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DIRECTORY

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TUSCALOOSA bridal DIRECTORY

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The TUSCALOOSA BRIDAL DIRECTORY is a unique Directory full of useful information about planning your wedding. It includes checklists of what to do when, lists of who pays for what, and facts about invitations, announcements and much more.

Your Wedding Day is very special and we encourage you to use professionals like those you will find in the Directory. When contacting those professionals listed in the Directory, let them know how you found them. Finally, please let us hear from you—your comments will help us provide a better service to you and others in the future. ***Congratulations!***

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The 50/50 Marriage Myth

by Dick Hastings, M. Div., EDUCARE

The most common plan for marriage today is the “50/50 plan.” This approach to marriage centers around the idea, I’ll do my part, and you do yours. “Performance” becomes the glue that holds the marriage together, although, as one wife discovered, it may be more like Velcro. She acknowledged, “When my husband and I first got married we agreed to split household chores 50/50. That lasted until the house needed to be cleaned!”

In the 50/50 relationship, the motivation for action is based upon how one feels. If I feel I have done my part and I feel you have not done your part, we are going to have a marital meltdown! The assumption is “I expect you to make me happy by fulfilling your responsibilities—whatever I think they might be.”

While the 50/50 concept sounds like a logical blueprint for a marriage, it is a myth. One reason is because of our inability to meet all our partner’s expectations, including those that may be unrealistic or unspoken. Another reason is an innate tendency to focus on others’ weaknesses and what they are not doing. When this occurs, we convince ourselves we may be doing more than our fair share and our partner is doing little to nothing. This jaded perspective naturally results in a degree of disappointment toward our partner and paralyzes our own performance. Perhaps the most obvious reason the 50/50 performance relationship doesn’t work is the impossibility of knowing my partner has met me halfway. As one relationship expert remarked, “The spouse who says I’ll meet you halfway is usually a poor judge of distance!”

A more productive blueprint for marriage is one that promotes two complementary principles: unconditional acceptance of each

other and unlimited responsibility in the relationship.

Unconditional acceptance means our worth in the relationship doesn’t depend upon what we do but who we are. Not that performance doesn’t matter, but we don’t worry about being scrutinized or graded on our contributions because we are loved “as is.” Unlimited responsibility means “I’m going to give 100 percent to this relationship, regardless. I care enough about your needs, desires, and burdens that I’m willing to go above the call of duty to show my commitment to serving you.”

Having a plan for a wedding ceremony is important if you want to build some great memories. Having a plan for a marriage is essential if you want to experience a successful relationship. So, what is your plan?



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Grooming the Groom

There's no disputing that the wedding is the bride's day, but that doesn't mean the groom doesn't need to pay attention to his appearance. Take pride in knowing that you are a beautiful couple with a perfect sense of style.

Whatever the style and degree of formality you choose for your wedding, there are a few key points regarding fit when ordering formalwear for groom and groomsmen.

Shirts: Whether pleated front panels or traditional smooth-fronted ones, shirts should fit snugly around the neck.

Pants: The bottom hem of the pants should touch the top of the shoes.

Jackets: As a general rule, you should be able to cup your fingers under the sides of your suit jacket. Jackets should fit snugly, but comfortably with some room at the waist. Vents on the sides of the jacket should lay smoothly and follow bodylines.

Sleeves: Sleeves that drop below the thumb or come midway down the hand are too long; if the wristbone is showing, the jacket is too short.

Collar: The collar should hug the neck and the lapels should not buckle.



With all the attention given to the men's clothes, an important detail that is sometimes overlooked is the groomsmen's hair. Men are generally more casual about haircuts than women, but they should be sure to get a trim two weeks before the wedding to add the finishing touch to their wedding finery.

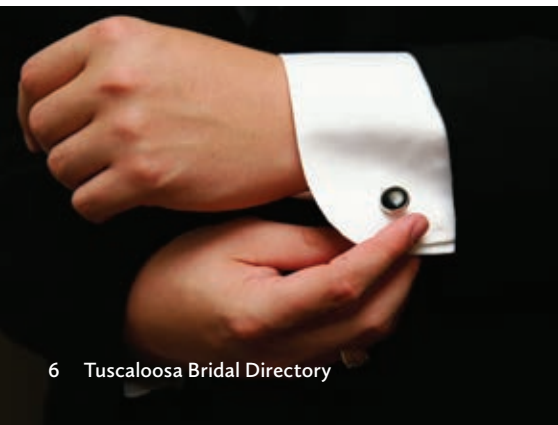
A Groom's Glossary

Tails: The ultimate formal attire, which should only be worn after 6 p.m., this ensemble features a winged-collar tuxedo shirt, ascot or bow tie, vest, tuxedo trousers and tailcoat. The full-dress ensemble comes in black, midnight blue, or grey, with a white shirt and matching or all white accessories.

Tuxedo: Either single or double-breasted, this formal suit has satin shawl or notched lapels. Matching pants sport a satin stripe down the pant-legs. Tailored in silk, mohair, wool or blend, in black, grey, ivory or white, tuxedos come in a range of styles sure to suit any taste.

Vest: This is often referred to as a waistcoat and comes in single- or double-breasted styles easily worn with nearly any tuxedo ensemble. With the open back vest, a band goes around the neck and another is fastened across the back. Tails, strollers, white-tie and director's suits require a different style of vest.

White tie: Worn only to the most formal evening weddings, this ensemble consists of a black tailcoat and black tuxedo trousers with a white bow tie, winged-collar shirt and white vest.





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The Perfect Wedding Toast

Serious, humorous, or poignant, toasts are an integral part of almost every wedding celebration. Every toast is different, and on such a special occasion, many will be eager to share their sentiments. You're not alone if you fear public speaking, but at your best friend's wedding, you're bound to want to say a few words in her (or his) honor. If you're truly prepared to speak in front of people, you'll find it's much easier to let the words flow.

Here are some tips to help you get ready:

The best toasts are those that are heartfelt. So start by pouring your heart out. List everything you want people to know about your friends. (Remember to talk about both the bride *and* the groom in your toast.)

Start with the best qualities. Include memories of good times together—especially the first time they spoke of their beloved. Scribble some thoughts about what makes them a great couple and your wish for their future.

You have two audiences. One is the bride and groom, and you can make them happy by not saying anything that would cause them embarrassment. Your other audience is the assembly of friends and family. Stories of drunken revels and bad relationships may be appropriate at the bachelor(ette) party, but *not* at the wedding reception!

A toast is a speech. It should have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and make sense throughout. When you stand up to speak, it's best to have a single card with a few notes written down to help you remember the key points. Rehearse before the big day.

Many wedding toasters aim for lyricism in song or rhyming poetry. That's a great idea, if it's you. But a direct, from-the-heart talk works well also. Be sincere and be yourself.



One of the classic rules of public speaking is to open with a joke. One of the classic rules of wedding toasting is to end by tugging on the heartstrings. If you can't be sentimental at a wedding, where can you be? On the other hand, while a couple of well-placed jokes can win the crowd, you're not there to do a stand-up routine.

A toast should last no longer than three minutes, which translates to no more than five double-spaced pages. Rehearse your toasts with a stopwatch. If it's five minutes or under, don't worry, since under the glare of the spotlight, you may speak faster.

At the Rehearsal Dinner, the first toast is made by the dinner's host, usually the groom's father, during the main course. The toast is often met by a "return toast" from the bride's father. Then it's open season—the mothers of the bride and groom, the best man and maid/matron of honor, other wedding attendants, family, and close friends.

The Groom's Toast: Keep it short. Be sincere. Thank everyone for coming, including your parents and hers. Share a brief personal (not too personal) story of experiences shared with your bride, but don't tell embarrassing stories or go on and on. Turn to your bride and look her in the eye, tell her how proud you are to be her husband, how happy you are today, and how much you love her!



A bride with blonde hair, wearing a white strapless gown with a long lace train, is posing on a brick walkway. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background is a large brick building with white-framed glass doors and windows. A large tree trunk is visible to the left of the bride. The overall scene is set outdoors on a campus.

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Relationships: Surviving the Wedding

Planning and surviving a wedding may be the first in a long line of tests a couple faces in their relationship. Although a wedding is just one day, planning a wedding involves managing expectations, budgeting, balancing family traditions, and learning to communicate with your future in-laws. A couple able to handle the decisions, details, and people that make up a wedding will have better luck dealing with future challenges together. On the contrary, those who aren't equipped to deal with wedding stress may find their relationship strained time and time again as new challenges, like finding a place to live and planning a family, arise.

So how do you survive a wedding without destroying the reason you're getting married in the first place? A couple of key strategies are to communicate honestly with each other, discuss expectations, and always remember why this is important to you.

Decide who will plan the wedding

Talk to your partner about who will lead the wedding efforts. Will it be the bride, a wedding planner, the mother-of-the-bride, or will you share the responsibility? There is no right or wrong choice. The important thing is to agree on who is doing what and communicate that to everyone involved.

Discuss your expectations

Even if you decide to let one person plan the wedding, it's still important for both parties to talk about what they want. Even the most laid-back groom will have one or two things he wants to have at his own wedding. Write down what each of you want, attach a priority to each item and then discuss expectations.

Be open-minded

While the idea that "it's your day" is a great one, it doesn't mean that you discard the opinions of others in favor of getting what you want. A wedding is an event that joins two families. It's not just you and your partner anymore. Your parents and in-laws, and possibly even friends, have a stake in this and an expectation here and there. Hear everyone out and be willing to give in to something they feel strongly about. It may be your wedding but these people will play a key role in your marriage and the rest of your life, so a little good will now might go a long way later.

Lay problems on the table

Maybe your parents are divorced, your mother-in-law isn't your biggest fan, or there is a "problematic" relative. Whatever the situation, talk to your future spouse about any issues that may cause problems at the wedding so that the two of you can devise a solution to minimize chaos on your big day. The two of you are creating a family, and you have to be able to talk openly about your problems. Good problem solving skills are essential to good relationships.

Make time for yourselves

Don't lose sight of the reason you're getting married in the first place! Take a break from the wedding plans and enjoy each others company. Spending time together strengthens your relationship, and making time for each other during stressful times will prove to be an invaluable skill for your future life together. So make each other a priority, learn to work together as a team and be open-minded to what lies ahead – being newlyweds is a wonderful phase of life!

"Dating is fun, but marriage is work, and wedding planning is even more work."
—Elizabeth Doherty Thomas



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Addressing Formal Invitations Today

by Andrea Watson, *The Fine Hand: Calligraphy, Etc.*



Every issue of the Tuscaloosa Bridal Directory contains an excellent guide on “How to address invitations.” It is, however, necessarily brief, and inevitably questions arise as individual cases present themselves. Though formal wedding invitations maintain a sense of tradition, life in twenty-first century America has given rise to many changes in family life and nomenclature. Your guest list will have many variants from the usual *Mr. and Mrs.* As a calligrapher I have made a study over the years of correct traditional forms and contemporary practices. Following are a few special cases that should help you avoid common errors.

When a married woman retains her maiden name, the invitation should have her name first, followed by the word *and* and the name of her spouse. The *and* indicates that this is a married couple:

Ms. Mary Elizabeth Jones and Mr. Steven Smith

Married couples using professional honorifics who share the same last name:

Both are doctors:

Drs. Kathryn Anne and William Edward Coates
or

The Doctors Coates

If she is a doctor and he is not:

Dr. Kathryn Anne Coates and
Mr. William Edward Coates

If she retains her maiden name:

Dr. Kathryn Anne Turner and
Mr. William Edward Coates

Unmarried persons whose invitation will be sent to one address should have their names on separate lines:

Dr. Kathryn Anne Turner
Mr. Steven James Smith

Using *Mrs.* with a woman's given name is poor form. Whether married, widowed, or divorced, a woman should be *Ms. Mary Smith* or *Mrs. John Smith*. The *Mrs.* comes with the man's name. If a divorced woman retains her ex-husband's surname and wishes to continue to use the honorific *Mrs.* it should be followed by her maiden surname and her former husband's surname. If Mary and John Smith divorce, she may correctly be *Ms. Mary Smith* or *Mrs. Jones Smith*, but *never Mrs. Mary Smith*.

When using first names, it's ladies first: *Mary and John Smith*. This isn't merely etiquette, it logically keeps the man's name together.

When children are invited you will need to know their ages and sexes to list them properly. Age is a factor in deciding whether they should be sent separate invitations. The contemporary custom of giving surnames to girls as well as boys creates confusion. Note that double envelope sets make this somewhat easier, as children's names can be listed on the inner envelope. Single envelopes can't support more than two lines for names, so unless the children are of the same sex, separate invitations become a necessity.

There are bound to be other special cases that are real stumppers. An experienced calligrapher can help you sort these out while maintaining good form.





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Changing Your Name After the Wedding

STEP 1: SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE

You will need to take: your birth certificate, a proof of identification, like your driver's license or passport, along with a certified copy of your marriage license and a completed SS-5 form.

Once you have changed your name with the Social Security Administration, you will receive your new card in the mail in a couple of weeks, and they will notify the IRS of your name change. Best part—this step is free!

STEP 2: IRS

Next, you will need to fill out the IRS 8822 form. This will update your name in their system, and you can update your address as well if you have moved into a new home with your spouse. Print, fill out and mail in this form and you are ready for the next step!

STEP 3: DMV

Once you have received your new social security card in the mail, you are ready to go to the DMV. Apart from waiting in the inevitable long line, this part of the process is a piece of cake. Take your old license, new social security card and a certified copy of your marriage license to get a new driver's license.

STEP 4: BANK ACCOUNT

Once you receive your new driver's license in the mail, you can change over your name on your bank account. Go to your bank with your new driver's license and a certified copy of your marriage license to change your name on your accounts. Now is a good time to make a joint account with your spouse, and don't forget to order a new debit card and checks with your new last name on them.

STEP 5: EVERYTHING ELSE

Now that your name is updated with the SSA, the IRS, the DMV, and your bank, you are ready to do everything else! Luckily, these steps do not require you to go anywhere or bring any forms. Take a day and knock these out, and you will be good to go.

- Employer/payroll
- Landlord or mortgage company
- Insurance companies (health, auto, home)
- Title and registration
- Utility bills
- Credit cards
- Doctor's offices
- Voter registration
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- Email and social media accounts



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Wedding Expenses—Who Pays?

The bride's family is entirely responsible for the wedding ceremony. The groom's family may offer to share in the cost of the reception, and the bride's family may accept, if they wish. By tradition, wedding costs are divided as follows:

The Bride (or family) pays for:

- Invitations and Announcements
- The Bridal Outfit and Trousseau
- Bridal Photographs/Video
- All Costs of the Reception
- Flowers for the Church, Attendants and Reception
- Music at the Church and Reception
- Sexton, Organist and Choir Fees
- Bridesmaids' Luncheon

- All Rented Equipment for Large Weddings and Receptions
- A Limousine for the Bride and Cars for Transportation
- Groom's Wedding Band
- Groom's Gift
- Gifts for the Bride's Attendants
- Lodging (if necessary) for Out-of-town Bridesmaids
- Bride's Personal Stationery

The Groom (or family) pays for:

- Bride's Engagement and Wedding Rings
- Marriage License
- Clergyman's Fee (\$10–\$100, inquire)
- Bride's Flowers
- Boutonnieres, Gloves, Ties for Men of Wedding Party
- Wedding Gift for the Bride

- Complete Wedding Trip or Honeymoon Expenses
- Gifts for Best Man and Ushers
- Lodging (if necessary) for Out-of-town Ushers

Optional Expenses:

- Bride's Bouquet, usually gift of the groom, may be purchased by the bride's family
- Corsages for mothers and grandmothers are usually provided by the groom, may be purchased by the bride for her mother and grandmother
- Bachelor Dinner is usually given by groom or family, but may be given by the bride's family or friends
- Rehearsal Dinner is usually given by the groom or family, but may be given by the bride's family or friends
- Attendants' Dresses are usually bought by each girl, but the bride may provide them, if she wishes

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Groom's Checklist

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- ☐ Set budget and division of financial obligations
- ☐ Buy engagement ring
- ☐ Choose best man and ushers (one usher per 50 guests)
- ☐ Set appointment with clergyman
- ☐ Furnish family guest list to fiancée
- ☐ Plan honeymoon with fiancée (check passports and visas, if necessary)
- ☐ Order bride's flowers
- ☐ Order mother's flowers
- ☐ Plan correct formal attire with fiancée and groomsmen
- ☐ Make reservations for rehearsal dinner
- ☐ Take dance lessons
- ☐ Order groom's cake
- ☐ Reserve limousine and/or special transportation

TWO MONTHS BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Select your wardrobe for honeymoon
- ☐ Select wedding rings with fiancée
- ☐ Choose gifts for ushers and best man
- ☐ Select bride's gift

ONE MONTH BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Arrange all needed insurance and review legal/medical/religious documents
- ☐ Arrange lodging and transportation for out-of-town guests
- ☐ Have medical examination and blood test

TWO WEEKS TO ONE DAY BEFORE WEDDING DAY

- ☐ Get marriage license
- ☐ Provide final guest count for rehearsal dinner to caterer or restaurant
- ☐ Arrange for clergyman's fee
- ☐ Plan bachelor dinner or party with best man
- ☐ Pick up wedding bands
- ☐ Pack for honeymoon

Best Man's Checklist

- ☐ Take charge of ushers
- ☐ Be responsible for wedding rings
- ☐ Be responsible for clergyman's fee
- ☐ Be responsible for license
- ☐ Check on all travel arrangements for honeymoon
- ☐ Prepare to toast bride and groom

Setting Your Budget

There are many details to investigate before signing any contractual agreements for your wedding services. Once you've checked off the items listed below and made your decisions, get in writing everything you expect.

	BUDGET	EST.COST
Stationery	\$_____	_____
Invitations		_____
Announcements		_____
Thank You Notes		_____
Reply Cards		_____
Monogrammed Napkins		_____
Photography	\$_____	_____
Formal Portraits		_____
Engagement		_____
Wedding		_____
Wedding Album		_____
Parent's Album		_____
Extra Prints		_____
Videography	\$_____	_____
Reception	\$_____	_____
Food		_____
Beverage		_____
Wedding Cake		_____
Groom's Cake		_____
Gratuities and Taxes		_____
Valet Parking		_____
Officer		_____
Music \$_____	_____	_____
Wedding		_____
Reception		_____
Soloist		_____
Bridal Attire	\$_____	_____
Dress		_____
Headpiece and Veil		_____
Undergarments		_____
Jewelry		_____
Shoes	_____	_____
Trousseau		_____
Garter		_____
Preservation-Gown		_____
Hair / Makeup		_____
Nails		_____
Wedding Consultant	\$_____	_____
Transportation	\$_____	_____
Limousines		_____
Carriage, etc.		_____
Parking		_____

	BUDGET	EST.COST
Wedding Parties	\$_____	_____
Bridal Luncheon		_____
Rehearsal Dinner		_____
Out-of-town Guests		_____
Fees	\$_____	_____
Church/Synagogue		_____
Officiant		_____
Assistants (cantors, altar boys)		_____
Gifts	\$_____	_____
Maid of Honor		_____
Best Man		_____
Bridesmaids		_____
Groomsmen		_____
Other	_____	_____
Flowers	\$_____	_____
Ceremony		_____
Bridal Bouquet		_____
Attendants'		_____
(male, female)		_____
Mothers' Corsages		_____
Reception		_____
Miscellaneous	\$_____	_____
Hotel Accommodations		_____
(for out-of-town guests)		_____
Honeymoon	\$_____	_____
Transportation		_____
Accommodations		_____
Daily Allowance		_____
Total Budget	\$ _____	
Total Est. Cost	\$ _____	

Typical Breakdown of Wedding Expenses

Reception Costs	30%
Clothes and Gifts	30%
Ceremony Costs	11%
Photography	11%
Invitations & Stationery	6%
Miscellaneous	12%

Wedding Planner

THREE TO TWELVE MONTHS BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Determine budget with parents / number of guests
- ☐ Create a website for your wedding
- ☐ Type of wedding (very formal, formal, semi-formal)
- ☐ Date, time and place for ceremony
- ☐ Visit officiating clergy for consultation
- ☐ Choose bridal consultant if desired
- ☐ Type of reception
- ☐ Reserve facility for reception
- ☐ Wedding dress
- ☐ Bridal attendants
- ☐ Attendants' dresses and mothers' gowns
- ☐ Start compiling guest list
- ☐ Wedding invitations and announcements / calligrapher if desired
- ☐ Thank you and personal stationery
- ☐ Choose photographer and videographer
- ☐ Register for gifts
- ☐ Buy a wedding album, gift and guest record file
- ☐ Find a new home and plan furnishings
- ☐ Start your make-up lessons, skin care, hairstyling program
- ☐ Start workout program with personal trainer
- ☐ Ceremony and reception music
- ☐ Take dance lessons
- ☐ Meet with florist
- ☐ Make appointment for pre-marital examination
- ☐ Consult caterer
- ☐ Discuss honeymoon with groom
- ☐ Reserve a block of hotel rooms for out-of-town guests

TWO MONTHS BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Check state requirements for marriage license
- ☐ Order bride's cake
- ☐ Address and mail invitations
- ☐ Develop system for organizing RSVPs
- ☐ Wedding gown fittings
- ☐ Attendants' gown fittings
- ☐ Shop for trousseau
- ☐ Coordinate men's formalwear attire
- ☐ Select attendants' and groom's gifts

Wedding Planner

ONE MONTH BEFORE WEDDING

- ☐ Begin dental treatments to whiten teeth
- ☐ Have programs printed
- ☐ Set appointment to have make-up and hairstyling
- ☐ Check with groom regarding wedding ring(s)
- ☐ Final fitting of wedding dress and all gowns
- ☐ Make sure musicians/DJ have playlists
- ☐ Send portrait to newspapers
- ☐ Complete arrangements for reception
- ☐ Arrange transportation for out-of-town guests
- ☐ Arrange for moving (if necessary)
- ☐ Arrange for party rental equipment
- ☐ Arrange transportation to ceremony and reception
- ☐ Arrange for your joint or new checking accounts
- ☐ Have all charge accounts changed / change of address to post office
- ☐ Acknowledge each gift as it arrives
- ☐ Arrange for yoga class to help with stress from the above
- ☐ Pick up marriage license

TWO WEEKS TO ONE DAY BEFORE WEDDING DAY

- ☐ Arrange final seating for the rehearsal/reception
- ☐ Write toasts for rehearsal dinner
- ☐ Check all gowns and accessories / break in wedding shoes at home
- ☐ Complete trousseau and going away clothes
- ☐ Write checks to vendors, put in envelope and give to event planner to distribute
- ☐ Give caterer final estimate of attendance at reception
- ☐ Discuss specific shots with photographer
- ☐ Make arrangements with Best Man to return tuxedo rentals
- ☐ Attend bridesmaid's luncheon and present gifts
- ☐ Deliver welcome bags to hotel
- ☐ Arrange any last minute transportation
- ☐ Put all wedding clothes in one place
- ☐ Provide any readers scripture for readings
- ☐ Arrange wedding day time schedule with event planner
- ☐ Get lots of beauty rest

WEDDING DAY

- ☐ Relax – Have a leisurely breakfast
- ☐ Take time to bathe and dress leisurely
- ☐ Make-up by an artist, manicure, hair styled
- ☐ Leave all details to those responsible... *This is your day. Enjoy!*

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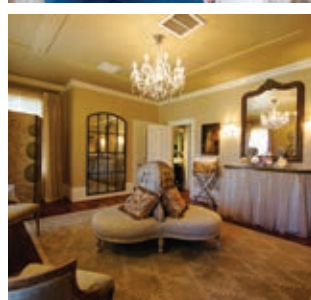
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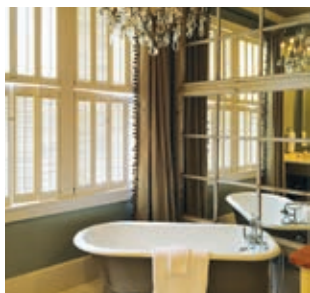
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Advantages of Friday and Sunday Weddings



If you decide to have your wedding on a Friday or a Sunday, you'll reap several rewards: both financial and otherwise. You'll save time, you'll probably save a significant amount of money, and you'll find that your guests may appreciate having a Saturday free to spend time with you and the other guests they know.

Maximize Your Dollar

For Friday or Sunday weddings, the majority of banquet facilities, photographers, video producers, musicians/entertainers and limousine services are much more willing to negotiate in order to reach a price that suits your budget. Vendors tend to see Friday and Sunday as bonus days, a time when they can earn income. Savings on these services can really add up, making this option a great way to save money without having to sacrifice the quality of your wedding.

Save Time

On a Friday, you'll probably have your wedding in the evening, which means that the ceremony is followed immediately by dinner. This means that you will avoid the extra cost and hassle of a one-to-two hour interim reception or cocktail party. Having the ceremony and reception back to back may ensure more people at the church ceremony.

Additionally, a Friday/Sunday wedding frees up at least one day of the weekend, generally making your family, friends and guests more appreciative of the extra time, especially if they are traveling.

Save the Date

Planning for a Friday or a Sunday wedding makes it much more likely that you will be able to reserve the church, hall, music and other services on the date of your choice. Choosing a Friday or Sunday date allows you to avoid making several calls to numerous vendors, only to hear, "Sorry, we're booked on that date."

Rehearsal Is Easy

Restaurants are usually thrilled to have rehearsal dinners booked on Thursdays or other evenings during the week, since those are typically their slower business days. You will find a more relaxed atmosphere and the staff will be more attentive to your party's needs.

In selecting a Friday or Sunday date for your event, you'll help both your budget and your odds of getting exactly the wedding you want, while also allowing for more time dedicated to finalizing last minute details. You can use the extra day to catch your breath, and use the extra money to purchase something special.



The logo for Eat My Beats is prominently displayed in the center. It features the letters 'E', 'M', and 'B' in a large, stylized, white-outlined font. Below the letters, the website 'EATMYBEATS.COM' is written in a smaller, white, outlined font. The background of the entire advertisement is a vibrant, colorful photograph of a large event space, likely a warehouse or factory, filled with long tables set for a party. The room is decorated with colorful lights and streamers, creating a festive atmosphere.

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Wording Your Invitation

by Andrea Watson, *Fine Hand Calligraphy, Etc.*

As a calligrapher I see a great many types and styles of wedding invitations, ranging from exquisitely engraved beauties to DIY specimens. Unfortunately, none of them is immune to error. When ordering invitations from a stationer or creating them yourself, you are the one who bears ultimate responsibility for the finished product. Don't rely on others; make it your business to know proper forms and usage.

Here are a few common errors to avoid, along with some other hints that will make your invitation not only beautiful but correct.

Honour of your presence/pleasure of your company: The phrase *honour of your presence* should be used only when the ceremony is held in a house of worship. This excludes even very formal weddings held in elegant hotels or clubs. If it isn't in a house of worship, the correct phrase is *request the pleasure of your company*. This is by far the most common error I see.

Time expression: evening begins at 6 p.m. That means that any time between noon and 6 p.m. is afternoon (*e.g.* half after five in the afternoon). Many etiquette mavens say that stating *in the afternoon* or *in the evening* is unnecessary. Their reasoning is that recipients will assume your wedding ceremony is at a reasonable time of day. These phrases sound so delightfully romantic, though, that using one may be irresistible. In that case, take care to apply it accurately.

State names: do not abbreviate in the wording of your invitation or follow the state name with a ZIP code. The return address on the envelope flap should also have the state name spelled out in full and should be followed by the ZIP code.

Capitalization: avoid unnecessary capitals. Some word-processing programs and online services automatically capitalize the

first word of every line. Take the time to check and manually change these supplied, but often incorrect, capitals.

Punctuation: avoid unnecessary commas. In names that are followed by numerals it is not necessary to use a comma before the numeral. Strictly speaking, it is not incorrect to do so, but neither is it necessary, so don't clutter up the name. When a man's name includes Jr. it may be so abbreviated and should be preceded by a comma. If you choose to spell the word out, the comma is not required, nor is capitalization. Thus, Mr. James Richard Gibson, Jr. is correct and so is Mr. James Richard Gibson junior.

Choice of font: there are countless fonts available and choosing one for your invitation can be both time-consuming and dizzying. For script fonts, one shortcut is to check the capitals that will be frequently used in your invitation and addresses. Obviously, M is everywhere (Mr. and Mrs.). The capitals in your and your fiancé's names are of paramount importance. Those in your hometown and state will appear in your invitation, return address, and the addresses of many recipients.

This is a very basic set of rules. For complexities, particularly in the case of names of those giving the wedding (*e.g.* divorced parents, the bride and groom themselves, etc.), you should consult a definitive etiquette source, such as *Crane's Wedding Blue Book* or *Emily Post's Wedding Etiquette*. Beware of sites available online; they themselves are often imperfectly edited.





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Wedding Program Pointers

by Andrea Watson, *The Fine Hand Calligraphy, Etc.*

Wedding programs are becoming increasingly popular today. Although they may not be absolutely essential for a traditional wedding ceremony, they are a virtual necessity for ceremonies that combine elements from different religions and cultures or if the bride and groom have written their own vows. Should special songs or prayers be included, a wedding program will enable guests to participate more fully in the service. In any case, an attractively designed and carefully thought-out wedding program that complements your other wedding stationery will serve as a lovely record of the event and its participants.

Essential items to include are (1) the title of the event, (2) the names of the bride and groom, (3) day and date, (4) place, (5) the order of the service which also notes titles of musical selections and soloists if any, as well as citations to sources of readings, (6) officiants, (7) parents and grandparents, (8) members of the wedding, and (9) any helpful translations and explanations of rituals. The first four elements can easily be combined in a title phrase with appropriate line breaks, *e.g.* The Celebration of Marriage / uniting / Anna Kathryn Leigh / and / William Arthur Wells / Saturday, the eleventh of August / Two thousand twelve / at half after five o'clock / First Presbyterian Church / Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Other optional elements that you may wish to include are expressions of thanks to parents, tributes to deceased relatives, a special verse of scripture or poetry, and other useful information, *e.g.* directions to the reception venue and/ or your new names and address following the

phrase *At home*.

If your wedding will be in a church, the pastor will likely want to approve any artwork you wish to use and proofread your program to check terminology and the citations to scripture readings. Take advantage of this free expertise. Marriage may be properly called a sacrament in some churches, not in others. Presbyterians have cross bearers; Episcopalians have crucifers. Your clergy will know the correct forms and be happy to help you. Music directors can also provide advice for the accurate listing of musical selections.

It is possible to produce an attractive wedding program yourself at very little cost using your own computer and printer. You should be proficient with word processing or layout software and be absolutely certain that you have the time and patience to do a thorough job. Good design skills and meticulous attention to spelling and punctuation are essential, also. Cutting and assembly require tools and time. If you are unsure of your abilities and resources in any of these areas, seek help from a professional graphic designer or a reputable printer who offers these services. Even when working with a professional, you must still exercise your own best judgment and taste. When it comes to creating a wedding program that will become a treasured keepsake, remember always that there is much elegance in simplicity.



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Photo by April Whinery Photography

Reception Checklist

*When planning your wedding, set a budget and stick with it.
The following checklist will help you keep track of your expenses.*

The Location

- ☐ Proximity to the ceremony site
- ☐ Date availability and discount days to consider
- ☐ Rental fee and what it includes
- ☐ Time allowed to decorate the space for the day of the wedding
- ☐ Using the location for a ceremony as well, if desired
- ☐ Whether there will be other receptions that day
- ☐ Number of guests the space will accommodate comfortably
- ☐ Terms of liability insurance
- ☐ Ratio of staff to guests
- ☐ Overtime charges
- ☐ Postponement/cancellation refund policy
- ☐ Gratuities and taxes
- ☐ Availability of valet parking
- ☐ Clean restroom facilities
- ☐ Room for changing
- ☐ Means of handicapped access
- ☐ The availability of a nursery or babysitter

Food and Drink

- ☐ Meal options, from a seated dinner to a dessert-only reception
- ☐ Special meals to accommodate restricted diets
- ☐ Price per guest
- ☐ Method of payment
- ☐ A date for tasting menu and tour of the site with a wedding in progress
- ☐ Dessert table policy
- ☐ Availability of non-alcoholic beer, wine, and beverages
- ☐ Top-shelf wine and alcohol vs. house brands
- ☐ Cost of open bar vs. one/two hour cocktail service or host's per-drink tab arrangement

- ☐ Possibility of bringing in your alcohol and amount of corking fee
- ☐ Supplier of the wedding cake and cutting fee
- ☐ On-site wedding coordinator

Miscellaneous

- ☐ Musicians
- ☐ Florist
- ☐ Photographer
- ☐ Videographer
- ☐ Cake knife/server
- ☐ Food for band, etc.
- ☐ Wedding guest book
- ☐ Seating plans
- ☐ Place cards
- ☐ Decorations
- ☐ Favors
- ☐ List of photos

Basic Rentals for Off-site locations

- ☐ Tent
- ☐ Chairs
- ☐ Tables
- ☐ China
- ☐ Cutlery
- ☐ Glassware
- ☐ Tableskirts
- ☐ Dance floor
- ☐ Serving trays and dishes
- ☐ Linens
- ☐ Lighting
- ☐ Heaters and/or air conditioners
- ☐ Restroom facilities
- ☐ Electrical outlets
- ☐ Bar equipment



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Don't Forget to Write!

by Andrea Watson, *The Fine Hand: Calligraphy, Etc.*

You lucky girl! You've got a great guy, a stunning diamond ring on your finger, fabulous wedding plans in the works, and tons of people offering to give parties and showers for you. No princess ever led such a charmed life, and you deserve it, don't you? We'll see.

All these people who are being so wonderful to you are going to have to be thanked, and thanked promptly. Don't think for one minute that you have a year in which to acknowledge wedding gifts. That particular etiquette theory applies to gift-giving only. Gifts, once received, should be acknowledged within two weeks. Two, count 'em, weeks!!!!

So...don't forget to write! In this era of electronic communication, it's tempting to send thanks via e-mail. That may be adequate for some of your contemporaries, but those who truly love you will treasure a handwritten note, however brief, that is heartfelt and timely.

Your own immediate reaction to a present (provided it is not "EEUWWWW!!!!") is the best subject matter for your thank-you note. For those writer's-block days, here are a few stock phrases to get you started:

Dear Katie, Leave it to you to pick the perfect gift for us! The luxurious towels are our favorite color and will look wonderful in our new place...

Dear Mrs. Urquhart, Josh and I are honored to have received the crystal epergne that belonged to his great aunt Arabella Stanhope. We will cherish this heirloom throughout our lives, and it will remind of us of our heritage..."



Dear Aunt Patrice, You were so kind to offer to house two of my bridesmaids during the wedding weekend. It's nice to know that they will be staying under your protection in your beautiful home...

Dear Uncle Harry, You are the most generous of uncles! Josh and I are going to use the money you sent us to buy ...

Lay in a supply of attractive informal notes and pens you like to write with. Don't forget to buy lots of pretty postage stamps. Keep an organized list of each gift or special kindness (remember, not every gift is tangible), its giver, date received, and the date thanks were sent. When you've been to a shower and received fifty gifts, write three or four notes a day, and you'll be finished in two weeks. Think of the motherly chiding you'll spare yourself. Think of the good will you'll create with your mother-in-law to be. Best of all, think of how smug you'll feel!



Thank-you notes don't have to be a chore and a bore

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ALTERATIONS
BY *Becky*
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How to Cut a Wedding Cake

The most important info is to

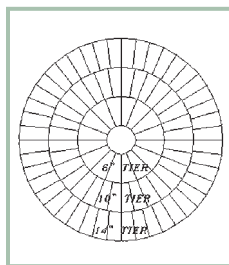
- (1) remove the top tier which is usually saved and
- (2) obviously remove the topper and any other non-edible decorations, then
- (3) start from the top and work your way down the cake.

Finally, if there are more than 3 tiers, remove the tiers before cutting to avoid having the tiers slip off while cutting.

General Guidelines

The first step is to use the right knife. Always use a sharp, thin knife. The cuts should be made by first inserting the knife straight down into the cake, and then by pulling the knife at an angle toward the outer edge. Before the next cut, wipe the knife clean with a damp cloth.

Three-Tiered Round Cake



1. Start from the top by removing the 6" tier, which is usually the bride and groom's cake to be saved.

2. Cut a circle about two inches from the outer edge of the 10" tier.

3. Work from this circle and make vertical cuts about one inch apart, until the ring is completely sliced.

4. Use the same starting procedure and cut another two-inch ring, again slicing into one-inch pieces.

5. Repeat the procedure until the tier is completed; then repeat entire process on 14" tier until all the cake has been served.

Source: <http://www.elegantaffair-ca.com/weddingcake.php>

Three-Tiered Square Cake

1. Start from the top by removing the 6" tier, which is usually the bride and groom's cake to be saved.

2. Work from any side to cut a horizontal line about two inches from the outer edge of the tier.

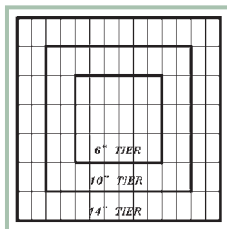
3. Slice from right to left to make vertical cuts about one inch apart, until the entire row has been sliced.

4. Cut another horizontal line two inches from the new edge, and slice this row.

5. Repeat until the entire tier has been cut.

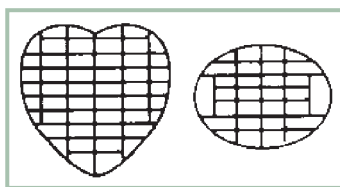
6. You should produce five rows in the 10" tier.

7. Move to the 14" and repeat the process for seven rows.



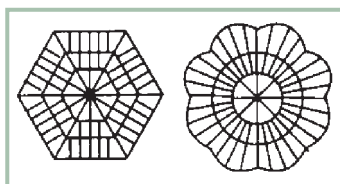
Heart and Oval Cakes

Heart and oval shaped cakes are cut in a similar fashion as square and rectangular cakes.



Hexagonal and Petal Cakes

Hexagonal shaped and petal shaped cakes are cut up in the same way as for round cakes.





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Honeymoon in Nashville

by Linda Holloway

Start your first days as newlyweds in the dynamic city of Nashville, Tennessee. Here, the music never stops, and the world-class live entertainment is legendary. While Nashville has long been the capital of country music, it is now famous for music of all genres. You will find historic Nashville intact—waiting for you to explore, while contemporary honeymoon fantasies begin with an upscale hotel and romantic restaurants.

The Westin Nashville is perfect for newlyweds with the full-service spa, and their rooftop L27 showcases rooftop views of Nashville, along with nourishing light bites. Nestled in the city's downtown district, the 4-star luxury hotel connects couples with iconic attractions. With only a 3-minute walk from Nashville Broadway, and 6 minutes by foot from Music City Center, couples are steps from the unique

attractions that Nashville has to offer.

Ask about the hotel's lavish suites with floor-to-ceiling windows for views of the dazzling Nashville skyline. Take advantage of The Westin Nashville amenities such as an indoor pool and a seasonal outdoor pool. If you are planning a wedding in Nashville, the hotel has elegant venue spaces to make your destination wedding dreams a reality.

Dining: Enjoy a romantic dinner at one of Nashville's upscale restaurants. Try the Continental, Rolf & Daughters, or the Catbird Seat. Grab a meal at one of the classics such as Prince's Hot Chicken, Arnold's Country Kitchen, or Elliston Place Soda Shop.

Entertainment & Attractions: Experience one of Music City's best-sounding venues. The Listening Room started in 2006 with a simple idea. There's nothing like hearing a great song

Nashville Skyline

Photo by Larry Holloway





The Westin Nashville
Photo courtesy of Nashville CVB

performed live—not as background music, not as something you shout to yourself over, but as the main attraction. The food menu is centered around the freshest local ingredients. The result is a one-of-a-kind venue with a uniquely Nashville flavor.

Make reservations in advance for the Bluebird Café, which showcases up-and-coming songwriters as well as established writers with number one hits performing in an intimate “in-the-round” setting. Another perk is listening to the artists’ stories and inspirations behind their popular songs. The iconic Ryman Auditorium plays host to concerts from all genres throughout the year, and the Ryman tours tell the stories of the past. The Ryman was home to the Grand Ole Opry show until the Opry was moved to its current location in 1974.

The Grand Ole Opry is the hottest live-stage venue in town. Each show includes performances ranging from the biggest names in country music to those making their Opry debut. We previously saw a show-stopping performance by Keith Urban. Be sure to reserve tickets to the Backstage Tour.

The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum is known as the Smithsonian of country music. Visitors can enjoy tracing country

music through the decades where more than two million artifacts are on display. The museum is home to recordings, photographs, stage costumes and musical instruments from the past to today’s current stars.

Stroll the streets of Nashville where you can find live music 365 days a year. Take a romantic walk through the city’s outdoor areas such as The Parthenon at Centennial Park where the re-creation of the 42-foot statue Athena is the focus. The building and Athena are both full-scale replicas of the Athenian originals. Schedule a photoshoot with one of the many murals in town, and for outdoor adventures, go tandem kayaking with River Queen Voyages.

For Westin Nashville reservations, visit www.WestinNashville.com

For Nashville tourist information, visit www.visitmusiccity.com



Keith Urban at the Grand Ole Opry
Photo by Larry Holloway



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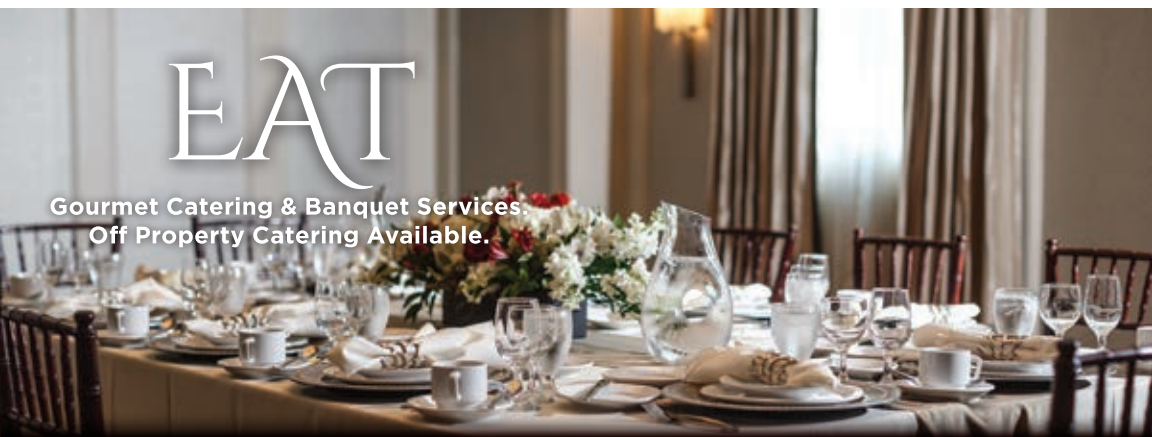
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