

# Wedding Guide

*when shopping for a wedding reception venue*

## Questions to ask

Engaged couples make plenty of decisions when planning their weddings, and some may be more significant than others. Choosing a wedding reception venue is among the most important decisions couples will make.

The reception venue is where couples and guests will spend the majority of the day, and no two venues are the same. As couples begin shopping for a place to host their reception, they can ask themselves and venue representatives a multitude of questions to narrow down their options and ultimately make the best decision for them.

### What are we looking for in a venue?

Some couples may know precisely what they want their receptions to be like, while others may not have the slightest idea. Of course, some couples may be somewhere in the middle. Prior to beginning the process of choosing a venue, couples can identify what they're looking for. Is a venue with outdoor entertaining space a priority? Do you want to hold the ceremony and reception at the same venue? How many guests will the venue need to accommodate? Answering these questions and others can help couples narrow down their search.

### How much can we afford?

Budget is a significant variable when shopping for a wedding venue. Some venues offer multiple spaces that can accommodate couples with a wide range of budgets, while others are singular spaces suited to receptions within a specified size. Itemizing a budget and determining how much can be allotted to a reception venue can serve as a guideline when couples begin searching for sites.

### Is our date available?

Once couples know what they want and what they can afford, they can prepare a number of questions that are worth asking at every venue they visit. Perhaps the most important, at least for those couples who have already chosen a wedding date, is the availability of the site on that date. If couples have not yet chosen a date, they can ask for a list of available dates at each venue they visit and perhaps use that knowledge to pick a day, particularly if they prefer a given venue.

### Who will cater the meal?

Some venues do their own catering, while others may have working relationships with outside caterers. And some venues rent only the spaces and require couples to hire their own caterers and arrange all the details on their own. If a venue caters the meal, ask if they accommodate people with various restrictions, such as food allergies and gluten intolerances.

### How many hours are included in the rental agreement?

It's important that couples know what they're getting, including how much time they get in each space they consider. The online wedding resource The Knot notes a standard wedding reception is five hours, the first of which is generally designated as cocktail hour.

### What is the payment structure?

Identifying the payment structure, include down payment due date and when the final payment must be made, is important as well. This knowledge can allow couples to map out their expenses, the most significant of which is typically the reception venue.

These are just some of the questions couples can ask as they plan their wedding receptions.



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Katherine offers any type of travel you can imagine. The most popular bookings are cruises, followed by all-inclusive resorts. River cruises are also very popular.

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Expedia Cruises is owned by Chad Jackson and has been open for the past 10 years.

"I would like to thank Chad for mentoring me during my training and for always supporting me in this business," says Katherine. "He has a wealth of knowledge that he is always willing to share with me."

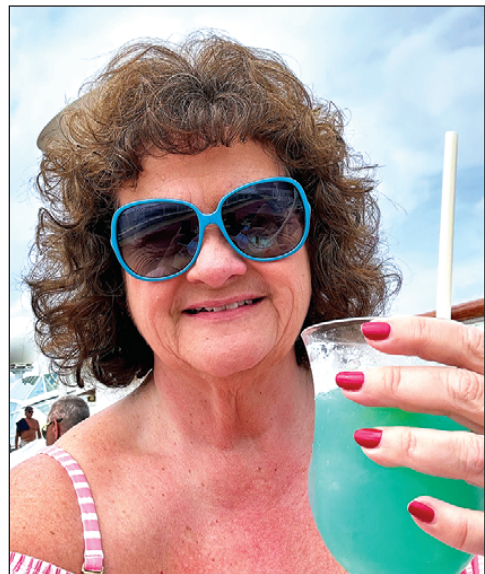
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Katherine resides in Limestone County and is willing to meet with clients in Freestone and Limestone Counties outside of business hours, by appointment.

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# Wedding Guide

## The roles played by

### bridesmaids and the maid of honor in a wedding

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

A bridal party typically includes a soon-to-be-bride's close friends and family. The bridesmaid tradition may trace its origins to ancient times, when bridesmaids would be selected to dress like the bride and confuse vengeful spirits or warring rival clans who might want to harm the bride. A special individual gets to enjoy a higher-level job within the bridal party, serving as maid of honor, if she is unmarried, or matron of honor if she has already walked down the aisle.

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

#### Bridesmaids

A significant amount of planning goes into a wedding and bridesmaids may be called upon to help brides make various decisions. Bridesmaids also offer support to the bride, who may be feeling a tad overwhelmed. It is important for bridesmaids to calm the bride and care for her while she tackles the tasks necessary to host such a momentous occasion.

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

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

#### Maid of honor

The maid of honor (MOH) does all of the above and more. She will attend wedding dress shopping appointments and serve as a trusted source of honest feedback. The MOH also may be called in to mediate any conflicts within the bridal party, as these ladies may not all know each other prior to the nuptials. She will check in with the bridesmaids to be sure they are on task and fulfilling any responsibilities in a timely manner.

The MOH will be the main point of contact for the bridal shower and bachelorette party. She will keep track of gifts so that the couple can follow up with thank you notes. She also may help assemble and mail out wedding invitations. The MOH will help the bride get dressed on the wedding day and attend to any needs she may have, including providing snacks and water. In the event the bride's gown is cumbersome, the MOH may need to assist the bride by adjusting the dress while seated or when visiting the restroom.

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

There is no minimum or maximum number of people who can be part of a bridal party, but it is important to choose people who can be relied upon and who will enhance the experience. The bride-to-be can discuss her expectations from bridesmaids and the maid of honor at the start of the wedding adventure to ensure that everyone can help ensure the day is a momentous occasion.

### Did you know?

Brides-to-be make many important decisions when planning their weddings, and one of the more notable ones is the choice of wedding gown. According to The Knot Real Weddings Study, the average wedding dress cost \$2,000 in 2023. Despite that hefty price tag, gowns remain a pivotal component of a wedding, as 98 percent of women who responded to The Knot survey indicated they wore a dress for their nuptials. If the sizable price tag is a cause for concern to some aspiring brides, The Knot notes that customization can drive up the final price tag by a significant amount, which undoubtedly affects the median price of gowns. Brides who opt for no or minimal customization can likely find a dress that costs significantly less than the \$2,000 average price.

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## Consider wedding flowers carefully

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

Engaged couples typically go to great lengths when planning their weddings, but flowers may not be as micromanaged as other elements. Some are content to let florists design their arrangements, but the average cost of wedding flowers in 2023 was \$2,800, according to The Knot Real Weddings Study. That price tag merits some input on the part of couples. Floral experts say couples should budget for floral arrangements coming in at 10 percent of the overall wedding budget, which is the industry standard. Therefore, for a \$60,000 wedding a couple should assume their florals will cost \$6,000. It's important to note that the cost of wedding flowers has been steadily increasing over the last few years due to inflation and climate change, says The Knot. So couples may need to be even more involved in floral decisions to maximize their dollars spent.

Here are some variables to consider when selecting wedding flowers.

- **Greenery:** Adding greenery to fill in spaces in floral arrangements can save some money. Centerpieces and bouquets that are floral-heavy will certainly cost more.
- **Symbolism:** Consider the meaning behind flowers to make choices even more personal. You also may want to select flowers that will complement the theme of the wedding. For

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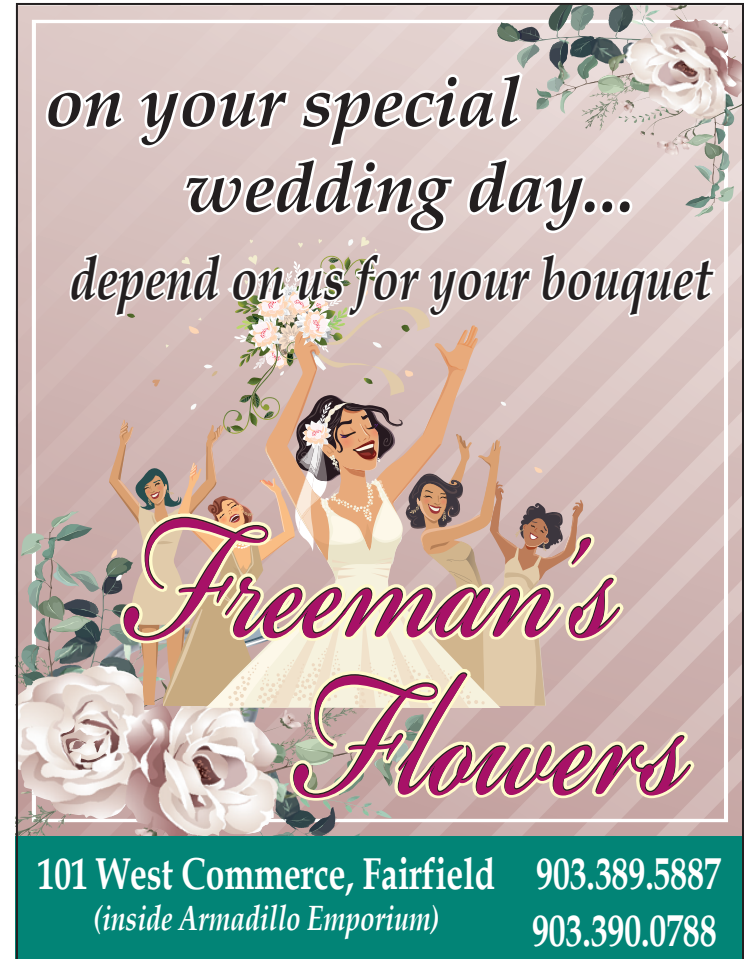
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## Top trends in tuxes

Theories on the origins of the tuxedo vary significantly. Some believe that this formal garment was created by wealthy aristocrats attending an autumn ball in Tuxedo Park, New York. However, the Wall Street Journal has reported that the tuxedo might be a British invention, spearheaded by the fashion-conscious King of Wales Edward VII in 1865. No matter where the tuxedo originated, it has become standard attire for formal occasions, including weddings.

It may seem as though every tuxedo is the same, but that's not the case. Tuxes come in different styles, so those tying the knot or attending other formal functions can choose an option that fits their personality and physique. Here's a look at what sets tuxedos apart and some noteworthy tux trends.

### Suits versus tuxedos

Some may wonder what sets a tuxedo apart from a suit. One of the more notable differences is that tuxedo lapels are designed with silk, satin or textured grosgrain to provide that signature V-look, says Brides magazine. Suit lapels are made from the same fabric as the suit jacket. Tuxedos traditionally are held up with suspenders, while suit pants have belt loops for use with a belt. Suits are styled with a dress shirt while tuxedos are worn with a particular tuxedo shirt that likely has a spread collar, bib, decorative studs, and French cuffs fastened with cufflinks.

### Change up lapel styles

Men who want to set themselves apart can opt for what The Knot calls the most popular styles of tuxedo lapels. Notch lapels are the most common and feature two lateral points. Shawl collars feature a smooth, sleek looped lapel without notches or peaks. Peak lapels have the lower point of the lapel peak above the upper. Trying on the different jackets can give individuals an idea of which lapel look is best.

### New color spectrum

A traditional tuxedo will be black, although navy tuxedos have gained a following. But individuals can find a tuxedo in any color. Those who want to add some extra flair to their weddings may opt for a tuxedo in a color that coordinates to the season or aligns with what the rest of the bridal party is wearing.

### Alternative fabrics

The majority of tuxedos are made from wool and will have the silk or satin detailing as described. Newer trends include incorporating fabrics like linen or flannel, although these are rare and may be harder to come by.

### Neckties grabbing hold

People can set themselves apart with everything from lapels to tuxedo shirts to different colors, but only bowties or neckties can be worn with tuxedos. While bowties once were the gold standard, those personalizing their wedding looks and taking liberties with style are increasingly opting for neckties. Gents can choose a necktie in a complementary texture that will coordinate with the elegance of the tuxedo.

### Slim fit

Modern tuxedo choices feature a slim fit in both jacket and pant. It's a good idea to try on a few different options to see what feels comfortable before choosing a fit.

Tuxedos have been around since the nineteenth century and are the attire of choice for formal functions.



## How to manage the menu *at your wedding reception*

Wedding receptions are the culmination of a lot of planning. Though there may not be any insignificant decisions when planning the post-ceremony party, some choices will loom larger than others, including which foods will be served. Certain factors can help determine who to use for reception food services.

### Planning

A traditional reception center/catering hall is likely a wise choice for couples who prefer simplicity in wedding day meal planning. These facilities are experts at addressing all of the components that go into a reception. Such venues offer access to a cocktail area and banquet room, and the facility likely has a staff of chefs at the ready to dish up meals. While many reception centers offer restaurant-quality offerings, scouting venues and sampling dishes will provide an idea of how foods taste and help couples narrow down their choices.

### Preferences

Some receptions are multi-course events starting from the moment guests arrive and snack on hors d'oeuvres to the dessert display served as a final course. Others are low-key and may not have full sit-down service. If you prefer a cocktail atmosphere only, certain venues may make more sense than others. Identifying how much food to have and the type of service desired can help pinpoint caterers to interview.

### Chef access

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

### Location

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

### Allergies

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

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

### -Wedding Flowers-

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example, traditional spring blooms like tulips and daffodils will coordinate with spring weddings.

- **Flower varieties:** Hardier varieties of flowers, such as daisies, mums, carnations, and protea, are less likely to wilt quickly in bouquets or centerpieces than some other blooms, even when they are cut. Such blooms can hold up in any weather and last the entire day so that arrangements will be picture-perfect no matter the hour.
- **Venue:** Couples may find that some venues already have faux flowers or other decor. That may mean couples do not need to have as many flowers or any elaborate arrangements.
- **Size:** A particularly large floral centerpiece can overwhelm a table, and a bouquet that is overly cumbersome may detract from the bride or her bridesmaids. Choose the correct scale for comfort in bouquets. For table arrangements, select a size that will not discourage conversation or block guests' view, nor take up too much real estate on the table.
- **Allergies:** Although they are cut, flowers in arrangements can trigger allergic responses in some people. Others may be bothered by overly aromatic flowers. Work with the florist to find blooms that will be best.
- **Color scheme:** Although white flowers always coordinate, many couples like some color in their arrangements. Be sure the flowers pick up the hues used in bridesmaid dresses or even the season of the year. Couples should take an active role in deciding what to include in floral pieces for their weddings.

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# Wedding Guide

## Can't-miss photos for your wedding



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

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

### Before the ceremony

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

### At the ceremony

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

### Portraits

- Couple with bridesmaids and groomsmen
- Bride and maid/matron of honor
- Groom and best man
- Couple with each set of parents and siblings
- Couple with close family members

### At the reception

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

## Wedding hair for every style

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

French Touch Photography says wedding photographers take an average 50 to 100 pictures per hour. That means couples ultimately may appear in 600 photos before the night is through. Is it any wonder that brides, grooms and everyone in between want to ensure they are presenting the best versions of themselves come the big day? The hairstyle chosen for a wedding can affect how couples view these photographs in the years to come. It can take some trial and error to find a wedding day hairstyle that is perfect, but these popular styles are good starting points.

- **Bouncy blowout:** Many brides choose to leave their hair down for the wedding, and this style looks bouncy, smooth and approachable. The blowout can be straight, or stylists can add curled edges for a luxurious look.
- **Messy bun:** A messy bun is another hairstyle that appears effortless. An imperfect bun with some tendrils escaping and a decorative hair pin is both elegant and fun.
- **Boho braids:** Whether a hairstyle is mostly down and free-flowing or pinned back into a loose bun, adding bohemian style braids can impart whimsy to any look. This hairstyle may be best for informal weddings and to match gowns that are flowing and ethereal.
- **Top knot:** This style is a practical choice for warm weather weddings, when heat and humidity can attack a polished style. The look is made by winding the hair into a bun at the crown of the head. It can be enhanced with a crown or headband.
- **Half-up, half-down:** Brides who want their locks down with voluminous waves but without hair in their faces often opt for a half-up, half-down style. This pulls the front portion of hair back and away from the face, which can be braided, twisted or even just loosely pinned, depending on preference.
- **Side-swept:** This look pulls tresses over to one side, where they cascade in waves over the shoulder. It is elegant and classic.
- **Chignon:** From the French chignon de cou, which means 'nape of the neck,' a chignon is a wrapped bun hairstyle pinned low on the head where it meets the neck.

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

- **Pompadour:** This style is characterized by a voluminous top that is swept back from the face.
- **Quiff:** Like a pompadour, this hairstyle also features volume but with natural curls offering a full, defined look.
- **Classic side part:** This look is classic and polished. A clean parting that is either slightly off from the middle or even deeper on the side completes this look.
- **Undercut:** This hairstyle features hair buzzed on the sides and back with a longer top.

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



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