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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 desti-



favors continued

nation 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.

LATE-NIGHT SNACKS

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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How to curtail wedding spending and still impress guests

Tying the knot can be an expensive endeavor. According to The Knot 2017 Real Weddings Study, which surveyed nearly 13,000 brides and grooms in the United States who got married in 2017, the average cost of a wedding was more than \$33,000.

That figure may surprise some couples planning their weddings, many of whom may not be able to afford spending so much on their ceremonies and receptions. Couples may feel pressure to compete with friends and relatives whose weddings they have attended in the past, and that may compel some to stretch their budgets and even go into debt to finance their nuptials. However, there are ways for couples to curtail their wedding spending and impress guests at the same time.

• Trim the guest list. The 2017 Real Weddings Study found that couples spent an average of \$268 per guest in 2017. Many couples are recognizing that smaller guest lists are a great way to lower wedding spending, and The Knot study found that the average guest count decreased from 149 in 2009 to 136 in 2017. Trimming the guest list may seem harsh, but couples who work together need not cut their guest lists in half. By working together, couples can likely find between 10 and 15 acquaintances on their initial lists who won't be offended if they're not invited. Couples who spend the 2017 average per guest can save nearly \$3,000 by removing just 10 people from their guest lists.

• Expand your venue horizons. A greater number of couples are looking beyond traditional wedding venues and opting for more unique locales to tie the knot. The 2017 Real Weddings Study found that 15 percent of 2017 weddings were held on farms, ranches and even in barns, while just 2 percent of weddings were hosted in such venues in 2009. The growing popularity of unique wedding venues may make some locations more expensive than couples an

ticipate, but a willingness to tie the knot in a unique venue greatly increases couples' options, improving the chances they will find more affordable venues.

• Cut back on guest entertainment. Customizing experiences for guests is a major reason why today's couples are spending so much more per guest than their predecessors. Spending for customized guest entertainment, which includes things like photo booths, sparklers and video booths, tripled between 2009 and 2017. Couples may want to give their guests unique experiences, but should not stretch their budgets or go into debt to do so.

• Tie the knot in winter. Summer and fall were the most popular wedding seasons in 2017, and that does not figure to change anytime soon. Couples can take advantage of those trends by getting married in winter, a slow season for wedding venues and vendors, who might be more flexible with their prices.



Bridal World – Fall/Winter 2020 Page 7 Is airbrushed makeup the way to go?

Hair and makeup is an important part of wedding day planning. Brides and grooms want to look their best on their wedding days, when they will no doubt take dozens of photos, if not more. Men may apply some oil-absorbing powder to tone down shine on their skin, but women tend to pull out all the stops when selecting bridal makeup — often hiring professional makeup artists to create a signature look.

Airbrush-applied makeup is an option women may want to explore. The wedding resource The Knot says that makeup airbrushing is quite popular in the world of movies and modeling and is now becoming more popular among brides-to-be. When applied correctly by a professional, airbrush makeup can have a number of perks.

Understanding airbrush makeup can help brides determine if it's the best choice for them.

Airbrush makeup is comprised of a



very thin liquid makeup that is applied with the use of an air gun. This produces a thin, even layer of foundation, often creating a matte finish. Makeup artists can custom-blend shades to get the right match for their customers' skin tones. And because the fine mist of airbrush makeup enables true skin tone to show through, it can appear much more natural.

Many airbrushed formulations are silicone-based, enabling long-lasting wear and water-resistant properties. This is advantageous when hugging and kissing on one's wedding day. Some airbrush makeup can last up to 16 hours. Some airbrush formulations are water- or alcohol-based. Alcohol-based options can be used to cover tattoos or birthmarks.

Touchups are minimal with airbrush makeup, and the formulations can be layered to cover blemishes. Airbrush makeup also creates a pristine finish for applying other makeup.

Airbrush makeup is compatible with well-moisturized skin and takes to it well, but dry skin may flake, crack and look flat, advises Essence Designs.

Brides who end up shedding tears of joy on their wedding days might find that airbrush makeup can streak, which can be difficult to cover up.

Because it requires a certain skillset and equipment, airbrush makeup tends to be more expensive than traditional makeup when done by a professional.

Airbrush makeup can create a flawless look and may be an option for brides to consider.

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7 ways to recycle a wedding gown



When planning their weddings, many brides-to-be devote a large portion of their wedding budgets to their ward-robes. Statistics released by The Knot in 2014 indicated the amount the average woman was willing to spend her gown was \$1,281.

Wedding gowns are among the most costly wedding expenditures. Because wedding gowns can be so expensive, many brides elect to have their gowns cleaned and preserved. Reusing a wedding gown is a cost-effective and earth-friendly idea. Women have many options when it comes time to putting their wedding gowns to use after they have tied the knot. The following are just some of the great ideas couples can explore.

1. Save it for younger generations. One of the primary reasons to preserve a wedding gown is to save the dress for a daughter, granddaughter or another relative to wear at her own wedding.

2. Transform it into other attire. There are a number of different occasions when wearing white is acceptable. Religious ceremonies such as baptisms and communions qualify, and a wedding gown in the hands of an experienced seamstress or tailor can be transformed into a baby's Christening ensemble or a beautiful dress for a youngster about to receive First Holy Communion.

3. Donate the gown. Brides in need may not have the funds to purchase their own beautiful gowns. Work with an organization that will provide dresses to the less fortunate. Or donate it to an organization that can sell the gown to fund projects for others in need. Another option is the Mary Madeline Project, which uses wedding dress fabrics to create burial outfits for stillborn infants.

4. Cut it up into usable fabric. Wedding gown fabrics can be used in various applications. Dresses can be transformed into decorative pillows or other wedding mementos. Stretch the fabric across a frame and use it as a blank canvas for a photo keepsake. The fabric also can work for baby cribs and infant basket skirting.

5. Use it as a Halloween costume. Dress as a bride for Halloween. Otherwise, tailor the dress to fit a child and she can use it for any number of dress-up opportunities.

6. Donate it to a costume archive. Theatrical companies may be able to use the fabric to create costumes for their productions.

7. Create a keepsake. Cut a small piece of the fabric and put it into a pendant or locket. A piece of tulle or lace also can be placed inside a clear Christmas ornament and hung on the tree for years to come.

Wedding gowns can be upcyled into many new and innovative items. Doing so eliminates long storage times and can benefit others.



Cut blooms that will last the longest



Flowers may look beautiful in gardens and even when snipped and brought inside to brighten up a mantel or dining table. Unfortunately, cut flowers have a finite shelf life. While cut blooms can't live forever, certain varieties will outlast others. Choosing flowers wisely for wedding centerpieces or keepsakes can help couples enjoy selected flowers longer.

• Peonies: Peonies can last for about a week or two when brought indoors. HGTV says to snip the stems when the buds are tight, wrap them in newspaper and store them in the refrigerator until you're ready to arrange.

• Zinnias: These bright blooms can last for three to four weeks and are best harvested in summer. Related to the sunflower, zinnias are available in a wide range of colors.

· Chrysanthemums: Widely referred to as "mums," these midsummer to late-fall flowers can last between three and four weeks after being cut. Mums can be used to fill out floral displays because they tend to be inexpensive but durable flowers.

• Coneflower: The purple coneflower is popular, but coneflowers are available in many colors aside from purple. Coneflowers attract butterflies and are beautiful in cut displays.

• Ranunculus: Ranunculus mimic the look of roses and display layer after layer of silky, crepe-like petals. These blooms can last a week or more in vases if they're put in water right after being cut.

• Carnations: Another budget-friendly flower, carnations are popular from early spring until late summer. Available in many hues, they can be used in conjunction with other blooms to create well-rounded floral displays that may last between two and three weeks.

 \cdot Lilies: Lilies are traditional flowers that are beautiful to behold. Lilies are

available in various sizes and colors and can be bought fresh year-round. Lilies often last longer than a week after being cut. Look for lilies with tight buds, as such flowers tend to last the longest.

· Gladioli: The lovely flowers of the vertical-growing gladiolus, which is sometimes referred to as the "sword lily," are available in yellow, peach, pink, white, and other hues. These bulbbased plants can last up to two weeks after being cut and add variety and texture to floral displays.

Although advice varies on how to keep cut flowers fresh the longest, veteran florist Nic Faitos, senior partner at Starbright Floral Design in New York, who has provided his floral expertise for Reader's Digest, says the best approach is to keep vase water clean. In addition, ProFlowers suggests keeping cut blooms in a cool room away from direct sunlight and heat.

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More couples are embracing edgy, adventurous weddings

Brides and grooms once felt compelled to conform to the trappings of traditional weddings. From uber-romantic vows to pastel colors to the penultimate white tiered cake, various wedding components were long considered must-haves. But modern couples are increasingly expressing their individuality, and even embracing more edgy and adventurous elements, when planning their weddings.

According to The Knot, a leading bridal resource and information site, today's weddings are not what they were just a few years ago. Bold colors, exotic cakes and nontraditional foliage, are just some of the elements modern couples are embracing to set their weddings apart.

ADVENTUROUS LOCALES

Vineyards and catering halls can be great places to tie the knot, but couples who like to push the envelope are looking to more adventurous locales to impart their unique spin on their weddings. Sharing vows atop a mountain crest at the end of a favorite hiking trail or on a roller coaster at a theme park that harkens back to a first date are some adventurous places to tie the knot.

OUTSIDE-THE-BOX MENUS

Couples may want to break with tradition by offering a wide selection of foods at their receptions. These foods can include items that fit with their specific ethnic cuisines, gourmet comfort foods (think cocktail franks wellington), or foods that fit with their dietary choices, such as organic or vegan options. Work with a caterer to provide a variety of tasty choices.

BOLD WARDROBE CHOICES

Brides can put new spins on their gowns by adding color and texture. Sequins, bold embroidery, shorter hemlines, and whatever adventurous fashion style you want to impart can be considered. If white isn't your thing, that's okay, too. Yellow and slate gray look great together. Gentlemen can choose to wear a black suit or any combination of color and style they want to make a dramatic impression.

FULL OF FLAVOR

Cakes don't have to be white with white buttercream. In fact, couples can make things even more tasty by incorporating favorite flavor combinations into their cakes. For example, a chocolate and caramel filling reminiscent of a candy bar might be something to consider.

Modern couples are embracing bold, unique and edgy components when planning their weddings. Putting an individualized spin on the ceremony and reception can make couples even more excited to tie the knot.



Falling in love with fall

Depending upon what part of the country you live in, an outdoor wedding might hold natural appeal and the season offers a chance to create a more unique experience. But before you fall for fall, take the expanded view of these considerations in mind from the website Here Comes The Guide.

THE WEATHER

THE HOLIDAYS

Holding your wedding indoors or outdoors in the fall greatly depends on the type of weather your region experiences in the fall months. The west coast might be sunny and temperate. The southwest and south could still be warm. Northern and midwestern states will, obviously, get cooler sooner. Wherever you live, keep an eye on the weather as your wedding date nears and be sure to inform your guests of the type of venue and the appropriate dress. If you're planning an outdoor wedding, make a backup plan in case the weather doesn't cooperate. Fall is the gateway to the holiday season, with plenty of reason to add your wedding to the celebration calendar. It probably goes without saying, but you might want to avoid holding your wedding near or on major holidays. Other than that, the season is wide open (except for football fans). If you do choose a weekend wedding, look for such holidays as Veteran's Day that might offer the added value of an extra day off for your guests.

THE COLORS

The fall season offers an opportunity to take advantage of a color palette that separates your wedding from the traditional bright whites and spring and summer shades. But you don't necessarily have to match those deep reds, oranges or browns. Take in the bigger picture of warm tones or choose a modern palette that might feature golds for a glitzy feel, emerald green or plum for a touch of elegance, or neutral shades such as champagne.

THE FABRICS

Regardless of where you live, and often because of that fact, autumn opens the door to the chance of chillier weather. For cooler climes, your bridesmaid dresses might demand a heavier fabric or accessories for warmth. Deep jewel tones and longsleeved dresses are a natural for fall weddings. Groomsmen should choose navy or gray suits for a sophisticated fall look, perhaps offset by argyle socks or plaid ties.

THE FLOWERS

Again, the season provides you a whole new realm of possibilities when choosing flowers. Some of the site's suggestions: Dahlias for an enchanting wedding bouquet. Deep burgundy varietals are especially elegant. Garden roses present the perfect alternative to peonies. Marigolds come in festive fall colors of gold, orange and red. For arrangements and table decor, look to autumn foliage, seasonal berries and nuts for a modern yet rustic look.





Bridal World - Fall/Winter 2020

Nature and naturally beautiful

Access the great outdoors to take advantage of the fall foliage or invite the colors inside. No matter which location you choose, the season provides a bounty of gorgeous color palettes, decor and attire options.

OUTDOORS

Autumn weddings are idealized as outdoor affairs — and for good reason. The temperate weather, the beautiful colors, the romantic and celebratory atmosphere all conspire to almost demand an outdoor wedding. Here are three classic outdoor options.

Farms and barns: No setting guarantees a rustic vibe more than an atmospheric country farm or barn. The outdoors lets nature take care of itself as a setting, but transforming a barn into a reception-worthy venue takes some diligence. But the result will be entirely memorable and worth the extra trouble.

Vineyards and wineries: Postcard- and picture-perfect, rustic and elegant, choos-

ing a vineyard venue literally says "celebration." Pre-stocked with wine, gorgeous and unique settings indoors or outdoors, it's no wonder vineyards have become popular wedding destinations. Decide early if you're thinking of a particular destination.

Gardens and forests: Fall weddings are all about nature, and the outdoorsy and nature-lovers will naturally be drawn to a forest- or garden-themed wedding. The valueadded, nature-provided decor makes these venues both beautiful and cost-effective. But take care to plan for a contingency if Mother Nature doesn't cooperate.

INDOORS

Pulling off a fall wedding indoors can also be an inviting choice. The weather is no longer a concern and bringing the fall atmosphere indoors is all about the decor. Fall color palettes and decorative elements can be easily adapted at these indoor settings.

Restored warehouses: A different kind of vintage appeal can be easily achieved by

booking a restored warehouse for a wedding venue. Many downtowns have reinvigorated their appeal with restorations that retain a location's retro elements, and many offer open-air areas. Features such as vaulted ceilings, exposed brick, and natural light offer a warm canvas that can be made fallperfect.

Cozy inns or hotels: For a more intimate, charming setting in fall, small historic inns, lodges and hotels offer both the warmth and romance of dark, romantic rooms featuring fireplaces as well as terraces and patios that allow guests to bask in the fall weather and foliage.

Botanical gardens or arboretums: No venue could be more in touch with nature and offer large enough covered spaces for weddings that botanical gardens or arboretums. Large windows provide gorgeous vistas of the fall season in all its glory and both settings easily customized with your choice of flowers and other decorative touches that take an indoor fall wedding to the next level.





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E-2

Food and drink stations on the rise

Maybe it was a buffet or limited-choice meal delivered by waiters. But don't let the past lock you in. There are lots of new choices to consider this year. Here, we've collected a "buffet" of trends happening that will hopefully spark your culinary imagination and kick your own wedding event up a notch.

DRINKS

Stations are in. Instead of a standard bar or roaming waiters, interaction is the keyword for wedding cocktails this year, claims an expert on the website Delish. Flavored syrups, fruits, edible flowers and herbs can be featured for guests to add to their drinks. Signature cocktails never go out of style, says another expert but plastic straws have. The movement to eliminate single-use plastics is also trending at weddings, where you'll see more paper straws and bamboo stir sticks.

SEATING

A mix of rectangular market tables and round tables are trending, as are wooden market tables. The juxtaposition creates different textures, shapes, dimensions along with textured linens and velvet, the site reports. An uptick in picnic-style seating should blend well for fall weddings held outdoors or in rustic spaces such as barns or warehouses.

DINNER

Wedding planner Kylie Carlson reports that the popularity of intimate weddings is leading to couples — especially foodies — developing tasting menus featuring six or seven small courses. The trend toward the less formal continues with wedding dinners. Roaming dinners in which guests visit food stations turn the event into an extended cocktail hour. The popularity of healthy, locally sourced ingredients is filling the choices at those food stations.

DESSERT

The iconic wedding cake also changes with the seasons. The once-popular "naked" cakes have given way to elegance and sophistication with wedding experts seeing more polished creations. To create a decidedly less traditional and fun feel, alternative cakes made of Belgian waffles or pancakes, cinnamon buns and donut cakes are trending options.

LATE-NIGHT SNACKS

If you expect your wedding bash to extend into the wee hours, late-night snacks are an expected (and necessary) final touch to the party. Expect to see the food station and healthy trend extend to these snacks, featuring such items as açaí bowls, vegetarian options and cheese and fruit pairings.

For more substantial fare, food trucks continue to dominate in popularity. Look into reserving one.





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Wedding tools make planning easier

Ensuring an event goes on with minimal hiccups takes patience and thorough planning. This is especially true for weddings, when many elements must merge together for a memorable day. Today's couples have a bevy of new resources at their disposal to facilitate wedding planning.

The internet makes vetting vendors and reading reviews that much easier, but wedding-related apps also can simplify wedding planning. The following are some top picks as culled by Wedding Shoppe, Inc., The Knot and Lifehacker.

• Wedding Spot: Couples can search for their ideal wedding venue based on location, budget, styles, and capacity. The website enables users to plan their ideal weddings and get cost estimates based on guest list and options. Users also can access discounts and exclusive deals.

• Wedding LookBook: This app enables couples to browse through thousands of dresses, accessories, jewelry, and much more. The app will help customers find products in their area.

• **Shutterfly:** This photo, invitation and image-sharing tool can be an inexpensive place to create save-the-date stationery, invitations, and photo memory books.



• Appy Couple: This app and website helps couples manage their budgets, timelines, wedding parties, and seating charts, while also allowing them to share photos. There is a free version and basic packages that allow access to more features.

• iWedding Deluxe: In addition to managing timelines, to-do lists and vendors, this app offers inspiration ideas for gowns, manages and tracks gifts, and offers first dance suggestions from iTunes. However, it is only available to iPhone users.

• AllSeated: This tool can help couples figure out seating arrangements by creating 3D floor plans of the event, and couples can pull contacts from email and social networks to establish a guest list. If floor plans are unavailable in their database, they can be drawn.

• The Knot's Marketplace: With the click of a button, couples can search for wedding vendors in all different categories, read reviews, and directly connect with those businesses.

• **HitchSwitch:** Brides or grooms who may be changing their names can do so in one convenient place. Three different packages cater to various name-changing needs.

• Vistaprint: These stationery specialists offer an array of services, from cards to invitations to personalized envelopes. Once a design is chosen, Vistaprint will offer add-on suggestions for coordinating items, helping to create a cohesive look for the festivities.

Wedding websites, apps and more can streamline wedding planning.



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