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Floral trend looks to be continuing in wedding gowns

BY BRIAN HAYTCHER

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When searching for wedding gowns, brides are spoiled for choice.

Penny Bowers-Schebal, owner of Formality Bridal in Geneva, florals are a major trend she has noticed.

“We are seeing florals everywhere, and florals on color,” she said. “And I don’t mean white appliques florals, I mean colorful florals. So we are seeing spring tones of florals, we are seeing deeper, autumn tones of florals.

“I am seeing florals everywhere. I am seeing dogwood florals, I am seeing wild flower florals.”

It is a trend that is probably not going away, Bowers-Schebal said.

“Its a good way to introduce color into a bridal theme,” she said.

Another trend is a basque waist, Bowers-Schebal said.

“It harkens back to victorian times, where the hips were exaggerated, and extra crinoline, and things are added to make hips look larger,” she said.

While it is trendy, the basque waist can look better on social media than it does on people, Bowers-Schebal said.

There was a surge of black gowns in past years, but now, many brides are choosing a black

accessory, she said.

“Just a little bit of that high-end, black-tie elegance that goes along with a traditional ivory or white gown,” Bowers-Schebal said.

Pantone’s color of the year was a shade of white.

“I think that is going to influence our bridal trends going forward,” Bowers-Schebal said. “Ivorys and whites have always been popular and a mainstay and a staple in the bridal world, but I think based on Pantone saying that it is a very strong color choice, that that will now influence the bridal world, as well.”

Slits continue to be popular, along with boning on

a bodice, but there appears to be more of a trend toward more conservative looks, she said.

“For the first time in a few years, I’m seeing things that are almost like turtlenecks in comparison,” Bowers-Schebal said. “But the turtlenecks offer a bit of modesty, so sometimes you’ll see that coupled with a sheer tone to them, so it’s covered, but not covered like a grandma would cover.”

Almost anything goes, she said.

“When I got married a long time ago, you didn’t have a lot of choices,” Bowers-Schebal said. “Today’s bride has almost too many.”

It is a good time for a bride to make her dress whatever she wants it to be, she said.

“The number of options are nearly endless for brides,” Bowers-Schebal said.

Formality Bridal has been open in Geneva for about a decade, and expanded to a location in Erie about two and a half years ago.

Bowers-Schebal said she has heard from professional groups that gowns have been held up in customs so long they may not get to brides in time, due to lack of staffing.

“There’s not enough people to let these packages get released,” Bowers-Schebal said.

She predicted a surge in off-the-rack purchases in order to avoid that issue.

“You can choose to buy however you want

to buy, but be aware that your gown could be held up in customs, and you don’t have a way to release that,” Bowers-Schebal said. “There is nobody to call and say, ‘Hey, can you release my package? It’s been paid for, it’s ready to go.’ Because that doesn’t really hold any water.”

There has been a lot of speculation about what Taylor Swift’s wedding gown will look like, she said.

Bowers-Schebal said her business is recovering following difficulties caused by the West Main Street infrastructure project in Geneva.

“We are rebuilding from that,” she said. “We love what we do, and so that is the takeaway. We will do what we have to do, because we are women and we are strong. Small businesses are resilient.”



WARREN DILLAWAY | STAR BEACON

Penny Bowers-Schebal, owner of Formality Bridal in Geneva, displays some of the wedding gowns available at the business.



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Epic Elopements sees success, soon to rebrand

CHRISTOPHER GILLETT

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Amber Massey sits at the intersection of weddings, hospitality, local tourism and the Grand River Valley wine industry through her business Epic Elopements.

Living in Madison, Massey plans many small weddings in Ashtabula and Lake counties and other locations throughout Ohio.

“We are essentially like the wedding client, and we are hosting the event for our couple,” she said. “We’re literally bringing the flowers. We’re bringing the cake. We’re officiating the wedding. We take care of the music and stuff or the ceremony.”

Massey started planning her business in 2019.

She said many tourists told her at the time there was no way to plan a small wedding in the area.

“If you wanted to plan a big wedding, there’s tons of places,” Massey said. “You just Google it, and you find a place.”

Massey said she initially thought the venture would be a side business. Epic Elopements hosted its first weddings in 2021.

“When we first started, I was just going to do elopements, and we were going to do pop-up weddings, which were popular at the time,” she said.

The business started small, Massey said.

“I just thought that it would be a great asset to be able to offer something like that here,” she said.

Massey said her experience in the hospitality industry prepared her for

important aspects of wedding planning.

“It’s not just the financial investment and the logistics that go into it,” she said. “You’re dealing with a lot of emotion, and a lot of emotional investment, and not just from the couple, but from all the family members.”

The wedding industry can be a gig economy, Massey said.

“We see people float in and out of it, who maybe aren’t professionals, per se,” she said. “It makes it a more competitive market, because some couples want something super low-budget, and some want something super high-up.”

Massey said her business focuses on smaller weddings, and the logistics of making the experience special and memorable.

“Our clients are normally people who are very mindful,” she said. “They want an intimate event. They want to be able to connect with their people, see all of their guests, and they want it to be nice, but they don’t want to spend frivolously.”

Massey had networked with many local venues through her time in the hospitality industry, she said.

A long-time business partner of hers is South River Vineyard owner Gene Sigel, she said.

Massey said South River had stopped offering weddings, because they felt it did not fit their business. But she convinced Sigel to let her run her smaller weddings while letting him keep up his winery.

“It really has been a wonderful working relation-

ship,” she said.

Massey said her business’ smaller weddings have proven more convenient for local wineries.

Epic Elopements has connected with other local wineries, including Debonné Vineyards, Buccia Vineyards, Cask 307 and Baci Winery, she said.

Massey said her network allows her to provide many options for clients, while understanding local challenges.

While many of Massey’s weddings take place in Ashtabula and Lake counties, she said most clients come from outside the area looking for a scenic and romantic venue.

“People, they know of this area because of the wineries, and then of course Geneva-on-the-Lake, and all of the marketing that’s been done and the tourism,” she said.

Massey said her work occasionally takes her to other parts of the state.

“We’re in Columbus a couple times a year, Youngstown [and] Akron,” she said. “I have a wedding coming up in February in Dayton.”

Since Epic Elopement’s start, Massey said she has expanded her work.

“Last year ... we ventured out and we started doing larger events, which was never my goal,” she said.

Many people recommended Massey to others, expanding her work. She has hosted some larger events.

“The biggest event we’ve done so far has been 300,” she said.

The growth of the business has provided some

challenges, Massey said.

“Other than that, we really haven’t had any major challenges,” she said. “It’s been really great. The people have been really wonderful.”

“Our couples are amazing, and this past year, we started to bring on a full-time staff. It wasn’t anything I ever thought I was going to do.”

Still Epic Elopements focuses on smaller weddings, which can number around 20-30 people, Massey said.

With the expansion, Massey said her business is preparing to rebrand as Epic Elopements and Events.

“We’re partnering with Holden Arboretum and taking over all the events there starting this year,” she said.

Massey said she initially worked with many older couples, and people on their second, third or fourth marriages.

“The oldest couple I had was in their mid-70s, which was really sweet,” she said. “They’d been together forever.”

As her business has evolved, Massey said her client’s age demographics have skewed younger.

“It’s been really cool to see the shift in that,” she said.

Smaller weddings have become more popular recently, Massey said.

“People are really struggling, and they’re having to make some really hard decisions of ‘What do we really want?’ and ‘What can we do without?’” she said.

Massey said she focuses on finding out what costs couples can cut on their



CHRISTOPHER GILLETT | STAR BEACON

Amber Massey is the owner of Epic Elopements.

wedding day by asking them what they would find most memorable.

“You only get that one moment,” she said.

Rising costs and inflation has been a major factor in the interest in smaller weddings, Massey said.

“People will figure out how to afford the thing they want,” she said. “There is nobody more resourceful than a bride. If we let brides be in control of the economy, we’d probably all be doing really well, because they will figure out how to stretch a penny.”

Massey said many older couples she worked with on their second or third marriage notice weddings now are much more expensive.

“That’s why we’re seeing trends of pizza at weddings,

barbecue at weddings, because it’s a lot less expensive than a formal dinner,” she said.

Many parents cannot afford to pitch in as much as they used to for their children’s weddings, Massey said.

“A lot of couples are really on their own,” she said. “They don’t really have help from family members.”

Larger wedding planners are shifting and providing plans for micro-weddings, Massey said.

“Because of the economy, venues are starting to mimic what we’ve been doing the whole time,” she said.

People can reach out to Epic Elopements through its website epicallyelope.com, or through its Facebook and Instagram pages.

Wedding officiants come in different types

BY WARREN DILLAWAY
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Weddings can occur in many different settings and with a variety of different people making the union official.

“I have done tons of weddings,” said Rev. Steve Sargent of Hiawatha Church of God in Christ in Ashtabula. He said he loves the opportunity to help two people come together for the rest of their lives.

The process of planning a wedding with a minister often takes months, Sargent said.

“There is a certain amount of counseling,” he said of the preparation for the big day, and the rest of their lives.

Sargent said he has noticed an increase in people getting married outside of the church because of the one-stop options for renting a facility to be used the service and the

reception.

Another option for people seeking to tie the knot with a little less fanfare is in area courts. Conneaut Municipal Court Judge Nicholas Iarocci officiates court ceremonies.

“My staff and I very much enjoy performing weddings in the courtroom. With all the ugliness we deal with every day, weddings give a chance to experience happiness and joy with a couple joining their lives together as one,” Iarocci said.

“I always tell them to focus on each other as they say their vows and drown out everyone else in the courtroom, since they are only supposed to make those vows one time in their lives,” he said.

Iarocci said the court charges a one time \$50 filing fee. He said each court has a different fee structure, and

Ashtabula County Probate Court handles fees for marriage licenses.

Many people work with a one-stop shop approach that includes ordained officiants such as Epic Elopements, business owner Amber Massey said.

“People typically use us because we are all ordained, however, we do get a lot of people who want to use a family friend of a family member,” Massey said. She said people will then do their officiation certification online and through the state.

Ed Pickard, a pastor at numerous area churches, said he officiated his first wedding in 1969. He said he has probably done 25 over the years, and enjoys helping couples grow together to hopefully experience a long marriage and raise a family.

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Local options abound for flowers

BY BRIAN HAYTCHER
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Flowers are an integral part of any wedding, large or small.

Michelle Brennan, owner of Morris Flowers and Gifts in Conneaut, said roses and baby's breath are definitely a trend, currently.

The color of roses are usually based on the bride's dress, Brennan said.

"Last year, it was kind of like the mauve and ivory," she said.

A lot of people are having DIY weddings, making much of the floral arrangements themselves, and coming to Morris Flowers or another florist for the bride's bouquet and groom's boutonniere, Brennan said.

"A lot of my customers

will say, 'hey, these are my colors,'" she said.

Brennan will then show brides what she has to offer, or order flowers to fit what they are looking for.

"Usually, they trust me on putting a pretty bouquet together," she said.

Brennan has also done some weddings with silk flowers.

Morris Flowers has been in business since 1933, and Brennan has run it since 2001, she said.

Lisa Richmond, owner of Capetina's Floral and Gift Shop, said dramatic, high-contrast colors are trending nation-wide, along with sculpted floral art and ceremonial arches.

"We talk about sculptural floral art, it would be like your bouquets would

resemble art, using metal or wire wraps, instead of the traditional ribbon," she said.

For colors, bright flowers will be contrasted with a softer pastel, Richmond said.

Hybrid arrangements, a mix of real flowers and high-end artificial ones, are also popular, she said.

Bouquets are trending to be delicate and small, and made up of all the same flower, Richmond said.

Larger events are suspending flowers from the ceiling, adding to the decor, she said.

"Another trend is, they're using fruit in their centerpieces this year," Richmond said.

Top flowers this year include amaranthus, garden

roses, delphinium, ranunculus, carnations, calla-lilies and lilies of the valley, she said.

Capetina's provides flowers for weddings large and small, and offers free consultations by appointment, Richmond said.

"We work with the bride and custom design their bouquet and floral arrangement based on what their needs are, based on their color, based on their flower type," she said.

Capetina's has been in business for 34 years, and Richmond purchased it just under four years ago.

"I have a wonderful design staff and support staff," she said. "We have about 15 employees, and they do wonderful work, beautiful work."



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Wedding options vary with venue options

BY WARREN DILLAWAY
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Couples in love can still find a church wedding with a reception in a fellowship hall, but there are so many more options available in 2026.

For decades, a church and reception hall were the main options for getting married. However, that has changed, with a wide variety of options available for couples.

Many couples opt for an outdoor wedding at a park, then rent a hall and hire a caterer. Others are looking for a more inclusive option that provides a venue which can add many ancillary services.

The wedding experience at Meadow Ridge Events,

just a handful of miles across the border in Geauga County on Route 322 in Huntsburg Township, has changed quite a bit in the half-century in business, said Seneca Wheelock of the family business that offers a variety of options for couples.

“We’ve been doing this a long time,” she said.

The event center has focused more specifically on weddings during the last 20 years, Wheelock said of the 70-acre site that has two outdoor wedding sites open from May to October.

She said one of the big changes is couples seeking to “put their own stamp” on the wedding with their own special touches.

“Clients can have a simple wedding or an



Warren Dillaway | Star Beacon

The Chapel Hill Venue is an option for weddings and other gatherings in Saybrook Township.

elevated-format wedding,” Wheelock said.

She said the event center handles catering, and is able to offer suggestions on officiants, floral options, DJs and photographers, if needed.

The Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake has been an

active wedding venue for decades, and lodge General Manager Charlene Horgan hopes to continue that trend. She said the lodge hosted 37 weddings in 2025, and already has 30 booked for 2026.

See **VENUE**, on page 10

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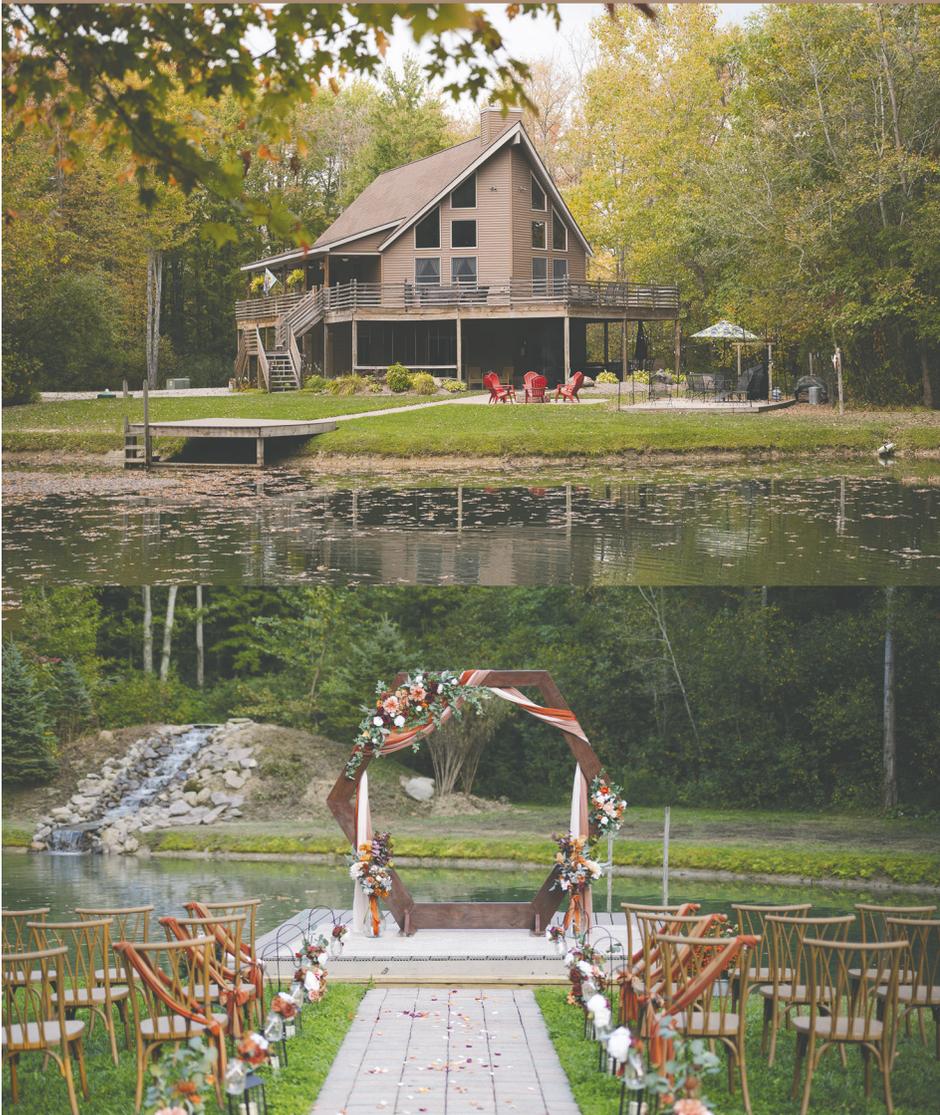
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Local florist reflects on work

CHRISTOPHER GILLETT

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Joshua Woodard is the owner of Village Floral and Event Planning in Pierpont.

The business started around four years ago, he said.

“We are a full-service floral studio, along with wedding and event planning and wedding and funeral officiating,” he said.

Woodard said he oper-

ates out of a home studio, and does not have a retail location.

The business caters to brides, as well as people planning funerals and other large events, he said.

Village Floral gets customers from all over, Woodard said.

“Ashtabula County draws a lot of outside business for weddings with the Lodge [at Geneva-on-the-Lake] and other event

venues,” he said.

Woodard said he has had a long interest in weddings.

“I always loved weddings, so weddings and events have been my passion,” he said.

Woodard said he was involved in the wedding industry before he started his business.

“We had a shop in Ashtabula between 2011-2014, but [it] closed,” he said. “After several years, I missed doing weddings and started back up in 2022.”

Village Floral’s work has been influenced by changes to the national economy, Woodard said.

“Pricing on flowers and people’s budgets get tighter so they cut things out, like a wedding planner or buying flowers,” he said.

Woodard’s advice for aspiring business owners is to take classes and do their own research.

“In business it’s hard, period,” he said.

People can reach the business at its website villagefloralevents.com or by calling 440-813-2776.

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

Village Floral and Event Planning owner Joshua Woodard holds a bouquet of flowers.

How much does the average wedding cost, according to data?

JANET SIROTO

SoFi

How much does the average wedding cost, according to data? As of 2025, the average cost of a wedding is approximately \$36,000, according to data from Zola, a wedding registry platform. When you think about all that goes into a wedding, you may understand how the figure can get so high. There's the venue (whether you book an event space or have a party tent in a backyard), food and drink, music, photography and videography, the dress and the ring, hair and makeup, flowers, and more.

But whether you want to have a destination wedding or one at home, you'll likely want to understand what others spend, whether the average expense accurately reflects what most people pay, and how you can develop and wrangle your own budget. SoFi shares need-to-know info to help you plan for what may just be the happiest day of your life.

Key Points

The average wedding cost in 2025 was \$36,000, with a median of \$10,000, which may be a more accurate figure to work with.

Costs vary by location; New York averages \$47,000, while Utah weddings ring in at about \$17,000.

Gen Z weddings average \$27,000, Millennials \$38,000, and Gen X \$23,000. Wedding costs fluctuate by month, with July to September being priciest, averaging \$34,000.

Careful planning and budgeting can help you control wedding costs, as can wise use of funding sources, such as relatives' gifts and person-

al loans.

What Is the Average Cost of a Wedding?

As noted above, the average cost of a wedding ceremony and reception for 2025 was documented at \$36,000, according to Zola, a wedding registry platform. However, before thinking that you need to spend that much to get hitched, keep in mind a bit of basic math about average vs. median wedding costs. Averages can be inflated by a few super-luxe weddings in the mix. To get the average, you add the data points and divide by the number of data points.

For instance, if eight out of 10 people spend \$10,000 for their big day and two people spend \$125,000 each, the average cost would be \$33,000. Even though just two couples splashed out, it looks as if everyone is spending a sum of over \$30,000.

Because a few high figures can skew data, it may be more meaningful to look at the median cost. When a median is calculated, the data points are arranged from smallest to largest, and the median is the middle value for sets with an odd number of data points. When there is an even number of data points, the median is the average of the middle two.

If you use the same values as above, the median would be 10,000, because you are only looking at the middle two values when the 10 data points are arrayed from smallest to largest. In other words, the big spenders get eliminated.

So what would the current median cost of a wedding be?

SoFi's most recent research found that the median cost of

a wedding is about \$10,000. Wedding costs will vary based on how elaborate the event is and the unique vendor and venue costs of the region.

And whether typical costs are closer to \$10,000 or \$36,000, that's a considerable investment: a five-figure amount to pull together or to finance with, say, a personal loan.

Average Wedding Cost by State

You've just learned that average wedding costs may be inflated vs. median costs.

However, most of the world tallies data as averages. Here, you'll see how much an average wedding costs by state, according to the most recent data from the wedding platform The Knot. Keep in mind that if you were to use medians, the dollar amounts could be significantly lower.

The price tag associated with this fantastic celebration for the couple, their friends, and family differs by state. The variations in amounts may reflect how the cost of living by state can vary. This is where things stand as of 2025:

- Alabama: \$27,000
- Alaska: Not available
- Arizona: \$26,830
- Arkansas: \$18,700
- California: \$39,170
- Colorado: \$31,130
- Connecticut: \$40,300
- Delaware: \$38,880
- District of Columbia: \$42,480
- Florida: \$32,560
- Georgia: \$28,800
- Hawaii: \$32,280
- Idaho: \$17,380
- Illinois: \$38,100
- Indiana: \$24,380
- Iowa: \$20,080
- Kansas: \$20,000
- Kentucky: \$21,680
- Louisiana: \$33,240
- Maine: \$36,000
- Maryland: \$39,460

- Massachusetts: \$45,000
- Michigan: \$28,330
- Minnesota: \$27,440
- Mississippi: \$21,280
- Missouri: \$25,040
- Montana: \$20,050
- Nebraska: \$20,870
- Nevada: \$19,890
- New Hampshire: \$36,080
- New Jersey: \$54,500
- New Mexico: \$22,260
- New York: \$47,800
- North Carolina: \$29,060
- North Dakota: \$21,080
- Ohio: \$28,300
- Oklahoma: \$19,590
- Oregon: \$23,290
- Pennsylvania: \$35,310
- Rhode Island: \$49,180
- South Carolina: \$36,170
- South Dakota: \$20,750
- Tennessee: \$24,040
- Texas: \$30,000
- Utah: \$17,380
- Vermont: \$44,720
- Virginia: \$33,760
- Washington: \$26,380
- West Virginia: \$19,080
- Wisconsin: \$28,730
- Wyoming: \$16,750

Average Wedding Cost by Number of Guests

If you're curious about how the number of guests will impact your wedding costs, consider this data about getting married from The Knot.

In 2025, the most recent year studied, the average number of guests at a wedding was 116, up slightly from the year prior.

Of course, just because that's the average number of attendees doesn't mean it's right for you. Some people with large families and circles of friends could have twice that amount, while others might prefer an intimate ceremony with just one or two dozen guests.

In terms of cost per guest, the latest figures are \$284 per person. Once again, keep in mind that these are averages, and the median cost

could be significantly lower. Nevertheless, that can be a considerable sum to pay. Looking into wedding loans could be a wise move.

Average Wedding Cost by Month

The time of year during which you host your wedding can impact the cost. Interestingly, in generations past, June used to be the most popular and in-demand month for weddings. That's a factor that can drive up costs. Now, September and October are the most popular months to get hitched.

However, there are regional differences in when people marry (for instance, a Florida February wedding will be very different from one in Maine), and many other factors impact which date you'll pick. Here, a look at average costs by time of year to help you plan your budget well:

- January-March wedding: \$32,000
- April-June wedding: \$33,000
- July-September wedding: \$34,000
- October-December wedding: \$32,000

The Takeaway

The current average cost of a wedding in the U.S., according to the data is \$36,000. However, median costs of a wedding reveal a significantly lower figure of \$10,000 for the big day. Keep in mind that average costs are just that: an average made up of numerous data points. It's not how much you will or must spend. Planning a wedding doesn't have to be a budget breaker, and there are various ways to finance the event, including gifts from family and personal loans. Think twice before turning to high-interest credit cards; a personal loan could be a wiser choice.

FAQ

What is the average cost of a wedding in the United States compared to the rest of the world?

The average cost of a wedding in the U.S. is currently \$36,000, and the median is \$10,000. Wedding costs in America tend to be higher than elsewhere in the world, but figures vary tremendously depending on location, wedding size, and details of the ceremony and celebration.

What is the average cost of a destination wedding?

The current average cost of a destination wedding is \$39,000, although the exact price can vary depending on where the wedding takes place, travel expenses, and the size and style of the wedding.

How much should I plan to spend on a wedding with 100 guests?

Currently, the average cost per person for a wedding is \$284, so a wedding for 100 guests would require a budget of \$28,400. What's the best way to estimate the costs of a wedding?

In addition to looking at the data and talking to friends and wedding professionals, you can develop a budget and research costs for your intended ceremony, such as venue rental, flowers, music, dress, catering, and more.

Are there different ways to pay for a wedding?

Yes, there are options for financing a wedding, including savings, gifts of money from family and friends, and securing a personal loan.

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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.

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 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?
- 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.

The 5 diamond cuts many brides are choosing for 2026

KIMBERLY ZERKEL

VRAI

Engagement rings are evolving in 2026 — and so are their center stones. Brides today are redefining tradition with designs that reflect personal style, creativity, and modern values. According to VRAI's fine jewelry experts, this year's most sought-after diamond cuts balance timeless romance with a fresh sense of individuality.

Oval Cut: Enduring Elegance

Graceful and elongating, the oval cut remains one of the most beloved choices for modern brides. Its soft curves and brilliant facets offer both classic shine and a contemporary silhouette. Whether set in a solitaire or halo design, the oval symbolizes effortless sophistication — ideal for those who love tradition with a twist.

Radiant Cut: Modern Brilliance

The Radiant cut's crisp edges and intricate faceting create unmatched light performance. Brides drawn to this shape often seek boldness and clarity —

qualities mirrored in its geometric precision. A Radiant cut diamond reflects confidence and individuality, as well as unmatched brilliance.

Pear Cut: Romantic Expression

Part teardrop, part statement, the Pear cut combines sentimentality with modern edge. Its tapered silhouette elongates the finger and creates a look that feels both unique and timeless. It's a favorite for those who want a ring that feels distinctly personal — a design that catches the eye and tells a love story all its own.

Emerald Cut: Architectural Beauty

Known for its clean lines and step-cut facets, the Emerald cut offers understated elegance. Rather than a fiery scintillation, its beauty lies in clarity and proportion — a style admired by brides who appreciate refinement and minimalism.

Old Mine Cut: Vintage Revival

The resurgence of vintage-inspired designs has brought the Old Mine cut back into the spotlight — a shape that gained even more attention following recent

celebrity engagements, including Taylor Swift's antique-style ring. Characterized by its cushion outline and hand-cut charm, the Old Mine cut appeals to romantics who love heirloom aesthetics with a modern conscience.

The Meaning Behind the Trend

Behind every diamond cut lies a story — and in 2026, that story is one of self-expression and thoughtfulness. Brides are choosing stones that reflect who they are, how they live, and what they value.

This year's engagement ring trends prove that modern brides aren't abandoning tradition — they're redefining it. From the sleek geometry of the Radiant to the soft glow of the Old Mine cut, today's most loved designs are as individual as the people who wear them. In 2026, the future of bridal jewelry is clear: timeless design, conscious creation, and a brilliance that endures.

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VENUE

Continued from page 7

She said some couples have taken advantage of the outside Shoreline Grill, just north of the lodge for a wedding with a view of Lake Erie.

A relatively new entry to the wedding venue scene is Chapel Hill Venue, located on Austinburg Road in Saybrook Township. Brittany Winchell, events coordinator of the operation, said the facility opened last year and hosts a variety of events, but weddings are definitely part of the business plan at the for-

mer golf course clubhouse.

She said they offer competitive prices for weddings with people bringing in their own caterers and other services. Winchell said they have had weddings throughout the year, not just in the summer and early fall.

Another relatively new entry to the county wedding venue business is Red Hawk Landing in Pierpont Township. Todd Neczeporenko, co-owner, said the business has been open for almost two years, and hosts weddings, and is open as a restaurant and bar Friday and Saturday.

He said Pierpont Township residents have been very supportive, passing a ballot issue allowing Sunday sale of alcohol.

“Initially, we were just going to be a wedding venue,” Neczeporenko said.

He said he felt they owed something to the community as a more regular place for community usage. He said there is a beautiful wooded area for weddings that includes a view of the Cain Road Covered Bridge.

“It's kind of a one stop shop,” Neczeporenko said of the variety of services offered for weddings.

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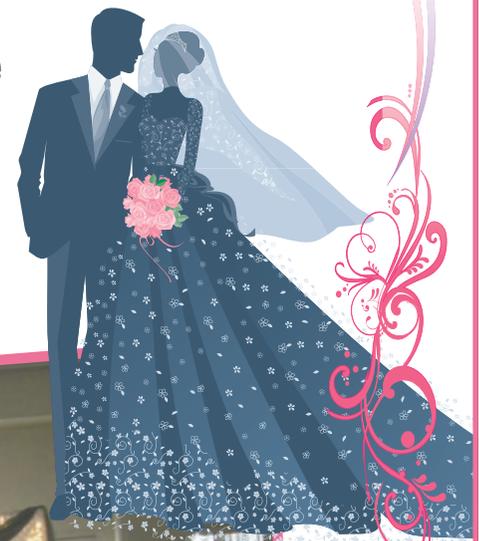
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