

Spring Brides



Spring Necessities

Spring offers its own natural beauty. Blossoming flowers complete the gorgeous setting, adding pops of color and fresh scents to your special day.

But no spring wedding would be complete without a few other necessities. Here's a look:

FRESH STYLE LOOKS

The warmer weather opens up all sorts of style options for fashionable brides. Make sure your look matches the moments with soft colors and lightweight material so friends and family can enjoy the nuptials in comfort. Choosing the bridesmaids' dresses can be particularly fun this time of year, with lots of options in shades of the same color.

OUTDOOR DANCING

Look for venues with space for outdoor dancing, so you can celebrate your new union in the warmth of a starry night. Setting all of this up can add another layer of logistical issues, considering you'll need both power and lights. Discuss where the band or DJ will need to set up, and ensure the facility has everything needed. Of course, the best venues are old pros at this and will have a detailed plan ready to share. Be sure to update them on the number of guests who are



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expected to ensure there's room for everyone.

HYDRATION STATION

Everyone is bound to be thirsty after the ceremony, and particularly after cutting a rug for a while at the reception. Be sure there are plenty of drinks on hand to quench their thirst, both non-alcohol-

ic and alcoholic.

Spring is the perfect time for eye-catching libations, from lemonade and margaritas to iced tea and fruity drinks. Ask about clear glass pitchers to show everything off. If the venue can accommodate it, consider making separate stations for different kinds of drinks.

LIGHT DESSERTS

Don't forget that desserts are about more than the wedding cake. Take advantage of the opportunity to wow your guests by bringing the same level of creativity to the final course of the evening. Besides a wedding cake that's bound to be beautiful and delicious, create something that makes use

of in-season fruits and berries to garnish colorful cookies and pies. Your decorator can complete the look with centerpieces based on similar colors. Spring-themed cakes are always a hit, and you can also have lots of fun with cupcakes. Top it all off with a champagne toast. What better way to celebrate such a huge occasion?

Registry Item Trends

The first bridal registry was said to have been created in 1924 at Marshall Field's in Chicago.

The idea, then as now, was to provide a list of things like china, silverware and crystal to make wedding gift buying easier for friends and family. Back then, a registry was created in person and kept in a special notebook. Today, much of this is handled online. But that's not the only way that the bridal registry has changed. The latest trends include some very high-tech items.

SMART CHOICES

Couples register for a wide variety of things to complete their new household. Perhaps the hottest recent trend involves smart appliances. Coffee pots, refrigerators, vacuums, and even toasters are now outfitted with technology that allows them to connect via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth to your phone. This allows you to control them remotely and to set certain scheduled actions. Turn the air-conditioning or heat on before you arrive, or off while you are away. Have a hot cup of joe waiting when you wake up. There's even a toaster with more than 60 settings, following intelligent algorithms to heat things your precise desires.

GOING PLACES

You'll probably start dream-

ing of the next getaway not long after returning from your honeymoon. Arrive in style with all-new luggage that fits the modern lifestyle and aesthetic. Hard-sided bags now have built-in phone chargers, for instance. New compartmentalization options make organizing and packing a breeze. If you're more adven-

turous or love to camp, be sure to mark down back-packs and duffel bags in the registry.

AT HOME

Maybe you're more of a homebody. Gift registries can help you quickly build a warm and inviting atmosphere for one another. Registry standbys like sheets and towels

make timeless gifts, the more comfy the better. The latest trend is high-tech fabrics that are both sustainable and longer lasting than the products of yesteryear.

Just remember to make pattern and color choices that will fit into your life on a longer-term basis. Neutrals are always in fashion.

OTHER IDEAS

Round out your registry with items that will make your first years together more carefree. Soundbars help bring your home theater to life. Convection toaster ovens bring the food to your table in the blink of an eye. Espresso machines will make getting out of bed something to look forward to.



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Hiring a Professional

There's a lot more to nuptials than saying "I do." In fact, there are so many moving parts that it might make sense for you to hire someone to help out — or several someones.

Here's a look at some of the available professional services to help take some of the stress out of planning and putting on a wedding. Why not simply enjoy your day?

PLANNING SERVICES

Wedding planners are hired to look at the big picture, making sure everything works in concert as your wedding day unfolds. In some cases, you may be able to break apart their responsibilities, but others don't offer a la carte options. They want to make sure it all unfolds flawlessly. During your initial consultation meeting, you'll discuss personal expectations, their available packages, and information on coordinating during your actual wedding day.

Don't worry about a venue if you hire a wedding planner. They will listen carefully to your explanation and then select a series of possible facilities to meet your criteria. Once your big day arrives, the wedding planner will then take control of every aspect of the wedding event. They'll



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hire and manage vendors, as needed, while providing directions to guests and your wedding party.

PHOTOGRAPHER

You're going to want lots of documentation from this special event. Don't rely on friends and family to get the best photos. Make sure a pro-

fessional photographer is on hand to capture the quality images you'll keep with you for a lifetime. Ask for referrals before hiring someone, ask people in your circle about their experiences, and look over examples of their previous wedding assignments. Then create a detailed plan based on how the event will

unfold, and what you are looking for from the pre-wedding activities and reception.

FLORIST

You want to get the most out of the bounty of spring, so splurge on an expert in floral arrangements. A florist will help create centerpieces, fun accents and your bouquets,

adding pops of color and intrigue. When you meet, explain your expectations and color palette in as much detail as possible. This is a particularly important hire if you have booked a destination wedding, since you're likely unfamiliar with the local varieties and when they are at their peak.

Wedding Favors

Wedding favors are your way of saying thank you to everyone who was a part of your special event.

The average cost of these gifts, according to The Knot wedding website, is several hundred dollars. Still, that's worth it. They let guests know that you care, while providing them with a small special memory of their own from the big day. Here are a few gift ideas:

GO GREEN

Giving plants as a wedding favor is hip and eco-friendly, and they're especially attractive if your wedding is being held in an outdoor setting. Match with local flora or fauna, and you're literally allowing your friends and family to take a piece of your wedding home with them. Once it's home, their plant will become a living memory. Succulents are on trend, and also easy to care for. Stop by a local nursery to ask for specifics, keeping in mind that some native plants may not transfer well when brought back home.

GET GOING

Destination weddings offer a great opportunity to match the event with a travel theme. Pick fun items like luggage tags, maps and travel snacks, then arrange them in attractive totes. Or go hyper-local, giving



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your guests things that are only found in the area where you're getting married. That might be a special food, handmade good, or art object. Having a beach wedding? Don't forget the sunscreen!

TIME TO INDULGE

Trendy items this year include coffee mugs and minia-

ture candles. For the more off-beat, consider heart-shaped tea bags or mini-pizza cutters. Edible wedding favors like small chocolates, jars of honey or cupcakes can both surprise and delight. If you're already indulging in plenty of flowers, add floral-inspired lollipops in flavors like champagne and roses, lemon and thyme, and

rosemary and mint. One memorable offering even has seeds infused into the sticks, so they can be planted afterward.

FUN AND GAMES

Add flair with personalized items like napkins, plastic cups, shot glasses, wine glass charms and miniature bottles of liquor, beer, wine and non-alcoholic

beverages with your names and the wedding date. Other personalized options include koozies, matchboxes, playing cards and mugs which can be made with messages, names, dates or even pictures. Everyone can enjoy them right away at the reception, or bring things home as a special memento from your nuptials.

The Long Tradition of Rice

We've seen it time and time again: Spouses kiss and are presented as a couple, then exit toward a waiting vehicle as guests throw celebratory rice in the air. But why?

Here's a look at the long tradition of rice in weddings — and some newer alternative practices:

HOW IT BEGAN

Rice was originally chosen because it symbolizes prosperity and fertility, according to Brides magazine. It's tossed as a sign of well wishes for the future. The tradition dates back at least to ancient Celts, who threw rice and other grains both as a newlywed blessing and to appease various gods, according to Brides. Not everyone followed along, however. Ancient Romans were said to toss wheat, Moroccans threw figs or dried dates, and Indians celebrated with flower petals.

GETTING READY

Make or buy small packages of rice for your guests before the ceremony. Ushers can distribute the packets, or you can attach them to chairs or the wedding program. Ask ushers and other helpers to let guests know when the time is right. You might also consider listing the proper time to throw rice in the program. Most



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couples choose the moment they initially walk out of the venue, but others may want to do it during a special photo.

MODERN CONTROVERSY

More recently, fears have arisen that leftover grains might cause harm to wildlife long after the ceremony is over. Some government offi-

cials have even banned the practice.

Brides magazine reported, however, that subsequent testing has shown no immediate danger to animals. Rice can pose a slip hazard, however, so someone should be on hand to sweep up once the happy couple has left the venue.

INSTEAD OF RICE

There are plenty of reasons beyond worries over wildlife to opt for something else instead of rice. Some people are looking for greener options, while others are planning to have children and therefore feel uncomfortable about rice's age-old symbolism of fertility. Then there are the

inherent safety issues. Some options to consider go back to alternative traditions from places around the world like flower petals. Others now use birdseed, herbs, or biodegradable confetti. Some choose not to throw anything at all. Instead, have friends and family ring small bells or wave colorful ribbons.

A New Take on Dairy

Wine and cheese may have long been staples at weddings, but cheese is now having its own moment.

Wedding celebrations are now including everything from upscale charcuterie and exciting cheesecake options to comfort foods like macaroni and cheese and grilled cheese sandwiches. Here's how to join this growing trend:

BOARDS AND WINES

Charcuterie is a French word that originally referred to preparing meats, particularly pork, and then presenting them in a variety of ways. Today, the selection and variety of ingredients have wildly expanded. Ham, sausages, bacon or confit can be paired with complementary cheeses, jams, fruits or nuts of your choosing. Create your own unique charcuterie boards or enticing spreads on a main table, or smaller versions at individual seating areas, so everyone can join in the cheesy fun. They're attractive and often cost-efficient.

Consider hiring a sommelier, or wine expert, if the budget allows. They'll know just which libation matches with the unique flavor combinations you've created on these charcuterie boards. Ideally, there will be a variety of choices in both whites and reds, so everyone can enjoy the evening. Some couples also choose to



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pair all of this with craft beer, to add a modern twist.

COMFORT FOODS

Grilled cheese sandwiches and macaroni and cheese aren't just easy home-cooked meals anymore. Caterers are increasingly including these warm, cheesy delights as part of their wedding reception offerings,

but with more polished culinary twists, of course. Nutty Gruyere, gooey fontina and sharp cheddar jazz up mini-bite sandwiches, which are made using inventive breads and spreads. Macaroni and cheese is also being elevated, with inviting new cheese choices and fun pasta shapes. Try cavatappi, penne or rotini. Then dive

into Swiss, blue cheese, creamy Alfredo or Gruyere-based sauces. Top it all off with pancetta or crispy bacon, diced tomatoes (particularly welcome if it gets a little too warm at your spring wedding), spicy jalapenos, fresh broccoli or chopped herbs.

AFTER DINNER

The multi-tiered wedding

cake still rules in all of its confectionery glory. But cheese is elbowing its way to the table too in the form of exciting cheesecake options or cheeses matched with sweets like fresh fruit.

Cheese and fruit are a great alternative if the spouses-to-be or guests are going low-carb or gluten-free.



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Take It Outside

There's something special about an outdoor wedding, especially if you're planning a gorgeous, romantic destination event.

But even if you are planning on having your nuptials in the backyard, there are certain benchmark elements that you'll need to have in place to pull it all off. Here's a checklist to make your spring outdoor wedding a stress-free success:

COMMUNICATION PLAN

There needs to be a central communication hub so that check-ins and changes can be communicated, whether that's a group text, a Facebook event page, wedding website

or online meeting space. Vendors, guests, friends and members of the wedding party should be able to quickly and easily get in contact if they have questions or concerns. This will become particularly important if there is a major change in plans, but can be helpful in even small situations — such as when someone is running late.

If you don't hire a wedding planner, designate a family member or friend to monitor the agreed-upon communication hub.

KNOW THE RULES

Be aware of local noise and crowd regulations. There may be local statutes or venue guidelines when it comes to how loudly and how long a band or DJ can play music.

You also need to make sure you don't block traffic, or create other issues for people who live in or are traveling through the area. Make sure you know where and when people are allowed to park. You don't want to end up with unforeseen issues with neighbors or business owners because of overflow traffic.

If you're worried about having enough space for all of your guests to park, contact nearby churches or schools — and then direct people there.

HYDRATION AND SHADE

Spring brings warmer temps, and that creates the need for shade and hydration. Dancing and drinking alcoholic beverages also tend to make people thirsty during your reception. Older guests may be particularly susceptible to stress from heat.

ALTERNATE LOCATION

The biggest risk with outdoor events of any kind, of course, is bad weather. Your wedding will be planned out months in advance, meaning there's no way to check the forecast for rain. Create a backup plan just in case. Tour suitable alternate venues or look for outdoor sites that have nearby buildings so everything can be quickly transferred.