weddings Replacing Tradition?

With the passage of time we find that traditional weddings are slowly being replaced by modern ones. Nothing lasts forever is a common enough sentiment and people are leaning toward the modern when getting married. Some of the familiar wedding traditions that were carefully preserved for generations past are now being replaced by exciting new traditions stemming from the amazing growth of technology.

In this article we take a look at some of the more modern trends that couples are adopting for their weddings.

Wedding websites

The coming of age of the internet allows couples to set up what has been termed the 'wedding website', something that was unheard of a while back. Couples can choose a website provider and domain name and have their own personal wedding website set up. Alternatively, there are many free sites that allow you to select a template and set up a site. The website usually contains information about the bride and groom to be, photos before and after the wedding, invitations, thank you notes, video and audio clips and lots more.

Wedding websites come in a variety of shapes and sizes and it is an excellent way to put out information to family and friends. With a detailed website in place you will not be answering a zillion questions on what time the church service is scheduled for or where it is being held or even how to get there! Use the wedding website as a personal planner and save yourself additional stress.

Wedding cakes

Another area of the wedding ceremony that has been bitten by the modernization bug is the wedding cake. Traditional

cakes were frosted and decorated with flowers, nothing very remarkable really! Today you have elegant, tiered cakes and technology in all its glory has been brought to bear on wedding cakes resulting in laser cut designs, any concept imaginable and three dimensional cakes.

Couples can choose a cake that reflects their personalities; get a cake that is funny, sophisticated, just plain cute or even whimsical. The cake can reflect the couple's hobbies or careers in an animated or mechanized version. How about a cake that has sparkers inside and goes off when the bride and groom take their first bite! Technology and art come together to produce one of a kind character wedding cakes the modern way.

The above are just two examples of the areas of a wedding where the traditional is moving over to make room for the modern.

Best Food Ideas for Wedding Receptions

Weddings are not all morning weddings or evening weddings, they can be held at different times of the day and obviously the food served will differ. It is important that you know what kind of foods to have served to match the time of your wedding reception. If people come expecting dinner and get only cocktails and finger food you are going to have very unhappy guests.

Make sure that your wedding reception invitation clearly lays out the time of the reception and specifies what the guest is being invited to whether cocktails or lunch or dinner. Some wedding ceremonies take place early in the morning and a buffet breakfast may be served, so guests should know what to expect.

Let us take receptions in the order of the day and see what the best foods to be served for each meal are.

Morning receptions are one of the easiest to cater for. You are not going to be giving your guests steaks and roasts so food choices get simplified. You can arrange for a traditional breakfast to be served which includes fruit, cereals, cured meats and a selection of eggs. Beverages will consist of coffee, tea and juices and this sort of meal will really keep the cost down. You may want to serve wine, champagne, bucks fizz or mimosas if your budget runs to it.

If your wedding is late morning around 11 am or so, you could consider a brunch. This will require some mainstream foods being served together with a few breakfast selections. It could be a champagne brunch or you could stick with wine or mimosas to take care of the beverages.

Evening receptions are for the most part expensive because you have to serve a full dinner and guests who are invited to an evening wedding certainly expect it. Here the food will need to consist of steaks or roasts, cold cuts, salads, maybe some pasta choices. Often couples choose the food to blend with the theme of the reception. If you have for

example a Mexican theme you will need to serve some Mexican food as well. You could serve snack items like nachos and salsa dip and then have the regular foods served. Chinese food goes down well with most people; a pork roast, rack of lamb or roast chicken could make up the main course.

Buffet style receptions are becoming increasingly proper as they tend to get rid of the very formal air created by sit down meals. Buffets are good for any time of the day and you can serve pastas, chicken, meat or pork dishes that stay well.

Choosing Clothing to Suit the Style of Wedding

Weddings have come a long way from the traditional, staid affairs they once were. Don't misunderstand; there is nothing wrong with choosing an all traditional formal wedding. But these days, wedding styles have actually evolved to showcase the personal styles and preferences of the people who are getting married.

Wedding styles can be broadly classified into formal, semi formal and casual weddings. It has rightly been said that clothes make the man; in the case of weddings, the clothing chosen for the occasion dictates the style of the wedding. Here is an explanation of the kind of clothing that suits different wedding styles.

The bridal couple will decide on the style of the wedding and if it is going to be a formal wedding, the bride will generally wear a formal gown with a long train and veil. The groom will be attired in black tie or even a tuxedo. Guests will be informed in the invitation as to the type of attire to be worn. This is by way of the dress code instructions that state either formal or semi formal, smart casual or relaxed.

There are certain factors that the couple should consider when planning the wedding attire for themselves and their guests. If, for example, you are going to have a day wedding in the month of July and the reception outdoors, you cannot in all good conscience expect your guests to show up in formal black tie. The seasons and time of day when the wedding is held will wield considerable influence over the right clothing to be worn.

You will find the following review of dress codes for weddings quite useful.

A very handy guide to the kind of clothing you need to wear to match the wedding style is the invitation. It should inform you about the expected dress code. If, for whatever reason it doesn't don't worry! The kind of invitation itself that you receive is a good indicator - if the invitation is a very formal looking engraved black script with formal language on heavy paper, go with formal attire. On the other hand if the language is less formal and the quality of the paper not so very elegant, go with smart casual.

Next thing you need to consider is the venue. Outdoors in summer means no black at any cost. Forget modesty in favor of the practical and if you are hesitant, think about the wind factor. That will help you make up your mind. High heeled shoes are out if you have to walk on sand or grass. If the wedding reception is to be held indoors like a hotel or club, you need to choose something dressy, well tailored and smart.

For a daytime wedding, ladies should wear floral print dresses or smart skirt suits with good shoes. There are plenty of stylish skirts available in stores, which will work well for a wedding reception in the daytime. Find a matching top and accessories and you are set for the wedding. You could also wear a light colored suit and hat to compliment the outfit. For the guys, it is best to go with a light colored linen or seersucker suit.

Evening weddings are different and where daytime weddings tend to be a bit more casual, evening weddings are at least semi formal if not formal. You need to dress for the wedding as if to the theater or a formal dinner. Black is good for evening wear, so go with a classy dress suit or cocktail suit. Dark colors look sophisticated and beads and fancy bits are not done if it is a formal reception. Black tie for ladies means a floor length dress or formal gown if you have one. Accessorize with formal jewelry and bring that black beaded purse out of hibernation!

Men are generally best off choosing a black or dark suit with tie for formal settings. Tuxedos are good provided the wedding will be held after 6 in the evening. It is not the done thing to be seen wearing your tuxedo in the daytime.

Semi formal or casual weddings held in the evenings generally means slacks, tie and blazer or jacket.

It is better to dress up than down for weddings and honestly, just go and have yourself a great time!

Decoration Ideas for Outdoor Weddings

For couples who marry in a season of good weather like the springtime, an outdoor wedding is a favorite choice. No one wants to be cooped up indoors in lovely spring weather. A balmy spring evening wedding in the garden is just perfect for such a memorable event.

Decorations for outdoor weddings are not very difficult to handle and you can even save money by taking care of it yourself. When you have your wedding reception outdoors, nature lends a hand and quite a bit of the decorations can be natural greenery and flowering plants. All you need to do is make use of what nature has provided to make some additions.

You will need an arch to walk down and that is quite easily constructed with very fine flexible bamboo. Once the structure of the arch is constructed it can be firmly fixed into the ground and then decorated with lots of greenery and flowers. All you need to ensure is that the décor is in keeping with your color scheme and wedding theme.

Next you can make use of candles stuck into tall torch holders but make sure they are the insect repellent kind, to line the aisle. You can also use flaming torches or tikki torches as they are commonly referred to. Again the kind you choose should tie in with your theme.

String lights over the bushes, shrubs and even the trees for a really gay atmosphere. Hang colorful lanterns off the trees to add a touch of elegance to the décor. Make sure all the cabling is well tucked away and out of reach of mischievous little fingers!

If you have a flower rich garden there really is no need to overdo things and add more flowers, you could ruin the décor that way. Even centerpieces for the tables can be something other than flower arrangements. If you have a fountain or pond in your garden decorate with lights and floating candles for a great effect.

The music you play should also blend in with your outdoor wedding reception theme; if you are having a serene setting don't go blasting heavy metal!

There is so much you can do with an outdoor wedding reception in terms of decorations using lights and flowers to maximum effect. Whatever you choose should be in line with the wedding colors and the reception theme. Understated is better than overstated because it can make the show look gaudy and you don't want that.

Exploring Wedding Reception Themes

There are several wedding reception themes available for you to choose from to make this momentous occasion extra special. Get your creative juices flowing and express your thoughts and ideas at your reception. You will need a central theme for the reception and this article provides you with some good ideas to get you started.

The seaside theme has become rather popular and you can use the blue backdrop of the sea to build on. A wedding on the beach will perfectly suit a marine theme or if you are not so inclined but still want to feature water opt for a poolside wedding. You can also choose a harbor side, boat house or cruise ship wedding. Make innovative use of shells, plants, mermaids, crystals and rocks. Lots of choices for food with a variety of seafood dishes, but consider the people who don't eat seafood and make sure the menu has some of the mainstream foods on offer as well

Traditional period themed weddings are quite the rage and though not everyone can hire a castle there are ways to make the dream come true. The dress code will call for the ultimate in style and grandeur to blend with your theme. Beginning with the church, you can choose a cathedral that is very grand with high arched ceilings, columns, frescoes and stained glass windows. Then you move to a reception hall that has a feeling of being back in a period piece drama. The décor you choose can transform any room successfully

and you should take maximum advantage of the play of light on the setting. Serve traditional food and drink using fancy crockery and silver cutlery.

Garden weddings are a great choice if you marry when the weather is good. You can have free reign with the décor and setup. Go for a carnival atmosphere by setting up gaily colored tents and furniture or have a formal sit down setting amidst the greenery and color of nature. If you don't have the space for a garden wedding on the lawns of your home you can always approach the management of the garden of choice to rent the lawns for your wedding reception.

Country style wedding themes are a great way to celebrate nature and you can choose a particular region, for example Spain or the Mediterranean for a touch of the exotic. Use the natural surroundings to maximum effect and fill the place with traditional flowers and other decoration items that will enhance and compliment your theme. Serve a mix of Spanish, French, Italian and other foods to add flavor to the theme. Play music that is fitting and a great time will be had by all.

Factors to Consider When Choosing a Wedding Cake

You want your wedding to be flawless and that includes choosing the wedding cake with care. How do you go about picking the right wedding cake for that special day? First

you need to decide how much you are willing to spend on the cake because be warned that wedding cakes come expensive. Do you want the whole nine yards with tiers reaching skyward or will you settle for one layer of real cake and the rest made of Styrofoam?

Take the following factors into consideration when choosing your wedding cake and you should be fine.

You will need to choose the style of cake you want to have. Tiered cakes are the most common choice for weddings. Then you have single tier or sheet cake, themed cakes, laser cut cakes, three dimensional cakes, monogrammed cakes and the list goes on. Nothing is ever easy when it comes to weddings - there are a gazillion decisions to be made on everything! Bakeries specializing in wedding cakes will be able to produce photo albums for you to look at as well as cake books for you to choose from.

There's a famous cliché which states that 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating', so get to tasting. You will need to decide on the flavor, filling if needed and the icing. Professional bakers will set up a cake tasting session for you and they will prepare a sample just for you to taste. As with anything that has to be perfect don't rush the decision.

Your budget needs to be realistic and after talking to a select group of bakers you will have a better idea of how much a really good wedding cake will cost. A budget of at least a thousand dollars will give you a cake to die for;

a budget of two hundred dollars means you get what you pay for. If you have budget constraints, it is far better to choose cupcakes or fruit muffins and a novel way of doing the wedding cake bit rather than buying a cheap wedding cake. If you choose a themed or monogrammed cake you could very well end up spending over a thousand dollars.

Make sure the bakery does a sketch of the cake you have discussed before you sign the final order. This will ensure that the two of you are in sync over what your expectations of the wedding cake are.

Getting Married on a Cruise Ship

To be married at sea has such a romantic ring to it and surely a good majority of the brides-to-be would jump at such an opportunity if given the chance. However, weddings on a cruise ship can be an expensive affair and unfortunately not in everyone's budget. In this article we cover some of the more salient features of getting married on a cruise ship to help make your decision a bit easier.

Weddings on cruise ships are actually quite popular and people are happy to combine it with the honeymoon. It does save the couple a bundle when compared to having a land based wedding ceremony and reception. This money can be spent on a cruise which will include the wedding ceremony and honeymoon. Couples are also able to take their parents and give them a vacation as well.

When you decide to marry on a cruise ship you are in effect planning a wedding event more than just a ceremony. Many couples invite their closest friends and make it one grand party. Some of the things you need to know about weddings at sea are detailed below for your use.

Sorry to put a damper on your enthusiasm and excitement but marrying at sea does not actually happen. The ship needs to have a special license which allows you to marry while it is sailing. Otherwise it is not considered a lawful wedding because you cannot marry in international waters. Therefore the wedding will take place on the ship but in port. For the marriage to be legally recognized in the US it has to take place in US territory, for example you will get married in Fort Lauderdale or any US port and then set sail for your cruise. Couples are advised to thoroughly research this point before finalizing their decision.

Allowing the cruise line to take care of the planning is a wise move; they take care of everything and you just need to make choices from the selections they give you. The planning will be done based on the size of the wedding party, wedding date, space availability and more. You will not be running around checking out reception venues, dealing with caterers, photographer, videographer, band, florists and getting the mother of all headaches to boot! Give the organizer the color scheme for your wedding and the flowers will be arranged. Of course if you like a particular kind of flower you can always request it.

Cruise lines offer wedding packages which take care of all the intricate details and some ships have a lovely chapel on board so you can marry in church. It is very important to book well in advance, in fact as soon as you agree to marry your knight in shining armor get started planning your wedding on a cruise ship.

Getting the Seating Right at a Wedding

Weddings are happy events filled with loads of excitement but they are also one of the most stressful times you will ever face in life. There's so much to plan, coordinate and accomplish that its quite easy to overlook something really important. People seldom pay much attention to the seating arrangements and this could pose problems.

In point of fact getting the seating right is really very important for a successful reception. Imagine that you have two aunts who simply cannot get along and you inadvertently put them next to each other at the reception! Would you want to be responsible for the mayhem that follows?

When planning the seating arrangements think carefully about the ties that bind and the little family squabbles. Also consider that you will serve alcohol and this can get people properly steamed up. Rather than tearing out your hair in frustration, read on to find some useful tips to help you devise the perfect seating plan which will avert disaster.

Family members and close friends who are part of the wedding party go right up front at the head table. It is best not to deviate from this plan as there are only so many people you can seat with the bride and groom. Whoever you put at your table others are going to be insulted, so stick to the bridal party only and there will not be room for complaints.

Try to place people who share similar interests together, don't go putting an artsy person next to a dry as dust lawyer! Even if people are total strangers meeting for the first time, pairing them off properly will get the conversation going. Your aim is to make sure that the mood around each table is upbeat and joyful, not dancing on the tables joyful but happy on such a special day.

Music at weddings is invariably loud, don't go putting the elderly guests near the speakers, it will be very annoying to say nothing of the discomfort they will experience. Loud noise is not good for people with hearing aids - it can interfere with their hearing ability.

When seating people at a table you need to make sure that every person at the table knows at least one other person. This will help get the conversation started and people will feel more at ease having someone they know nearby.

You should make use of these tips as a guideline to drawing up your seating chart.

How Can a Wedding Planner Help

For many people, juggling a fast paced career, responsibilities at home and a social life is stressful enough. Add planning a wedding to the heap and they just might fall apart. When both the bride and groom to-be work in demanding careers, they will not have much time to plan a wedding. It may very well be that the couple prefers to call in a professional rather than make a mess of things handling it on their own.

The wedding planning business is big and wedding planners are very much in demand for their skills and expertise in putting together a terrific show. You need to have a clear plan in your own mind first as to the type of wedding you want and the kind of budget you are looking at. A really good planner will be able to fit things into your budget and give you a day to remember.

Budget: you will be sure to discuss this with your partner in great detail and your parents as well. It may be that you and your partner are footing the entire bill or the parents on either side may be helping out. Either way you should have a set budget with a margin for adjustment. Your wedding planner will be able to give you a few options to fit your budget.

Wedding type: you have to decide whether you wish to go with a simple, no frills wedding or you want to make a huge

splash. Either way the wedding planner will help you out. Do you want a church wedding and then on to a catered reception in a hotel or will you return to something simpler like the lawns of your parent's home? Only the couple can decide what they want but you have to be absolutely clear in detailing what you want to the wedding planner.

Guests: long before you actually firm up the date the guest list should be started. In times of great excitement and stress it is very easy to miss out someone who will most likely be offended. You cannot afford to forget to invite your partner's great aunt Matilda now can you! Rather than causing people hurt and angst by leaving them off the guest list, albeit unintentionally, it is best to start the list early and get your parents to help check it over. You have to provide the planner with the exact number of adults and children and any special dietary needs.

These are some of the main areas in which you need to provide the wedding planner with clear and precise information for the successful planning of your wedding.

How to Choose the Perfect Wedding Venue

There are many factors which go into the making of a great wedding and each one is equally important in its own right. One of the pitfalls to watch out for when selecting a wedding venue is not to get swayed by the beauty of the place or location. Don't sign on the dotted line until you have

considered all the practical aspects as well.

There is no shortage of wedding locations and you can choose the church hall, hotel lawns or banquet hall, fly away to a romantic location to tie the knot, beach wedding, community hall or even the lawns of your own home. What is important is to know what factors to consider when choosing the perfect wedding location.

Here are some guidelines to help you with the wedding location aspect of your planning.

One of the first things you will need to consider is the number of guests you are going to invite and the kind of budget you have for the venue. When you are on a tight budget the lawns of your own home or the beach means a huge saving. You can also choose between the church hall or the community hall, either should do just fine. Of course if you have the budget you can get married on the high seas while taking a luxury cruise.

When you have a clear idea of the number of guests you are going to invite and the budget for the venue, it is time to start asking questions.

What sort of décor does the location have?

Will you need to spend a sizeable amount to decorate?

Will it match the wedding colors?

Will it hold all your guests?

Can you seat people outside as well?

Will an in-house caterer be on offer? Sample the food to make sure you like what they serve. In-house caterers can be a bit cheaper but the food may not always be up to scratch.

What about bathroom and coat checking facilities?

Will a wheelchair bound person be able to access the wedding hall easily?

What is the deposit and booking procedure?

What sort of cancellation policy is in place?

Will you have place for the food to be laid out buffet style?

Will there be place for a live band and dancing?

Do they allow you to bring your own liquor (they should have a licence)

Other things to be considered will be parking, proper setting for photographs, a room for the bride and groom to relax in and how near the public transportation system is to the venue. It is always advisable to read and re-read the contract as carefully as possible to spot any hidden costs.

How to Cut Down on Expensive Rehearsal Dinners

One tradition that most families seem reluctant to let go

off is the rehearsal dinner that is usually held after the wedding rehearsal. Family and friends come together after all their hard efforts on behalf of the happy couple and the dinner is a way of thanking people.

There is no hard and fast rule about how the dinner should be held; it is entirely up to the couple to decide whether they want a small intimate affair or an elaborate catered meal. Depending on what you choose you can quite easily end up spending a few thousand dollars, money that you really cannot afford when planning for your wedding. You would be wise to consider some of the following ideas on how to cut down on the cost of the rehearsal dinner.

If you are not open to any suggestions other than a proper sit down meal in a restaurant you can go with a set menu. Most restaurants are quite happy to oblige by giving you a good discount on a set menu. You will probably be charged per head and the guests will have a few select choices. A definitely better option than going for the a la carte menu which can cost a bomb.

Have a barbeque in your backyard and save a packet. If your wedding is planned for when the weather is fine you will have no problems. Set up the backyard with insect repellent candles in fancy holders and dish up a lot of grills and salads, make sure there's plenty of cold beer on hand to wash it all down. This will lend a certain gaiety to the atmosphere as everyone relaxes after all their hard efforts.

There are many outlets which will provide you low cost catering, you can have the dinner at your home or again outdoors weather permitting. Restaurants will bring and serve a selection of dishes that will not cost the earth. There are also catering agencies that do very reasonably priced meals that they will home deliver.

One of the cheapest of all rehearsal dinners is to have a pot luck dinner and this suits people with a very limited budget right down to the ground. When couples are footing the entire bill for the wedding out of their own pockets with no help from anyone, they need every penny they have. With a pot luck dinner, each one brings a dish or dessert and there is sharing and unity to be experienced.

Whatever you choose to do, no one knows your financial situation better than you do and you have to be sensible about your spending. Family and friends will understand and so long as there is a rehearsal dinner and some drinks everyone is sure to have a good time.

How to Handle Serving Alcohol at Your Wedding Reception

Weddings are joyous occasions, full of celebration and happiness for a couple on the brink of a brand new life. Nothing should be allowed to mar this glorious occasion and there are certain decisions you will need to take as a couple. Some may require a hardline stand and in this article we deal with the serving of alcohol at the wedding

reception.

You do not have to follow the crowd and serve alcohol because other people do. You can decide based on your budget whether you can afford this expenditure. A full bar is very expensive when the caterers are supplying the drinks. You will be charged for every bottle opened and have to pay servers and bartender fees.

You would be well within your rights to have a champagne reception where only champagne is served. Make sure to put this information in your reception invitation so that people know what to expect. You could also serve wine or a mixed punch, which is made up of a mixture of alcoholic and fruit beverages.

In order to help you decide whether to serve alcohol at your wedding reception or not, the following tips may be of use.

* You will need to check with the reception venue about their policy on serving alcohol. For example, if you have the reception in a church hall there is no way you will be allowed to serve alcohol, so nix the thought.

*

There are some hotels which may not be amenable to you bringing your own alcohol and if they insist on supplying and serving, you need to think long and hard about whether you want to incur this cost.

* If you want the caterer to supply the alcohol, make sure he has a liquor license. If you want to supply it yourself, you can go online and apply for a liquor license for a one off event where the stuff is not for sale and no tickets are sold to the event.

* You will need a professional bartender to take care of the liquor serving all through the evening. If you have a friend who works in this line you can always get him or her to help out. Depending on the number of guests you invite, you need to make sure that there are sufficient bartenders available to serve them. You don't want your guests queuing up for ages to get a drink - the mood can get ugly.

How to Save Money on Wedding Ceremony Costs

A wedding is a landmark of gigantic proportions in anyone's life and most of us look forward to that wonderful day with great anticipation. What needs to be realized is the amount of planning and organization needed for a wedding is extremely time consuming. The whole event can be quite a stressful one.

A wedding can be 'break the bank' expensive or downright simple and low budget. It is really up to the couple to decide. Brides, of course, dreaming of and longing for their special day would ideally like the works. In reality it is not always wise to splurge mega bucks on a wedding when you have to think about the honeymoon costs and the expenditure

involved in setting up your new home .

The traditional wedding ceremony can cost quite a bit and if you are working off a tight budget, do what other couples are doing, forgo tradition. Here are a few tips you may want to consider to shave some money off the wedding ceremony costs.

If you are not too particular about having a church wedding, you can have a Justice of the Peace officiate. The obvious advantage here is you can marry at City Hall, in a courtroom or even in the JP's office. You can find a JP online, call the county courthouse or District Magistrate's office or just drive up there to finalize things. A simple, yet cheap solution! The cost is very nominal when compared to high fees you will pay for a traditional, full celebration. Expenses mount up when you consider the church fee, minister's fee, decorations and choir's cost.

Couples, who are not quite satisfied with the simplicity of a wedding ceremony in City Hall or the JP's office, have another cost effective option available to them. You can plan to have the wedding ceremony in your own backyard and follow it up with the reception. You will really save a very big chunk of your wedding budget if you have it at home.

You can even get a minister to officiate at your wedding ceremony to retain a bit of the traditional church ceremony. The garden can be decorated quite simply with flowers and other things depending on whether it is a day or evening wedding.

Depending on the number of guests you plan to invite, you can have a nice meal served or set up a buffet table with a bar at one end. Guests will be more relaxed and enjoy the ceremony and the reception a great deal.

Quite honestly the two most expensive items on the wedding checklist that will cause your bank account grief is the wedding reception and the clothes you wear. Apart from that the traditional church ceremony and the rehearsal dinner, the flowers, decorations, band and just about everything else has a large price tag on it! Weddings are a huge money spinner and a very big revenue generating industry. Now, it is understood that you want to make the day as memorable as possible, but don't throw caution to the winds and simply spend. Talk things through with your partner and come to firm decisions on what you want but can do without and what you want, period.

Most couples start out by wanting the works and then reality sets in and they are forced to take a step back to analyze costs. Here's a good way to start out cutting cost on your wedding ceremony. Make a comprehensive checklist of everything that needs to be done - you will find some good ones online. Now start pricing each item on your list till you are done and you have a total

If you have just collapsed in shock, pick yourself up - it's time for a reality check. What items on your list can you omit entirely? Now you have a new list and a new total. From the second list identify the things you can do either by

yourselves or with the help of family and friends. To make things a bit clearer, for example, don't have invitations printed if you can get someone with a good cursive script to do them for you. Cut the guest list down to people who are considered 'must invite'. There are many ways in which you can cut costs, get creative. What is left of the list will be your actual expenditure provided you stick to the plan!

Cut cost, enjoy yourselves and don't forget to apply for the marriage license!

How to Save on a Beach Wedding Reception

Beach weddings are quite popular with couples who are going the modern route to get married. You can have a beach wedding ceremony and an indoor reception or you can have the entire event on the beach. There is no doubt that you will really make a saving if you choose to marry on the beach. You can use the money saved for your new home or even for an unforgettable honeymoon. Saving money is not being miserly rather it is being sensible in a time of economic downswing.

You may find the following savings suggestions useful when planning a beach wedding:

You can choose to have your reception poolside if the crowd is not too big. This will help you have an intimate yet

informal wedding party. The idea of a wedding reception is for the guests to enjoy themselves and for the couple to have a blast!

If you are keen on a church wedding you are sure to find churches that are located barely a stone's throw from the beach. Some churches are actually located on the beach itself.

Since you cannot put up decorations you are saving money on flowers and other decoration items. As there is no real aisle to walk down you can make arrangements for a long strip of carpet and a sort of arch that can be minimally decorated, to be set up for the wedding.

Food can be tricky because of the lack of refrigeration. A beach barbecue is ideal and you can plan on having the food transported in coolers. Just don't choose to serve mayonnaise potato salad. Pig roast, clam bake, meats and vegetables on skewers, cold roasted chicken are all good ideas for a beach wedding reception. Get creative and do plenty of research; you will find plenty of good ideas based on peoples real life experiences that you can borrow from. This type of food will save you a lot of money when compared to a catered sit down meal or a buffet.

You could rent a portable floor for the tables and chairs for your guests and make use of carpet runners placed over the sand to make it easier for people to walk over to the wedding site. With a portable floor you can also have dancing.

Getting married in the morning means you will not need to bother with lighting and that's an additional saving.

If you have friends who are good with music get them to help you out - you will not need to hire a band or DJ, yet another saving. So long as you have someone knowledgeable in charge of keeping the tempo going, things will be fine.

Its your day so get as creative as possible and remember the sky's the limit for planning your beach wedding.

Inexpensive Wedding Dress Ideas

Shopping for the perfect wedding dress can be both exciting and stressful. There are so many wonderful designs out there but along with those wonderful designs come expensive price tags. If you are on a limited budget for your wedding, this can be more than just a little stressful. There is hope though, and here are some ideas on how you can get a great looking wedding dress for a fraction of the price that everyone else is paying.

One of the easiest things to do is to check the sale rack for last season's choices. These are not going to be dresses that are very outdated. Last season's dresses are still extremely beautiful and they are a lot less than their original price. Some women have been lucky enough to find

a perfectly suitable, brand new wedding dress for just over a hundred dollars, all because it was from "last season".

Another way to save money on a wedding dress is to purchase a used one. This is something that a lot of brides don't think of. Many women hold onto their bridal gowns forever, but this is not always the case. There are weddings that never happened or the divorce that broke it all apart. Either way, there is usually a dress in the midst of all of that which needs to be sold. Since it is technically a used dress, even if just worn for a couple of hours, you will find that women are willing to sell them pretty cheap.

If you like getting a little creative, you could always go for a nice looking prom dress and use it as your wedding dress. Many of the prom dresses out there are so fantastic looking you'd be proud to wear them for your wedding. This is also an excellent option for second weddings as well.

Another way to get an affordable wedding dress on a budget would be to use the services of a seamstress. A seamstress should have no problem pulling together the perfect gown for you. A benefit to going this route is that you are sure to have a gown that is a perfect fit. The gown is sewn to fit instead of altered. If you bought a brand new gown off the rack, you would still have to go to the seamstress to have it altered, so why not just start there and save yourself some time and money?

The beautiful wedding dress your mother wore is another great option for an affordable gown. You can wear it as-is,

or with your mother's permission you can have it altered slightly in order to add a bit of your personality and style to it.

In the end, even if you are on a budget, your hunt for the perfect wedding gown will be one full of dreams and excitement. Selecting just the right gown can be the most memorable experience you have from the entire wedding planning process.

Incorporating Overseas Marriage Traditions into Your Wedding

Thoughts of weddings and dreams of the perfect wedding feature more prominently in a woman's mind than it does in a man's. Probably has something to do with the fact that men would rather put it off until the inevitable happens!

There is no denying that a wedding is one of life's most momentous occasions. There is a special solemnity to it that no other event quite matches. There is also a great deal of fun, laughter, happiness and tears all blended into a strange mix.

As society has evolved there have been numerous changes in the way we did things in the past and how we do them today. Weddings have undergone a lot of changes, progressing to what they have become today. Though we still hold on to many

of the wedding traditions of yesteryear - no wedding would be complete without them - couples have become more adventurous in their wedding planning.

Many people like to incorporate overseas marriage traditions into their weddings to spice up the entire event. With globalization spreading its wings on a truly massive scale, why not import some of the foreign wedding traditions as well, with everything else we import. We also live in an age where online dating allows relationships to span the globe. This of course has resulted in a larger number of inter-racial marriages than ever before.

Let us look at a few examples that showcase the incorporation of overseas wedding traditions into a western wedding ceremony. In other words, just how well do these traditions and customs merge together? Let's take a look at some classic examples that really highlight the wide range of differences in marriage traditions that exist.

A marriage between a Christian bride from the west and a non Christian groom from Asia means what exactly? Simply put the church wedding is out because the groom will have to convert first before being allowed to marry in a church.

Then you have customs that dictate which family pays for the wedding. The Chinese custom says the groom pays for the wedding while in the western world the bride's family pays. The Chinese wear red as a ceremonial wedding color, of course in the west people wear white.

These examples barely scratch the surface of what lies in store for couples from different racial backgrounds who plan to wed. You can choose to either turn it into a three ring circus with everyone squabbling with everyone, or the bridal couple can decide what foreign wedding traditions they want to incorporate into the wedding.

How about a Belgium wedding to really add to the ceremony? Here are some noteworthy Belgian wedding features you can incorporate into your wedding. The bride walks up the aisle to give her mother a single flower and a huge embrace. When the wedding ceremony is over, the bride presents her new mother in law with a single flower followed by the embrace. This is a very symbolic gesture to show the bride's acceptance of her new mother.

Another very traditional wedding tradition is that the bride carries a special handkerchief, embroidered with her name on it. After the wedding the handkerchief is framed and hung in a place of honor till the time when it is passed on to the next female family member on the bride's side who is getting married.

Why not try the French croquembouche or French wedding cake that has survived since the 1600s! A pyramid of creampuffs that have to be covered with hard-crack sugar followed by spun caramelized sugar. Quite a deviation from the traditional wedding cake one might say.

Maybe you would like a touch of Scotland with its strange blend of ancient Highland traditions and modernistic rights. Have a wedding reception filled with music, singing, toasting and much drinking - a celebration to end all celebrations that continues on till the early morning hours. Too much to handle! Try having the groom carry you over the threshold of your new home. This is a 700 year old custom and a very symbolic one at that.

There are so many cultures and wedding traditions that you can borrow from to make your wedding the talk of the town.

Live Band versus Wedding DJ

Music is the backbone of any party and good or bad music can either make or break the evening. Couples on the threshold of a brand new life together are already jittery enough over everything that needs doing to make the day perfect.

But how can you decide whether to choose a live band or wedding DJ for your reception party? Before we begin talking about music, bands and DJs, remember it's your day; do what pleases you and forget about traditions and what other people think.

To start out let's be clear that both live bands and DJs have their positive and negative aspects. Rather than

stereotyping, why not check it out for yourself? If you have a large enough budget, the ideal thing to do would be to get both, a live band and a DJ. This could really keep the party going all night. However, wedding budgets with the gazillion things that needing paying for, seldom stretch that far.

The general consensus is that live bands are more expensive than a DJ and prices vary according to the reputation, demand and quality of the band or DJ. If you are planning a really long evening with dancing the night away on your agenda, it will require a lot of music being played. Will the band be able to last all night long is the question?

What sort of wedding venue have you decided upon? Will there be sufficient space for a full band complement? Are there restrictions on the kinds of music to be played? These are some of the questions you will need to consider before deciding on whether to go with a live band or DJ.

Formal weddings with all the trappings of age old traditions and live bands make a perfect match. On the other hand, a DJ may be better suited to a semi formal or casual wedding style. If your choice of music is going to be traditional and dignified, then by all means a live band will better suit the occasion. DJs are cool for casual wedding style receptions.

You need to listen to them play, better yet attend an event where the band is playing and also attend an event featuring the DJ. This will help you to make a more informed decision.

With a live band you have the option to use the band leader as master of ceremonies. Band leaders generally (but not always) have the right kind of personality for this job.

You need to inquire about the music repertoire of the live band as well as the DJ's collection of music. With the varied crowd one expects at wedding receptions, a plentiful mix of music spanning the decades is important to get the crowd going. Will the band be able to accommodate song requests from your guests? For example, if you have guests who want songs from the 60s and guests who want songs that are current favorites, can they do both?

Live bands are to put it simply, live! Well experienced musicians can really make the party come alive with their music. Live bands can incorporate the wedding theme beautifully and are fully capable of switching tempos should the party spirit start flagging.

The downside to a live band is the price and also finding a band that can play the wide eclectic mix of music you are planning for your guests.

DJs are the cheaper option for your wedding reception music and they generally have a wider collection of music to offer. However, elegant, traditional, black tie receptions and DJs do not go together very well. DJs cannot improvise, they simply play the songs they have in their collection. Changing the tempo to lift the party spirit is out!

You need to decide what you want and make a booking well in advance if you want the best for your reception.

Selecting the Best Music for the Wedding Reception

A wedding reception party will probably be the biggest event in any couple's life and going all out to make it as grand as possible is the done thing. With all the planning and organizing a wedding entails, something is bound to get overlooked or paid little attention to. Music strangely enough often features at the bottom of the wedding checklist more often than not.

Music is what makes the party rock and without it things can fall rather flat. In fact, good music often helps gloss over the little hiccups that happen to even the most carefully planned receptions. Have you ever noticed how things and people tend to be a little stiff at the start of the party and then begin to warm up as the band strikes up? Music is a fantastic ice breaker and good music will soon have your reception guests' boogying the night away.

Here is some insight about the kind of music used for the wedding reception. The following tips are useful in helping you select a variety of fast and slow numbers to make sure everyone in the crowd regardless of age has a rocking good time.

You have a room full of people, each one a unique individual with distinct tastes and preferences. Whom do you please when selecting the music for your reception? The best way to do things is to play a selection of songs from various periods to cover every age group in the room. Let us assume your older guests come to the floor for a lively number from the 60s, a period they can relate to. They are going to have so much fun few of them will want to leave when Shakira comes on. Mixing up the music will have feet tapping and people twirling around the floor.

The music you choose for your reception party should be the life of the party. It should get the guests to relax and let their hair down, step out onto the floor to dance and generally remove any initial stiffness people usually feel.

How well do you know the people you are inviting to your wedding reception? You should know your immediate family and close friends well enough to play their favorite music. There is no harm in getting people to give suggestions on the kind of music to be played. You have the whole evening and will probably be able to cover most suggestions.

Are you planning on having a live band to provide the music for your reception? A great way to get the guests involved in the spirit of having fun and making the reception a resounding success is to have the guests hand in song requests. You could place a small song request pad on every table with a mini pen or pencil. Let the guest write out the request, tear it off the pad and hand it over to the

wait staff to deliver to the band.

If you use this suggestion you are going to see your guests really bopping around and having fun - that's what music does to people. It was Shakespeare who said, "if music be the food of love, play on,..." What better place to put that line to practice than at a wedding reception!

One thing that you need to consider when making out your seating plan, don't put elderly people too near the band and dance floor area. Start off the music with hits from the 40s then progress to the 50s and 60s early in the evening, then start mixing them up with current hits. Lots of old time favorites have fantastic beats that will make anyone young or old want to dance. The reason for this suggestion is that older people generally put in an appearance first and also leave earlier than the young crowd. There'll be time enough to play all the current hits as the evening progresses.

One way to get the crowd going is to start the music early. Don't let your guests sit around getting bored while you follow the tradition of starting the music after the cutting of the cake. In fact it may be best to have dance sessions interspersed with toasts, dinner, cake cutting and all the other festivities you have planned.

When your guests enter the reception venue to be greeted by lively music, it can really set the tone of the evening.

Personal Wedding Websites - the Future has Arrived

There is no denying that the innovation of the internet has made a vast difference to our lives as it continues to influence the various aspects of everyday life. The concept of the wedding website has come into its own and is a great boon for couples. Rather than having to deal with the stress of talking to countless people who all have questions to ask, couples can now post their information on the site and send the link to family and friends.

Using a wedding website to serve as an information portal and means of communication between the wedding couple and family and friends, has helped do away with the hassle and stress of talking to everyone by telephone. All of the details of the wedding can be posted on the site. For example, you can put a picture of the church together with a map and directions to get there. This will help save the couple the endless bother of having to explain over and over again to people the directions for getting to the church.

There are several free online sites that offer tools and advice for setting up a wedding site. If you are good with computers you can do a more than satisfactory job by yourself. Alternatively you could get professional help from one of the companies offering this service. The free sites allow a very limited amount of posting of information and probably only one picture, so it may be better to take a paid subscription.

Post photos beginning with the story of your romantic involvement, move on to the engagement and then give all the information you can relevant to the wedding and the reception. Some guidelines on what to have on your wedding site are given below to help you get started.

- * Have an interactive guestbook page where your visitors can leave their good wishes for the soon to be married couple.

- * Put the information relating to the wedding service, time, venue and directions, add a map if possible or add links for people to use to find the map. Add similar information about the reception - venue, time and directions.

- * You can have a link to your gift registry on the site because this is the kind of information one simply does not put in an invitation. This is a great way to let people know where you are registered.

- * One very useful purpose served by a wedding website is you can get your RSVPs done online. Track who has not responded and send reminders and save yourself time and money, not forgetting the stress of an added task.

In short, make the most of your wedding website and enjoy the planning!

Planning a Successful Wedding Reception

Planning a successful wedding reception is no small task and wedding planners certainly have their work cut out for them. If you have decided that you can do the planning on your own - more power to you! Here are a few basic tips to help you get started.

You need to select the wedding colors and the type of wedding you want. Will you want a traditional white gown and veil, church wedding followed by a sit down meal or will you be looking for something less sedate and more flamboyant? This is an important question and needs careful consideration because once you decide, everything about the reception will revolve around your theme.

Following on from your color scheme will be the reception decorations, based on the wedding theme you have chosen. You can have simple, elegant decorations or go for the outrageous. Everything about your wedding will reflect your and the groom's personality, tastes and values, so choose whatever feels right for you.

Spending individual time with your guests is actually quite important and remember, it is your reception, which you need to enjoy with your friends and family. Make it as festive and happy as possible; move around and mingle with people, talk to them and pay attention to their comfort. Thanking as many people as you can personally for coming to the wedding says a lot about you as a couple. Further it makes people feel real special when you take the time to let them

know you appreciate their presence and support.

Running short on food is an absolute No in a wedding reception! It is probably your worst nightmare and nothing can put a damper on the reception party faster than hungry guests. Overestimate because some people will bring uninvited guests and you also have to consider wastage. You will also have guests who did not RSVP turning up and it is best to overestimate when ordering rather than underestimating.

You will probably have quite a few kids at the reception and it may be far better to plan some activities for them rather than trying to get them to sit still and be quiet - ever heard of a child sitting still? You may want to make up little goody bags to give to them when they arrive, which will keep them entertained. Just don't put water pistols in there! Better yet if you have the space set up a dedicated play area with a child lover to supervise.

Use these tips to get your planning off the ground.

Planning Your Wedding on a Well Thought Out Budget

Quite honestly expensive weddings are out and cost-cutting and budget weddings are in! Why spend a truck load of money on a wedding, which will last just a few short hours? Couples are finding that it is far better to make a down payment

on a property rather than have a lavish wedding. The economy too has been in recession for a while and spending definitely is down!

While it is true that everyone dreams of the most memorable wedding of the century, unless you are fabulously wealthy and most of us are not, this is not really possible. Couples are planning their weddings very carefully and budgeting expenses to cut down on or do away with unnecessary costs.

It is one thing to dream and most brides do dream of the picture perfect wedding but the dream soon takes on a nightmarish quality when you see what it will cost you. Couples need to take up a ruthless stance in ditching all the expenses for things that really don't impact the wedding much, the extra frills and fancies if you will.

There are definite advantages to having a small wedding and they include:

- * Your greatest saving comes from limiting the number of guests you invite but be prepared for some ruffled feathers among the non-invitees. You can limit the number of guests who bring a date along. These guests will usually comprise unmarried people who are not in any long term relationship. To avoid confusion, you can put only the guest's name on the envelope and the response card.

*

Wedding invitations can be quite an expensive affair because you will be tempted to get the best. One of avoiding

this expense altogether is to set up a wedding website on which you can give all the details of the wedding including timings and locations. You can also get your RSVPs by mail and save on postage and printing.

* If you feel you simply must have printed invitations don't order them till the guest list is completely finalized. Ask a friend who has beautiful writing to do the cards and save on a professional calligrapher's fee. You may also decide that a program is not really essential since the ceremony will be a short, traditional one. However, you will need to do thank you cards so get them in bulk to make a saving.

A budget wedding does not have to appear cheap if you spend wisely on stationery, flowers, favors and other things. The money you save can go towards a fine honeymoon and a new home.

Popular Wedding Ceremony Traditions

Wedding traditions abound in every culture across the globe and most of us haven't got a clue why we do something. For example that ancient of sayings, "something borrowed, something blue, something old and something new." Where did it come from and why blue and not any other color are questions we don't have the answers to. Why do we have wedding rings and white dresses and so much more?

Let us begin a journey of exploration into the customs that prevail in wedding ceremonies. It is guaranteed to be an interesting read. Many of the wedding traditions have their roots in superstition but they are fascinating to learn about nevertheless.

Wedding rings: According to the Greeks and later the Romans it was believed that the third finger or ring finger on the left hand had a vein leading directly to the heart. To the Egyptians the circle of the wedding band symbolized eternal and unending love. The space in the center also has a meaning of its own as a gateway to the unknown. The ring like time was believed to have no beginning and no end.

Wedding dresses: Prior to the 15th century brides wore their best dresses regardless of any particular color. In the late 15th century the wedding dress came into vogue when Anne of Brittany wore it for her wedding ceremony to her third husband. However, credit must be given to Queen Victoria who is really responsible for the white wedding dress becoming popular, after she wore hers in 1840.

Wedding veils: one explanation is that the veil was frequently adopted in the Middle Ages and Europe, a custom linked to superstition and the protection of the bride from evil spirits. Another superstition is that it brings bad luck to the groom if he sees the bride before the wedding. Traditionally the veil covered the face and the groom lifted it up after the wedding rings were put on for the first kiss. Today the veil is more of an accessory and sometimes covers the face and sometimes just hangs off the back of the head.

Wedding cakes: here's a funny one - ancient Romans broke a small loaf of bread made of either wheat or barley, over the bride's head - ouch! It was a symbol of fertility and this bashing on the head was meant to ensure the bride bore many children.

While all of the above symbols of a wedding ceremony still exist, thankfully the breaking of bread over the bride's head does not.

Practical Wedding Gift Ideas

The groom to be is over the moon - he proposed and she accepted! Romance and wedding bells are in the air but there is a lot of work ahead before they get to enjoy happily wedded bliss. In this article we take a look at some of the practical wedding gifts one can give a couple on the threshold of a brand new life together.

Couples embarking on a new chapter in their lives require many things to set up a home. It may be that they will combine their 'single life' possessions to start building a home but they will still need help. Knowing the bride and groom well helps to a great extent, because you are in a better position to know what to give them. If you don't, then you will find these ideas helpful in knowing what to give them as a wedding gift.

The kitchen is really the most important area of focus for a newly married couple. They will suddenly find themselves having to cook for two and if the bride hasn't got a clue, things could get rocky. Cookbooks are great as are pots and pans and other kitchen gadgets and appliances. Check the guest register to see what's listed before you buy. A barbecue grill will get the groom involved in the cooking process, at least on the weekends!

If you know that the couple are planning on a new home that has a garden, you can give them garden supplies like the basic tools, wheelbarrow, hoe, rake, shovel and even a few plants.

Spare a thought for the groom and get him a starter tool kit - he is going to need a few tools to do basic work around the home. The starter kit comprises a tool box with hammer, tape measure, screwdrivers, duct tape and a few other bits. You could buy a handy drill machine which comes in a separate pack with the different drill bits for wood and stone.

Closet organizers may sound like a strange gift but you have no idea just how valuable they will be to a newly married couple having to share closet space for the first time. Closet organizers include drawer organizers, shoe and tie hanging organizers, storage bins, boxes and shelves and more.

These ideas should help you in your search for the best

wedding gift. There is no harm in asking, in fact it is far better to buy the couple what they need rather than play the guessing game.

Pros and Cons of Tropical Island Weddings

All brides to be dream of the picture perfect wedding complete with romantic appeal and all the elements that make a memory that can never be erased. Destination weddings have become increasingly popular as more couples choose to head off to an idyllic spot to say their 'I dos'.

There are some advantages to be had in choosing a destination wedding. One of them being that it helps you combine the wedding ceremony and honeymoon in one package. For another, only close family and friends will attend, making the whole event very intimate and of course less expensive.

In this article we want to explore the pros and cons of tropical island weddings. Now tropical paradises abound from the Caribbean to Mauritius and so many others, just as lovely or even lovelier places. It all boils down to a matter of personal choice.

It should be understood that as with most things in this world, there are advantages and disadvantages to be considered when planning a wedding in a tropical setting.

Let us go with the positive side to having a tropical island wedding first.

A wedding is always planned as a once in a life time event and no one really wants to think beyond it. More often than not the couple tends to lean toward making a huge splash and what better way to do so than on a tropical island beach? You can just imagine it, the wind gently caressing your skin, warm breezes blowing off the ocean, blue skies, a beautiful beach stretching endlessly into the horizon, the waves gently washing ashore and palm trees swaying in the wind. The stuff dreams are made of that's for sure!

* One of the advantages is you can have a fabulous natural setting for your wedding. Hold the wedding ceremony against the absolutely stunning sunrise for a wedding ceremony backdrop. How about a gorgeous sunset as the backdrop to your wedding reception? It doesn't get any better than that!

* Saying yes to the man or woman of your dreams in such an amazing setting can never quite be matched by much else.

* While it can be a bit expensive to fly even close family and friends to the wedding locale, many resorts offer special wedding package deals on rooms and food. Couples can take advantage of special deals to club the honeymoon with the wedding itself.

* The guest list is considerably lightened when you have a destination wedding. Not everyone who is invited can jet off to help the couple celebrate their special occasion. Catering is considerably reduced and so is the burden on your budget.

* Planning a full scale wedding can be really stressful on the people involved as well as the finances of the couple. Planning a wedding on a tropical island is not all that stressful if you get yourself a really good wedding planner. Keep the details simple and you can really have a wonderful time and so will the guests.

* Tropical island weddings are usually held on a beach and the décor is simple because nature provides most of the props. Wedding décor can make a huge dent in your finances and if you cut down on expenses, you have more to spend on the wedding itself.

Consider what a wedding planner expert's take on the advantages of having a tropical island wedding is. Having the wedding ceremony, reception and honeymoon over an exciting, long weekend coupled with other activities related to the wedding is a great way to provide immediate family and close friends with a mini vacation. A 4 day wedding weekend costs a whole lot less than a reception with food and drinks for 150-200 people in a hotel.

The cons of a tropical island wedding do exist but it is all a matter of perception and how you manage them.

* Paring down the guest list to a few family and friends can be a tricky problem. People have to buy plane tickets to come to your wedding and not many will want to do that. What about the ones who want to come, but have difficulty travelling?

* A destination wedding means you have less control over the proceedings but if you have an excellent wedding planner in place, things should work just fine.

At the end of the day, bear in mind you cannot please everyone and it is your special day. Just make sure that the ceremony is legally valid in the US whichever tropical paradise you have it in!

Some Far-Out Wedding Reception Ideas

Weddings we hope will come once in a lifetime and every bride and groom wants to make it a day to remember. In fact weddings are truly a monumental experience and need to be celebrated in a way that makes the memory linger on. Apart from the seriousness of the wedding ceremony, weddings are actually symbolic of a new beginning for the happy couple, a melding of two lives becoming one and the start of a brand new journey together.

There has to be fun and laughter, celebration and great rejoicing. To this end let us look at some far out wedding

reception ideas together. Here are some new ideas that you can use as a springboard to creating your own out of this world wedding reception experience.

In order to find a wedding reception idea that is really out there, you need to know that the standard fare is typically a sit down meal with the cutting of the cake, dancing, music, speeches and general celebration.

The couple wants their guests to be happy and talk about the fantastic time they had for simply years to come. The parents of the happy couple want to be able to look back and regret nothing including the big dent in their bank balances. The bride and groom want to be able to remember this day for the rest of their lives.

A wedding cruise is a really great idea and a very grand one at that. Don't venture into it if you don't have daddy Warbucks to sign the check. It can be as intimate or as huge a splash as you want it to be. If you are tight on finances, you can always choose to hire a boat big enough to hold everyone and sail off into the wild blue yonder with your guests. You can actually have the wedding reception on the boat while it sails, but don't forget to remind your guests to carry their seasick pills.

Are there any castles, forts or other historic buildings in your area that you can rent for the reception? It will really blow your guests away! The reception can be catered, the castle and surrounding lawns will make a fabulous wedding backdrop and you can really turn up the volume on

the music system. If you do manage to get a castle or fort you can always get the groom to ride up on a white horse to sweep you off your feet!

Themed wedding receptions are really popular and you can choose any theme you want from a Las Vegas casino to something truly outrageous. There are many themes to choose from like seasonal themes, vintage, romantic, beach, tropical island, cultural, western, outdoor, in a cave or the top of a mountain. There have even been weddings in hot air balloons.

When the guest list is made up of a small intimate group, a romantic wedding reception is an excellent choice. Picture it - candlelight, champagne, soft lighting, flowers, music that speaks to the heart, elegant décor and there you have it - the makings of a fairytale wedding.

If the church where the wedding ceremony will be held and the wedding reception venue are far apart, lay on some entertainment so that your guests don't get impatient waiting for you to arrive. Whatever you do avoid playing loud music that only serves to deafen your guests. When expecting a lot of kids, you can always get a magician to do a class act that keeps kids and adults spellbound. The guests need to be entertained and relaxed not tense and fretting.

Borrowing from the wedding reception traditions of other countries is a great way to add fun and laughter to your own wedding. A Mexican wedding reception tradition is to

have all the guests form a heart shape around the bride and groom who dance their first dance inside it.

To add some sparkle to the festivities, have helpers hand out sparklers and little matchbooks to the guests; let them form a huge circle with the couple in the middle. When the band begins to play the music for the couple's first dance, people light their sparklers and someone turns off the lights. An absolutely incredible sight!

Adding a wow factor to your wedding reception does not necessarily have to break the bank - so get those creative juices flowing!

Successfully Planning Your Wedding

A wedding symbolizes a new beginning for the couple getting married and is one of the most joyous occasions in life. It is a day when dreams become reality and life begins anew, filled with hope and promise. However, there is a lot of stress attached to planning a wedding so if you can afford it, let a professional wedding planner take over. It really is well worth the money to be free from the headaches and anxiety associated with planning a wedding ceremony and reception.

Start by making a short list of companies offering wedding planner services. This really is a good way to plan your

wedding without having to be involved in all the last minute panics on the day of the wedding. Consider this, would you like your wedding day to be relaxed, with lots of time to get a massage, get your make up done, get your hair done, get your nails done... or would you like to be running around like a headless chicken dealing with florists and lighting, seating problems, caterers and the photographer? A wedding planner is well worth the money for your sanity and peace of mind!

The wedding planner will handle all the arrangements and coordination for a smooth wedding ceremony and reception. Better yet, if the florist delivers the wrong flowers or the photographer is late, the wedding planner will handle the problem.

It is advisable to find a wedding services center that has all the business related to wedding ceremonies and receptions under one umbrella. In this way the wedding planner really only has to deal with one business instead of myriad different ones, causing endless confusion and panic.

Make sure to research the business you choose very carefully. It has happened often enough that a business is not mature or properly experienced to handle the complexities of a wedding ceremony. When this happens the wedding will be ruined because of poor coordination and arrangements. You can check the company out online, do reference checks and even talk to clients to find out more about the quality of the service offered. This is one area where you need to take your time and be absolutely sure

before going ahead with a company. If you get feedback that the company was late to the wedding and things got delayed, don't touch them.

Once you finalize your budget stick to it, that way you save yourself a lot of hassles. Make sure the business you choose and the wedding planner are clear on how much you want to spend and don't let yourself be bullied or talked into spending more than you planned.

The Best Time of Year for a Wedding

The best time of year for a couple about to embark on life's most momentous journey, has to be firstly a date that will mean something to you. Setting romantic notions aside like one year to the date your guy proposed, get practical. Read this article for help with choosing the best time of year for a wedding. You cannot simply pull a date out of a hat like magicians pull rabbits out!

The date you choose should be one that will allow all the bridal party to be present. People have lives and they cannot adjust the clock because your wedding is more important. What about the people on the guest list that you would like to have sharing the celebration with you; they have to be considered as well.

Other things you need to consider will be stuff like does

your wedding theme match the season - beach wedding and winter do not go together! How comfortable are you going to be getting married in the dead of winter? How cost effective are the dates you have chosen, high season for weddings is usually summer to early fall or May to August. Everything from venues to caterers and beyond costs a fortune.

You may have a secret desire to marry at a particular time. Here again unfortunately the voice of reason must be heard. If you or your fiancé have a career that necessitates you being in the office, choosing a date at that inopportune time is not going to help. For example, a finance person like a tax accountant is never going to get away in the spring time. The period between November to April is known to be a slack time for the wedding trade. You could cut your costs in half if you have the wedding at this time. Why follow the crowd and plump for a May wedding that will cost a fortune?

Another factor to be considered is the kind of honeymoon you want to have. If you want to go skiing then it has to be a winter wedding, unless you are willing to wait for your honeymoon. Big mistake, something will keep coming up and you may never get around to it! If you want to go exploring a brand new country, check what the weather will be like at that end. Tramping around in high temperatures will not a perfect honeymoon make!

Life is always full of complications and you always have to keep making choices. When picking the wedding date, it is recommended that you get all your ducks in a row. Meaning

make a list of all the important considerations you have to make regarding dates and choose one that has the highest match to everything on your list. You will not get a perfect, 100 percent match so be willing to compromise.

What we will do at this point is present you with overviews of the seasons for you to choose from.

Spring is a great time to get married, the flowers are full bloom and the sun beams down on you, but not too brightly. Everything seems to be reborn and renewed, a great time to begin a new adventure called marriage. In spring you will have flowers in abundance to choose from and every conceivable color to choose from. Great time to travel as well on your honeymoon!

A summer wedding can be held from May to August and be warned it is the most popular time of year for weddings. You can expect prices to be high on everything. To compensate for the high prices you can revel in the warmth of summer and have an outdoor wedding.

Fall weddings are great if you are thinking along the lines of an intimate wedding. A winter wedding can be turned into a magical event with a bit of creativity.

What couples need to be aware of is that there is no perfect time of year to marry that will guarantee lifelong marital bliss. It is not the time of year or the day of the week that will make your marriage work, but the level of love,

commitment, fidelity and trust you bring to the relationship.

The Intricate Details of Wedding Planning

Receiving a proposal of marriage and accepting is absolutely thrilling but once you come back down to earth, the real fun starts. Making plans for a wedding can be exciting but it can also be extremely confusing and give you anxiety attacks. There are so many details that go into the planning it can be difficult to keep track of them.

Let us do a quick rundown on the factors that need to be considered when planning a wedding. The guest list has to be finalized first because you will need to choose a venue for the reception based on the number of guests you are inviting. You have to decide on the kind of wedding you want to have. Will it be in the courthouse, in a church or on the lawns of your parents' home with a Justice of the Peace officiating?

Now that you have gotten the most important factors safely out of the way it is time to move on to the details.

Will you require a sit down meal or a buffet style meal and what kinds of food will be served? Cost varies depending on the menu you choose and if you do some fact finding you can set a realistic budget for the reception.

Do you want a live band or just a DJ playing music and will there be dancing? You may have two left feet but people expect dancing at a wedding.

Who will make up the bridal party? You have to choose your Matron of Honor and the groom's best man, the bridesmaids and their partners. Consider the color scheme for the wedding and the outfits for the bridal party. You need to choose the flowers and decide on the seating arrangements as well.

Next we come to the service, if it's to be held in a church you will need to decide on the hymns to be sung and the order of service. Will there be special vows that the two of you write up or will you repeat the standard vows? Will there be a special solo sung during the service?

Transportation will need to be arranged for the bridal party from home to church and then on to the reception. Think about the decorations you want for the bridal car.

Other things to be considered will be the rings, seating arrangements at the reception venue, wedding stationery, favors, cake and bridal gown. You will also need to set up the gift registry.

Whatever you decide pay attention to detail and don't leave things till the last minute. This way you can really enjoy

planning your wedding to the full.

The Pros and Cons of Different Wedding Seasons

Wedding seasons have an impact on a wedding and need to be considered carefully when deciding on a wedding date. Every bride wants her wedding day to be perfect and choosing the time of year that meets all your requirements can go a long way towards making the day perfect.

Outdoor weddings which are becoming increasingly popular are best held in spring and early summer. Having a wedding outdoors in the height of the summer season can bring its own share of problems with the heat and humidity not to mention the insects that come out during summer. Early fall is also a good time to have an outdoor wedding and maybe an indoor reception depending on how cold the weather is. Holiday weddings are best held during the winter months.

Spring weddings are a favorite choice for couples; spring brings to mind sprouting greenery, flowers blooming, balmy breezes and a sun kissed world that chases away the chill of winter. It's a great time for fancy themed receptions requiring fancy dress and formal tuxedos. The wedding can be held outdoors with the greatest ease and you will have a wide range of colors to choose for the wedding because most every flower is in bloom.

Summer weddings are also very popular because beach and water themed weddings are fast becoming increasingly trendy. Tropical or country themed weddings are perfect for summer and with all of nature sprouting in its glory it's a fine time for a wedding.

Fall weddings are also popular because of the sheer beauty of the colors of nature. The changing leaves and cool weather are ideal for either an indoor or outdoor wedding. An outdoor ceremony followed by an indoor reception is a good choice because the weather can become quite cool towards the latter part of the evening. Fall weddings provide an excellent backdrop for really beautiful photographs.

People do marry in winter especially if they are planning a skiing honeymoon. The holiday season is an added advantage for a winter wedding. People are free to attend the wedding even if it means some travel involved. A wedding in winter means dealing with snow and wet weather and the flowers you want will in all probability not be in bloom. An outdoor ceremony is out because of the wind chill factor and the snow.

Choosing the season to marry in is entirely up to the bride and groom-to-be and they are sure to have their own reasons why they make a particular choice.

Tips for a Backyard Wedding Celebration

With the way things are going with the economy at present, couples are doing the wise thing and cutting down on wedding expenses. With property prices down this is the best time to invest in a house. Therefore, rather than spending a fortune on a wedding which lasts but a few hours, couples are choosing to invest in a property that will last a lifetime.

There are many ways in which wedding costs can be kept down and having a backyard wedding is one such method. Small, intimate weddings with close family and friends in attendance will work well for couples on a tight budget. It really does not matter why, what matters is that you can have just as fantastic a wedding in your own backyard as you would in a grand hotel. Use the following tips to have the backyard wedding of your dreams.

Be mindful of the size limitations of a backyard when doing up your guest list. The yard by itself may look big enough but when you factor in chairs, tables, dance floor, band space and buffet arrangement and liquor bar you are not going to be left with much room. You need to do some careful planning on the number of guests you can fit into the yard together with all the wedding paraphernalia. You don't want to have to deal with uncomfortable guests all evening.

Make sure that the season in which you plan to get married is a good weather one or else your wedding reception will be a total bust. A backup plan is a must for outdoor weddings of any type whether backyard, hotel lawns or beach side.

You could arrange for weatherproof tents to be set up as a precaution to avoid disaster.

Don't make the mistake of borrowing chairs and tables from your family and friends; you will end up with a hodge podge of very unsightly looking furniture. It is best to spend some money and rent uniform tables and chairs and the supplier can guide you on the sizes required for your backyard. There are some areas of the wedding planning that simply cannot be skimmed on.

When planning a not too large guest list for a backyard wedding you have the option to do the catering at home. Your kitchen is nearby and it will not be very difficult to cook and serve a simple menu for your guests. You can set up a barbeque area and the buffet table with salads and main courses. Let people walk around and help themselves, this will allow your guests to mingle and lend a cheerful air to the festivities.

Backyard weddings are perfect for people who really need to save their money.

Wedding Candle Centerpieces

A wedding candle centerpiece is a simple, and inexpensive, way to enhance your wedding setting and decorations. Creating your own candle centerpieces for your wedding will

enable you to add your own personal touches to your wedding decorations.

Not only can these centerpieces enhance the beauty of your wedding theme, but they can also be exquisite take home keepsakes for your guests. The types of wedding candle centerpieces you choose, or design and create on your own, are limitless.

A simple flower arrangement on your wedding tables can enliven any scene, but a candle centerpiece adds that special glow. Although you can purchase a centerpiece designing your own candle centerpiece is fun and doesn't have to cost much either. These decorations can be made from numerous types of materials and can showcase the colors in your wedding theme.

A centerpiece should be noticeable, but not so large as to take up space on the tables or be a hindrance to conversations. The best wedding candle centerpiece will be small in size, but exquisitely designed. White, or colored, ribbons can be tied around the candle to add the special little touch.

The candle can be based in a small glass bowl full of colored rocks, sand, or flowers; floating candles can be placed in a dish of clear, or colored, water.

The candle can be scented, or you can use a simple beeswax, or white votive, candle. A wreath of flowers wrapped around

the base of the candle adds color and beauty to the centerpiece.

If you need more inspiration to help with creating that special wedding candle centerpiece there are numerous resources available. The Internet is one of the best resources that you can use to check out different types of wedding candle centerpieces that can be made. Other ideas can be seen in wedding magazines and books. Ask friends, and family, for their creative input.

With so many different types of wedding stores, products and services available it can sometimes be difficult to feel like you have contributed your own personal touches to your wedding. Creating your own wedding candle centerpiece is the perfect way to be intimately involved in the decorations for your wedding. These centerpieces can help to add a beautiful glow to the wedding atmosphere. They can dazzle and shimmer, or they can be simple little pieces of beauty. Whichever design you choose, a wedding candle centerpiece will be a charming addition to your wedding atmosphere.

Tips to Choose the Right Catering Service

No one wants a wedding that flops! Brides and grooms look forward to a day filled with happiness in which the perfect wedding takes place. One of the main areas in a wedding that is subject to disaster is the food. If you do not take sufficient pains to find the right caterer your wedding

could well go down the tubes.

Once you decide on a catered wedding you have to be prepared to expend lots of time and money in getting the best catering service available. You want exceptional not average, so look long and hard before making a decision. Never rush the caterer selection process, you need a reliable catering service that has a good record of competency and is well established.

You will find the following tips useful when looking for that top notch catering service to cater for your wedding reception.

You will begin your search for "THE" catering service in the area where you live. Finding someone local is best because they come recommended and you can talk to some of their clients as well. You can consider recommendations by family and friends and also consider franchised caterers, newspaper classifieds, internet search, event managers, wedding planners and clubs or restaurants. If you are planning to go for broke on the food you may want to consider celebrity chefs or cordon bleu chefs.

Lots of catering services in the market but the celebrity chefs give exceptional value for the money you pay. Keep in mind that every chef has his or her own unique style and you need to be clear about what you want from the person who caters your wedding reception. Start contacting people and getting estimates and information, this stage is your fact finding stage and once all the information is in you

can proceed to make a short list.

Pay each caterer a visit with either your partner or friends who know their cooking. Request a lunch meeting or a dinner meeting, you will get to sample the goods and the quality of the service. Ask as many questions as you can which can include: previous work done, client references, willingness to make modifications and the discount you can count on. Check out temperature of food served, presentation, flavors, tastes, smells and freshness. Ask to do a wine tasting and if you don't know much about wines take someone along who does.

Finally, make sure to get a written contract that is all inclusive, but don't be in a hurry to sign. Take it away to study in detail and get other opinions as well. You will not regret your efforts and time spent finding the best caterer for your reception.

Unusual Wedding Non-Traditions

While wedding ceremony traditions have dictated how weddings should be conducted through the ages, times are changing. Couples no longer want to go with stereotyped weddings and prefer the non-traditional to the traditional. There are many areas in which the non-traditional and the unusual can feature in a wedding ceremony from the cake to the reception location and everything in between.

In today's world most couples plan and pay for their wedding out of their own pockets, so expensive weddings are too much of a strain for the couple. Some non-traditional ideas for a wedding ceremony include:

A destination wedding that can be combined with the honeymoon and has the advantage of limiting the guests to near family members only. A small ceremony will suffice as not all the invited guests will fly to Honolulu or Thailand to watch you get married.

A beach wedding is a great money saver. It can be low key with a picnic reception and swimming thrown in to add to the excitement. You will have a day filled with memories and lots of beautiful pictures.

The traditional tiered wedding cake is also an expensive deal so you can compromise by having only one tier of actual cake and the rest made from Styrofoam. Most couples are choosing to go this route to save their money. You get the traditional cake cutting bit and make a saving as well. There are couples who go to absolute extremes by not having the traditional cake at all. The tiered cake is replaced by cupcakes or fruit muffins or even pie, it really is the couple's choice and if they want to be different, so be it.

Whatever is meaningful to the couple and reflective of their personalities and values should do just as well as traditional practices. Create your own traditions at your wedding - it is your day. You will never be able to please everyone so don't even try. You can get as creative as you

want when planning your wedding bearing in mind that it is not the cake or the gown or even the reception that is important. You are at the start of something new and beautiful and you should not lose sight of it all through the planning. Weddings last a few hours and are then all over, but the marriage has to last a lifetime.

One important thing to remember when planning your wedding - it's your day and what you want wins out over what guests want or think!

Wedding Cost Savers - Stretching the Dollar

Weddings are special and everyone likes to think that their wedding will be the fairytale wedding of the century! However, the cost of getting married is not to be ignored and one has to have a healthy dose of reality to deal with it. Sometimes couples get help from their parents and sometimes they are on their own. Depending on how much you have you will need to temper dreams with reality.

However, its not all doom and gloom and you don't have to give up on your dreams of a memorable wedding. You will find the following practical tips handy in stretching your budget.

* The first thing to avoid is buying up every book and magazine on weddings and bridal gowns. Try your local

library first, they are sure to have a wide selection of books that you can either checkout or skim through. The same holds good for the magazines and when you find gowns that catch your fancy, simply have a copy made right there in the library.

* The internet is a very valuable source of information, ideas, tips and advice. Make use of it to do your research for the planning of your wedding. You will find complete checklists of things that need doing in preparation for a wedding and so much more.

* There's no denying that flowers are an integral part of any wedding and all of us would love to have them in abundance. They are captivating and make the wedding décor complete, but they are prohibitively expensive. Talk to your florist, show samples of your color scheme and find out which flowers will be in season to match your colors. Florists can give you good advice on the flowers that photograph well and match your overall color scheme.

* You can choose decorative candles set in simple green wreaths as the centerpiece for your tables. In this way you can save quite a bit on flowers because it all adds up. Small bowls with decorative colored stones, some water and a tea light will also make a very nice table decoration.

* Should you choose to go with a wedding planner then you can save by limiting the scope of their involvement. There are many little tasks that family and friends can handle so before you talk to a wedding planner talk to your family

first. Decide firmly on who will take care of what and make a list.

* Wedding cake can also be expensive if you want to have many tiers of real cake. Choose instead one layer of cake for cutting and serving and the rest can be made of Styrofoam.

Using any or all of these tips is sure to help you stretch that wedding budget and still have the time of your life!

Wedding Day Tips for the Bride-to-be

A bride's wedding day is one of the greatest events in her life and needs to be perfect on all counts. Quite often brides are so caught up in the planning and coordinating of the wedding itself they forget to take care of themselves on this special day. You will find a few practical tips that can help you to enjoy your wedding day to the fullest extent.

A bride who can relax and enjoy her wedding day is a lucky bride indeed! There comes a point when you have to realize you have given your all to the planning and coordination of the biggest event in your life and it is now time to sit back and let the professionals take over and do their jobs.

Your sole aim should be to stay relaxed and pamper yourself

a little bit. Getting a good massage is an excellent way to loosen up and a great stress buster. Here are some things you can do to help you enjoy your wedding day.

A few weeks prior to the wedding you need to do a trial run of your makeup, you may be expert enough to handle it alone or may require a friend's help. Either way set up your wedding makeup bag and put on the makeup to see how it looks on you. Make all the adjustments you need to fine tune your makeup to the perfect level. Subtle, understated elegance goes down well for a bride rather than too much makeup, which only serves to make you look trashy.

Try out different hairstyles to see which one suits you best; you can also seek your hairdresser's advice on which hairstyle will be good for your wedding. Alternatively, you can splurge a little and hire a professional hair and makeup stylist to do the job.

Wear your wedding shoes for a little while each day to break them in. Wearing a brand new pair of shoes and being on your feet for several hours are not a good combination. To avoid painful feet break in the new shoes well before your wedding day.

If you have a favorite store where you always shop for your makeup you can get the sales girl to give you samples of the makeup you want. These small items will fit nicely into a little bag and will be quite handy for touching up your makeup.

There will be a fair amount of tears shed; they usually are at weddings so use waterproof mascara!

Wedding Gift Ideas - Thinking Outside the Box

A wedding is a grand occasion and for the happy couple a time filled with great excitement and drama not to mention stress and empty bank accounts. All part of the fun we believe but the couple could do with a bit of help and that's where family and friends need to rally round.

It was long believed that giving soon-to-be married couples money was not the done thing. Well times have changed and you can give money if you want to; one thing is for sure, it will be greatly appreciated. Consider that the couple has to pay for the wedding themselves, then there's the expense of buying or renting a home and getting it set up. You can always give the gift in a very diplomatic manner - attach the check to a small gift like a lovely picture frame or candlesticks and give it to them. You can also attach a note letting them know it is towards the honeymoon or to have a slap-up meal on your account.

Couples hesitate to put expensive items on the registry and you could get them something they have not listed. Of course, it depends on how much you want to spend and you will need to know what those items are. You could try talking to the bride's mother to get the inside scoop. If the gift

is very expensive you may want to organize your friends into contributing as well. It really makes more sense when you stop to think about it.

If you have the money to give a valuable gift you could choose a lovely piece of art or a vase or something decorative for the couple's new home. Antique furniture or lace are also good choices. Some people give a really expensive wine to be opened on a special anniversary. The options are limitless and the choice is yours based on the budget you have.

You could give the couple a night's stay at a luxury hotel but you will need to make sure they aren't already booked to fly out the night of the wedding. If they are not, you could pay for their stay in a classy hotel for their first night as a married couple. Bet they would simply love that!

Upgrading their airline tickets to first class is another great idea. These are things a newly married couple certainly cannot afford and would really welcome with gladness.

Wedding Programs - Setting the Tone of a Wedding

Wedding programs may not be adopted by every wedding couple but for those who wish to do so, the ideas in this article will serve as an excellent guide. A wedding program adds

a little something extra to the big event and is a record of the ceremony. Guests feel included when they have a program and can better understand the planned ceremony. Of course a wedding program makes a great keepsake for the bridal couple.

You can make of your wedding program anything you desire, make it a formal statement of the evening ahead or add elements that are light hearted in nature. Add a picture or two and get as creative as you possibly can. When your guests take their program home as a keepsake it means you have achieved what you set out to do - create something memorable.

If you don't want your guests to discard their programs soon after the wedding you need to add an element of the unexpected that will make them want to keep a souvenir of the wedding. A sample program would ideally include a picture of the bride and groom with the wedding date, names of the bridal couple's parents and the wedding party members, ceremony of events including the hymns, prayers and church proceedings, reception information and a beautiful closing in the form of a love quote or something more unique.

You can create the cover of your program to have the names and date, a picture of the two of you and maybe a scroll design. Give details of the ceremony beginning with the processional music, greeting, readings, hymns, prayers, vows and so on until the recessional music is played as the couple leave the church. Keep to the order in which the ceremony will proceed to include your guests from other

faiths.

Information about the bridal party will include the names of the parents of the bride and groom, officiant, grandparents, maid of honor, best man, bridesmaids, groomsmen, readers and soloist if you plan to have a special wedding song.

Don't forget to put in the directions to your reception. The program can include one liners about the bridal party - keep it humorous; special thank you messages and a general thank you message to the guests for making a memorable event more special by their attendance.

Wedding programs that incorporate funny pictures of the couple and personally written wedding vows make for a great keepsake.

Wedding Reception Ideas that Work for You

Planning a wedding is fraught with endless decisions, who to invite, where to hold the reception, should the ceremony be in a church, what about the invitations, wedding color scheme, flowers and on and on. Take a deep breath and first decide how much money you have to spend as a couple on the wedding.

Gone are the days of spending enormous amounts of money fit to break the bank on a wedding ceremony and reception. Couples are wising up to the fact that the money they save on the wedding can be put to good use by buying a property or having the honeymoon of a lifetime. So long as you can get creative when planning your wedding you can have a fabulous time and still have money to spare.

One of the most economical of all reception venues is the church hall but you will have to check about serving alcohol. Finding a church that will allow you to serve liquor is highly unlikely so check it out. If you have the wedding ceremony in the church it will be very convenient for people to just move to the reception site without any problem. Cuts off the expense of transporting people from the church to the reception hall altogether. Church halls are pretty flexible about reception themes and you can choose anything from Spanish fiestas to Arabian nights as your theme.

Water theme parks are a novel idea and your guests are sure to have loads of fun. A small guest list and lots of children will definitely benefit from this theme. You can have a lovely outdoor wedding party that can last all day if you want. When the reception is a small one you can arrange to transport your guests to the water park and also get concession on a group booking. Make sure you can arrange for your own food and drink to be served inside the park.

Outdoor receptions are great if you plan to marry in the good weather season. Plenty of parks and nature reserves abound for you to choose from. You can also have the

reception in your backyard provided it's a small one. This is a great way to save money. You can either get the park venue free of cost or for a very nominal fee. You will have water laid on and nice sheltered spots to set up in. Choose a cowboy theme or a tropical one, make your own music and serve your own food. Everyone of your guests is bound to have a wonderful time.

Wedding Reception Mistakes that are Common

No wedding is without its fair share of mistakes and hotspots and the bride and groom are invariably on tenterhooks until the whole thing is over. Weddings are meant to be enjoyed to the full and not fraught with difficulty. If the bride's hopes for a beautiful dream wedding are not to be shattered, you need to pay heed to the common mistakes detailed below.

The main mistake and unfortunately an all too common one is the bride and groom leave the wedding reception early. In fact in some Asian customs the bride and groom do not leave the reception hall until the last guest has left. When you leave the reception early it is an insult to your guests. There will be time enough to begin married life with your partner and you will have the rest of your lives together. Spend the few hours of the reception with your guests, move around the hall thanking them personally for coming and let them know how much you appreciate the effort.

Arriving late to the reception is another big 'NO' in the wedding etiquette book. Have a structured reception timeline and stick to it. Soon after the wedding ceremony guests start heading to the reception venue while the bride, groom and members of the bridal party go off to take photographs. This picture taking session can easily last for over an hour so make sure your guests are well taken care of in the interim period. You could consider arranging for music to be played and cocktails to be served. You could also do most of the picture taking before the wedding ceremony to cut down on time away from the reception. Bride and groom should not meet before the wedding according to tradition, so have the individual family pictures taken.

Seating is important and it is best to observe the rules when drawing up your seating plan. Keep squabbling relatives apart and the older people away from the music. Don't seat anyone but the bridal party at the head table to avoid controversy.

Choose a selection of music that is eclectic enough to cater to diverse tastes so people don't get bored listening to one type of music all evening long. If you have friends or family who sing well, get them to do some numbers and try to get people involved in putting on a little entertainment.

Try to get the cake cutting and speeches over with as quickly as possible because it is traditional for the bride and groom to start the food line. Your guests will be hungry because no one eats a big meal before attending a wedding reception dinner.

Finally, do not get drunk - it's your wedding and you are the hosts of the party!

Wedding Receptions: The Importance of a Good Checklist

Planning a wedding reception means remembering a million and one things that need doing on or before the fateful day. Plans have to be made and set in motion long before the wedding day for things to go off without a hitch. Checklists are the backbone of wedding reception planning and if you have a detailed checklist to hand you can't go far wrong.

Once you finalize your plans for the wedding ceremony you need to focus your attention on the wedding reception. It is better to keep two separate checklists, one for each part of the event. The guidelines that follow should help you get started making your personal wedding reception checklist.

Heading the list is the wedding date, time and venue. You need to first fix the date taking into consideration the season in which you plan to marry. Then you need to consider the time, will it be a morning wedding because you are scheduled to fly out that same night on your honeymoon or will it be an evening wedding with a night planned in a luxury hotel.

If you are having a church wedding you need to figure on at least an hour for the service, so you can fix the time accordingly at which your guests will arrive at the reception hall. Will you serve cocktails to get the party started while you finish off the photo session and then come to the hall? Will you take the pictures before the wedding ceremony starts and forget about superstition and the groom not seeing the bride before the wedding?

What sort of venue are you looking for? This ties in with the season in which you plan to marry. If its spring or summer you could choose an outdoor wedding reception? If its the fall season, you could choose an outdoor ceremony and indoor reception. You need to book the venue at least 8 months in advance to be sure of finding the best venue to match your reception theme.

Make a note of decorations and flowers for the church, entrance, hall, stage, cake table, guest book table, gifts table and dinner tables. For the buffet table as well if you plan to serve a buffet. Outdoor receptions will require you to add the arch and aisle to the list.

You then have transportation, seating arrangements, cake, band, DJ, music selection, toast, speeches, dinner and thank you cards and gifts to deal with. You have to choose the vendors for the various supplies from flowers to photographs, food, drinks, transport and more.

Wedding Speeches: Tips to Stop Your Knees from Knocking!

Public speaking ranks very high on the list of fears a person faces in life! The knees start knocking and the hands begin to shake like someone with palsy; the sweat pops out on your brow and you start to stammer. If you can relate to this description then you have a serious problem that needs to be overcome before your wedding day dawns.

Reading this article will help you to put to good use some practical tips for making your wedding speech flow off your tongue with very little effort. You may still experience the 'butterflies in the stomach' feeling but it will soon pass. Turn your wedding speech into a humorous attention grabber and put to rest the dread you feel.

When writing out your speech don't try to do it all in one go, some people can write with little effort as the words just flow out of them and some people can't write that well. Take time to prepare your speech, make changes and get your partner to support your efforts.

A good speech should have a beginning, middle and end. You can begin by introducing yourself in a slightly humorous way to get people's attention. The beginning is very important because your guests are actually listening to you, wondering what you are going to say. The beginning of the speech should be punchy enough to grab and hold people's attention and they should want to know what's coming next.

The middle of your speech could be something about the two of you as a couple, a humorous event from your relationship or how you met. A clear, concise story that lasts no more than 3 minutes at best; do not under any circumstances begin a long convoluted tale that will have everyone heading for the bar as soon as you begin.

In the closing of your speech you can wind up by thanking the people who helped make this special day possible. You then end by thanking your guests for giving up their valuable time to come and be a part of this joyful day. Don't forget to thank them on behalf of your bride and yourself. Read a short love poem dedicating your love to your beloved wife - that should make it different.

Stand up straight whether on stage or at your table and start off by looking around at the guests assembled around you. This will get people to stop talking and pay attention to you. If you suddenly feel your knees begin to knock lean on the table but don't give in to the feeling.

Remember you are talking to your family and friends!

A History of Wedding Traditions and Symbolisms

There is no documented evidence to tell us when the first wedding took place. In fact in earliest times when people lived in tribes, taking a bride for oneself was not all that

difficult. A common joke on the subject is the depiction of a caveman in the Stone age movies bashing the woman on the head and dragging her off to be his wife!

Weddings today are a far cry from what was once the fashion! It is quite interesting to read about wedding traditions and where they originated from. In early times the woman was kidnapped by the prospective groom and some of his friends. Today we have the groom and his best men, but thankfully they don't do any kidnapping! After kidnapping the woman, the couple disappeared for a long time, quite possibly, to avoid the repercussions of such an act. Soon this disappearance came to be known as the honeymoon period.

While it is hard to delve really deep in wedding history that goes far back in time, what is known is that as society evolved, people and their thinking began to change. Tribes began to trade and also to live in harmony. In fact, little is known about weddings and their history except that it is believed that the Egyptians first recognized the idea of marriage. The engagement or betrothal was also invented by the Egyptians as a way for the couple to get to know each other.

An old favorite tradition is something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue. The meaning of this Victorian rhyme has some significance to it that has been preserved through time as a wedding tradition. The old refers to the bride's ties to family and her old life. The new of course is symbolic of the couple's new life as one, their hopes and dreams of a life of happiness and prosperity. When the bride to be borrows something from a

happily married woman the symbolic meaning is that similar happiness will come to the bride. The blue refers to fidelity in the marriage and faithfulness to the vows the couple makes.

Rice is considered to be a life giving seed, throwing it on the couple symbolizes the bestowing of fertility and the resultant children. There are many churches who have politely but firmly refused to allow the throwing of rice. People now throw flower petals or confetti to uphold the ancient tradition.

The white bridal gown dates back to Victorian times when Queen Victoria decided to throw tradition to the wind and wear a white gown. Prior to that there really was no wedding gown per se; brides simply wore their best gown. The color white is attributed to purity and virginity, so many women the world over still wear white bridal gowns, though the gowns themselves have grown more daring with each passing generation!

The kiss that traditionally ends the wedding ceremony is believed to symbolize the ancient Roman sentiment that a kiss sealed the couple's union and agreement to a lifelong commitment. It is representative of the couple joining their souls.

There are two possible meanings to the tradition of placing the wedding ring on the third finger or ring finger of the left hand. According to the Egyptians who seem well up in all marital matters, the vein of love runs directly from

this finger to the heart, ergo it is placed there to embody eternal, undying love.

A less romantic notion is that in the 17th century, the groom would slide the ring up the thumb, index and middle finger of the bride while the priest intoned a prayer that began with 'in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. Three for three and if you follow the design of the hand, logically the third finger comes after the middle finger, so the ring finally came to rest on it.

Let us close with something humorous. In the old days women walked down the aisle carrying bouquets of herbs and garlic not for their beauty surely, but to ward of the evil spirits. Time changed this tradition and today women carry a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

Many wedding traditions have stood the test of time but due to our progress march, have evolved to match modern standards.

Weddings: The Importance of Saying 'Thank You'

Saying thank you to your guests, family and friends is very important and one of the key aspects of proper wedding etiquette. You will have to tackle this huge task manfully and get it over with at the very earliest. The longer you put things off the harder it will become to find the time.

Here are some simple steps you can adopt to make the process as pain free as possible. You need to enjoy every aspect of your wedding and saying thank you is a part of the wedding package.

True, weddings are a time of heightened excitement and a feeling of not knowing whether you are coming or going! However, saying thank you to the many people who are there to lend a hand in your time of need is absolutely necessary. It's easy to miss out the people who work quietly behind the scenes without much fanfare. Your thank you's have to be personalized to be meaningful.

It is most advisable to keep a small notepad or book with you at all times and keep jotting down names of people who are helping you with your wedding preparations. If you just scribble Aunt Sylvia - helped with flowers, when you see your note it will recall to mind the arduous task your poor aunt had to track down a florist who stocked those hard to find flowers you wanted.

Thanks you's are not only for the people who send you gifts for the wedding. The fact that you and the groom make it to the alter on time for the event of a lifetime is really thanks to the painstaking and concerted efforts of a lot of people who make it possible for dreams to become reality. Saying thank you with a card and small token of appreciation is a great way to do the right thing.

You don't have to wait till after the wedding to say thank you - do it as each job gets completed. Another method you

can adopt to remember everyone is a gift chest. You can fill the box or suitcase or bag, whatever, with thank you items and have the cards printed up well in advance. Taking the time to personally thank people is very good and will be appreciated by the people you thank. Your gifts can be chocolates, candles, small knick knacks that are unusual, wine, cookies, assorted teas and personalized frames, wine glasses or shot glasses. The list is endless and depends on your budget - remember it's the thought and effort that count.

What Food to Choose for Your Wedding Reception

All the glitz and glamour of a fabulous wedding and the best planning in the world for your wedding reception will not excuse bad food. People hold fast to tradition to serve certain items, but if the truth be told there really are no hard and fast rules for wedding food.

Here are some hints about what food to choose for your wedding reception. It is helpful to know the kinds of foods you can serve for formal, semi formal and casual wedding receptions. It is also useful to have ideas on what to serve for wedding reception breakfasts, lunches and dinners.

A wedding is supposed to be a time of great enjoyment and celebration. Find yourself a qualified and reputed wedding caterer to suggest menu ideas. Make sure you sample their offerings to find out how good they really are. You can also

check references to see whether the catering company is all it claims to be.

Formal, sit down dinners in the best wedding tradition are one of the biggest expense items on your wedding list. You need furniture, table settings, table centerpieces and decoration, a minimum of 3 courses comprising soup, entrée and main course, coffee and wedding cake not to mention drinks including dinner wines. Then you have the wait staff to add to your bill. Quite an expense!

You can also treat your guests to a splendid buffet dinner beginning with cocktails and moving on to the dinner itself. You can have dancing afterward, followed by the cake cutting ceremony, tossing the bouquet and any other traditions you wish to include. An excellent way to draw out the entire evening; you can fill it to overflowing with celebration and good cheer.

Have you heard of the fork buffet? It falls somewhere between the formal dinner service and finger buffet. On offer will be a spread of hot (chicken wings, cutlets, rolls, etc.) and cold food items (prawns, lobster meat, crab meat salad, chicken salad, etc.) laid out buffet style for your guests to help themselves. Then the guests sit at formal tables to eat dinner. You still get to have the formal table settings and seating plan combined with a more relaxed eating style.

How about having the caterer set up a variety of food stalls as some of the big hotels do? It is very exciting for the

guests to move around informally checking out what's on offer at each food station. This will help solve the problem of what to feed your guests who will have individual preferences for sure. Asian and Far Eastern foods generally go down well and you can add a pasta station to the mix for added variety.

Finger buffets are a very relaxed, informal reception style where all types of finger foods are served. Guests simply tuck in and there are no formal tables and confusion over which fork to use. Canapés, pastries, rolls, dips, small sandwiches, open face sandwiches, cheeses and more can be set out for guests to indulge themselves. This type of reception cannot be dragged out over an entire evening simply because your guests cannot stand for so long. It may be a better idea to provide tables with less formal settings for people to sit and eat in comfort.

This type of food style is also referred to as a cocktail reception. If you don't plan on having a very long reception, cut out the tables and let people move around freely. Bear in mind that people really load up on drinks at this type of reception. What you save on food could very well be spent on drinks!

Wedding reception food runs the gamut from picnics to barbeques, breakfast, brunch and afternoon tea. If you have a themed wedding the kind of meal you serve will need to be blended into the mix. Make sure to cater to children and elderly people and request guests to inform you in advance about any special diets or allergies.

While people loudly declare that they come to wedding receptions to help the bride and groom celebrate a major event in their lives, the kind of food served at the reception is still very important.

Focus on making sure your guests have a great time and you will have no problems with the food!

What Kind of Reception will You Have?

Getting married is a huge event that requires enormous preparation, planning and coordination. Wedding planning can be fun if you plan well and try not to be too hands-on in every detail big and small. A major part of the wedding planning relates to the wedding reception. The ceremony is a solemn affair, but the reception that follows can be a really enjoyable time if you know what kind of reception you want to have. Here are some tips for wedding reception ideas and how to plan the perfect reception.

The kind of wedding reception you will have depends on what you have long dreamed your wedding day should be like. Weddings have spawned a huge industry that offers a very wide array of choices in everything related to weddings. Your most important consideration has to be the budget you need to work with.

Once you know how much you realistically have to spend, you will have to do an itemized costing to know what everything will cost. Wedding reception venues are many and the whims and fancies of most every bride to be can be catered to. There are many traditions that are part of a wedding reception. Here again, you need to decide what you want to have happening at your wedding.

Let us look at a few options to get an idea of how you need to plan the reception.

Wedding receptions traditionally have a receiving party at the entrance to receive guests. Before that guests will begin to arrive at the reception hall while the bridal party is doing the photo shoot. There has to be a receiving line to greet guests and make sure you have some sort of entertainment planned to keep your guests happy.

When you arrive at the reception venue there's the traditional cake cutting, first dance, toasts, dinner and dancing to be enjoyed. Try to space things out and give your guests a chance to have a drink and some food. They will feel a lot happier if you do!

There are many exciting wedding traditions that you can borrow from other countries to add excitement to your reception. You don't have to follow standard tradition all the way; get creative and either borrow or invent your own wedding traditions.

Starting with a morning wedding, you have to decide whether to have a breakfast reception or a brunch. Are you planning on a sunrise wedding with only family and dear friends present? People who show up are going to want breakfast. Traditional menus generally include standard fare like eggs benedict, omelets, French toast and quiche. Luxury menus for a brunch include smoked salmon, caviar, carving stations for ham, beef and turkey. Lots of coffee and of course Bloody Mary's and more to liven the atmosphere.

On the positive side a brunch reception is a whole lot cheaper than a full sit down dinner. An early wedding lets you get off to a good start on your honeymoon. People don't generally drink you out of house and home so early in the morning. On the downside, you need to consider how early people have to leave their homes to get to the wedding. The bridal party will not have much time to get ready so early in the morning and the bride - unless a super fast dresser - is going to face problems.

Most morning weddings generally start at around 10.30 or 11 am. This gives everyone more time to get ready and the guests can make it to the ceremony in good time. A lunch reception is a good idea and you can have some of the dinner favorites served to your guests. Lunches help free up the evening for you to either leave on your honeymoon or rest up and get an early start the next day.

A wedding reception is what you make it out to be. Arrange dancing, lively music and a free flowing wet bar with a cheerful bartender to make your guests happy. People are relaxed and can enjoy the festivities, but you need to pick

a date when people can attend a daytime wedding.

Other reception ideas are afternoon tea, cocktail receptions and of course dinner receptions. Choose what your budget permits and make sure that you and your guests have a blast.

What Venue to Choose for Your Wedding Reception

Weddings have come a long way and receptions can be anything you want them to be. From fairy tale castles to ocean cruises, the sky's the limit on what you can choose as the venue for your wedding reception. Here are some ideas for exciting wedding reception venue options.

There is no limit to the grand scale on which you can host your wedding reception, but remember that weddings are a very expensive proposition without the addition of expensive fantasies. Let us take a look at a selection of wedding reception venues that cover a broad spectrum of offerings.

First of all if you have a limited budget you don't want to waste anything on a professional wedding planner. This means you have to get as creative as you can to find the wedding venue you want within the budget you have. Here are a few tips to save money when planning your wedding reception and they don't include skimping on the quality.

Hotels are a popular choice because of the advantages they come with. The bridal party and guests can stay overnight, food is served in-house and so is the alcohol, which means you don't need to bother getting the license and bringing your own booze. You can get good discounts and may even get the bridal suite free for an overnight stay if you book a hall for the reception with the hotel.

In a hotel you are not confined to a ballroom or reception hall; hotels have lawns and gazebos that make great wedding backdrops. Hotels also have the staff necessary to set up the tables and provide excellent table décor. Many of the other items like the cake stand, buffet set-up, bar area, band area and dance floor can be provided by the hotel. Many hotels will offer you their own wedding packages that can be customized to meet your needs. These packages will include limo service, champagne breakfast for the newly married couple and more.

If the hotel idea is all too common, you can always choose a different setting that will allow you to arrange the food and drinks. How about a fort, a historical inn or some other historical structure you can rent.

Public parks and botanical gardens do allow wedding receptions to take place for a nominal fee, provided of course that you do a great clean up job afterwards. You may need to enquire about their rules concerning the serving of alcohol in a public place.

Beaches, piers, harbors, riverbanks and lakes have become very popular for wedding receptions. The natural beauty of these spots makes them a highly attractive choice for the beautiful backdrops they provide. Harbor side weddings with boats in the background look lovely. Of course you have to consider where exactly you will serve the food and drinks in such a public place.

Museums and art galleries offer their places for a fee and they certainly make very elegant wedding reception settings. If you have the budget you can opt for a cruise reception. You will have to marry in port according to the law and then sail off to hold the reception at sea. Tropical islands and other destination weddings are great fun but not everyone can afford to attend and the overall cost can be quite high.

There are many places to choose from to have a wedding reception that is elegant, fun filled and sensational. Make sure to keep the following tips in mind when choosing.

First you have to get your guest list squared away. Only then will you know the size of the venue you are going to need. When you do be an early bird and get your booking in as fast as possible. Popular sites may need a year's notice and you will have to pay a sizeable deposit so don't go changing your mind about the venue or the marriage!

Choosing a Friday or Sunday wedding is more cost effective

and you are sure to find the venue of your choice available. In case you are wondering, most people like Saturday weddings better.

The venue you choose should be easy to find with ample parking space for your guests. If the weather is fine you can do an outdoor affair, but if it is chilly or windy your guests are not going to be too comfortable.

Weddings: Where to Hold the Ceremony

Every bride to be has, hidden somewhere in the deep recesses of the mind, a wedding fantasy that includes where the wedding ceremony will take place. Maybe you want a spring wedding with all the beauty and color of fresh flowers, summer warmth and outdoor festivities, the awesome beauty of fall colors or the winter wonderland wedding full of glitter and sparkle.

Fix your guest list before you do anything else. This is the rock on which you will build your wedding plans. Once you have your guest list you can make informed decisions about a lot of things. If all of your guests or at least 85-90 percent of them are from the same town as you, consider having the wedding in the off season to get better rates.

Choosing the wedding venue is a huge decision and one that is governed by many factors. After the guest list is

finalized, the next most important aspect to be decided upon is the venue. The type of venue you choose will depend on the sort of wedding you have always dreamed of having. For example, if you have always dreamed of a fairy tale wedding with a castle in the background and knight in shining armor carrying you off on his steed; well obviously you need to book a castle!

Another important factor for consideration is how religious are your beliefs. If both you and your partner are religious, a church wedding ceremony is the best way forward. Christians typically have wedding ceremonies performed in churches; Jewish tradition dictates the ceremony takes place in a temple or synagogue.

Every religion has its own beliefs and traditions that will need to be upheld. Then again, inter-racial marriages where two different faiths are involved will require a different type of planning. Many factors like religion, race and social standing can affect the wedding ceremony location. Most white weddings as they are referred to in the western world are generally performed in a church of the couple's choice and officiated by a religious minister.

For the people who are not too particular about having a church wedding, the ceremony can be held anywhere you please. All you need is an official who is authorized to perform the ceremony. You may find these ideas useful when deciding where to hold the ceremony.

A Civil ceremony is performed by the Justice of the Peace

or a judge, or in some cases the mayor. These people are authorized to perform a civil ceremony anywhere outside the church. The ceremony is very brief and does not involve any reference to God. It is a purely legal ceremony and can be held in City Hall or a courtroom.

If you want to have a civil ceremony, you can always have the ceremony in your own garden. In this way you can have lovely decorations, serve food and drinks and have an intimate wedding reception after the ceremony.

How about a cruise wedding, the official will first perform the wedding ceremony, which unfortunately cannot be performed while sailing. It has to be done in port on American soil so to speak. You can set sail once the official ceremony is over, to enjoy a wonderful cruise reception.

So you cannot afford to have a cruise wedding ceremony and reception, you can still have the ceremony on a dock, harbor, riverside, lake or beach if a water based theme is what you want. You can have the ceremony in a public park or botanical garden; you can choose a roof deck or a beautifully landscaped private garden.

Is your idea of the perfect wedding ceremony something rare? Why not have the ceremony against the backdrop of a natural wonder. Check out the geography of the place you plan to have the wedding. Find out if there are any mountains, cliffs, waterfalls, gorges or other natural wonders that will make a sensational backdrop to the entire ceremonial proceedings.

Ultimately, where you decide to have your wedding ceremony will depend on your religious beliefs and the budget you have. There is no shortage of ideas on where the ceremony can be held from castle to courtroom; you just need to be able to afford it.

Will Your Wedding be Formal or Casual?

When planning a wedding, the first thing to do is get a hold of your emotions and not go overboard. It is very easy to get carried away because the wedding day is what most brides to be dream of. However, a healthy dose of reality will stand you in good stead to keep a check on the spending.

Weddings involve stupendous amounts of planning, organization and coordination. Are you looking for something with all the bells and whistles or a laid back, understated style wedding? You can read all about choosing formal or casual wedding ceremonies and receptions from attire to décor and beyond right here in this highly informative article.

We will begin with the formal wedding requirements. The concept of a formal wedding is based on the fact that a wedding is actually a very solemn occasion. It is the coming together of two separate individuals to become one. It is a union before God and man that is sanctified and blessed, vows are spoken and a commitment made for a lifetime. In

light of the solemnity of the occasion, tradition and elegance become the cornerstones of the entire affair.

On the other hand the casual wedding has an understated elegance and can be a beautiful affair. You don't have to spend enough money to break the bank; people will be relaxed and will have a really enjoyable time. Casual weddings will have kids running around, noise and a lot of hilarity.

The planning and organization of a formal wedding will be an expensive one. But if you have budget constraints, (don't we all!) you can easily find ways to trim costs, but still make your elegant dreams come true.

Formal weddings hold fast to tradition and seriousness rules the day. Etiquette and behavior are emphasized and the wedding planning has to be professionally done. Formal weddings generally mean a guest list with anywhere from 250-500 people, the bride in a white gown complete with train and veil, groom in black tie, bridesmaids and groomsmen all formally attired in tuxedos and the décor highly respectable.

Other features of the formal wedding include a full band, engraved wedding invitations, extravagant flower arrangements, full church service and formal reception with sit down meal at an exclusive hotel or club. Transportation usually runs to a stretch limousine service.

A casual wedding celebration can be semi formal or totally

informal. In a semi formal or smart casual setting you will generally find that allowances are made for non traditional wedding elements to be incorporated into the ceremony and celebration. Guests are quite relaxed and range from 100-250 people. The bridal gown is not a very formal full gown, more a wedding dress with short train and veil. Men wear black tie or dark suits, even dinner jackets. Invitations can be engraved or printed on regular invitation paper. The bride and groom have fewer bridesmaids and groomsmen in attendance and the band is more or less made up of 2-3 musicians or one DJ.

The casual wedding is quite different from what we just read. People at this type of wedding really get to let their hair down and have fun. Guest numbers are small and usually comprise close family and friends in a more intimate setting. Casual weddings are characterized by approximately 50-100 guests. The bridal attire can be a simple dress, either long or short with a token veil and no train. At the most there will be two bridesmaids and groomsmen. The men wear dark suits and the groom will probably wear black tie. Invitations are handwritten and sometimes given over the phone.

A formal wedding is usually held in the back garden with tables set around the place for people to sit. A buffet set up encourages guests to mingle and help themselves. There may or may not be a bartender, so the self-help theme would probably be the standard norm. Casual weddings can be receptions where lunch or tea is served. The wedding ceremony itself will be held in the same place as the reception and décor will be limited to a simple arch and flowers.

Deciding upon whether to have a formal or casual wedding is really the couple's choice and one they have to be comfortable with.

Deciding On The Wedding Package For Your Honeymoon

There are many options to take into consideration when deciding on how you would like to spend your honeymoon and where to go for your honeymoon, while trying to decide on the perfect venues for your honeymoon, whether it's in Paris or a tropical paradise island. Basically, the honeymoon is almost as important as the wedding itself, this is why it has now become a standard in most wedding packages.

For many newlyweds, being able to get a wedding package that features honeymoon deals as part of the package is like hitting two birds with one stone.

Most honeymoon deals supported by wedding packages are very good, but newlyweds or soon to be newlyweds should consider a number of important things before making the final decision on which inclusive wedding package to choose from. Here are some pointers to consider:

Honeymoon/Wedding Package Booking Schedule

The honeymoon/wedding package's booking schedule is very important as it details the specifics of the departure time; which many honeymooners make the mistake of scheduling the departure time too early in the morning, the day after the wedding. Not realizing just how stressful the wedding day is, including the reunion of long time friends and family, a long night of dancing, drinking and having fun including all the many related concerns and issues that come with the whole wedding process.

With this in mind, could you see how tired and stressful it can be by scheduling the honeymoon departure too early in the morning?

Probably one of the most common factors when choosing the honeymoon and wedding package is where your budget stands.

As we all know, money doesn't grow on trees and many people tend to hold off on getting married right away in order to save enough money for their perfect wedding. Not only do you need to have the money for the wedding but you need to consider the cost of normal day to day life once these important events have passed.

Also by having the financial issues out of the way, you can be sure to be more focused on the wedding and honeymoon as well as being able to enjoy yourself that much more.

Don't be shy about your honeymoon.

Let people know you are on your honeymoon and you'll be sure to receive the best treatment and service. You are there to have a good time and by letting those around you know, many people will help to ensure you have a magical time on your honeymoon.

Taking these pointers into consideration can prove to make your wedding and honeymoon the most enjoyable and memorable event of your life.

Inexpensive Jewelry Options For Your Wedding

Not only is a wedding dress a big expense, but the wedding jewelry can often times cost quite a bit too. Even if you are having a small wedding, you want to make sure you have the jewelry you desire to make you feel like the princess you are, at least for the day.

The thing is though; many brides feel they simply cannot afford the bridal jewelry they want, considering all the other wedding expenses involved. But there are a few jewelry options here that are less expensive solutions.

The most inexpensive option is to simply borrow the jewelry. Maybe you know someone near and dear to you that wore

beautiful jewelry at her wedding and wouldn't mind loaning them to you for your big day. Then again, maybe you have some friends or relatives that simply have a gorgeous selection of fancy jewelry that you could borrow.

If neither of these are an option, you could always set up a gift registry for your bridal shower and ask that a particular set of jewelry be purchased. For rather pricey jewelry sets, you might find that a few friends will go in on the gift together.

If you are set on purchasing your wedding jewelry on your own, you could always shop online for gently used jewelry. There are a lot of women out there who end up never making it down the aisle so they take everything they bought for their wedding and place it for sale online. You might find some really good deals.

For those who want new jewelry and who do not want any help paying for it, there are still ways to get jewelry less expensively. Many jewelry stores will have blow out sales a couple of times a year. If you can shop well in advance, you will find that you have a better chance of coming across one of those sales.

And last but not least, there is the option of wearing fake diamonds or costume jewelry for your wedding. You will still get the sparkle and beauty you would get with the real thing, except you are not going to go broke paying for it.

As you can see, there really are several options for getting the beautiful wedding jewelry you want. Take your time and look over your options and you are bound to find your perfect wedding jewelry.

Resources

Deborah Mccoy "america's Wedding Planner": (Recommended)

<http://tinyurl.com/ndasmnt>

"Save Money On Your Wedding" - Cut Weddings Costs Without Cutting Quality:

<http://tinyurl.com/othxh4p>

Marriage Vows And Wedding Vows For Couples Getting Married:

<http://tinyurl.com/pz8kb9p>

I hope my tips and advice was some help to you in creating

your perfect wedding.

Thank You,

Terry Clark

