

Before you say I do

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Floral designer says. The only limiting factor is which flowers are in season. A good rule of thumb is to order floral arrangements with plenty of lead time—as much as three to six months. According to *The Essential Guide*, orchids, pansies, calamus, hyacinths, ladsloves and violets all are flowers historically associated with sexual minorities. (Of course, the guide also says that if you can't stand the thought of holding a bouquet, you can always carry your miniature poodle.)

An Affair to Remember, 503-223-9267
Beaumont Florist, 503-281-5501
Broadway Floral, 503-288-5537
Floral Dreams, 503-777-0800
Jackson's Florist, 503-282-0657
Ralph's Florist, 503-249-1888
Westside Florist, 503-642-9992

STEP 6: BOOK YOUR CATERER

PER GUEST

Everyone will expect to eat at your reception. Whether it's a simple buffet or a sit-down five-course meal, guests need sustenance, especially if alcohol is being served. Additionally, *The Essential Guide* says, "What you serve your guests and how well may be one of the major things they will remember."

Book your caterer three to six months in advance. Amy Levy at Pazzo, the exclusive caterer for the popular Vintage Plaza hotel, says their average dinner is \$33 a guest, which includes salad, dinner choice and dessert but not the cost of the banquet room. "I also let couples choose their own menu and can work around various price budgets."

Art of Catering, 503-231-8185
Delilah's Catering, 503-243-3324
Four Seasons Catering, 503-674-2812
Joseph's Desserts, 503-231-0989
Pazzo, 503-228-1515
Salvador Molly's, 503-699-8871

STEP 7: TAKE THE CAKE

PER GUEST

As the grand finale, the wedding cake is an important element of a well-rounded, and potentially sticky, reception. "Our wedding cake was the epicenter of the party," says Deb France and Gail Hand, a lesbian couple married in the summer of 2001, about their Polly Cake. "It was so beautiful," Hand says, "when we



went to cut it, the guests, in unison, said 'Nooooo.' "Don't forget to order your cake several months in advance. They can take several days to assemble, and good bakeries get busy. Also, be sure to arrange for same-sex figurines on top.

Alameda Baking Co., 503-282-2253
Beaverton Baking, 503-646-7136
The Decorette Shop, 503-774-3760
Joseph's Dessert Company, 503-231-0989
Mixed Media, 503-695-3581
Polly Cakes, 503-230-1986

STEP 8: GET SOME FASHION SENSE

If you're going to have a commitment ceremony, there's a good chance you'll want to not only be dressed to the nines but also to exchange rings. "Because we have our own rules, we're free to do what's comfortable for us," says Edmund Gaines, owner of Pendleton Jewellers, about his plethora of ring choices. Gaines notes that the only trend he's seen with gay and lesbian couples is they like to have rings that are similar in design. He encourages couples to discuss their expectations for ring wear before coming in and to be active in the design process.

Wedding rings ★★★★★
Gilt (vintage), 503-226-0629
Judith Arnell Jewelers, 503-227-3437
LaRog's, 503-223-5051
Maloy's Jewelry Workshop, 503-223-4720
Pendleton Jewellers, 503-284-4095

Debbie Drorbaugh, owner of A Formal Affair, says no matter where you choose to get your formal wear, "it's important to feel comfortable. And if you're getting the stenchy eye, leave immediately, because it's only going to get worse." From the dozen or so weddings they do in a year, they always put the ladies in tails. (It's more flattering to the female body.) They also offer their gay and lesbian clients the option of after-hours appointments, depending on their comfort level. Her

word of advice: "Have the wedding of your dreams, not someone else's."

Wedding wear ★★★★★
tuxedos, ★★★★★
wedding dresses ★★★★★
A Formal Affair, 503-287-2824
A Beautiful Bride, 503-249-7570



Although they chose an unusual Polly Cake (right) for their commitment ceremony, Gail Hand (top) and Deb France spent their honeymoon in Hawaii, a traditional destination for newlyweds

STEP 9: RECEPTION ENTERTAINMENT

PER HOUR

The costs for reception entertainment and décor range in price depending on scale. One of the many benefits of using a wedding planner is that sometimes they are also a source for props that clients can sometimes use free of charge rather than having to rent them. And although your reception doesn't need to be "Dance Party USA," consider at least background ambiance if not live music, a DJ or a sound system.

Affordable Karaoke, 503-307-7589
Don's Rentals, 503-224-9526
Kennedy Rentals, 503-233-3399
The Prop Shop, 503-282-8828
West Coast Productions, 503-294-0412

STEP 10: TRANSPORTATION

PER HOUR

If the ceremony and reception are at the same place, moving from point A to point B might not be necessary. However, if the happy queer couple need to be transported, do so in style. But book your limousine many months in advance, especially in peak season, as

there are only so many limos in Portland. Tips are not included in their base price, and you'll have to reserve a minimum number of hours.

Arrive in Style Limo, 503-351-5827
Classic Chauffeur, 503-238-8880

HONEYMOON ALOHA

"I always recommend Hawaii," says seasoned travel agent Joan Sher of GK Ltd. Travel. "It is gay-friendly and very romantic."

Even though Hawaii is also a popular destination for many heterosexual honeymooners, it is also the top location for queer newlyweds. Portlanders Gail Hand and Deb France honeymooned on the island of Kauai two summers ago. The newly committed couple rented a beach house for extra privacy, but even when locals asked why they were visiting the islands, no one was alarmed when they said they were on their honeymoon.

"We'd recommend Hawaii to any of our gay and lesbian friends. It was exquisite," France says.

Beyond Hawaii, Sher often recommends Australia, New Zealand and other Pacific Coast destinations. The drawback, she says, is that "there

is more touring involved and less lying around in the sun enjoying your honeymoon."

Other great choices include gay- and lesbian-exclusive cruise lines (Atlantis for gay men and Olivia for the ladies) as well as a number of the Greek islands, which tend to be very gay-friendly. Closer to home, the Oregon coast is always a safe, romantic bet, as is Victoria, British Columbia; the San Juan Islands near Seattle; and Ashland in southern Oregon.

However, Sher does warn gay and lesbian couples about the Caribbean. "Some of the islands can be homophobic," she notes, "but with the right travel agent to guide you, you can make sure you are in the best place where you won't be bothered."

Azumano Travel, 800-777-2018
Cruise Holidays of Beaverton, 503-643-5464
Detours Travel, 503-288-5145
GK Ltd. Travel, 503-635-7766
Gulliver's Travel, 503-221-0013
Imperial Tour and Travel, 503-224-8300

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