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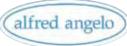














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Many couples' weddings take more than a year to plan. Couples want all of the special people in their lives to witness their vows, and giving guests advance notice can ensure as many loved ones as possible attend the ceremony.

To be certain that guests have ample notice to clear their schedules, many couples now turn to save-the-date cards, which announce weddings well in advance of the actual wedding day.

Save-the-date cards once were reserved only for weddings that required travel or special circumstances, such as destination weddings. But such cards have now become commonplace for all weddings. That's because many people plan vacations or business trips anywhere from four to six months in advance. Busy people require plenty of notice to include this important date on their calendars, particularly when wedding dates fall during popular travel seasons or around the holidays.

Kleinfeld Bridal, a premiere New York bridal boutique, says that save-the-date cards are typically mailed six to eight months prior to the wedding, though some are sent as early as a year before the big day. Once a date and a location is secured, save-the-dates can be ordered and mailed.

Save-the-date cards require couples to assemble their guest lists well in advance of the wedding. The leading bridal resource The Knot notes that everyone who will get a wedding invitation should also receive a save-the-date card. There's no turning back once cards are sent, so couples will need to be certain everyone they want to attend is getting advanced notice.

It's acceptable to mail save-the-date cards even if some wedding day details are still up in the air. Guests really only need to know the date and location of the wedding. Couples also can use the save-the-date card to direct invitees to a wedding website where guests can learn the details of the wedding as they unfold.

RSVP information does not need to be included on the save-the-date card.

Save-the-date cards are much less formal than invitations, so couples can have fun with them. They can showcase couples' clever personalities or funny quirks. Keep in mind it is in poor taste to mention gifts or registries on save-the-date cards. There will be plenty of time to direct guests to registries later on.

Couples are increasingly turning to save-thedate cards when planning their weddings to make sure busy friends and family will have enough time to make plans to attend their weddings.





Selecting a comfortable wedding gown

Many brides-to-be visit bridal shops with specific goals in mind regarding the style of their wedding gowns. Some women come equipped with magazine tear-outs or pull up ideas on their mobile phones. Others may have an entire scrapbook filled with various ideas they've been compiling for years.

Much consideration is given to wedding gowns. The cost and silhouette of the dress may garner the bulk of that consideration, but brides might want to spend more time considering comfort.

Depending on the time of day their weddings take place, brides can spend 12 hours or more in their wedding gowns on their wedding day. However, when shopping for their gowns, brides may prioritize beauty over comfort, even though it's entirely possible to find a gown that's both stunning and comfortable. When staff and friends or family who have come along to offer advice start to blush over wedding gowns, brides-tobe may feel pressured to downplay any discomfort they feel.

To make sure brides look flawless and elegant but are still comfortable in their wedding gowns, consider the following tips.

• Know what to highlight and what to cover up. No two body types are the same, and many women feel certain parts of their bodies are their best assets while they want to downplay others. Try on gowns that play up your best features. If you have shapely legs, consider a dramatic gown with a slit to show them off. Certain gowns can enhance the decollete or show off an hourglass

shape. Remember, many gowns can be modified so that you feel secure and confident. Sleeves can be added or fabric placed to cover up any perceived flaws. Confidence and pride are important parts of the comfort factor.

• Get sized correctly. Bridal gown sizes do not coincide with street sizes. Depending on the manufacturer, brides may have to select gowns that are several sizes larger than they would normally wear. This should not be a cause for alarm. Brides should go by their measurements. mirror and smile when

a dress that is too small will only lead to discomfort on the wedding day.

• Purchase the right undergarments. Improperly fitting bras, shapewear and other undergarments can lead to discomfort as well. Some seamstresses can sew in supportive cups to remove the need for separate bras. Brides can explore various options to reduce the visibility of certain accoutrements.

 Move around in the gown. Brides should not just stand in front of the

Attempting to squeeze into trying on gowns. Put them through their paces. Try sitting, bending and even a little dancing. Make sure the dress is comfortable to move around in.

> • Try different options. The gown brides have in mind may not be the one they ultimately go home with. Explore different styles and materials. Choose cooler, breezier fabrics and lightweight gowns, like crêpe, georgette or organza, for summer weddings. Heavier fabrics, such as brocade, may be more comfortable in the winter.



Determining wedding day dress codes

Wedding invitations do more than merely announce that a celebration is on the horizon. Invitations provide key information about the ceremony and festivities to follow. Many details, including the location, time and date of the wedding, are spelled out on the wedding invitations. However, invitations can sometimes leave guests confused about the appropriate style of attire for the occasion.

Even though wedding invitations rarely offer specific information regarding attire, chances are the wording will provide clues that can help guests interpret the desired dress code.

CASUAL

If the invitation mentions casual attire, it's important to realize that everyday casual is different from wedding casual. Jeans, shorts and tank tops are unacceptable unless otherwise noted. Err on the side of caution and go with business casual, which includes chinos, slacks, a polo shirt or button-down shirt for men. Women can wear a sundress or slacks or a skirt and an attractive blouse. If the invitation mentions beach casual, shorts and even sandals are likely acceptable.

SEMIFORMAL

Semiformal dresswear, sometimes referred to as "dressy casual," is a step up from casual clothing. Cocktail dresses or a more elegant skirt and top are the norms. Gentleman generally wear a suit and tie. Coordinate the colors of clothing to the time of day. Fabrics should represent the season. For example, a linen suit will not pass at a

winter wedding.

FORMAL

Formal attire is the default dress code for the majority of weddings. When the invitation does not specify a dress code, it is safe to assume formal attire is expected. Men can choose among a dark suit and tie or a tuxedo. Women can opt for a formal cocktail-length dress, a classic suit or a long dress. Select among tones that are gray, black or brown.

BLACK TIE

Black tie events also require formal attire. Black tie typically goes hand-in-hand with an evening wedding. Black tie is more rigid for male guests, who should wear a tuxedo, black bow tie, cummerbund, and patent leather shoes. Women have a little more leeway with their attire at such

gatherings. A long evening gown might be preferable. However, a chic cocktail dress also can be acceptable, and darker, neutral colors are most appropriate. Some invitations may reference "Black Tie Preferred." While men may opt for a tuxedo, a black suit also can be worn.

WHITE TIE

The most formal of occasions will request white tie attire. Ball gowns and tuxedoes with tails are the norm, as are dramatic jewelry and hairstyles. White tie attire is akin to what one might see worn to awards shows.

When attending a wedding, it is always better to be overdressed than underdressed. Guests can consult with fellow guests or the bride and groom if they are unsure of the dress code.





Treat quests to personalized vous

Couples who choose to write their own wedding vows recognize how special such personal gestures are. Writing one's own vows can impart a personalized and special touch to the ceremony. But as anyone who has stared down a blank piece of paper or blinking cursor can attest, a case of writer's block may encourage couples to abandon the idea of writing their own vows.

Writing vows can be nerve-wracking. Many couples are unaccustomed to speaking in front of crowds, and then there is the challenge of turning life-altering feelings into language that will appeal to the masses.

But couples struggling with their vows need not throw in the vow-writing towel. With some practice and guidance, anyone can write cherished vows that will be remembered for all of the right reasons for vears to come.

• Skip the schtick. Jokes may pop up in



speeches throughout the evening, but wedding vows can be your chance to truly speak from the heart. Humor may come across as insincerity. Rather, list the words that describe your feelings for your future spouse, and build on that.

• Tell a story. If you need inspiration, look to a moment in your relationship when you really knew this was the person with whom you wanted to share your life. Relay the story, but keep it brief. Try to be as specific as possible, and recognize that it's

acceptable to be playful with your words. When it's really coming from the heart and not the head, vou'll know it.

- Borrow from traditional words. Take traditional vows and tweak them to make them your own. This works especially well for those who have trouble getting started or are unsure of which format to follow. Incorporate key words, such as "partners," "love," "friends," "joy," and "forever."
- Be sure the officiant is on board. Depending on the type of ceremony, the

officiant may have final say over what can or cannot be included in your vows. Religious ceremonies, for example, may be limited to certain scripture readings and traditional vows. Before you devote any time get the final version right to writing vows, ensure that it's alright to include them. Otherwise, save personalized sentiments for a special toast at the wedding reception.

- Decide on a mutual structure for the vows. If you and your spouse will not be writing the vows together, agree on a format that you both will follow. Otherwise, you might be writing about your unending love, and he or she may be promising to keep updated on favorite sports teams or television programs. You want the tone and style of the vows to be cohesive.
- **Dig deeper.** Look into the future and project how you hope your life to be in 10 or 20 years. Explain all of the reasons you want to be together for the duration.

• Read the vows several times. Read over your listen to the vows and offer work and make sure the language is clear and there are no glaring errors. It may take a few versions to where you want it.

• Get a second opinion. to wedding ceremonies.

Ask someone you trust to feedback. This needs to be a person who will be honest and not just tell you what you want to hear.

Personalized vows can add an extra special touch





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Incorporate flowers in various ways

Weddings are special moments for couples and the guests they invite to share their happiness on their big days. Beautiful weddings require substantial planning, as every last detail must be considered for couples to enjoy the wedding of their dreams.

Flowers play a big role in many weddings, and couples can add beauty and ambiance to the event by using floral arrangements in various ways. Modern floral arrangements are stunning, and many couples may not know that herbs, spices and flowers have been used in weddings for centuries.

Today, flowers are used to decorate wedding venues, impart sweet fragrances and complement formal attire, but in ancient times they were used differently. Flowers were used to bestow good luck on the couple and keep bad omens away. Brides carried aromatic flowers and spices to keep evil spirits from spoiling the festivities, and some even tucked bulbs of garlic into their bouquets. In ancient Greece and Rome, both the bride and groom wore garlands made out of strong-smelling herbs flowers around their necks or heads.

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These wreaths were considered gifts of nature, and thus extremely appropriate for a wedding. Traditionally, bridesmaids would be responsible for fashioning these floral components. In ancient Sweden, young girls would carry small bouquets of fragrant herbs down the aisle and the groom would put thyme in his pocket. These aromatics were thought to help keep trolls at bay.

Besides warding off spirits or hungry trolls, flowers also served more practical purposes throughout history. During the Middle Ages, people bathed less frequently than they do today. Bathing might only have occurred twice a year, once during summer and then again at Christmastime. Because many weddings took place in the spring, flowers were used to

mask bodily odors. Not only were flowers and herbs carried, but they also would be sewn into clothing.

Modern brides and grooms may no longer see their wedding days as times for opportunistic evil spirits. But that doesn't mean that couples cannot borrow from ancient traditions and incorporate flowers into their weddings in various ways.

• Wreaths and garlands:

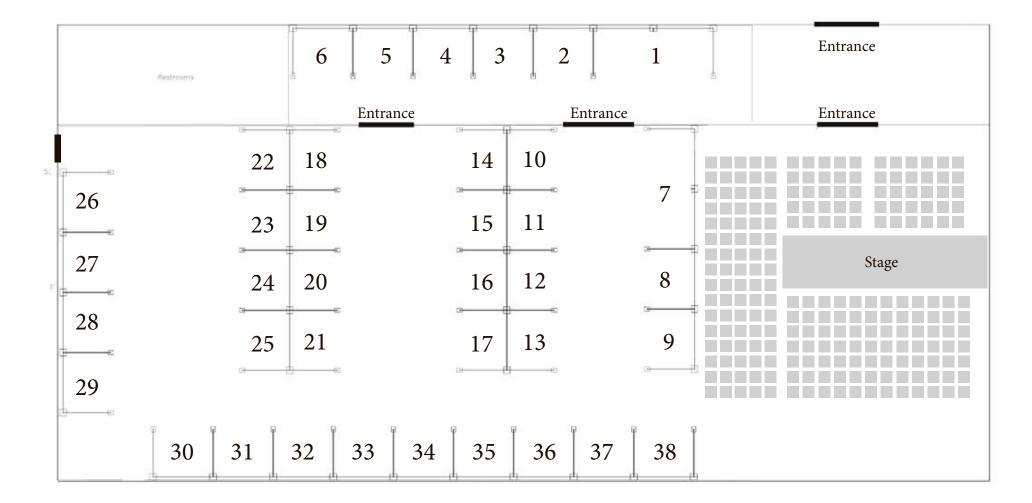
Ask the florist to weave small flower buds, berries and vines to a headband, wreath or piece of twine so that the bride and groom can wear these flowers in the way they were worn by ancient Greeks and Romans. When coupled with Grecianstyled wedding gowns, brides can look like beautiful goddesses on their wedding days.

- Fragrant favors: Tuck dried rose petals and other fragrant flowers into sachets that are embroidered with the wedding date and couple's names. Guests can use these sachets to keep clothings smelling fresh in drawers or as subtle air fresheners around the house.
- Edible flowers: Ask the caterier to make meals flower-friendly by including some edible blooms in the salad or as a garnish on meals.
- Raining petals: In lieu of bubbles or birdseed, guests can shower the newlyweds with rose petals after the ceremony.
- Memorial: Some couples like to honor departed family members. Floral arrangements with small placards can make for fitting memorials.









NIAGARA COUNTY'S BRIDAL SHOWCASE FLOOR PLAN





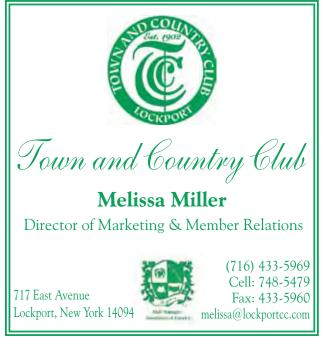


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Jewelry care and cleaning guidelines

Bridal gowns and tuxedos may get their fair share of attention at weddings, but the subtle details ears, and wrists of bridal of brides' and grooms' wedding attire also garner guests' attention.

Breathtaking jewelry worn by the bride, groom and members of the bridal party looks great on the day of the wedding and in photos couples will keep for decades to come. Naturally, engagement rings and bridal bands are the shining stars of the celebration. However, other pieces of jewelry also make for cherished accessories for weddings.

Bridal jewelry is an investment worth maintaining. According to a 2013 report by the Jewelers of America, couples spend an average of \$4,000 on engagement rings and more money on wedding

bands. Considering several thousands of dollars may adorn the necks, fingers, party members, individuals should learn how to keep their jewelry investments looking pristine.

REMOVE JEWELRY DURING HARD WORK

Exercise caution when wearing jewelry during strenuous activities or when jewelry can be damaged. Also, watch when handling slippery substances such as soaps and oils, as jewelry may fall off and become lost. Instead, remove precious jewelry and store it in a safe location, such as in a jewelry chest or a drawer.

USE CAUTION WITH BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Apply lotion, cosmetics,

perfume, cologne, and hairspray before putting on jewelry. These substances

can discolor certain metals or even damage stones. Prolonged contact with perspiration and bodily oils also can cause discoloration over time. Gently wipe down jewelry with a soft cloth after wearing it to remove oils

and sweat. BE CAREFUL **AROUND SWIMMING POOLS, SPAS**

Couples should remove jewelry before partaking in water-based activities on their honeymoons. According to jewelry retailer Zales, chlorinated water can react with the metals found in jewelry, causing color changes and even structural changes. Don't risk jewelry falling off in the ocean. Store it in a secure location

before diving in.

BEWARE THE SUN. TOO

The Gemological Institute of America, Inc. states that sunlight can affect the durability and color of colored gemstones. Over time and in excess, the sun and heat can fade or damage some stones, such as amethyst, topaz and pearls. Other stones can darken with exposure to the sun.

INSPECT AND KNOW YOUR JEWELRY

Routinely inspect jewelry to test for any structural issues that can result in breakage or lost stones. Make sure any suspected problems are repaired promptly.

Ensure jewelry will last for years to come. Exercise caution when wearing pieces and clean and care

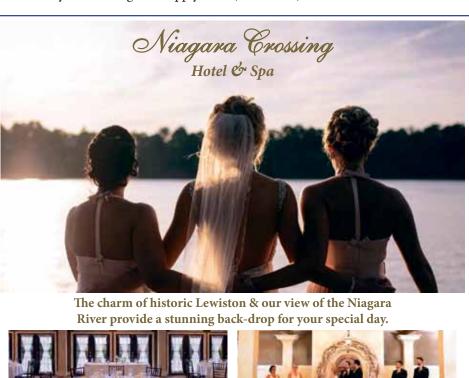


for them properly.

CLEAN JEWELRY WITH CARE

Rely on mild detergents and a light touch when cleaning jewelry. Use prod-

ucts specifically designed for jewelry care, and read labels to ensure safety. The International Gemological Institute says seriously soiled jewelry should be professionally cleaned.



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Stunning engagement ring alternatives

White diamonds have been the traditional engagement ring stones for decades. While shoppers have experimented with gold, silver, platinum, and other precious metals for ring bands, the star of the show has long been that twinkling, pristine diamond.

Even though diamonds may be a "girl's best friend," they may not fit every woman's style, particularly the bride who likes to buck tradition and think outside the box. According to Money magazine, the average engagement ring costs more than \$5,800. In addition to being one of the most expensive gemstones, diamonds have become quite commonplace. Some women even eschew diamonds for moral reasons.

Whatever the driving force behind shopping for alternative gems, women who want to set themselves apart from others — and men who want to "wow" their significant others with unique and

moissanite gem can cost less than \$1,000.

• **Lemon quartz:** This is the trade name for a lemon-yellow stone that is a variety of color-enhanced transparent quartz. Quartz is turned into this sunny hue through an artificial

gamma ray gemstones, lemon quartz

irradiation process. Like other quartz

sanite: This crystal naturally occurs in meteorites and is nearly as hard. dense and scuff-resistant as a diamond. Some feel moissanite offers more brilliance and fire than diamonds. Moissanite is a white-colored

stone, so it can mimic the

since it can be made in the

laboratory at a fraction of

look of a diamond. And

eye-catching rings — may

opt for other dazzling

stones.

• Mois-

the cost of even lab made diamonds, it's a frugal option. A nearly flawless one-carat

considered to be very durable and is therefore suitable for all types of jewelry.

• **Sapphire:** Sapphires tend to be blue stones (of varying intensity), but they also come

> in peach, pink, yellow, green, and white. Sapphire may not sparkle as much as a diamond or even moissanite. However, with the right cut, it can

be hard to distinguish any lack of luster. Sapphires are the third hardest mineral, and at about one-third the price of diamonds, they make an ideal diamond substitute.

• Morganite: According

to the blog Bridal Musings, morganite is currently one of the most popular choices for engagement rings. Its pretty pink hue is romantic and feminine. It also sits at around the same hardness as sapphires, ensuring the rings will endure.

Vividly cut rubies, emeralds and tanzanite - all gems that are rarer vet less expensive than diamonds — can make beautiful engagement rings. Some couples also may opt for rings without gemstones, such as traditional Claddagh or "true lover's knot" rings to signify their union.







Different roles for the father of the bride

Popular movies and televisions shows give the impression that the job of the father of the bride in a wedding is ultimately about making sure the festivities are adequately funded. In the movies. fathers fret about the costs of everything from flowers to photos.

But gone are the days when the father of the bride bankrolls his daughter's entire wedding. The Knot's "2014 Real Wedding Survey" reported that, on average, the bride's parents contribute 43 percent of the total cost of a wedding; the bride and groom contribute another 43 percent; the groom's parents spend 12 percent; the remaining 2 percent of the budget is paid for by family members or friends. That frees up Dad for other roles in wedding planning. With some creativity, couples can find ways to incorporate the father of the bride into the festivities in even more productive ways.

dear old dad the important task of looking at potential wedding reception sites prior to visiting them your- return rented items followself. He may have certain connections through work



or attended business or leisure occasions at catering halls and other venues. Dad's connections can pay off. Let him impart his negotiating skills and find the best deals with the ideal backdrop for the festivities.

• Wardrobe: Let your father assist the best man • Wedding sites: Assign and other groomsmen in securing their tuxedos or other wardrobe essentials. Dad also can step in and ing the wedding.

• Beverages: Dad may

be fitting to keep tabs on what is occurring at the bar during the reception, ensuring that guests' needs are being met. He also can keep an eagle eye trained on anyone who may have overindulged and needs to take a break.

• **Speech:** Give your father an opportunity to shine by letting him make a speech. Remember, this is a momentous day for Dad as well, as he may be trying to come to terms with his daughter starting a new life.

• Father-daughter song: Let Dad pick fatherdaughter song, and go with his choice even if you had

something else in mind.

• Ceremony: Even if you prefer a less traditional wedding ceremony, let your father walk you down the aisle. This will likely be a moment he'll remember for years to come.

Expand the father of the bride's role in the wedding by assigning him tasks where he can put his style, experience and excitement to good use.

 Share rooms to reduce costs. If the wedding rates are unaffordable, float the idea of sharing rooms with fellow guests. Splitting the cost of a double room instead of booking a single room by yourself can save substantial amounts of money. And staying in the hotel with many of the other guests will make you feel like you are not missing out on any-

Tips for a special mother/son dance

unions of happy couples ready to pledge their lives to each other. In theory, the wedding day spotlight should be shared equally by brides and grooms. But brides often eclipse their grooms, as guests are drawn to stunning bridal gowns.

Though grooms might play second fiddle for much of their wedding days, there is one moment when all eyes are on the groom and a special lady in his life. The mother/ son dance is a wedding tradition that many grooms embrace as their opportunity to show their mothers how much they love and appreciate them. The mother/son dance is an ideal time to create a special moment, and the following are some tips to personalize the dance.

- Precede the bride and her father. Make your own tradition and switch up the timing of the dances. Be the first to take a spin on the dance floor and set the tone for the other traditional songs to come.
- Create a photo montage. Work with an entertainment company or photographer to create a slideshow of images showing you and your mother together and separately. If possible, include some photos

Weddings celebrate the that were shot during the wedding ceremony, asking the photographer to capture the look on your mother's face during pivotal moments of the ceremony.

- Show off your dance skills. One increasingly popular wedding trend is for fathers and brides to choreograph the father/ daughter dances. Grooms and their mothers can follow suit, particularly if you both have some stellar dance moves.
- Let Mom choose the song. Give your mother the opportunity to express her sentiments to vou, as mothers of the groom do not typically toast their sons during weddings or even rehearsal dinners.
- Invite other son/ mother duos up. If the idea of dancing alone with your mother is a bit intimidating, give other mothers in attendance an opportunity to share the spotlight. Celebrate all mothers in attendance. encouraging any mothers and sons who are present to dance together.

Grooms may not garner the bulk of guests' attention on their wedding days. But they can take steps to make their special dances with their mothers more memorable and unique.

Hotel How-To: Tips for guests looking for lodging

Couples about to tie the knot often arrange for discounted hotel rooms for their wedding guests. Many hotels offer substantial discounts to wedding parties, but some guests and bridal party members might still want to examine their options before booking rooms. The following tips can help guests find the right room so they can enjoy their loved ones' wedding weekends to the fullest. your search, even if the

• Don't overlook the wedding hotel. Many

couples put a lot of thought not liked in the past. into the hotel where their guests will be staying. Couples may have already done the legwork with regard to finding a hotel that's closest to the wedding ceremony and receptions sites and still within arm's-length of other attractions guests can enjoy while in town. Give ample consideration to the hotel or hotels affiliated with the wedding prior to beginning hotel is a chain you have never used before or have

• Prioritize proximity. It's important to consider factors aside from cost when searching for a place to stay for a loved one's wedding. The most affordable option is not always the most ideal. Proximity to the ceremony and reception venues should be a priority, as guests won't save much money, if any, if their hotel is so far away from the weekend's activities that they must rent cars or take taxis all

thing during your stay.



Throw a casual wedding to remember

Elegant, lavish weddings provide moments couples will remember for years to come. But while such storybook ceremonies and receptions remain popular, casual affairs are gaining popularity.

According to the bridal resource The Knot, more and more couples are opting for less pageantry and more laid back panache when planning their weddings. For those who prefer something more intimate and more personalized, casual weddings may be right on target.

There are many advantages to having a "luxe with less" wedding, including the ability to break molds and impart more of the couple's personality into the event.

Another advantage is the price tag. The average U.S. wedding, according to The Knot 2014 Real Weddings Study, costs \$31,213. In some urban areas, particularly New York City, average costs are three times that amount. Golden Girl Finance, a leader in financial digital media, has found that Canadian weddings average \$31,000 with honeymoon included. Although wedding costs have gone up, the average number of wedding guests has gone down. As such, certain couples might look to rein in other aspects of their wedding. Transforming the festivities into a casual affair can help keep the overall bud- also incorporate some get low while still allowing for an exciting and

enjoyable event. To put casual plans into motion, consider these ideas to help the wedding vision come to fruition.

VENUE

Catering halls and other reception sites do a wonderful job of meeting the needs of their clientele. However, food and beverage costs are often the most expensive wedding expense. To reduce the per-guest cost and variety into their wedding days, couples can

Look for public locations that allow couples to hire their own caterer, which may be a favorite restaurant or specialty food shop. The cost per person may decrease dramatically from the venue costs.

Changing the venue also enables couples to pick unique spots that may hold special meaning to them. For example, couples can choose the site of their first date or the location where their proposal took place.

CONTRAST

Enjoy a casual, freespirited wedding that incorporates some aspects of formality in an off-beat way. Think about serving fast food, such as fried chicken or pizza, on fine china. Those wearing tuxedos and gowns can opt for casual footwear, such as athletic shoes. Place wildflowers in crystal vases. These are just some methods to give a rich feel without removing the fun element.

Personal touches Menus or wedding pro-

in a fun font can set the casual tone couples are looking for. Look for eclectic fabrics to use as gift tags or napkin holders. Hand-painted signs or a hodge-podge of picture frames can display pertinent information, such as itineraries or seating arrangements. Encourage friends or fam- mal attire that facilitates ily to contribute a favorite menu item to the food offerings. A home-baked dessert can be delicious and budget-friendly.

WARDROBE

Clothing often indicates the formality of an occasion. Everyone from the wedding party to the guests can dress down. Sundresses can replace taffeta bridesmaids' gowns. Guys can opt for tailored sports coats with jeans. Guests may feel comfortable in less fordancing and mingling.

Casual weddings are becoming more popular as many couples are playing down the party for various reasons.



Tips for trimming the wedding guest list

Weddings are a time to celebrate, and many couples hope to invite as many people as possible to share their excitement. A 2014 study by researchers at the University of Denver found that couples who invite at least 150 guests to the wedding may have happier marriages. The study examined 418 people who were single at the beginning of the study and married five years later. It found that 47 percent of those people who had gotten married in front of at least 150 guests had "high-quality marriages," while those with 50 or fewer guests fell short.

While guests make weddings more enjoyable, and may increase the propensity to enjoy a more successful marriage, couples must be practical and consider their wedding budgets when creating their guest lists. The average American wedding includes 120 guests, according to a 2015 Newlywed Survey released by WeddingWire. Couples who are finding it difficult to create and pare down their guest lists can employ the following tips.

• Create initial lists. When

jotting down potential guests' names, write down everyone you want to invite, regardless of budget. Then list the must-have guests for the wedding. This should include the family and friends with whom you interact on a regular basis. Create a separate column for guests who don't make the must-have list.

• Separate friends from friends' friends. If you don't see people outside of events set up by mutual friends, you should not feel obligated to invite those people to the wedding. They are more likely friends of your friends and not your close friends.

• Know the guest list ceiling. Catering halls or reception rooms often can only accommodate a certain number of people. Know this number before making a final list. The limits of the space may serve as the catalyst for trimming the guest list.

• Consider coworkers carefully. Think about whether you'd still be friends with your coworkers if the company dissolved tomorrow. If not, you should not feel obligated to invite them.

• Have we met? If you don't remember interacting with a person (your parent's long lost friend from high school) or the person has never met your significant other, then they probably can be cut. If parents insist on inviting someone you barely remember, they should help defray the costs.

• Cut out the kids. Even though children's dinner costs may be lower than adults', inviting children can significantly increase the guest list. A no-child policy at the reception can save money.

• Avoid uncomfortable situations. Unless you have remained particularly close, keep former boyfriends and girlfriends off of the guest list.

• Ask for an unbiased opinion. Give the editing pen to someone else if you cannot make a decision. This person may help weed out extraneous guests.

Paring down a wedding guest list can be a difficult process, but couples should work together and respect each other's concerns when creating their final list.









'I do,' take two: Guide to a second marriage



Couples are returning to the altar in increasing numbers, as second and third weddings are becoming ever more popular. Pew Research Center indicates that, as of 2014, 64 percent of divorced or widowed men have remarried, compared with 52 percent of previously married women.

Lavish second weddings were once uncommon, but that trend is also shifting. Couples who are taking another crack at marriage are tying the knot with renewed vigor and with weddings that may rival some first-timers'.

Men and women who are remarrying after divorce or being widowed may not know how to approach planning their upcoming nuptials. The following are some guidelines to making the wedding sequel a success.

WARDROBE

Couples who have been married before often find that they have more leeway with regard to their wedding wardrobes than they did when tying the knot for the

first time. Brides may choose first time around. something less traditional than a long, white dress. In fact, this can be a time to let loose and select something that is festive or even funky. This also may provide a great opportunity to choose clothing

styles from different cultures or ties into one's heritage. This freedom also allows brides to broaden their horizons with regard to where to buy their wedding wardrobes.

Grooms may opt for something more casual than

a tuxedo or coordinate with their brides-to-be so they are on the same creative page. Colored tuxedos and vintage suits are acceptable, even though such attire might have raised a few eyebrows the

REGISTRIES AND WEDDING GIFTS

Considering couples who have been married previously likely have many of the housewares and items for

> daily living that first-timers may not, registering is not necessary. What's more, some of the same guests may have been present at first marriages and gifted then. In lieu of gifts, couples may ask guests to donate to a

specific charity or forgo gifts altogether.

GUEST LIST

The guest list doesn't have to be a source of anxiety. Others will understand that there may be a melange of

people at a second wedding. Children from previous marriages as well as divorced spouses or former parents-inlaw are not out of the question. Even if exes will not be included, make sure they know about the nuptials in advance of others. It's common courtesy, and it can help head off feelings of ill-will.

Some couples choosing to for these gifts tie the knot again scale back the size of the wedding this time around, feeling something smaller and more intimate — with only the closest of friends and family — is more suitable.

VOWS

Couples can use experience to draft vows that have personal meaning to their unique situations and make the wedding ceremony even more special.

People getting married again can impart their own personalities into the ceremony and party to follow. There are no hard rules governing second weddings, so couples can plan their weddings with good times in mind.







Make every anniversary count

Wedding anniversaries provide opportunities for couples to reflect and relive the excitement of their wedding days. Anniversaries can easily be forgotten amid the hustle and bustle of daily life, but many couples are making concerted efforts to ensure their anniversaries are celebrated as the special occasions they are.

A first wedding anniversary is a special one. Some couples celebrate their first anniversaries by enjoying a piece of wedding cake that has been properly preserved in the freezer. Couples may also dance to their wedding songs or enjoy a nice dinner at a favorite restaurant. The first anniversary also is a time to pull out the wedding video or photo album and tions, and even munreminisce about the wedding day.

Anniversaries are a



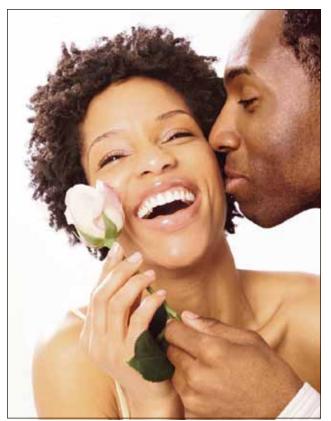
great way for couples to celebrate their time together by stepping away from emails, text messages, work obligadane everyday tasks to once again remember a day and moment that changed their lives forever. Those who may need a little inspiration celebrating their anniversaries can consider these suggestions.

• Have dinner at your reception site. Find out if the reception site,

which may be a catering hall or restaurant, serves dinner or brunch. Make a reservation and enjoy celebrating in the spot where the memories all began.

- Take a second honevmoon. Honor wedding memories by booking a second honeymoon at a special location.
- Throw a party. Use your anniversary as an excuse to have friends or family over for a party. Be sure to include your wedding song on the music playlist.
- Create a romantic evening. Rekindle the romance by pulling out all the stops, complete with a nice homecooked meal, candles and mood music.

Wedding anniversaries present ideal opportunities for couples to reminisce about their trip down the aisle and



all the entertaining moments from the wedding. They're also oppor-

tunities to connect as a couple and focus on each other.









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