

BRIDES

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Extreme Weddings

Did you meet your soon-to-be spouse scuba diving, rock climbing or during a triathlon? If you are nodding your head, why would you plan an ordinary wedding?

Extreme weddings have become the norm for adventurous couples everywhere as they ditch the traditional for the thrilling. Why walk when you can dirt bike down the aisle? Why arrive to your reception in a limousine when you can amaze your guests with a hot-air balloon entrance?

The options are endless for the truly audacious.

UNDERWATER CEREMONIES

Many aquariums, professional diving services and even zoos offer underwater wedding experiences. If you don't feel comfortable asking your wedding party to head underwater with you, they can watch from the land while you and your spouse officially tie the knot sporting scuba gear and snorkels.

Sharing your first kiss as a legally married couple among the fish and sea creatures will be a memory that lasts forever.

CLIFF-TOP VIEWS

Many extreme couples prefer to go up instead of down under for their wedding ceremonies. They are taking to the cliff-tops, mountainsides and even hot-air balloons to celebrate their special days.

Some venues offer skiing



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and snowboarding ceremonies, as well, to really showcase your extreme side.

Coordinate with your local national park officials or wedding planner. They will be able to provide you details on cost, options and potential

liability issues.

ZERO-G WEDDINGS

Ever since the first zero-gravity wedding was celebrated in 2009, more and

more couples have opted for this high-flying, sky-falling option.

Couples and their wedding parties take a ride on an airplane that climbs to high altitudes and then falls intermittently to produce periods of

weightlessness.

If the idea of floating through your vows sounds exciting to you – and you don't generally suffer from motion sickness – then the zero-gravity wedding may be for you.

Gourmet Food Trucks

Especially in bigger cities, gourmet food trucks are popping up at weddings at an incredible pace. Baked chicken and roast are being shoved to the side in favor of zesty tacos and sushi.

And gourmet trucks not only add diversity to your rehearsal dinner, reception or after-party, they provide a certain novelty and flair that will leave your guests talking about your wedding for years to come.

GUEST-CENTERED MENUS

One of the biggest benefits to having a gourmet truck cater your wedding is menu diversity. Your guests can simply walk up to the truck and place a custom order.

This turns the traditional one-size-fits-all wedding model on its head.

Let your guests know prior to the party which company you plan on using. Doing so will allow them time to plan their order ahead of time, making for shorter lines and greater anticipation for your big day.

SPRING IS BEST

Depending on the size of your guest list, your friends and family members will probably be standing in line for a while waiting to place their orders. That's why a seasonable spring day may be the best option for hiring a gourmet food truck.

Summer heat or the chilly fall air can take away from the



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enjoyment – no matter how great the food is.

If your party is dampened by an uncharacteristically hot or cold day, be sure to have ice cream cones or hot chocolate as an option for your

guests.

MORE THAN ONE TRUCK?

The last thing you want to see is your guests wait-

ing in line for hours. Gourmet food trucks can generally feed hundreds of people, just not in a short amount of time.

If you have hundreds of guests coming to your party,

you may consider hiring two or even three trucks to keep up with demand.

You could even bring in two different companies to give your guests even more options and convenience.

Localized Weddings

Where we live defines us. The local culture and traditions become part of our daily lives. We take pride in what our area is well-known for, whether that be food, natural beauty or a bustling cityscape.

Brides across the country are choosing to fuse these distinguishing factors into their weddings. Read the list below to find out what is trending in a geographical location near you.

WEST COAST WEDDINGS

The Beach: How can you not get married on a beach if you live next to the Pacific Ocean? Beachside weddings offer spectacular views and a laid-back atmosphere.

Hollywood Theme: Especially for couples anywhere near Hollywood, a swanky, upscale wedding is the perfect fit. Hire photographers to act like paparazzi to give your guests the real celebrity feeling.

MIDWEST WEDDINGS

Versatility: With the Midwest sprawling from mountains to rural areas, brides are taking advantage of their surrounding landscapes to help plan their weddings. Mountains, rivers, forests and bluffs all serve as a great wedding backdrop.

State Parks: Nature-lovers are saying their vows in state parks across the Midwest, which offer a place of peace



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and serenity for a beautiful ceremony.

SOUTHERN WEDDINGS

Southern Theme: Big hats, chivalry and fried chicken. Now that's a Southern wedding. Find aspects of your local community that you can

tie into a rustic ceremony.

Simplicity: The South and simplicity go hand in hand, as more and more brides are taking the same approach to scaled-back ceremonies and receptions. Nix the photo booths and loud dance music and get back to what weddings are all about: Two people celebrating their love for each other in the company of

supportive loved ones.

EAST COAST WEDDINGS

Rooftop: Many city-dwelling brides and grooms are taking to the rooftop, utilizing their endless city view for a stunning wedding environment. An elegant cere-

mony followed by a classy party with a jazz band just screams to be enjoyed on a rooftop.

Food: Lobster constantly makes its way into the wedding menu for East Coast weddings. And why not? If there is a food that your local area is popular for producing, then incorporating it into your meal is a no-brainer.

Prenuptial Agreements

OK, so prenuptial agreements may not be the happiest of topics to consider when planning your wedding. But more than one third of single adults say they would ask a significant other to sign a prenup, according to a recent survey by Harris Interactive.

At with the country's divorce rate hovering around the 50-percent mark according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more people are starting to explore the option of a prenup.

Proponents say a prenup doesn't necessarily signal a lack of faith in marriage, but more so a protection against an unlikely and unforeseen circumstance.

Traditionalists are generally against the thought of prenups, deciding instead to trust that their marriage is built to last.

WHAT IS A PRENUP?

No matter what side you fall on, it is important for you to understand the basics of what a prenup is and how using one could affect your marriage.

Prenuptial agreements are fluid and flexible, but more often than not are implemented to protect financial security in case of a divorce.

Most laws say that married people share assets, property and debts equally, regardless of whose name is on the titles or deeds. In a divorce this means that a spouse who didn't contribute as much as the other



monetarily could still receive all joint items and finances.

Prenups can also be comprised of a plan for protecting family heirlooms, as well as distinguishing the differences between marital and separate property.

WHO SIGNS PRENUPS?

Divorce mediators often urge prenups for people getting married for the second time and for ones with children or wealthy par-

ents.

Divorcees may come into their next marriage skeptical and afraid of going through the same process once more. Creating a prenup can help them feel more secure that their

financial futures won't be negatively harmed again.

If you are considering initiating a prenup, consult with a board-certified family law attorney to draft and discuss all aspects of a potential document.

Preserve Those Memories

Your wedding ceremony and reception will go by in a flash. You spend countless hours planning the perfect event and when the day finally arrives it seems to move in a fast-forward pace.

Preserving the memories from your special day can help you hold on to the feelings of love, support and excitement that accompany it.

So whether you opt for video, photography or another method to record the day's events, be sure to have a plan ahead of time so you're not scrambling for ideas at the last minute.

PHOTOGRAPHER

While quality photographic equipment is becoming more widely available, it may not be such a good idea to ask your wannabe-photographer cousin to take the photos of your wedding with their SLR camera.

A camera takes great pictures just like a kitchen makes delicious food. You need an expert operator to get great results.

Shopping carefully for a professional photographer can be one of the best decisions you make. They'll not only be able to get spectacular images from your big day, but they'll also add an air of professionalism and sophistication to your event by following proper etiquette.

VIDEOGRAPHER

Video is a powerful option



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for preserving your wedding memories, as it affords you the opportunity to watch yourself walk down the aisle over and over again.

A professional videographer can set up multiple cameras to capture your wedding and reception from every angle, even in crisp HD format.

Be ready to shell out a big portion of your wedding budget for this option, though. Quality video technicians

don't come cheap.

WEDDING JOURNAL

From the day of your engagement to the day of your wedding – and even for years to come – a wedding journal is a great way to record your thoughts and emotions related to your marriage.

Initially you can use it to jot down ideas for the wedding

and reception while also writing about your happiness, excitement and expectations for married life. Writing in a journal can also serve as a type of release from the stress of planning a wedding.

DISPOSABLE CAMERAS

Want a fun way to capture memories and make your guests a part of the story? Consider using disposable

cameras. They are an affordable option for capturing your wedding through the eyes of your guests.

Lay two or three cameras on each table and let your friends and family members play photographer for a night. They are likely to offer you snapshots into the parts of the party that you weren't able to see for yourself, supplementing the traditional images from your professional photographer.

Patterns Are In

Polka dots, plaid and stripes, oh my! Patterns are taking the wedding world by storm as more and more brides are opting for uniquely whimsical events.

And wedding experts aren't calling the pattern trend a passing fad. Bridal shows from California to New York have seen an uptick in designers showing off pattered dresses over the past few years.

When matched with a classic color scheme, polka dots and plaid can help create a contemporary yet quirky wedding theme.

THE ATTIRE

While you won't spot many brides donning full-on polka-dotted dresses as they walk down the aisle, patterns are becoming part of wardrobe accessories.

Groom and groomsmen vests, lapels or ties offer the perfect pieces for a little cus-

tomized patterning. Bride and bridesmaid veils, shawls or corsages can also be spiced up with subtle stripes or plaid patterns.

The key to pulling off patterned success is cohesion across your wedding party. Don't ask your bridesmaids to wear polka dots and the groomsmen to don stripes. A little consistency can go a long way.

THE DECORATIONS

If you decide to go with a patterned theme for your attire, help enhance it with similarly designed decorations.

Your tablecloths, napkins, chair backs and aisle runner can look great in patterns. You can even give guests a preview of your theme

by sending out patterned invitations, RSVP cards and dinner menus for the reception.

THE FOOD

And speaking of dinner menus, you can even infuse patterns into your wedding fare. Patterned napkins and plates can help strengthen your theme during dinner, while your cake be totally decked out in polka dots or stripes.

Let your cake designer get creative with layering patterns together or with only patterning one or two tiers of your cake. Guests will love your attention to detail and the effort you put into integrating patterns into every aspect of your event.



The Perfect Shower

While some brides like to be involved in all aspects of their wedding and related celebrations, tradition leaves it up to the bridesmaids to throw the bridal shower.

These events can range from informal get-togethers at a local restaurant to a fancy shindig at an upscale resort.

If your friends will be planning your shower, be sure to offer up a few ideas if asked. If you give them some general direction of how you would like the party to play out, then they will be more likely to plan the perfect party.

LOOK YOUR BEST

Don't forget to wear your shiny new engagement ring to your shower, as well as any party dress or accessories that will help you stick out from the crowd.

You will naturally be the center of attention at your bridal shower, so it is a good idea to be stylish and sleek. You want parting guests to be talking about your outfit and natural glow.

IT'S YOUR PARTY ... BUT NO CRYING

Nothing will rack up "bride-zilla" points quicker than someone throwing a fit over the shower her friends planned for her.

If you give your friends the green light, then you should be ready for anything. This means being willing to go with the flow if they have a few surprises to throw your way.

Even if you are less than impressed with certain aspects of your party – or who makes it onto the invite list – just remember how much work your friends put into planning a special night for your big celebration.

ASK FOR ADVICE

If your friends ask you for any input during the party planning phase, be sure to mention the idea of gathering advice, especially from female guests who have been married for long periods of time.

Guests can be pre-mailed a blank recipe card or advice sheet and be asked to bring the completed documents to the shower.

It's always a good idea to listen to and respect your elders, especially ones who have found happiness and longevity in their marriages.

