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# *The many ways to incorporate floral arrangements*

Flowers showcase the beauty and pageantry of the natural world. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The earth laughs in flowers," and Lady Bird Johnson is quoted as saying, "Where flowers bloom, so does hope." Flowers are inextricably tied to some of the most important events in a person's life. Flowers wish people well, console those who are mourning, and symbolize love and affection.

Flowers are an essential component of wedding day celebrations. Flowers symbolize love, fertility and new beginnings. According to The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study, the average cost of wedding flowers in 2025 was \$2,723, which serves as a testament to how important flowers can be on these special days. Flowers are incorporated into many facets of a wedding. Couples planning their weddings can give thought to the many ways flowers can enhance this special day.

## *Bouquets*

Wedding bouquets are some of the first arrangements people think of when planning a wedding. Historically, wedding bouquets contained herbs that were designed to ward off evil spirits. Today, one is much more likely to find a gathering of many beautiful flowers tied at the stems with ribbon. Bridesmaids carry bouquets as well, and flower girls toss flower petals along the aisle during the processional. Bouquets typically coordinate to the theme of the wedding and the color scheme. A bride's bouquet tends to be similar in design to her bridesmaids' but may feature more muted colored blooms to complement her gown.

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## *Boutonnieres and corsages*

Boutonnieres and corsages are customarily bestowed upon wedding party members and the parents of the happy couple. They also may be gifted to additional special people attending the wedding, such as grandparents or other guests of honor.

## *Aisle decorations*

Flowers may be used on the seatbacks or on the sides of pews. Small flowers, ribbons and greenery are hung to enhance the ambiance of the space.

## *Centerpieces*

Flowers are a focal point during wedding receptions, taking up prime real estate in the center of tables. Knowledgeable florists can create pieces that are beautiful and will not obstruct the view or comfort of guests when seated. Additional floral arrangements may be included to enhance additional areas of the reception space, such as floral arches for photographs, vases placed near the seating chart and even flowers in the restrooms to make these spaces even more inviting.

## *Toss bouquet*

If a couple decides to adhere to traditional wedding customs, the bride will toss a smaller bouquet to eager single women ready to catch it. A tossed bouquet may feature fresh flowers or artificial silk flowers. This decoy bouquet enables the bride to return home with her actual bouquet to preserve it, but still participate in this classic tradition.

Flowers enhance a wedding with their beauty, symbolism and aroma.

# Unique locations to tie the knot

The decision of where to get married was once a given. Indeed, the majority of weddings used to be held in houses of worship. A 2020 report in the Church Times estimated that 85 percent of all weddings in the early twentieth century were religious ceremonies. Many faiths require those seeking a religious wedding to get married in a house of worship, so one can reasonably conclude that a significant percentage of married couples in the early twentieth century said "I do" within a house of worship. The Church Times report indicated that percentage dipped to 49 percent by the late 1970s, and a recent report from The Knot indicates that 16 percent of couples who wed in 2023 did so in a religious institution or house of worship.



Many couples still prefer to get married in a house of worship, but those with no such preference can consider a wide range of venues when trying to decide where to tie the knot.

- **Rustic setting:** The popularity of the rustic aesthetic boomed in home interior design in the early decades of the twenty-first century, and that appeal also seems to have affected couples deciding where to get married. The Knot reports that more couples tied the knot in barn wedding venues (17 percent) than houses of worship in 2023, making these charming and often scenic venues worthy of consideration.
- **Historic locales:** History buffs may feel there's no greater place to say "I do" than a location that calls to mind bygone eras and notable events. Estates dating back centuries that feature expansive and awe-inspiring landscapes or mansions built during the Gilded Age can make for unique settings to tie the knot and celebrate into the wee hours.
- **Oceanfront venues:** Perhaps no backdrop makes for more awe-inspiring wedding photos than the ocean. Beautiful photos, not to mention pleasant temperatures and laid back vibes, undoubtedly contribute to the appeal of oceanfront weddings. Couples considering oceanfront venues may be surprised to learn that just 5 percent of weddings took place on the sand in 2023, which could make it easier than some think to book these idyllic locales.
- **Botanical gardens:** Floral arrangements feature prominently in many weddings, but what about saying "I do" in a venue where nature serves as your florist? Botanical gardens offer numerous spots for stunning photographs, and a formal garden can make for an impressive backdrop for the wedding ceremony.

There's no shortage of stunning locations for couples to tie the knot. Before choosing where to say "I do," couples can explore a wide range of prospective venues.

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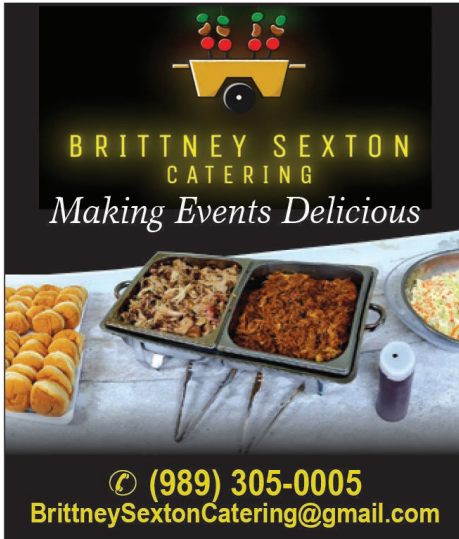


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# Questions to ask when interviewing caterers

A wedding reception is a joyous occasion that affords newlyweds and their guests an opportunity to celebrate into the evening. Various components combine to ensure a memorable reception, but food is a major highlight of the festivities for guests. That places a significant responsibility on couples to find a reception center or third-party caterer who can dish up food that will have guests saying "I do" to a great meal.

These considerations and questions can help couples find the right caterer for their weddings.



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## *Does my venue mandate use of a particular catering service?*

The wedding planning website Zola advises that many wedding venues require couples to use a specific catering service. They may have an arrangement with a particular caterer who they trust, or the venue has in-house chefs and servers. In the earliest planning stages after the wedding date has been set, a couple should be sure to pick a venue that will serve the best food possible. Couples who have a specific caterer in mind may need to shop around for a venue that will allow outside vendors.

## *Identify your preferred meal*

First and foremost, a couple should know how they want to have their food served and inquire with potential caterers about their standard options. Service types often include a formal sit-down dinner reception, a buffet dinner service, a family-style dinner, or a more minimal cocktail offering without a full dinner. The couple can cross out prospects that don't offer the type of service they desire most.

## *Ask what's included*

A couple should determine if a catering service offers food prepared by professionals, the amount of flexibility related to menus, if table settings are included, and if cleanup is part of the



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fee. Full-service catering typically includes all of this, while more limited service may be food brought in that requires the venue's own staff to serve and clean.

## Compile the right questions

It's important to ask caterers some key questions to narrow down prospects. Some of these include:

- Are you a participant in any local business associations?
- What events with a similar concept have you catered?
- How many weddings do you book each year?
- Will my wedding be the only event you cater on that day?
- How many guests can you accommodate?
- Do you handle special food requests, such as gluten-free or kosher meals?
- How many chefs and cooks prepare the meal, or are meals exclusively prepared by the business owner?
- Do you allow substitutions or customization to a set menu?



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- Do you have references for other events you have catered?
- Do you have any preferred vendors?
- What do we need to know and do regarding delivery?

### *Keep location in mind*

The distance a caterer has to travel to cater the wedding will affect the price. It's helpful to find a caterer who knows the venue or has had experience with a similar place.

### *What are the contingency plans?*

When interviewing caterers, Cvent, an event management software company, suggests asking about any last-minute changes they've dealt with to gauge how the caterer handles problem-solving. Inquire about how they adapt if a certain menu item is no longer readily available or what they do if a piece of equipment breaks down the day of an event? Answers to these types of questions can separate seasoned professionals from those caterers who may not be as experienced.

Food is a vital component of a wedding reception, which underscores the significance of finding a talented and experienced caterer.



# Here comes the bride

It's customary for a bride-to-be to make a grand entrance on her wedding day, and for many that involves the processional song "Bridal Chorus," commonly referred to as "Here Comes the Bride." The song is from the 1850 opera "Lohengrin," which was composed by Richard Wagner. In the opera, the women in the wedding party sing the song as they escort the bride, Elsa, to her bridal chamber. The original lyrics included, "Faithfully, led, you go." and referred to the joy of the couple's new life together. After Princess Victoria, the daughter of Queen Victoria of England, used the song for her 1858 wedding procession, the music became a wedding staple across Europe and America. While the instrumental version is widely used for a bride's walk down the aisle, some religious institutions prefer couples choose another song because of the music's secular origins.



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## Why it pays to hire a professional makeup artist for your wedding

There is no denying that weddings can be exciting, memorable and expensive. According to data from the wedding planning and registry website Zola, the average wedding in the United States in 2024 cost \$33,000. Prices for weddings will vary depending on geography and services.

In an effort to rein in spending, couples may wonder where they can cut costs, and one service that may be up for consideration is a professional makeup artist. After all, a bride and her bridesmaids may feel they already have plenty of experience applying makeup, and the plethora of online tutorials can guide them through areas where they may need some help. But before making a pilgrimage to Ulta or Sephora for supplies, savvy brides should realize there are plenty of reasons to utilize a pro when it comes to wedding makeup.

• **Bridal makeup isn't like everyday makeup.** A professional knows how to create a look that will remain flawless throughout the entire day. From the ceremony to the reception, makeup has to be durable, and a pro will know which products and techniques to use to ensure everything stays put, advises Shervonne Kitto, a makeup artist serving New York and New Jersey.

• **You can actually save money going with a pro.** Doing makeup yourself may not result in cost savings. Remember, employees at makeup stores may do your makeup for a reduced cost initially, but they are in the business of selling products. Many consumers walk away spending more in products than they intended, and sometimes the cost in getting all new bridal makeup could actually be more than if you relied on a professional.

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- **Enjoy time savings.**

Professionals who have mastered their crafts can quickly and efficiently create a desired makeup look, saving you time compared to a do-it-yourself attempt.

- **Enhance your beauty.** A pro knows which techniques to use to play up certain features and minimize others. This can help present the best version of yourself on one of the most photographed days of your life.

- **Create a comprehensive look.** Hiring a professional makeup artist means you can coordinate how you and your bridal party look, which can serve to complement the overall wedding theme. If you go the DIY route, you might end up with a bridal party with some very different-looking makeup applications. A pro may do some photo-enhancing minimal touches for the gentlemen in the wedding as well.

- **Enjoy time to relax.**

Having your hair and makeup done by someone else affords you an hour or more to just sit back and be pampered, something that likely will not occur for the rest of the busy wedding day.

When considering makeup artists, each should offer a free trial and be receptive to clients' needs and requests. However, it is worthwhile to trust the makeup artist as he or she ultimately knows how to craft winning wedding day looks.



# Get the scoop on wedding rehearsals and a rehearsal dinner

Weddings involve a lot of moving parts, and that includes people. The Knot 2025 Real Weddings Study indicates the average wedding party contains eight people. Add in four parents, individuals doing ceremony readings, people participating in unity rituals, ushers, and others of recognition, and there may be a dozen or more people responsible for knowing their places and understanding their responsibilities. The wedding rehearsal helps to corral these individuals and tame nerves by showing everyone what is expected of them on the big day.

## Who is in charge of the wedding rehearsal?

Various people may take the lead at the rehearsal. In some instances, it is the officiant who will guide everyone. More often it is the responsibility of the coordinator at the ceremony site or a wedding planner who handles the cues so that everyone enters and exits properly. Some couples will also ask an organized friend or family member to assume the role of rehearsal leader.

## What do you rehearse?

According to Ceremony Officiants, Rev. Laura Cannon and Associates, the wedding rehearsal does not run through the entire ceremony, only the key spots. A rehearsal typically focuses on the "walking in and walking out" and ensuring participants know where to stand and what to do. A generalized outline of the wedding ceremony timeline will be reviewed, helping participants understand when they will be called upon to fulfill their responsibilities. Running through the processional, recessional and other key



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moments in the ceremony two to three times is usually enough practice.

### *Who attends the rehearsal?*

Only a select number of people need to attend the rehearsal. This includes the couple, their parents, the wedding party, anyone serving a special role in the ceremony (such as leading a prayer), and the wedding coordinator or the rehearsal leader.

### *How long does the rehearsal last?*

Typically a rehearsal should not take longer than 30 minutes to one hour. It's generally held the evening before the actual wedding when everyone should be in town for the festivities.

### *What happens after the rehearsal?*

It's traditional to attend a rehearsal dinner directly after the rehearsal itself. This intimate meal gives the key players in the wedding ceremony an opportunity to chat and mingle before the big day. It's also a chance for the couple to offer gifts to the wedding party, parents and others in appreciation of their participation in the wedding. Sometimes speeches are given, but the rehearsal dinner tends to be a low-key, low-pressure opportunity to spend time with special people.

### *What is the dress code?*

The dress code for the rehearsal and the dinner is totally up to the couple. Many opt for business casual, but the restaurant chosen for the dinner may guide couples on what everyone should wear.

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## Additional Tips

Couples may instruct people to bring along the shoes they will be wearing at the wedding to get a feel for them walking into the ceremony site. While it is traditionally the groom's parents' obligation to reserve and pay for the rehearsal dinner, couples who do not want to place all of that responsibility on them can discuss contributing.

A wedding rehearsal and rehearsal dinner brings together the key participants in the wedding ceremony prior to the main event.



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# Why to trust a pro with wedding photography

User-friendly technology and greatly enhanced connectivity has changed the way people approach various tasks. The do-it-yourself home improvement trend is a testament to that shift, as homeowners now have access to professional grade tools and can easily take to social media for inspiration and instructions for renovations that were once the domain of experienced contractors.

Though it can be fun and budget-friendly to embrace a DIY approach in many settings, that strategy is not ideal for every situation, including the day couples tie the knot. A couple's wedding day is one to cherish forever, which is why it pays to rely on skilled professionals. That's particularly so with wedding photography, which will serve as the official record of a day filled with love and laughs. Modern technology may compel some couples to think they can go without the services of a professional photographer on their wedding day, but there are many reasons to trust this important job to an experienced pro.

• **Photographers can get great shots no matter the conditions.** There's a difference between snapping great shots of an idyllic setting on a smartphone and taking wedding day photographs couples will look back on for years to come. Experienced photographers have cameras capable of far more than those on a smartphone, and these skilled professionals also possess the knowledge of how to get great shots in settings that might not be so conducive to photography. A dimly lit reception hall dance floor may prove challenging for untrained amateurs, but professional photographers know what to do to get great shots in such settings. Professionals also know how to utilize natural light to their advantage when taking shots outdoors.

• **Photographers handle the details.** Couples have enough on their plate when planning weddings. Taking on photography duties requires identifying the right photo locations, knowing when to take photos to maximize surroundings, ensuring bridal party members are all ready to go so photos can be taken within tight deadlines, and post-wedding



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detailing. That's a lot to take on, and it's work best left to professionals.

- **Photographers free up time.** Many newlyweds note their wedding day seemed to fly by and was over before they knew it. Such sentiments may be even stronger when couples take on too much responsibility come the wedding day. A professional photographer will coordinate shots and timelines with couples prior to the big day and take over getting bridal party members where they need to be when they need to be there. That frees up time for couples to spend more time with each other and their guests come the day of the wedding, which in turn can make it feel as though the day didn't fly by.

- **You get a professionally finished product.** Amateur photographers simply won't produce as stunning a finished product as professionals who take and touch up photos for a living. A wedding day photo album is a keepsake couples will look back on for years, so it's best to ensure its contents include photos taken and touched up by a skilled professional.

Couples can find ways to cut costs with their wedding budgets. But it's best to avoid cutting corners regarding photography, as there's no way to turn back the clock and get better shots if the efforts of amateurs fall short of expectations.

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# Simple touches that add an elegant feel to a wedding

The term "the perfect wedding" can be somewhat misleading. Couples have their own ideas regarding the perfect wedding, and no single vision is more worthy of that characterization than another.

Tradition plays a big role at many weddings, as couples have long embraced customs like the first dance, cutting the cake together and even tossing the bridal bouquet at the reception. Traditional weddings often are associated with elegance, and there are many ways to create an elegant aesthetic at a wedding.

- **Consider candlelight.** Candlelight can make any space feel cozy and warm. Lit candles also create a calming and elegant vibe at a wedding. A handful of thoughtfully placed candles around a ceremony space can add a sense of elegance to a wedding. That vibe can be maintained into the reception when candles are placed on dining tables.

- **Include some vintage items.** Vintage items can add elegance because they call to mind traditional weddings of past eras. Unique vintage vases on seating tables or even as reception table centerpieces are simple to arrange and effective at adding an elegant touch.

- **Choose a signature cocktail.** The drinks guests enjoy at the reception also can add some elegance to the festivities. Ask the reception hall bartender to collaborate on a classic cocktail, ideally one that might have been popular years ago or even a modernized version of a drink that calls to mind ceremonies of yesteryear.

- **Go traditional with wedding attire.** More and more brides are choosing wedding gowns that go beyond the classic white dress. But brides who want



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something elegant may want to stick to traditional attire. The same goes for grooms, who can choose a traditional black tuxedo to add some simple elegance to the big day.

• **Set your sights on seating.** There's no area of a wedding that can't be augmented with a little elegance, and that even goes for seating. Chair sashes complement an elegant theme, and such simple decor is easy to pull off. It also provides instant appeal and a touch of class as guests enter the venue and take a seat.

An elegant wedding aesthetic makes for great photographs and adds a memorable vibe to a ceremony and reception.





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989-569-3363

**Blue Horizon Court**  
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Oscoda, MI 48750  
989-739-8487  
bluehorizoncourt.com  
bluehorizonct@hotmail.com

**Camp Nissokone**  
6836 F-41  
Oscoda, MI 48750  
989-739-2801  
mertz@ymcadetroit.org

**Lake Life Cottages**  
824 E. Bay St.  
East Tawas, MI 48730  
lakelifecottages.com  
events@lakelifecottages.com

**Mt. Maria Overlook**  
408 W. Mt. Maria Rd.  
Spruce, MI 48762  
NorthwoodsMichiganEvents.com

**Northern Lights Beach  
Resort**  
2510 N. US Hwy. 23  
Oscoda, MI 48750  
northern.lights.beach.resort@  
gmail.com  
989-739-7949

**The Rivermill**  
300 N. Mackinaw St.  
AuGres, MI 48703  
989-329-4173  
RivermillWedding@gmail.com

**Warrior Pavilion**  
6288 F-41  
Oscoda, MI 48750  
989-739-3211 x201  
director@oscodatownshipmi.gov

## **Waterfront Home**

**The Bear House**  
307 S. Huron Shores Rd.  
Harrisville, MI 48740  
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availability  
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## **Venues**

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807 N. Barlow Rd.  
Lincoln, MI 48742  
989-736-8879  
sunrisecenter.net  
sunrise.center.alcona@gmail.com

**American Legion Post 211**  
900 E. Lincoln Street  
East Tawas, MI 48730  
989-327-9593 or 989-254-2369

**Aplex Alpena Events  
Complex**  
701 Woodward Ave.  
Alpena, MI 49707  
989-354-6164  
denise@aplex.org

**Mikado Civic Center**  
2291 S. F-41  
Mikado, MI 48745  
989-736-7721  
mikadotownship.org

**Northwoods Greenhouse**  
368 Wilber Rd.  
Tawas City, MI 48763  
NorthwoodsMichiganEvents.com

**Portside of Long Lake**  
4973 Long Lake Rd.  
Hale, MI 48739  
989-257-1014  
portsideoflonglake@gmail.com

**The Flying Pig**  
2723 Grove Street Road  
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989-846-6988  
sara.herman06@gmail.com

**The Gallery by Branham's**  
313-333-0922  
TheGalleryVenue.love  
Teila@thegalleryvenue.love

**The Life Happens Hall**  
1123 W. Lake St.  
Tawas City, MI 48763  
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bleumoosebakery@gmail.com  
bleumoosebakery.com

**VFW Post 3735**  
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