

BRIDE & GROOM

A Special Supplement to the Glencoe Advertiser

2013

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You can have your cake and eat it too!

By Karin Ramige Cornwell

Who does not love cake? Dave and Teal Johnson, owners of The Cake House in Glencoe, have made their career out of that love of cake.

Teal took a cake decorating class over 30 years ago and had a wonderful mentor, Dave said. "She's really artistic."

This led to the Johnson's opening Mrs. T's Cake and Candy in Maple Grove, which they owned and operated for many years.

After moving to Glencoe to care for an aging relative, the Johnsons noticed something missing in Glencoe, a good bakery.

Along with daughter, Brittany, the Johnsons started The Cake House about a year ago. They rented a kitchen locally to make their cakes. In July 2012, they opened the bakery located at 917 12th St. E. in Glencoe.

"We wanted to provide a unique experience, to have that hometown bakery feeling," said Dave. They are one of the few fully licensed bakeries in the area.

The Cake House makes all of its goodies fresh, daily. "We never freeze anything," according to Dave. You can stop in and have a cup of coffee and enjoy freshly made muffins, cupcakes, bars, pie, cake, or what they are becoming famous for, the stuffed caramel rolls. Lemon meringue and sour cream raisin pies are also some of The Cake House's specialties.

And as the name suggests, they do cakes, lots of them. The Cake House offers 75 flavors of cake. The most popular varieties have become strawberry daiquiri, tutti-frutti, butter rum, root beer, champagne and marble.

The Cake House can make just about anything you want. One of the most interesting wedding cakes they have made was a pirate ship.

Thirty years ago, wedding cakes were big and elaborate with multiple tiers, fountains, etc., Dave says.

The trends these days have changed. Cupcakes and individual table cakes have become really popular in different flavors. They become a topic of conversation and get people moving around to try different flavors.

Another trend for layer cakes is to have the top layer real cake with the other layers fake and serving sheet cakes to guests. "It's a more economical way to go," Dave said.

The Cake

House will make your cake or cupcakes the day of your wedding or event and deliver almost anywhere in the area.

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fect cake or visit them at one of the local wedding fairs in Hutchinson or at the City Center in Glencoe.



Dave Johnson and daughter, Brittany, of The Cake House in Glencoe, pictured with some of their wedding cakes. They also have a variety of other bakery items to enjoy.



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Engagements and Weddings

that run in The McLeod County Chronicle are also posted on the Chronicle's Web site at www.GlencoeNews.com, so if you have an out-of-town relative, let them know they can view your announcement online!

To submit an engagement or wedding online just simply go to www.GlencoeNews.com, select the Submissions link in the links bar and then select the Engagements or Weddings link.

Tips for writing your very own wedding vows

Metro Creative Graphics

A wedding is a once-in-a-lifetime event for many couples, so brides and grooms wish for the event to be momentous and memorable. As such, couples are increasingly integrating personal nuances into their ceremonies and receptions to tailor weddings to their unique visions. The desire to include personalized wedding vows continues to be a popular trend.

If you are considering personalized wedding vows, first realize that it may not be a simple task. That is because you want the message conveyed to be dear to your heart, and that can be challenging when faced with the pressures and planning of the rest of the wedding. That is not to say that writing your own vows is impossible. Here are some guidelines for personalizing your ceremony with your own sentiments.

- **Schedule time for writing.** Amid the bustle of dress fittings and interviews with photographers, it can be easy to put off the important task of writing vows for another day. But as any great writer can attest, it takes writing – and rewriting – to achieve a finished product you can be proud of. Give the task of writing your vows your undivided attention. Mark it in on your calendar or set a reminder on your computer just as you would any other appointment.

- **Be aware of ceremony guidelines.** It is best to check with your officiant and confirm that personalized wedding vows

are allowed. During civil ceremonies it is often acceptable to customize vows as you see fit. However, during religious ceremonies there may be lines of scripture that need to be read or certain passages



required. Before you spend hours working on the task, be sure that it is allowed and that your spouse and you are on the same page.

- **Jot down your feelings.** Answer some questions about what marriage means to you and how you feel about your spouse. Try to avoid trite sayings and think from your heart and personal experiences. Think about what is the

most important thing you want to promise to your future partner. These notes can serve as the starting points for the actual vows.

- **Read inspirational writings.** Per-

not feel comfortable spouting words of adoration in front of friends and family. Feel free to tap into your unique personality. Humor can be used if it aligns with the way you normally express your affections. Be sure to weave this tone into more traditional passages to create a cohesive expression of your feelings.

- **Establish an outline.** Put together all of the words and phrases you have jotted down into an outline to help you organize the flow of the vows, using these words as a blueprint for the vows and building upon them. Make sure the vows will be concise. Aim for your entire speech to be around 1 minute in length to keep everyone engaged and the ceremony moving along.

- **Put everything together.** Draft your vows and then practice them by reading out loud. You want to avoid long sentences or anything that trips you up. Although large words may sound impressive, they could make the vows seem too academic and not necessarily heartfelt. Enlist the help of a friend or two to act as your audience to see if the vows sound good and are easily understandable.

Writing your own vows can be a way to include personal expressions of love into a couple's wedding day. Public speaking is seldom easy, nor is finding the perfect words to convey feelings about a future spouse. However, with some practice and inspiration, anyone can draft personalized vows.

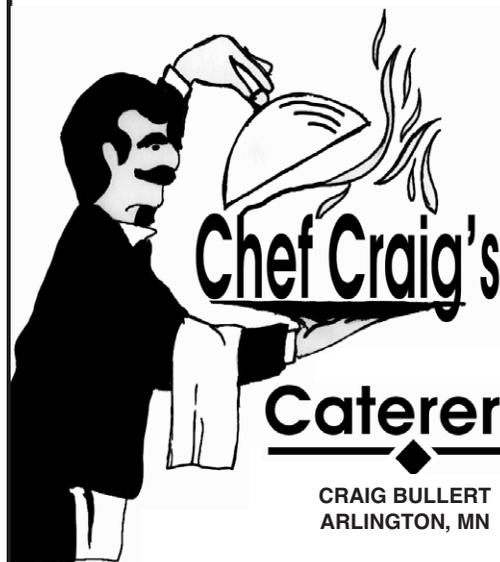
haps there is an author or a poet who inspires you? You can quote certain writers in your vows or let the tone of their works help shape the words of your vows. There also are suggested wedding readings and other quotes about marriage readily available at the library or with a quick search online.

- **Decide on a tone.** Although the day is based on love and affection, you may

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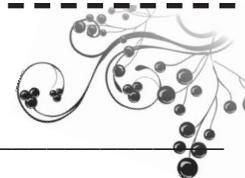
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Occupation of Bride (job title & place of employment) _____

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School(s) Attended by Bride _____

School(s) Attended by Groom _____

Wedding Date _____

Wedding Location _____

Please send this form to:
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What is in a name? To change it or not to change it . . .

By Karin Ramige Cornwell

The ring is on your finger, the church and reception hall is booked, the invites are out, the dress, flowers, cake, music, readings and all the other little details for your big day are done.

Now it is time to apply for the marriage license. Simple enough, right? It is a one-page application that asks for general information about the bride and groom, such as name, address, date of birth, etc. The application can be found online on your county's website. Once the application is complete, both the bride and groom must go to the McLeod County Auditor-Treasurer's office. You will be asked to raise your right hand and swear all the information provided on the application is correct. All in all, it is a fairly painless process.

There is a Marriage Application Supplemental form that can be completed and notarized if both parties are unable to appear in person.

The difficult part of this process is for the bride to decide what her name will be after the wedding. What she fills out on the marriage license is what her name will be for a long time. So I ask, what is in a name?

Prior to my Oct. 6, 2012 wedding, Karin Lynn Ramige had been my name for over 29 years. (OK, well over 29 years, but I am not telling how many!) The thought of being someone else was difficult for me. I knew it was important to my husband for me to take his name. It also was

important to me to take his last name, too.

At the same time, I felt that giving up my last name was giving up part of my identity. I also work for my family's company that, of course, is associated with that name as well. Luckily, he has a nice last name!

I thought about keeping my last name and not taking his, hyphenating both last names, dropping my last name, changing my middle name to my last name and adding my maiden name as a middle name. I am sure I thought of other combinations that I cannot recall now.

I think I waited until the absolute last minute to make my final decision. The name on the marriage license application, and now my new name, is Karin Lynn Ramige Cornwell. I added my maiden name as a middle name and took his last name. One first name, two middle names, one last name and no hyphens.

Once that decision was made, the I dos said, the cake eaten, honeymoon taken, thank yous written, the time comes to start changing your name on what seems like everything.

After registering for a couple of online wedding planning sites, I started to receive loads of e-mails for name change kits and services starting at around \$30.

They claim to make the process easy by providing all the necessary forms and documents.

To me this did not seem necessary. All of the information is available at no cost for free online. Google is a lifesaver. These kits and services do not actually do the work for you, just puts the forms together.

A certified official marriage license is sent to you about a week to 10 days after you are married. An application to change the information on your Social Security card is sent with the marriage license.

There are Social Security offices located in Minneapolis and St. Cloud or the application can be sent by mail along with the required documentation. It took

a couple of weeks by mail.

A marriage license is required to change your name on bank accounts and your driver's license. A driver's license can be renewed around six months before the expiration to avoid having to pay twice for the name change and renewal. It does take four to six weeks for the new card to arrive due to the name change.

Credit cards and other utilities can be changed by a simple phone call. They may require extra verification by the fraud department. One can never be too careful.

To change the name on a United States passport, the Form DS-82 must be completed and sent in by mail. The marriage license, current passport, one color passport photo and "applicable fees" must be sent to the address listed on the DS-82 form. If a passport was issued within one year of the marriage or name change there are no renewal fees. The applicable renewal fees apply if the passport was issued over a year before the marriage.

Slowly, but surely, I am getting all my information updated. The biggest challenge has been to remember what my name is on. As bills and subscriptions come in, I call to make the change. All in all, it is not a difficult process, but can be a bit time consuming. Hopefully I will have everything updated by our first anniversary.

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Did you know?

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At the end of 2013, two lucky couples whose engagement was announced in the Chronicle will win a \$50 Gift Certificate courtesy: of The McLeod County Chronicle.

Find a gown they will all love to wear on your day

Metro Creative Graphics

Close friends and family members are an important component of a couple's wedding day. Individuals who are especially close to the bride and groom are often asked to become members of the wedding party, which means a bride-to-be will be asking one or more women to play an integral role in the celebration.

To set these ladies apart from other guests at the wedding, they are often asked to wear coordinating bridesmaid gowns. Selecting a style and color that is fitting to the unique people of the bridal party can be challenging, but it is not impossible.

As if choosing your maid of honor was not tricky enough, you now must make a host of other decisions as well, all while playing stylist to the wedding party. Fashion sense is as unique as a fingerprint, and it is unlikely the bridesmaids will be able to agree on every aspect of the gowns they will be asked to wear. However, there are ways to narrow down the choices and be as accommodating as possible to their needs.

Size matters

The body shapes and sizes of the women in your bridal party will be different, and this should be kept in mind when selecting a gown style and cut. There are certain dress shapes that are universally flattering, such as A-line. Try to avoid gowns that are extremely form-fitting, as only a few of the bridesmaids may be able to pull off this look success-

fully. The remainder could be left feeling self-conscious and uncomfortable. Plus, form-fitting clothing will be restrictive and can be difficult to move around in — particularly considering the gown will be worn for an entire day.

Flattering Color

As a bride you may have a colorscape in your mind for the wedding. But what looks good in table linens and flowers is not always the right choice for clothing.

Take the skin tones and hair colors of your bridesmaids into consideration before choosing a dress. Green- and yellow-hued dresses may not look nice on women with olive skin tones, while very pale colors may wash out women with fair skin. Those with dark skin may need a brighter-colored dress.

Price Tag

It is an honor to be asked to be part of a bridal party, but that honor can be very

expensive. The bridesmaids are expected to pay for their wardrobe, hair styling, and makeup, as well as parties and gifts for the happy couple. As a courtesy to the women who already will be investing a considerable amount to be a part of your wedding, make every effort to se-

lect a gown that is affordable. There are plenty of retailers offering stylish options that may not be as expensive as some specialty stores.

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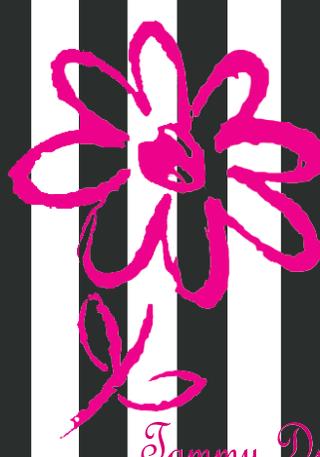
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A little patience can help a bride-to-be select bridesmaid gowns that are flattering to all the members of her bridal party.



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Wedding Insurance: Protecting your investment

By Karin Ramige Cornwell

A bride and groom spend a lot of time and money planning every detail of their special day. What happens when the photographer or dress shop goes out of business when you have already put money down or paid in full?

Wedding insurance is something a couple should consider as they start planning their wedding.

You would not drive a new \$20,000 car without having insurance. Should you plan a \$20,000 wedding without similar protection?

In 2011, the average cost of a wedding with 155-165 guests in McLeod County was \$20,953, according to www.theweddingreport.com.

Wedding insurance has become more and more popular over since around 2005, according to Mary Adelman of Professional Insurance Providers in Glencoe.

What is wedding insurance? Like other insurance policies, wedding insurance protects the couple's investment against situations that are out of their control.

Some events that wedding insurance could cover are: dress or tuxedo repair or replacement, lost deposits if a vendor goes out of business or declares bankruptcy, ring repair or replacement, severe weather that causes you to postpone the wedding, ruined photos, unexpected call to military service, damaged or stolen gifts, sudden illness or additional liability

insurance.

Adelman suggests checking the cancellation and refund policies of each vendor you are using and their liability insurance requirements.

She also suggests checking with your homeowners or renter's policy to see if a liability associated with your wedding would be covered.

As you start to plan your wedding determine the amount of risk involved with the money being spent, says Adelman.

Policies start from around \$160 with a range of coverage. Should you decide to purchase wedding insurance, check with your insurance agent to determine the best policy for your specific wedding.

Wedding insurance can be purchased from two years to two weeks before your wedding.

One circumstance that is never covered, Adelman says, is cold feet.

Talk to your local insurance agent to determine if wedding insurance is a good fit for you.



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To obtain a Certified Copy of a Marriage Certificate: Effective 8/1/2007 (You may make your request in person or by mail)

1. Send us the full name of the groom, the full maiden name of the bride and the date of the marriage. You must have purchased your Marriage License from McLeod County for us to be able to provide you with the Certified Copy.
2. Send \$9.00 for the first copy and \$9.00 for each additional copy requested for the same record. Make your check payable to McLeod County Auditor-Treasurer.
3. Send the request and the correct dollar amount to:
McLeod County Auditor-Treasurer
2391 Hennepin Ave. N.
Glencoe, MN 55336

To apply for a Marriage License:

1. Complete a Marriage License Application.
2. **As of August 1, 2009 BOTH parties will need to be present when applying for a marriage license.** If you are not able to both be present than the Marriage Application Supplemental form will need to be filled out & notarized.
3. The fee is \$115.00 if no pre-marital counseling has been completed. The fee is \$40.00 if 12 hours of pre-marital counseling has been completed AND we have a signed & notarized form from the person who provided the counseling. **As of August 1, 2009, the form will need to have a notarized signature to be accepted.**
4. If either has been divorced, we need the official date of divorce and the name of the court.
5. There is a 5-day waiting period, not including the day that you apply. (On the fifth day you may marry.)
6. The Marriage License is valid for 6 months. You must marry within that time or the license will expire.
(No Birth Certificates, Driver's License, or Blood tests are required in Minnesota)

Information courtesy of: <http://www.co.mcleod.mn.us>

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<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/osr/registrars.html#McLeod>

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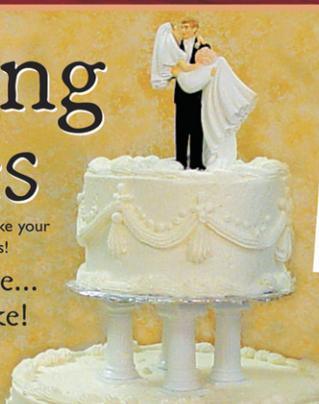
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Simple ways to save on your wedding day

Metro Creative Graphics

According to a 2012 report in Brides magazine, the average American couple spends just under \$27,000 on their wedding, while their northern neighbors in Canada spend slightly more than \$23,000 on average for their big day. Clearly couples, regardless of which side of the border they call home, can expect to invest a substantial amount of money for their weddings.

While many couples find the cost of a wedding is well worth it, others would like to find ways to save so their big day is not a budget-buster. Such savings are not always easy to come by, especially for couples with a very distinctive picture in mind of what their wedding should be. However, even couples strongly committed to a certain wedding style might change their minds once they realize how much such a dream wedding will cost. For those couples as well as couples who simply want to save some money, the following are a few ideas to avoid busting your budget without venturing too far from your dream wedding.

• **Trim the guest list.** The guest list is perhaps the easiest place to begin saving money. Many reception halls will charge by the head, so consider if you really need to invite 150 guests or if 100 will do. Such trimming can save you a substantial amount of money. For example, a banquet hall that charges \$200 per guest will cost couples with a guest list

of 150 \$30,000 for the reception alone. Cutting that guest list to 100 reduces that cost by \$10,000.

When putting together the guest list, remove those candidates who would best be described as acquaintances. This can include coworkers with whom you do not socialize, as well as old college friends to whom you rarely speak. Distant cousins you have not spoken to in years also can be cut from the list.

• **Do not go overboard on the gown.** Styles are ever-changing, so there is a strong chance brides will not be passing down their wedding gowns to their own daughters someday. What is popular now will likely seem outdated by the time your daughter walks down the aisle. Keep this in mind when shopping for a wedding dress, which can be made in the same design as the one you try on but with cheaper fabrics that are a fraction of the cost.

The disparity between gown costs in the United States and Canada should paint a good picture of how easily brides can save money on their gowns.

According to a survey of wedding trends conducted by Weddingbells, an online resource for Canadian brides,

the average Canadian bride in 2011 spent just under \$1,800 on her wedding gown, while the average American bride spends roughly \$1,100 on her gown. Though the reasons for that disparity are unclear, it is safe to say there are savings to be had for brides who do not want to break the bank paying for their wedding gowns.

• **Get hitched in the off-season.** Many couples prefer to get married sometime between the months of May through October. During these months, venues and

vendors, including limousine services, caterers, photographers, musicians, and deejays, are more expensive. If you are willing to switch your wedding date to the off-season you can save a substantial amount of money. In addition, you likely will not face as much competition for the best venues and vendors as you will during the peak wedding season.

• **Trim your beverage budget.** The bar tab at the end of the reception can be considerable, but there are ways to save money while ensuring your guests can still toast you and yours with a few libations. Rather than offering a full bar, limit the choices to beer and wine, which will be perfectly acceptable to most guests anyway. In addition, rather than paying the caterer for the wine, buy your own and you will save a considerable amount of money. You may have to pay the caterer a fee to pour the wine, but that fee is negligible compared to what you would pay the company to provide the wine.

• **Choose a buffet-style dinner over waiter service.** Many guests will no doubt prefer a buffet-style dinner instead of waiter service, so take advantage of that and choose a more affordable buffet-style dinner that allows diners to choose their own entrees and side dishes.

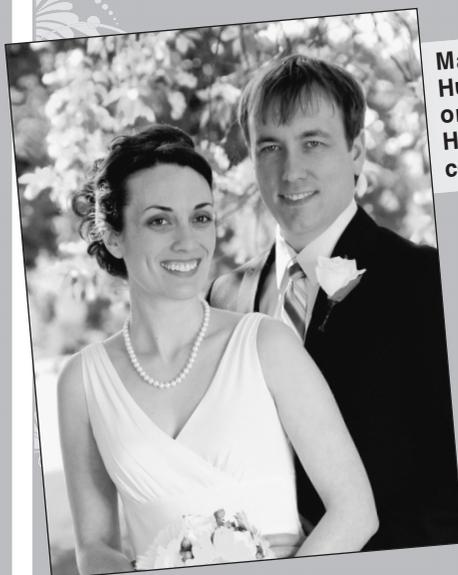
When it comes to trimming wedding costs, couples will have to make compromises. But those compromises do not have to come at the cost of a beautiful and memorable event.



A bride who is willing to be flexible with respect to her wedding gown can save a substantial amount of money.

\$50 Gift Certificate Winners

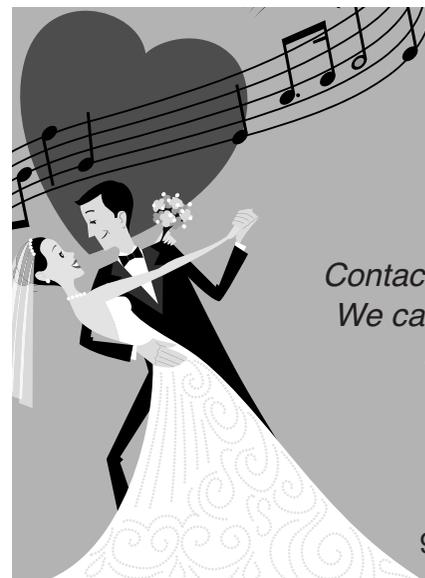
The drawing was open to any couples who had their engagement announcement in The McLeod County Chronicle during 2012. The two winning couples were able to choose a gift certificate from any business that advertised in the 2012 Bride & Groom supplement.



Matthew Peterson and Jennifer Huebscher were united in marriage on April 14, 2012. The Peterson-Huebscher's chose to have their certificate redeemed at Coborn's.



Taylor and Valerie Mackenthun were united in marriage on August 5, 2012. The Mackenthun's chose to have their certificate redeemed at Crow River Winery.



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Save-the-date card etiquette

Metro Creative Graphics

More and more couples planning to walk down the aisle are embracing save-the-date cards to give guests adequate notice that there is a party on the horizon.

Save-the-date cards do more than let guests know when you are getting hitched. The cards are a preliminary way to keep guests informed and let them know they are, in fact, on the guest list.

These cards have not always been so popular, but have risen in popularity due to longer engagement periods, a growing number of destination weddings and the growing number of couples with guests from all over the country, if not the world. Considering people often plan business trips, vacations and other excursions several months in advance, save-the-date cards help secure a greater number of attendees at your wedding.

Save-the-date announcements can vary in many ways. They may be post-cards or magnets that can be attached to a refrigerator door. If you desire a cohesive theme to your wedding stationery, select the save-the-date cards at the same time you choose your wedding invitations. This way you can ensure that either the patterns, fonts, colors, or style of the cards will match. It will also help convey the tone of the wedding. Guests often take their cues regarding the level of formality of the wedding from the type of stationery couples choose.

When to send out the save-the-date

announcements is important as well. As a general rule of thumb, it is wise to mail out the cards six months in advance for a standard wedding. If the wedding re-

A wedding also may necessitate planning a vacation or personal time off from work. Therefore, ample advanced notice is advisable.



Save-the-date cards inform guests that a wedding is on the horizon, making it easier to arrange travel plans.

quires travel or extended overnight accommodations, you may want to mail them out eight months to a year in advance to give guests the time to investigate flight costs and hotel arrangements.

Be sure to make your guest list in advance of sending out save-the-date cards. Everyone who receives a card also should be sent an invitation prior to the wedding. Remember to include any

members of your planned wedding party in the list of recipients. Just because a person has verbally confirmed attendance at your wedding does not mean they should be excluded from subsequent announcements.

Guests may talk to one another, and it is best to avoid hurt feelings and any added drama before the wedding by treating everyone equally.

Be sure to include the wedding date, your names and the location of the wedding on the save-the-date cards. You do not need to offer RSVP information or detailed specifics at this time. You may want to include a Web site URL on the card so guests can check it frequently for updates on wedding information. Be sure to also include that a formal invitation will follow at a later date. You do not want to cause confusion by having guests think that the save-the-date card is the actual invitation.

Also, make sure you address the save-the-date cards correctly to show your intentions with respect to guest invites. For example, be clear about whether children will be invited and whether a boyfriend/girlfriend or another guest can tag along.

Although save-the-date cards are not a necessity, they have become a popular part of wedding planning to eliminate confusion about invitations as well as help guests plan time off for your wedding.

How to help guests save on travel

Metro Creative Graphics

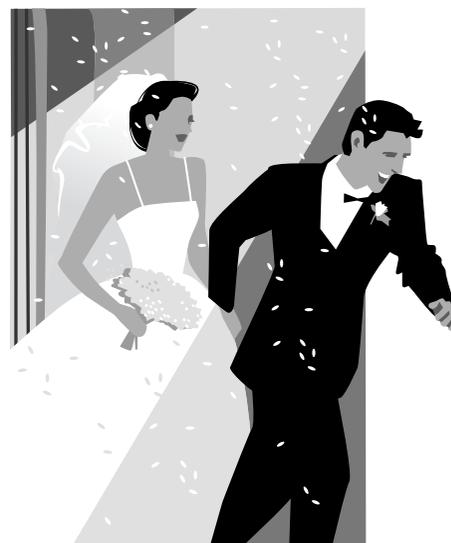
Weddings are typically expensive affairs. Couples may be willing to go the extra mile and stretch their finances for their big day, but what about their guests? Couples ask much of their out-of-town wedding guests, who must arrange for travel and lodging and possibly even childcare if they are bringing young children.

Because traveling to a wedding can be such a costly expenditure, many couples look for ways to alleviate some of the financial pressure that this travel places on their guests. The following are a few ways couples can do just that.

- Find an airport-friendly wedding destination. Couples who can get married within a short distance of a major airport can save their guests a significant amount of money. A major airport has more flights, and that can translate to more options and more affordable flights for your guests. In addition, a wedding destination that is close to an airport reduces the chance that guests will have to pay for rental cars. A cab ride to the hotel might be less expensive than a rental car, which guests may not need aside from getting to and from the airport.

- Inquire about group airline rates. Couples know to negotiate group hotel rates for their wedding guests, but few may know it's possible to negotiate group airline rates as well. If a large number of your wedding guests will be traveling from the same city, contact the major airlines to see if they offer group travel discounts. Many airlines do, so comparison shop to find your guests the best deal.

- Consider a longer engagement. A longer engagement can save your guests money on travel. Couples who choose to have a longer engagement and send save-the-date cards out early are giving their guests more time to book flights and find deals. Flights tend to be less expensive when booked well in advance, so a longer engagement gives guests more time to find a flight that's affordable. In addition, travelers who can book early often get the first crack at the best flight times, saving themselves the nuisance of taking a red-eye flight or traveling early in the morning.



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Here's to you! Some tips for a great best man toast

Metro Creative Graphics

The best man toast can be one of the most memorable parts of a couple's wedding. Sometimes a toast is memorable for its humor and heartfelt sense of appreciation for the groom and his bride, while other toasts are more memorable for all the wrong reasons.

One of the reasons best man toasts can be so unpredictable is that giving a best man toast is such a unique experience. It is something many men never do, while those who do give a best man toast may only do it once in a lifetime. It is understandable to be nervous when asked to give a best man toast, but there are a few tricks of the trade a best man can employ to calm those nerves and ensure his toast is memorable for all the right reasons.

Practice makes perfect. Few people are capable of standing in front of a crowd of people and speaking off the cuff. A best man should take this into account and practice his speech before the big day. A spur-of-the-moment speech may provide an adrenaline rush, but such an endeavor may come off as if you did not care enough to put the effort into writing a thoughtful toast ahead of time. In addition, practicing the toast once it has been written will make you feel more comfortable and confident in front of the crowd. If possible, practice in front of a friend or family member so you can solicit feedback. A friend or relative might be able to help you fine-tune the speech, which in turn can calm your nerves once you are handed the microphone.



Avoid alcohol. Getting liquored up prior to your toast is a recipe for disaster. Though it may seem like a good idea to employ alcohol to calm your nerves and lower your inhibitions, it is not a good idea. Consuming alcohol before your toast increases the chance that you will end up embarrassing the bride and groom as well as yourself.

Get to the point. Men and women who have attended their fair share of wedding receptions no doubt have sat through a long-winded toast from the best man or maid of honor. Such toasts can bring a festive reception to a grinding halt, and guests will likely tune out before the best man or maid of honor gets to the point.

Being succinct should be a goal for a best man with regard to his toast. Avoid long-winded walks down Memory Lane in favor of a toast that thoughtfully cuts to the chase and lets everyone get back to celebrating.

Spin a yarn. While it is important to be brief, do not be so brief that no one at the reception learns about your relationship to the groom. Share a humorous anecdote from your mutual past to illustrate the type of relationship you and the groom share with one another. This story should have an element of humor but do not include anything too embarrassing, and all ex-girlfriends should be considered off-limits.

Congratulate the couple. Because nerves play such a significant part in many best man toasts, it can be easy to forget to congratulate both the bride and groom. Do not just toast the groom at the end of your best man speech; toast his new bride as well.

Wedding Budget

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Wedding Consultant	\$ _____
<i>Parties:</i>	
Engagement	\$ _____
Rehearsal Dinner	\$ _____
Reception	\$ _____
Gift Opening	\$ _____
<i>Stationery:</i>	
Announcements	\$ _____
Invitations	\$ _____
Thank-you Notes	\$ _____
Stamps	\$ _____
Church Programs	\$ _____
<i>Clothing:</i>	
Bridal gown	\$ _____
Groom's tux	\$ _____
Attendant Dresses/Tuxes	\$ _____
<i>Flowers:</i>	
Bride	\$ _____
Groom	\$ _____
Parents	\$ _____
Grandparents	\$ _____
Members of Wedding Party	\$ _____
Wedding Bouquet	\$ _____
Reception Flowers	\$ _____
Reception Helpers (hosts, servers, attendants)	\$ _____
Readers/Musicians	\$ _____
<i>Catering:</i>	
Reception/Rental	\$ _____
Cake	\$ _____
Beverages	\$ _____
<i>Photography:</i>	
Photographer	\$ _____
Photos	\$ _____
Books	\$ _____
Videography	\$ _____
<i>Honeymoon:</i>	
Travel	\$ _____
Transportation	\$ _____
Accommodations	\$ _____
Food/Beverage	\$ _____
<i>Additional Expenses:</i>	
Marriage License	\$ _____
Rings	\$ _____
Clergy Fees/Church Rental	\$ _____
Bridal Party Gifts	\$ _____
Hair Styling/Manicures	\$ _____
Transportation	\$ _____
Guest Book	\$ _____
Ring Bearer Pillow	\$ _____
Tips/Gratuities	\$ _____
Limo/Parking	\$ _____
<i>Total</i>	\$ _____

Did you know?

For decades the month of June held firm as the most popular month for weddings. But statistics now indicate that there may be shifting preferences in the time of the year for marriages. According to The National Center for Health Statistics, July and August are now the most popular months for tying the knot in the United States. September and October have also gained momentum as premier months. Explanations for this shift vary, but it may have something to do with changing weather patterns and warmer weather now arriving later in the season than in the past. Also, getting married later in the year may make it easier for couples to secure their first choice of wedding venues.

What to expect in a civil wedding ceremony

Metro Creative Graphics

Many people dream of a wedding in a church or synagogue before dozens of family members and friends, while there are others who prefer to forego the fanfare of a large wedding ceremony and are content with a civil wedding instead.

Civil ceremonies are often a choice for couples who may have different religious beliefs or do not belong to a particular religious persuasion.

In lieu of being presided over by a pastor, priest or rabbi, civil ceremonies are conducted by an authorized official, such as a judge or justice of the peace. The marriage also can be performed by a licensed wedding officiant. Depending on where a couple lives, mayors or even notary publics can solemnize a marriage. Pilots and ship captains also may be able to preside over the ceremony. Some states and provinces will allow anyone to solemnize a wedding, provided they have filed for a special permit for the day.

In terms of location, the most basic of civil ceremonies take place at the county courthouse, where paperwork is immediately filed. Ceremonies also occur at City Hall. Couples can choose to hire an officiant to go to another location to oversee the marriage ceremony. The latter is the more expensive option and will be based on the officiant's schedule.

The structure of a civil marriage is much more lax than those which follow the more traditional course. Rather than being required to wear a certain

wardrobe or meet with the requirements of a particular church or other house of worship, couples often find flexibility with the civil route.

Although some brides and grooms prefer to wear a tuxedo or suit and a wedding gown, it is not necessary to do so. There are many couples who have tied the knot in more casual clothing or even costumes.

In order to participate in a civil ceremony, couples must secure a marriage license. This is usually obtained by a county registrar or another officer of records where the couple lives.

Regulations will vary as to the time period in which the ceremony can be done after the marriage license is received. Some licenses may be voided if the couple does not tie the knot within a few days of securing the license.

When the ceremony will take place is generally up to the couple and, if a member of the judiciary will be overseeing the wedding, the courthouse. Some courts require an appointment for the

wedding, while others may have a walk-in policy. Determine these policies well in advance of the wedding day.

There is often a fee collected for the wedding ceremony in addition to what was paid for the marriage license. For



Many couples forgo a religious ceremony, opting instead for one that is presided over by a civil officiant at a courthouse or another location.

those hiring a private officiant, the fee will be much higher than what a clerk of the court will cost. The couple will need to bring the marriage license and photo identification. Two witnesses also will need to be present with their own photographic identification. These witnesses will be needed to sign the marriage certificate.

Because there is no firm tradition with civil ceremonies, couples may need to be more hands-on when it comes to executing the wedding. Here are some tips to consider.

- An officiant may not organize the wedding, meaning it will be up to the couple to choose vows, arrange where people will stand, request any clerical blessings, or include any other special elements.

- Some officiants enjoy presiding over weddings, while others see it as just a part of public duty. Couples can try to find an officiant who meets with their approval and will keep with the tone that is expected of the ceremony.

- For those adding personal vows, keep them brief and tailored to the occasion.

- Know how many people can attend the ceremony in advance. Couples should recognize that space could be limited and restricted to only a few people if the wedding is taking place at the courthouse.

- Arrange the venue for a party afterward. Couples may choose to record a video of the ceremony for playback at a reception to enable those who were not in attendance to be part of the special moment where the rings and vows were exchanged.

Civil ceremonies are advantageous to those who have factors that may make a religious ceremony unfavorable.



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How to find the right hall for your big day

Metro Creative Graphics

Planning a wedding is no small feat, as couples are faced with many decisions seemingly from the moment they get engaged right up until they walk down the aisle as man and wife. One of the biggest decisions a couple will make is where to host the reception.

Couples must consider a variety of factors when looking for the right banquet hall to host their reception. The wedding is a celebration, and the banquet hall is where the couple and their guests will let their hair down and, hopefully, enjoy a festive and memorable night. Because the reception is typically the most lengthy portion of a couple's wedding day, it is important to find a place where everyone can be comfortable and enjoy themselves.

The following are a few tips for couples looking to find the ideal banquet hall to host their wedding reception.

• **Ask around.** Word-of-mouth is a great way to find the right banquet hall. Ask friends or family members who got hitched in the same town where your ceremony will be if they can recommend a reception site. These friends or family members can provide a behind-the-scenes look at a reception hall, from how

accommodating the staff was to how flexible the banquet hall was with regard to pricing to how open the staff was to suggestions. Wedding planning is not easy, so if friends, family members or coworkers recommend a hassle-free banquet hall, that recommendation can remove a lot of the stress from planning a wedding.

• **Consider the size of the facility.** Some couples prefer an intimate affair with relatively few guests, while others will desire a large wedding party with lots of guests. Couples can find a banquet hall that is capable of catering to small or large wedding parties, but find one that fits your party specifically. If your wedding party is small, then avoid a larger facility that will appear empty. If the party is large, make sure there's adequate room so guests will not feel like they are sitting on top of one another during dinner and dessert.

• **Do not downplay decor.** A banquet hall with an attractive decor is not only aesthetically appealing but can appeal to a couple's finances as well. Such a hall likely will not need any additional decorations, while a banquet hall that is unadorned and lacks embellishments will, and those decorations can dip into a

couple's overall wedding budget. Compare the costs of the more decorated banquet hall with the one that is more plain in appearance, factoring in the cost to decorate the latter, and you might just realize the one with more aesthetic appeal is more affordable in the long run.

• **Prioritize privacy.** Few couples would be open to strangers having easy access to their wedding reception. When shopping for a banquet hall, look for one that gives you and your guests all the privacy you need.

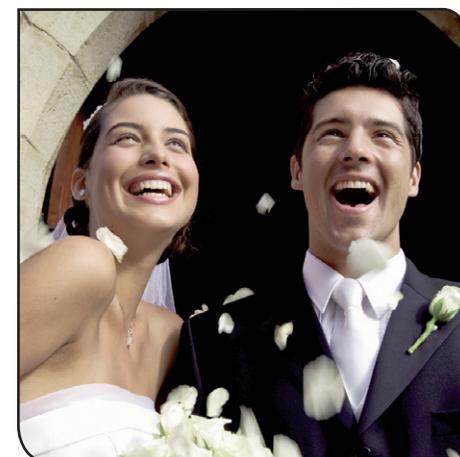
Many couples have taken to hosting the entire ceremony at a hotel, which may handle the bulk of the planning and remove the hassle of transportation for out-of-town guests. However, couples considering a hotel should look for one that can promise privacy from other guests at the hotel who are not there for the wedding. The reception room should be secluded from the rest of the hotel so other guests walking by aren't tempted to walk in on the festivities.

The banquet hall is where couples can expect to spend most of their time on their wedding day, so couples should exercise their due diligence to ensure they find an inviting and festive facility.

Tradition behind tossing rice

Metro Creative Graphics

Once a couple has been married, tradition states that they be covered with tossed rice upon exiting the ceremony. The idea of throwing rice began during the Middle Ages, when rice symbolized fertility. Rice was tossed at the married couple in the hopes they would have many children and be blessed with prosperity as a family. A false rumor spread that rice was harmful to birds who would eat the discarded rice and explode, so many people now use birdseed or rose petals as alternatives. However, rest assured that the rice myth has been debunked by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology.





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