

# Bridal

SPECIAL ONLINE ISSUE



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# Bridal

## A guide to hosting a daytime wedding



Weddings dot the social calendars of millions of people across the globe. The Association for Wedding Professionals International says every year an average of 2.4 million weddings are performed in the United States and approximately 150,000 per year are performed in Canada. Evenings are the most common time of the day to host a wedding, but that does not mean a daytime wedding cannot be a beautiful event and make for a party to remember.

Couples are increasingly customizing their weddings to be a reflection of their personal styles. One of the ways couples are customizing their festivities is by moving the wedding to various hours of the day that meet the couple's needs. A wedding that takes place in the late morning or afternoon may be the perfect fit for

some couples. Here's how to navigate the specifics of a daytime wedding.

- **Secure accommodations.** An early wedding means guests may have to travel from afar the evening before to be able to attend the festivities. Daytime weddings can be complemented by working with a hotel or bed and breakfast to ensure guests will have a place to stay and get ready to arrive at the early wedding in time.
- **Don't be afraid to negotiate prices.** The wedding resource Bridal Guide says that vendors are typically more amenable to price discounts or offering greater value for daytime weddings. That's because demand for their services is reduced during the day. Similarly, venues may have more availability during the day than at night, and, as a result, they're more flexible on

prices, especially since brunch foods generally cost less than dinner entrees.

- **Hire the right photographer.** Be sure to contract with a photographer who is a pro at handling photos in daylight and natural light. While many photographers are skilled in any light, many are used to shooting in churches and venues with low lighting. Be sure to see picture samples taken during the daytime to gauge a photographer's daytime experience and skill level.

- **Employ color to add dimension.** During evening weddings, lighting or candles help set the mood. Those same elements will be ineffective in daylight. Choose bright colors for your decor and flowers to brighten up spaces.

- **Choose alternative entertainment.** Chances are guests are not going to feel as comfortable dancing during daylight hours. Consider other entertainment, such as lawn games, karaoke, or a comedian. A guitarist or pianist may be a nice musical touch.

- **Plan food accordingly.** Just because the wedding is early does not mean the food should be. Guests still will need to eat. If you are only opting for light appetizers and cocktails, be sure to mention this on the invitation so guests can plan ahead and won't go hungry.

Daytime weddings can be successful with a little tweaking of traditional evening wedding planning.



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## *Bridal*

### Explore your travel options



Daily life was upended in March of 2020, when most of the world was first introduced to the novel coronavirus COVID-19. People from all walks of life were adversely affected by the pandemic, and certain industries, including travel and tourism, had an especially difficult time as the pandemic wore on.

Tourism greatly affected Travel was largely restricted in early 2020, with some countries prohibiting tourism from travelers from critically impacted areas. As the second wave of the virus arrived in late 2020, many nations returned to full or partial lockdowns to combat virus transmission, further hurting the travel and tourism industry. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, the tourism industry accounted for 330 million jobs in 2019. Estimates now suggest that approximately 121 million of those jobs have been eliminated due to the pandemic. Countries whose economies relied primarily on tourism either continued to stay open to travelers or have reopened to make ends meet.

#### Travel considerations

When the weather becomes colder and inhospitable, people often seek out warmer climates. Though travel figures to decrease dramatically in the winter of 2020-21, there may be some tourists who are willing to leave home for the promise of beaches and sunny skies. As of December 2020, Mexico had no entry restrictions for Americans, apart from limiting land-border crossings. Visitors can get a temperature check on arrival and will be schooled in basic information about social distancing. John Spence, president of the tour company Scott Dunn USA, says Kenya is a relatively safe East African destination to visit, and the country has been transparent about its reopening conditions. Costa Rica and Caribbean islands have been cautiously reopening to tourists, starting with nations reporting lower infection levels. Anyone who chooses to travel is strongly urged to quarantine for at least 14 days upon returning home.

**Home modifications**  
Individuals who prefer to stay close to home may want to invest their vacation dollars into

home renovations that can simulate getting away. While they may not serve as a substitute for a sandy beach, home renovations may make riding out the colder temps a bit more tolerable. Here are some ideas to make staycations more enjoyable.

- Improve lighting. Increase bright, indoor lighting to simulate longer hours of sunlight.
- Invest in a hot tub. You may not be able to swim outdoors in the winter, but sitting in a hot tub can chase away the chill and prove very relaxing.
- Renovate a bathroom. Create a spa resort experience with a bathroom overhaul that includes multi-jet shower heads, towel warmers and ultra-plush linens.
- Join a gym or indoor pool club. A chance to swim even when it is cold outside can be refreshing and make for great exercise.
- Visit an indoor water park. Indoor water parks can include wave pools that recreate the conditions of beach resorts, but all in a climate-controlled environment.

It's the time of year to escape the cold, and people are weighing their options as they try to decide if they will travel or stay home this winter.





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## Bridal

### Alternatives to engagement rings

Engagement rings are often sizable investments. Money magazine reports the average engagement ring costs around \$5,800. An engagement ring symbolizes the start of a lifelong commitment and may even set the tone for a couple's wedding day.

Jewelry styles are personal, and grooms-to-be should carefully research their significant others' preferences in terms of precious metals, colors and gemstones. Even though tradition holds that a diamond gemstone is classic for engagement rings, these precious stones are not the only options. In fact, before World War II, just 10 percent of proposals involved diamond engagement rings. That number jumped to 80 percent by 1990. However, many modern couples now lean toward other offerings not only for the uniqueness they provide, but also for the potential cost savings.

Those seeking something unique can embrace these engagement ring options. **• Amethyst:** This vibrant, lavender-hued stone can be breathtaking when cut the correct way. Purple shades have long been associated with royalty, making an amethyst fitting for such an occasion as special as an engagement. Because amethysts, which are less expensive than diamonds, are a seven on the Mohs scale for gemstone hardness, they can be very durable.

**• Knot rings:** These rings do not have a center stone. Rather, they're designed to be a tied knot or infinity symbol. These rings can be particularly sentimental as they represent true, unbroken love. **• Opal:** Gemstones, like flowers, have been assigned certain meanings. Tying the engagement ring to one of them can infuse more symbolism into the relationship. Opal, for example, represents love, passion, creativity, spontaneity, and

inspiration. Those traits seem tailor-made for surprise proposals. **• Sapphire:** While sapphire stones often are blue, they can also be yellow, green, pink, and white. Sapphires are the third hardest mineral. A white sapphire can be the perfect diamond replacement. **• Garnet or Ruby:** Red is the definitive color of love. A Valentine's Day proposal can be made even more special by presenting an engagement ring with a red gemstone.

**• Moissanite:** The jewelry source Brilliant Earth says moissanite is a gemstone first discovered in 1893 by Henri Moissan in a meteorite that fell to earth. It is remarkably similar to a diamond in appearance and strength. Moissanite also has heightened brilliance, with a refractive index higher than that of a diamond. Couples have many beautiful alternatives to diamonds that they can explore when shopping for engagement rings.





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# Bridal

## How to plan a winter wedding



Weddings take place throughout the year, but some months have traditionally proven more popular times of year for happy couples to tie the knot.

Summer was long known as the most popular season for weddings, but that trend has shifted in recent years. According to the 2020 WeddingWire Newlywed Report, 36 percent of couples get married in the fall, making autumn the most popular time to say “I do.”

Though October and September are the two most popular months to marry, budget-conscious couples may want to consider getting married in winter. December, January and February are the least popular wedding months, but the experts at WeddingWire note that getting married during the slow season has its benefits. Vendors, including wedding planners and venues, may offer their services and facilities at discounted prices in

winter to account for the slow season. And guests might be thankful to have a fun event to look forward to during a time of year when social schedules tend to be less busy.

Many wedding components will stay the same regardless of when couples walk down the aisle. However, couples may need to take a few things into consideration as they begin planning winter weddings.

- **Avoid holiday weekends.** Just because social schedules are not always so busy in winter that doesn't mean couples can pick any winter weekend to tie the knot. The holiday season, which begins on Thanksgiving weekend in late November and lasts until New Year's Day, is a hectic time of year for many people. Avoid holiday weekends like Thanksgiving and the weekends before or after Christmas and New Year's Eve/New Year's Day. These weekends already are busy travel times, so couples might

not be able to get guest-friendly rates on hotel rooms, and some guests may already have plans to visit family. In addition to the December holidays, avoid the first weekend in February. That's Super Bowl weekend, and many people may be reluctant to travel on the day of the big game.

- **Research local weather.** It's impossible to predict the weather, but savvy couples can research local weather in the town or city where they're getting married to determine when is the most travel-friendly month to host their weddings. Some regions get heavy snowfall in January, while others may be more susceptible to late winter snowstorms. Couples with a lot of out-of-town guests should choose a winter weekend where snowfall is unlikely so guests don't have to endure travel delays on their way to and from the wedding.

- **Purchase wedding insurance.** Wedding insurance is a wise investment for every couple, but it can be especially valuable for couples tying the knot in winter. Each policy is different, but wedding insurance policies should protect couples' investments if storms force local officials to declare a state of emergency that prohibits travel. Make sure the policy covers both cancellations and postponements.

Winter weddings can help couples save money. Planning such affairs may require paying attention to details that would not garner much consideration during other times of year.



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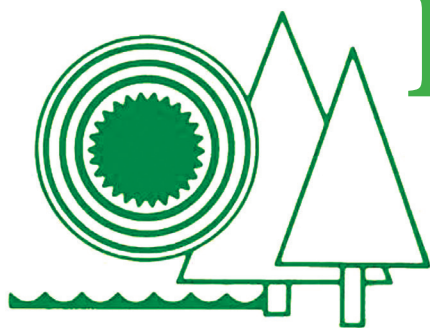
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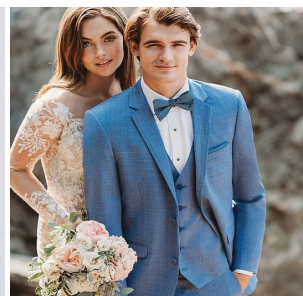
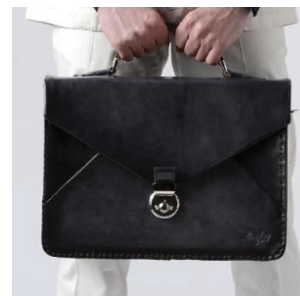
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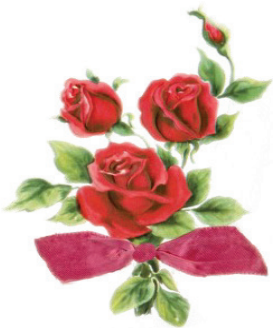
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# Bridal

## The evolution of wedding favors

Wedding favors have changed — and in many cases for the better. Favors have evolved from the inexpensive trinkets purchased in bulk into more personalized mementos that guests can cherish.

Today's couples are interested in customizing their weddings and offering guests something meaningful, or at the very least, edible, so that favors don't immediately get relegated to the trash can. According to Heather Jones of Wente Vineyards in California, favors have moved from "goodie bags" toward items that are experimental and fun. Wedding planners from across the country offer these wedding favor trends that couples may want to incorporate into their own celebrations.

### Welcome bags

Rather than take-home bags, welcome bags have replaced the traditional favor trinket at some weddings. Many weddings have become multi-day events that ask guests traveling from

out of town to attend a wedding weekend. To help greet them and make their experience memorable, couples may fill a gift bag with items guests can use or enjoy during their stay — like a bottle of locally sourced maple syrup or some handmade soaps from a nearby shopkeeper.

### Experience gifts

Instead of a candle or a monogrammed cake server, think of experiences to offer guests. A coupon for free drinks at a nearby brewery, a tour of a local attraction while guests are in town or a group excursion for guests attending a destination wedding can be fun and will help guests create lasting memories.

### Charitable donations

Some couples feel that favors are wasteful and would rather set aside a portion of their wedding budgets toward giving back. In such situations, a donation to charity in guests' names can be the way to go. Guests can vote on two favorite

charities advertised on a special table at the wedding reception. The one with the most votes will get the proceeds.

After a night of celebrating, some guests may want the festivities to continue, but may need some extra sustenance to make it through a few more hours. Some couples are eschewing traditional favors in lieu of making room for extra food or beverage expenses that can include after-party treats. These may run the gamut from wood-fired pizzas to food truck vendors to extra desserts. A tasty take-home option also may be given, such as fresh zeppolis or beignets, or even a personalized bottle of wine. Even if the food and drink is not consumed right away, there's a good chance it will hit the spot when guests return to their hotel rooms.

Wedding favors are changing to keep up with the times and keep guests feeling extra special.



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# Bridal

## Throw a safe bachelor or bachelorette party

The consensus from public health professionals around the world is to maintain continued social distancing to help prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus. Various events have been modified due to the pandemic, and weddings and bachelor/bachelorette parties have proven no exception.

Couples may need to make certain changes to traditional gatherings like bachelor and bachelorette parties to stay safe. Wedding parties average four to five close friends or family members on each side, according to Martha Stewart weddings. Gatherings of five will likely comply with the limitations set for gatherings for indoor and outdoor venues. However, it's essential to check local regulations before planning festivities. Even if gathering with your wedding party is doable, you may have to think outside the box when it comes to how to enjoy these last hoorahs before the wedding.

The likelihood of spreading respiratory viruses like COVID-19 is greatly reduced in outdoor settings where respiratory droplets are more likely to be dispersed rather than concentrated. Restaurants and bars still offer outdoor seating options in many areas, and an intimate gathering for food and drinks outside can be a low-key way to spend an evening.

### Try an "extreme" activity

Weekend travel has become a standard option for many bachelor and bachelorette parties, but travel restrictions or personal health preferences may mean it's not prudent to take a trip to Las Vegas or Cancún. Booking activities that are a little edgy can add some adventure to the festivities if travel is a nonstarter. Some amusement parks are still open, so an evening of riding zero-gravity coasters or free-fall bungee jumps could satisfy everyone's

tracks offer tourist options where novices can take high-speed spins around the course. When traveling in small groups, these activities can be possible.

### Virtual karaoke

In-person karaoke nights may be unavailable, but there's a bevy of online sing-a-long apps that enable participants to sing with backing tracks either for solo performances or with others — even people around the world. Each member of the bachelorette or bachelor party can download the same app and then sing together. Laugh along to renditions of classic tunes or modern favorites.

### Celebrate at home

It may not seem as glamorous as a night out, but home cocktail parties can be customized. Hire a mixologist to whip up special drinks. Caterers may be available to cook personalized meals, providing lessons along the way.

### Host it outdoors

adventurous side. Race

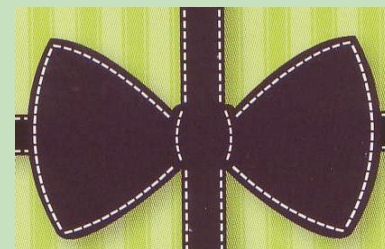


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## Bridal

### Wedding insurance can ease nerves



wedding venues carry their own liability insurance, so couples may not have to overlap there. However, for those who desire extra protection for vendor mishaps, it is wise to speak with an insurance professional about special wedding coverage.

Prices for wedding insurance policies can start at around \$100 to \$200 for minimum coverage and reach \$1,000 for more expensive ceremonies, according to

Couples spend thousands of dollars on their wedding ceremony and celebrations. The cost of a wedding varies depending on geographic location, but according to the business and financial resource Business Insider and The Knot 2017 Real Weddings Study, the average wedding in the United States costs \$31,391.

Insurance policies can help couples protect their wedding investment. Special event insurance provides coverage for various scenarios, including extreme weather, damaged gifts, lost jewelry, vendor cancellations or no-shows, venues closing before the wedding, and canceled weddings, according to Travelers Insurance. Insurance also may cover other unforeseen scenarios, such as unexpected expenses from injuries during the wedding or spoiled food. Policies will pay directly for any damage or injuries that occur, or reimburse the couple if the wedding is postponed or canceled. If weddings occur at home, some people's home insurance or umbrella policies may cover certain wedding liabilities. Most

the financial advisement website NerdWallet.

Speak with an insurance agent and read policies carefully before purchasing one. Non-covered issues typically include theft or loss of an engagement ring; rainy days that do not classify as extreme weather; switching vendors after a deposit is made; and risky entertainment, such as fireworks or live animals.

Protecting wedding expenditures with insurance policies can provide couples with added peace of mind on their big days.



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# Bridal

## Precautions that can keep wedding guests safe during the pandemic



The outbreak of the novel coronavirus that began in the winter of 2019-20 and was ultimately declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization put many couples' wedding plans in peril. In an effort to stop the spread of the virus and protect those most vulnerable to it, governments across the globe placed restrictions on social gatherings, including weddings. Those restrictions prompted some couples to postpone their nuptials until 2021, while others tied the knot at considerably smaller ceremonies than they initially planned for.

Couples planning to tie the knot in the months ahead can still do so, but the WHO recommends they take certain precautions as they organize their ceremonies and receptions.

- **Confirm local regulations.** Restrictions related to COVID-19 differ greatly by region.

hard by the virus may not have as many restrictions in place as those that were devastated by the outbreak. In addition, cities or regions whose responses to the virus have been successful may have relaxed restrictions more than areas that are still struggling. The WHO notes the importance of checking local guidelines prior to planning an event, and that's especially important for couples who hope to get married in towns or cities where they do not currently reside.

- **Keep guests up to date about precautions.** Include detailed information about the safety measures that will be implemented during the wedding on your wedding website. Insert a card detailing this information into your invitation envelopes as well so all guests know what to expect when they accept the invitation. In addition, remind guests of the safety

the ceremony.

- **Provide sanitary supplies.** Make sure hand sanitizer, soap, water, and masks are readily available for all guests. Social distance markers also can be placed on the ground throughout the venue to make it easy for guests to stay six feet apart from one another.

- **Choose an outdoor venue.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that the COVID-19 virus spreads very easily through person-to-person contact and that the risk of spreading the virus is greater when spending time indoors. Couples can mitigate some of that risk by tying the knot outdoors and then hosting an outdoor reception where tables are kept at least six feet apart.

Weddings will be different until the world puts COVID-19 in its rearview mirror. In the meantime, it's up to happy couples to keep their guests safe come the big day.

Areas that were not hit precautions throughout





# Bridal

## How to find your wedding florist



Weddings join the lives of two loving individuals so they can share their future with one another. Various elements help make weddings both momentous and magical.

Some weddings adhere to themes that are designed to make an impression and showcase couples' personalities. Floral arrangements are key components of wedding themes, as they help to establish ambiance at both the ceremony and reception.

Flowers can easily help couples achieve a desired vibe, whether that's rustic, romantic, modern, or even whimsical. Skilled florists may use a variety of flowers and foliage, as well as dramatic displays to help create the couple's wedding day vision. According to an internal study from the wedding advice and planning resource The Knot, which surveyed more than 27,000 couples who got married in 2019, the average cost of wedding flowers was \$2,000 in 2019. However, the cost of floral arrangements can vary depending on the scope of the arrangements and choice of flowers, including whether they're in season or not.

It is essential for couples

to spend time vetting potential florists to find one who will produce their desired vision at a price that fits their budget. These guidelines can make the process go more smoothly.

- **Establish your theme early on.** Floral arrangements will complement and enhance other elements of the wedding, including color scheme and the wedding theme. If your wedding theme ties into a specific season, you will work with the florist to find blooms and other pieces that coordinate. For example, winter weddings with white, ice blue and silver color schemes may coordinate with white ranunculus flowers, dahlias, dusty miller foliage, and viburnum berries.

- **Bring swatches and photographs to consultations.** It is easier to explain color palettes to a florist with examples in hand. Show the florist the types of arrangements you prefer and have actual fabric swatches from bridesmaid gowns or groomsmen vests so that colors can be complemented.

- **Create a list of desired items.** Florists may sell items a la carte or have packages of common floral pieces for wedding

celebrations. Types of floral arrangements include bridal bouquet, bridesmaids' bouquets, maid of honor bouquet, corsages for mothers/grandmothers, boutonnieres for groomsmen and fathers/grandfathers, flower girl headpiece, petals to sprinkle, table centerpieces, altar arrangements, pew or chair decorations, and cake decorations.

- **Go easy on aroma.** Tread lightly when selecting blooms that have strong aromas. They may be beautiful, but many people are sensitive to smells. Allergies also may be exacerbated by flowers with strong aromas. Discuss options with the florist before proceeding.

- **Explain your budget.** Research the average cost of floral arrangements and let the florist know what you can afford. This can help the florist narrow down options or make substitutions that fit your theme and your budget.

Couples can take certain steps as they choose floral arrangements for their weddings. Cost should not be the only factor in the decision, even though it is an important one.





# Bridal

## How to host a socially distant wedding

It's likely that few people heard of "social distancing" prior to 2020. That changed as the novel coronavirus COVID-19 spread rapidly across the globe and the world found itself in the midst of a deadly pandemic.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines social distancing as keeping a safe distance of at least six feet between yourself and other people who are not from your household. Public health officials continue to champion social distancing while acknowledging the fatigue that many people have experienced as the pandemic stretched on for months. Though much of the world hit the proverbial pause button, life went on during the pandemic. Perhaps nowhere was that more evident than at the altar, where many couples still tied the knot, albeit in scaled back ceremonies that adhered to social distancing guidelines in their communities.

Engaged couples who have yet to tie the knot no doubt recognize that planning a socially distant wedding will not be the

same as organizing more traditional ceremonies and receptions. While planning a socially distant wedding presents some unique challenges, couples can take certain steps to ensure their big day is memorable and safe.

- **Spread the socially distant word.** Let guests know what they're in for should they decide to take part in the festivities. Many people have strictly followed social distancing guidelines, while others have been reluctant to do so. Couples intent on keeping themselves and their guests safe from COVID-19 should emphasize that their weddings will be socially distant affairs so there's no confusion come the big day.

- **Stream the wedding online.** Stream the wedding online for those guests who won't be in attendance. By the end of 2020, millions of people had already "attended" weddings via platforms like Zoom, so loved ones may be experienced virtual guests by the time couples walk down the aisle in 2021. Couples who may need some help

planning virtual affairs can visit the virtual wedding coordinators at [Wedfuly.com](https://wedfuly.com), who recently partnered with Zoom to help couples bring their ceremonies online.

- **Pare down the in-person guest list.** Couples who planned large weddings prior to the pandemic can still invite all of their loved ones to witness the festivities online, but pare down the in-person guest list to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. Limit in-person guests to immediate family and those people who are part of your social distancing bubble.

- **Plan a party for down the road.** Couples can still celebrate their nuptials with family and friends down the road. Plan a post-pandemic reception and let guests know you will fill them in on the details once social distancing restrictions have been lifted.

Socially distant weddings may require couples to take some unusual steps as they try to tie the knot while keeping themselves and their loved ones safe.

