

Wedding Guide

Tips to streamline

a Wedding Day

Marriage is a social institution that is thousands of years old. Marriage has undergone changes over the years, but plenty of people are still tying the knot and hosting amazing wedding celebrations.

A total of 2,065,905 marriages were recorded in the United States in 2022. Statistics Canada indicates 98,355 registered marriages took place in 2020. Prospective brides and grooms may be inclined to host more simplified and streamlined weddings in order to save money and time. Finding ways to streamline a wedding is not necessarily that challenging.

-- **Keep the ceremony short.** While this may not always be an option for couples who are having a traditional religious ceremony that is beholden to the rules of the faith, some couples can opt for a shortened ceremony that is more direct and to the point. A streamlined ceremony can stick strictly to the exchange of vows, rather than including readings, musical interludes, candle lighting ceremonies, and more. Couples who want religious ceremonies can speak with their officiants to see how they can stick to tradition, but keep the ceremony more succinct.



-- **Communicate roles for the wedding party.** Having designated people to handle a variety of tasks at the wedding fosters efficiency and can save time by moving things along. It also allows for smooth transitions during parts of the ceremony. For example, the maid of honor traditionally holds the bride's bouquet during the ceremony. But other bridesmaids can be enlisted to hold items or fix the bride's train or veil as well.

-- **Select one venue.** Holding the wedding ceremony and reception in the same place cuts down on travel time and logistical issues for both the guests and those involved in the wedding. It also reduces necessary costs for transportation.

-- **Choose a nearby location.** Asking guests and vendors to travel great distances can add time to the wedding festivities. Selecting a centrally located ceremony site and reception hall will streamline many of the steps people would have to take to attend. It also might remove the need to arrange overnight accommodations for the wedding.

-- **Hire a wedding coordinator.** A professional planner and coordinator will keep the wedding moving along on time and ensure a smooth process. This professional can remain emotionally neutral, solve problems and ensure that everyone is in the right place.

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The many ways to incorporate Floral Arrangements

Flowers showcase the beauty and pageantry of the natural world. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The earth laughs in flowers," and Lady Bird Johnson is quoted as saying, "Where flowers bloom, so does hope."

Flowers are inextricably tied to some of the most important events in a person's life. Flowers wish people well, console those who are mourning, and symbolize love and affection.

Flowers are an essential component of wedding day celebrations. Flowers symbolize love, fertility and new beginnings. According to The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study, the average cost of wedding flowers in 2025 was \$2,723, which serves as a testament to how important flowers can be on these special days.

Flowers are incorporated into many facets of a wedding. Couples planning their weddings can give thought to the many ways flowers can enhance this special day.



Bouquets

Wedding bouquets are some of the first arrangements people think of when planning a wedding. Historically, wedding bouquets contained herbs that were designed to ward off evil spirits. Today, one is much more likely to find a gathering of many beautiful flowers tied at the stems with ribbon. Bridesmaids carry bouquets as well, and flower girls toss flower petals along the aisle during the processional. Bouquets typically coordinate to the theme of the wedding and the color scheme. A bride's bouquet tends to be similar in design to her bridesmaids' but may feature more muted colored blooms to complement her gown.

Boutonnieres and corsages

Boutonnieres and corsages are customarily bestowed upon wedding party members and the parents of the happy couple. They also may be gifted to additional special people attending the wedding, such as grandparents or other guests of honor.

Altar arrangements

Floral decorations also may be placed around or near the altar for the wedding ceremony. Jewish celebrants may place flowers on a chuppah to add beauty and elegance. Flowers also are commonly used in Muslim wedding ceremonies, appearing in floral arches or even as a stunning floral wall during the Nikah to separate the bride and groom. During religious ceremonies, couples should heed the requirements of the house

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Wedding Guide

Simple touches that add an elegant feel to a wedding

Couples have their own ideas regarding the perfect wedding, and no single vision is more worthy of that characterization than another.

Tradition plays a big role at many weddings, as couples have long embraced customs like the first dance, cutting the cake together and even tossing the bridal bouquet at the reception. Traditional weddings often are associated with elegance, and there are many ways to create an elegant aesthetic at a wedding.

-- **Consider candlelight.** Candlelight can make any space feel cozy and warm. Lit candles also create a calming and elegant vibe at a wedding. A handful of thoughtfully placed candles around a ceremony space can add a sense of elegance to a wedding. That vibe can

be maintained into the reception when candles are placed on dining tables.

-- **Include some vintage items.** Vintage items can add elegance because they call to mind traditional weddings of past eras. Unique vintage vases on seating tables or even as reception table centerpieces are simple to arrange and effective at adding an elegant touch.

-- **Choose a signature cocktail.** The drinks guests enjoy at the reception also can add some elegance to the festivities. Ask the reception hall bartender to collaborate on a classic cocktail, ideally one that might have been popular years ago or even a modernized version of a drink that calls to mind ceremonies of yesteryear.

-- **Go traditional with wedding attire.** More and more brides are choosing

wedding gowns that go beyond the classic white dress. But brides who want something elegant may want to stick to traditional attire. The same goes for grooms, who can choose a traditional black tuxedo to add some simple elegance to the big day.

-- **Set your sights on seating.** There's no area of a wedding that can't be augmented with a little elegance, and that even goes for seating. Chair sashes complement an elegant theme, and such simple decor is easy to pull off. It also provides instant appeal and a touch of class as guests enter the venue and take a seat.

An elegant wedding aesthetic makes for great photographs and adds a memorable vibe to a ceremony and reception.

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Questions to ask

when interviewing caterers

A wedding reception is a joyous occasion that affords newlyweds and their guests an opportunity to celebrate into the evening. Various components combine to ensure a memorable reception, but food is a major highlight of the festivities for guests. That places a significant responsibility on couples to find a reception center or third-party caterer who can dish up food that will have guests saying "I do" to a great meal.

These considerations and questions can help couples find the right caterer for their weddings.

Does my venue mandate use of a particular catering service?

The wedding planning website Zola advises that many wedding venues require couples to use a specific catering service. They may have an arrangement with a particular caterer who they trust, or the venue has in-house chefs and servers. In the earliest planning stages after the wedding date has been set, a couple should be sure to pick a venue that will serve the best food possible. Couples who have a specific caterer in mind may need to shop around for a venue that will allow outside vendors.

Identify your preferred meal

First and foremost, a couple should know how they want to have their food served and inquire with potential caterers about their standard options. Service types often include a

formal sit-down dinner reception, a buffet dinner service, a family-style dinner, or a more minimal cocktail offering without a full dinner. The couple can cross out prospects that don't offer the type of service they desire most.

Ask what's included

A couple should determine if a catering service offers food prepared by professionals, the amount of flexibility related to menus, if table settings are included, and if cleanup is part of the fee. Full-service catering typically includes all of this, while more limited service may be food brought in that requires the venue's own staff to serve and clean.

Compile the right questions

It's important to ask caterers some key questions to narrow down prospects. Some of these include:

- Are you a participant in any local business associations?
- What events with a similar concept have you catered?
- How many weddings do you book each year?
- Will my wedding be the only event you cater on that day?
- How many guests can you accommodate?
- Do you handle special food requests, such as gluten-free or kosher meals?
- How many chefs and cooks prepare the meal, or are meals exclusively prepared by the business owner?
- Do you allow substitutions or customization to a set menu?
- Do you have references for other events you have catered?



- Do you have any preferred vendors?
- What do we need to know and do regarding delivery?

Keep location in mind

The distance a caterer has to travel to cater the wedding will affect the price. It's helpful to find a caterer who knows the venue or has had experience with a similar place.

What are the contingency plans?

When interviewing caterers, Cvent, an event management software company, suggests asking about any last-minute changes they've dealt with to gauge how the caterer handles problem-solving. Inquire about how they adapt if a certain menu item is no longer readily available or what they do if a piece of equipment breaks down the day of an event? Answers to these types of questions can separate seasoned professionals from those caterers who may not be as experienced. Food is a vital component of a wedding reception, which underscores the significance of finding a talented and experienced caterer.

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Did You Know?

Weddings are made up of various components, and coordinating those elements can be a significant undertaking. In addition to accommodating their own needs, couples must consider a host of variables unique to their situation, including budget.

When establishing a wedding budget, couples may want to allocate a significant percentage of their funds to the reception. According to The Knot 2025 Weddings Study, much of the cost of a wedding, which cost an average of \$33,000 in 2025, can be traced to reception-related expenses such as food and drinks, entertainment and venue.

The Knot study found that couples spent roughly 27 percent of their wedding budget on venue and rentals, 24 percent on catering (including drinks and cake) and 11 percent on music and guest entertainment.



Plan a Special Proposal for Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is often characterized as the most romantic day of the year. Steeped in tradition involving the exchange of tokens of affection like chocolates, roses and gifts, Valentine's Day also is a popular day to propose marriage.

It's possible to separate popping the question from standard Valentine's Day celebrations. Here's how to shape a proposal that is heartfelt, personalized and presented with genuine emotion.

Be intentional

Before planning the proposal, reflect on what your partner likes and what matters most. Consider their feelings about gestures, namely, whether they like intimate moments or grand displays. The proposal should fit your partner's personality and not be about grabbing more social media likes. Start with good intentions that suit your partner.

Find the setting

Select a setting that is meaningful and doesn't veer into cliché territory. Look for places with personal significance, such as the location of a first date or a spot tied to a shared memory. The location even can be a special spot uniquely special to your partner, like a park bench frequently shared with a

grandparent who is no longer living. A new destination that reflects your future together also is a good option. Scout out any areas in advance to ensure privacy and a smooth experience. If the proposal will take place outdoors, have a Plan B ready to deal with weather or any other obstacles.

Make the day flow

Consider the proposal like a mini movie that's not a standalone moment, but part of a greater narrative. Plan activities leading up to the question. Have a meal together, walk through a favorite neighborhood haunt or exchange gifts as is customary on Valentine's Day. These touches set the scene for the day. They may also hint at what's to come.

Incorporate personal elements

Include touches that call to mind your shared story. Details from inside jokes to beloved songs to objects with sentimental value can elevate this special moment. If family members or close friends are especially important to your partner, figure out a way to incorporate them into the proposal.

Leave room to celebrate

So much emphasis is placed on finding the right words and moment to



pop the question, but don't forget about the afterglow. Knowing your partner will help you decide whether you should move on to a romantic dinner after the proposal or head to a place where phone calls sharing the great news can be handled immediately. You also may want to spend a cozy night reflecting on this life-changing moment and all that's on the horizon.

Valentine's Day proposals are wildly popular. But those considering popping the question on February 14 can still find ways to make their proposal unique.

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Navigating Transportation

for your wedding

On a couple's wedding day, some effort will be required to transport the bride and groom and wedding party participants and guests. Coordinating transportation is a task couples must add to their planning checklist.

Wedding transportation is perhaps best broken down into three categories: transportation for the couple and the wedding party, transportation for guests, and transportation for unique situations. These tips can make navigating wedding transportation needs go smoothly.

Transportation for the couple and wedding party

Ensuring that the couple and wedding party participants arrive to the ceremony (and later the reception venue) on time is essential. Couples and their attendants traditionally arrive in some sort of hired car, whether it's a limousine or vintage/classic ride. It's important to find a service that will pick up the couple (separately) and their bridesmaids and groomsmen as well as parents of the bride or groom and bring them to the ceremony site. Drivers usually wait for the ceremony to end before taking passengers to photography locations and eventually the reception venue. Vendors typically price for hourly service with a minimal rental period. Larger vehicles will have a higher hourly rate.

Transportation for guests

Although it's not customary to offer transportation for all guests to the ceremony or reception venue, in the event of circumstances like hotel room accommodations close to the reception, couples may want to offer shuttle service between the reception center and hotel. If the wedding reception will be non-traditional, and take place at various stop-off spots, like a bar crawl, party buses or trolley service could be considered to keep all guests together.

Unique situations

Couples may want to enhance their wedding festivities with some specialized details that might require unique transportation situations. For example, a wedding that takes place on an island would require a ferry service or water taxi. Couples tying the knot during the picturesque winter season can go the extra mile and commission horse-drawn sleighs. Rustic weddings have grown in popularity. A charming hayride can complete the picture for a wedding reception held at a farm or in a converted barn.

After the festivities

The couple also may need to consider transportation once the wedding has ended. Those going directly to a honeymoon may need a hired car to take them to the airport. Transportation also will be needed for any wedding party participants who did not take their own vehicles to the wedding, but rode in party buses or limousines.

Wedding transportation may not be the most glamorous aspect of wedding planning, but well-coordinated transportation is a necessity that couples, their friends and family will appreciate.

Responsibilities typically delegated

to notable bridal party members

-- **Best man:** The best man toast at a wedding reception tends to be a jovial part of the festivities that couples and guests look forward to, so asking a best man to give such a speech is customary. Best man responsibilities also may include organizing a bachelor party or a similar type of get-together with fellow groomsmen and other guests prior to the wedding. A best man also may coordinate a gift for the groom if the groomsmen want to give the groom an item that requires pooling resources.

-- **Maid/matron of honor:** A maid/matron of honor typically delivers a toast at the reception prior to the best man's speech. A maid/matron of honor also may coordinate a bachelorette party and bridal shower in the weeks or months before the wedding. A maid/matron of honor tends to play a significant role on the wedding day as well. A maid/matron of honor may handle any problems that arise in the hours before the ceremony so the bride can relax. For example, a maid/matron of honor may work to ensure the bride is shielded from issues affecting hair and makeup, the venue, last-minute gown concerns, and other unforeseen problems that can arise. A maid/matron of honor may need to do some delegating of her own prior to the ceremony, asking fellow bridesmaids to help coordinate party plans.

-- **Bridesmaids:** Bridesmaids can help a bride when she's choosing her gown as well as the dresses bridesmaids themselves will wear. Bridesmaids also help the maid/matron of honor coordinate the bachelorette party and pitch in to help address any issues that arise on the day of the ceremony.



-- **Groomsmen:** Groomsmen can be tasked with helping the best man coordinate a bachelor party. Groomsmen also can be asked to schedule their tuxedo fittings to afford enough time for alterations and orders to be completed in time for the big day.

-- **Parents:** Parents' roles have changed considerably in recent years. While the parents of the bride traditionally paid for the wedding and grooms' parents were tasked with bankrolling the rehearsal dinner, many modern couples now foot some, if not all, of those bills themselves. Parents can still be asked to lend some financial assistance. In addition, couples can seek input from parents regarding reception traditions like father/daughter and mother/son dances.



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-Floral-
Continued from 1-B

of worship and ensure that flowers are modest and within the parameters set for the faith.

Aisle decorations

Flowers may be used on the seatbacks or on the sides of pews. Small flowers, ribbons and greenery are hung to enhance the ambiance of the space.

Centerpieces

Flowers are a focal point during wedding receptions, taking up prime real estate in the center of tables. Knowledgeable florists can create pieces that are beautiful and will not obstruct the view or comfort of guests when seated. Additional floral arrangements may be included to enhance additional areas of the reception space, such as floral arches for photographs, vases placed near the seating chart and even flowers in the restrooms to make these spaces even more inviting.

Toss bouquet

If a couple decides to adhere to traditional wedding customs, the bride will toss a smaller bouquet to eager single women ready to catch it. A tossed bouquet may feature fresh flowers or artificial silk flowers. This decoy bouquet enables the bride to return home with her actual bouquet to preserve it, but still participate in this classic tradition.

Flowers enhance a wedding with their beauty, symbolism and aroma.

Assistance for the Perfect

Honeymoon or Destination Wedding

Plan that perfect destination wedding or spectacular honeymoon with the help of Vacation Consultant Katherine Havens with Expedia Cruises.

"I love to travel, and I hope to inspire others to make memories by traveling," exclaims Katherine. "My business is special because of the relationship that I have with my clients; and my consulting service is free of charge!"

"I love planning and researching the perfect, dream vacation," she says. "Come see me for ideas for your perfect honeymoon or destination wedding. A destination wedding might be the perfect solution, if you do not want to risk the Texas weather ruining it!"

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.

She can also book flights and hotels for you.

Another popular option is group travel. Katherine has planned family celebrations to include all generations, a cruise for teachers where they get money for their classrooms, and most recently a cruise with quilters to Alaska to buy fabric only available there.

"I can customize travel plans and vacations to fit your exact needs," she states. "It's not like booking on a website where you cannot talk to someone or plan for a special celebration. My services are available at all phases of the vacation, from planning until arriving back home."

She goes on to say, "Expedia Cruises has a great relationship with all the travel suppliers, like the cruise companies and resorts, so that we can offer some of the best prices on the market!"

Katherine's inspiration for becoming a travel agent is her family. "I believe that travel bonds us together and makes for lasting memories," she explains.

She is always looking to expand her knowledge of travel and continues to train daily.

The business is in Waco at the Crossroads West Shopping Center, 8810 Woodway Drive, #107. Hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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

She can be reached by calling 817-907-7058 or emailing to khavens@expediacruz.com.

You can also find her on Facebook under "Vacations by Katherine." Get booked today!



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