

Wedding Costs Shared By Both Bride, Groom

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There's no ceiling on potential wedding expenses. Costs can soar as rapidly as the spirits of the bride-to-be. Nevertheless the expenditure for an adequate wedding need not rival the national debt despite anguished cries from father.

Expenses aren't one-sided though. The groom may well discover that he is spending as much as the bride's family. And many more-or-less independent college or working men discover that they are footing the bill, not mommy and daddy. The bride thinks she has problems! Just wait until your chosen one realizes what his obligations are.

Everyone of those nice "Bridal Books" is very explicit—on customs, propriety, tradition, wedding etiquette—and they all disagree. If Emily Post says white Amy Vanderbilt will say black. You can almost count on it. So pick one authority and stay with it, for better or worse.

Estimate Cost

When the bride's father first hears that word "wedding" he starts contemplating dollars—by the thousands. He could save the whole family a lot of trouble by estimating before he contemplates.

That's the first step—estimate. How much can the family afford? Never mind if it sounds insignificant! You can plan a wedding for \$500 or less—and it beats going into debt.

The bride and her family face certain major costs: wedding dress, flowers, invitations, cake, photographs, and church costs.

The groom and his family have a list of their own: rehearsal dinner, flowers for the bride and the mothers, boutonnieres for the men, clothes rental, bachelor dinner, and THE HONEYMOON.

Both the bride and the groom will have to buy gifts for their attendants and for each other. That's right guys, it's not enough to give her yourself, she deserves a present too. But the bride's gift to the groom is optional. . . .

So, those are the items, now for the money.

Shop Around

The bride will find beautiful wedding dresses for \$200 or \$300. Shop around for a while though, there are some nice gowns for about \$60. Or if there's a seamstress handy, a dress can be made at a good saving. And don't overlook the possibility of renting a dress. Remember it's only worn once.

Flowers come next. Again, costs can run into the hundreds. But tell the florist your problem and he will come up with something perfectly adequate for about \$80.

The cake and invitations are two good items to save money on. Consider getting a small tiered bride's cake plus sufficient sheet cakes to serve guests. Remember that only two-third of those who attend the ceremony will stay at the reception long enough to eat.

Genuine engraved, deckle-edged, parchment invitations with enclosures are beautiful. But many of the new processes look like engravings at less than half the cost. And it's no longer a serious breach of etiquette to disregard enclosures.

Photography

Photographs can be a problem. Color is nice, but remember that you get what you pay for, and cheap color is likely to be bad color. It is better to stay with black-and-white. And don't have a friend photograph your wedding unless he's a professional. An amateur just can't do an adequate job—don't take the chance.

Church costs aren't very flexible. But if you are a member

of the church you plan to be married in, you can save as much as one-half. Non-member costs at one church are \$75 for the wedding, including organist, custodian, services of the hostess, and room for the reception.

Catering costs (through the church) are about \$50 for the first 100 guests, including coffee, tea, cream, sugar, mints, nuts, silver, china, and crystal.

The groom can cut costs in several areas, often depending on local customs. The rehearsal dinner is often optional, in some communities it too is given by the bride's parents. And it doesn't have to be a sit down dinner. It can be an informal buffet at home or a dessert.

Flower Choice

Flowers must be in keeping with the others used. Again let the florist help you out. He knows where you can save money and he'll tell you.

The bachelor dinner is also optional. Sometimes it is given

by the best man rather than by the groom. Traditionally, the groom rents clothes for the men and buys the accessories for them. This still holds true in many parts of California, but further north, in Washington, the men expect to pay for their own. Rental costs run about \$10-\$12 for semi-formal or formal wear.

Finally, the honeymoon. Don't cut it entirely. But remember there's no need to go to an expensive resort. You aren't going to notice anything anyway. One couple went to Yosemite after their June wedding. When they returned the next year for their first anniversary, they were amazed at all the people there. They were convinced they had the whole park to themselves the year before. Not too oblivious. . . .

So there you have it—costs, responsibilities. It looks so simple. It's not. It's hell. But it can be done. And it's worth it. I think. Someday. When it's all over. I should live so long.

It is worth it.



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