

PROM GUIDE



Preserving Prom Forever

Despite the huge amount of time spent in anticipation of this big night, prom can zoom by in the blink of an eye.

Months spent preparing, whether you're picking out the perfect dress or just the right corsage, all point to one single dance. You'll want to remember everything, down to the smallest glitter-flecked detail. Here's how.

SCRAPBOOK

Posting to social media is fine, but far too temporary for such a big occasion. Within a few weeks, or even days for more regular posters, these once-in-a-lifetime photos will get pushed out of sight by the latest meme or meal. Consider getting the hardcopies together for a scrapbook. You can create captions for each image, identifying everyone and perhaps including a hilarious anecdote. Surround the photos with whatever mementos you find, including things like ticket stubs and flower petals. Get creative! There is no wrong way to scrapbook.

JOURNALING

Images capture moments in time, but putting pen to paper allows you to fill out all of the sensory elements that surround prom: How it felt when they played your favorite song, the sweet smell of a

boutonniere or the fun little story someone shared. But you'll want to get started way before then. Buy a journal and begin writing down your entries as soon as the date and your partner are confirmed.

You'll also be able to relive all of the anticipation and excitement as this special event gets closer.

FLOWERS CAN BE FOREVER

Don't let one of the best parts of prom fall apart. There are several easy ways to preserve your prom-night flowers, right at home. Buy silica gel from a local craft store, place the flowers in the gel and seal the container. They'll emerge perfectly preserved. You can

also place them in the freezer, use Borax, or dry your flowers the old fashioned way after spraying them with hairspray to minimize any crumbling.

GO ONLINE

Combine all of these elements into a stand-alone website of your prom adventures, and you'll have a digital

archive, too. Better still, a commemorative site can be collaborative, meaning friends and classmates could contribute comments and content, too. If you'd prefer the ease of using your every-day social-media pages to collect these memories, create a prom hashtag so that your whole class can easily view the posted images.



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How to Ace the Promposal

An event this grand requires a similarly grand gesture, right? Thus was born the promposal, an increasing elaborate way of popping the question to a potential dance partner.

Still, as we've seen over the last decade or so, the impulse to make it a big deal can sometimes go too far. Here's how to pull off the modern promposal without embarrassing yourself or breaking the bank.

BE AUTHENTIC

The internet is overflowing with examples of how this can go wrong. But even promposals that worked for others might not work for you. Find a gesture that fits in your comfort zone — and, just as importantly, in your prospective date's.

Ultimately, you're trying to get to a "yes," not an "ew." Even ideas that are on the cheesy side can come off exceptionally well, if they fit the personality of the couple. Authenticity is key.

STAY ON BUDGET

Increasingly elaborate promposals risk breaking the bank before you've

even begun deciding what to wear and where to eat.

Stick to a pre-determined budget. That will not only lessen the stress that's always been associated with asking someone to prom, but also force you into a creative space where the best ideas are often found. No matter what, you never want to run out of money while still in the asking phase.

TRY SOMETHING NEW

Remember, neither person in this equation is a Disney princess, waiting to be rescued. Anyone can ask anyone else to the dance.

Promposals don't have to follow any gender rules — or any rules at all,

really. Do they have a favorite pop star? Make up a placard that uses lyrics to ask. Empty out a sleeve of tennis balls into their locker — since now the ball is in their court. An epic dance routine? A car covered in Post-It notes in the school parking lot? It's all on the table.

KEEP A RECORD

Whatever idea you come up with, whether impressively large or cute and small, be sure to have someone else there to take pictures and video. Even a shaky smartphone clip will do, since you'll want to watch this incredible moment time and time again.

Giving Prom a New Flair

Let's face it, most proms follow a pretty well-known script — right down to the themes.

Generation after generation have couples photos beneath a banner reading “Midsummer Night’s Dream,” “Happily Ever After,” “A Night in Paris” or “Let the Good Times Roll.” There’s a DJ, and a formal photo area. It can all feel played out. Here’s how to give your prom a new flair.

THEMES

The prom theme plays a big role in how much fun everyone has — and how memorable this year will always be. Being inventive makes even more sense when you take into account the disruptions caused by a world-wide pandemic, when proms were cancelled.

So, think “Hollywood” but select a movie of more recent vintage — like ‘La La Land.’ Or try something more folksy, something that will always be on trend as long as Taylor Swift is one of music’s biggest stars. Glam it up by adding an “enchanted forest” vibe to the country setting. Disco may be played out, but the ‘80s are still going strong. Pick a key song, a Brat Pack movie or wacky fashion trend to focus on. For something a bit more sophisticated, consider a Roaring ‘20s, casino or royal-family theme.



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TREATS

Everyone arrives at prom still stuffed from their pre-dance meal, but all of this prom activity is bound to work up an appetite for dessert or a late-night snack. Why not include a popcorn or vending machine, or a station for fresh donuts or cotton candy? If you want to take it up a notch, set

up a full concession stand, with proceeds going to school activities — or hire a food truck to be parked outside.

ENTERTAINMENT

DJs or bands are also standard at proms, of course. Try mixing it up by getting inventive with the song selections: Focus on one decade per

hour, or do a night of all-requests. Consider a fun ice breaker like hiring a local comedian, or student-led karaoke. Formal pictures are a must, but that doesn’t mean you can’t shake up convention by adding a photo booth, as well. Contact the yearbook committee about reprinting some of the best candid.

Remember that not everyone likes to dance, or feels comfortable in front of a larger audience. So, strategically place a series of fun games around the space. They can be anything from decks of cards to Jenga, or even video game consoles in designated areas. All of it is guaranteed to be TikTok worthy.

Staying Safe at Prom

Unfortunately, prom night can go hand in hand with poor decision making.

Alcohol-related car accidents, sexual assaults and other teen-related crime typically sky rockets. But you don't have to be a statistic this year. Here how you can stay safe at prom.

DRIVING

Prom can be the best of times, or the worst of times — depending on whether everyone is making good decisions. Teen traffic fatalities are higher during prom and graduation season than in any other time of the year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. A stunning one in three of these car accidents happens during the same period every year. Often, these drivers are impaired. If you elect not to take a taxi, ride-share or limo, pick a designated driver and stick with that plan. If all else fails, work out a plan to get a ride home with a parent or family friend.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The dangers don't end when you arrive at the dance. Besides the obvious illegality of teens consuming alcohol and drugs, they also are a consistent element in sexual assaults at prom and post-prom events. In fact, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services confirms that most date rapes are directly related to drugs or



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alcohol. Be aware of your surroundings, and keep yourself safe.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Give your parents your complete itinerary, including where you'll be stopping for dinner and any post-dance plans. Give them your friends phone num-

bers, in case of emergency. Check in throughout the night, even if it's just to share a quick photo, humorous anecdote or appropriate emoji. Talk about their expectations, including when you're due back. If you've shown enough trustworthiness in the past, they'll likely give you some extra breathing room

if lose track of time and return a little late. But do your best to keep your word.

DIFFICULT TOPICS

None of this is easy to talk about, perhaps least of all with your parents. But it's an important discussion to have, considering the myriad dan-

gers inherent with this annual event. Discuss specifically what you'll do should you be offered drugs or alcohol, a ride from an intoxicated classmate, or unwanted sexual advances from anyone. The more honest you can be with them, the more freedom you'll likely enjoy.



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Going to Prom Solo

In the old days, proms were exclusively for pairs, but that's not the case anymore, as an increasing number of students have decided to go solo.

There's a cost savings, of course, but also no reason to worry about a date. More than that, it's a chance to make this night about a circle of graduating friends who may be going their separate ways soon. Here's why going it alone can end up turning into a great night.

LESS PRESSURE

Online and hybrid learning may have ended a long-term relationship, or made it more difficult for you to meet new people. Even before COVID, teens lived in an internet-driven fish bowl, and prom can end up as another trigger for anxiety. Going alone eliminates the pressure of getting a date and then actually being on a date. It's just one more late-year stressor.

FASHION SIMPLIFIED

Depending on how close you are with the friend group you'll meet, they may want to coordinate outfits. But, more often, going solo takes

away all of the worry over matching or complimenting with someone else. You can accentuate your own unique sense of style, without stepping on anyone else's toes.

Just remember to bring your own coat, since there won't be a date around to loan your theirs if it turns cold or rainy.

ADDITION BY SUBTRACTION

Obviously, you'll never feel tied down. You can eat when you want, talk to who you want, and leave when you want. You also won't have to deal with those sometimes awkward photograph sessions with a date. You'll be saving money, since you're not paying

for someone else's dinner, tickets or flowers. Best of all, you'll miss out on one of the most consistent issues facing teens: drama.

FOCUSING ON FRIENDS

You've got the rest of your life to consider marriage, buying a house with the proverbial white-picket fence and starting a family. Instead, why not make this night about friendship? Rather than feeling tied down with a single dance partner, you can freely move from table to table, visiting with a variety of classmates. There won't be too many more of these opportunities, as college and work life beckon. Take time to enjoy it.

Trends in Prom Dresses

Nobody wants to look like their parents did at prom — that is, unless their particular form of retro style is back in fashion.

That's why it's best to start following the latest trends in prom attire, well before you head off to the local dress store. Here's a look at a few of the hottest looks for 2022.

ONE SHOULDER

Whether a simple strap or a long sleeve, the one-shoulder dress is always the ultimate in glam — but a little edgy, too.

VINTAGE

Somethings never go out of style, while other things — like the newfound fascination with roaring '20s style — are related to the age we're in. Fringes, and high-leg slits were all the rage then, and now.

METALLIC

Metallic colors are still hot, despite having been trendy for a few years now. Stay shimmering in silver, gold, gunmetal or rose gold.

BALL GOWNS

These are perfect for anyone who doesn't feel comfortable in a more fully fitted dress, and they still provide an ageless, princess-style silhouette.

EMBELLISHED TOPS

These are especially cool if



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you are having another virtual prom, since the shoulder area of your outfit or dress will be the most visible to classmates and friends when you're on the phone or in front of a laptop. Sparkles, glitter, sequins, beads and lace are back; for a sumptuous look, try 3D floral blooms.

CONTRASTING COLORS

The combination of pinks

and reds has been dominating the red carpet of a while, definitely rebutting the long-held argument that these colors clash. Mandy Moore, Zoe Kazan and Taraji P. Henson can't be wrong.

ANIMAL PRINTS

One of 2022's hottest fashion choices never really went away. The difference these days is you don't have to stick

with classic cheetah or leopard designs. Mix and match zebra, tiger or even snakeskin looks for an eye-catching twist on a long-time favorite.

OMBRE

These long flowing gowns are the height of timeless fashion, with new color wrinkles and intriguing fabric options to keep things fresh. Get creative with dark tops

and lighter skirts, tie dyes or sequins.

RETRO

Raiding your mom's closet has never made more sense, since '80s-style ruffled skirts, bright silky fabrics, puffy sleeves and even bows are back. If you're not ready to jump in with both feet, try a dress in the era's bold neon hues. You'll still be on trend.

Renting a Limo

Hitching a ride with someone is always a good idea on prom night — so why not do it in style, right?

Booking a limo is a chance to take part in one of the safest ways to travel, while easing your parents' minds. Still, there are some very important things to consider before hopping into your prom-night rental.

WHY IT'S SMART

The roads are far more dangerous in and around prom dances, whether because of distracted teen drivers or those who are actually impaired.

Limo drivers are licensed, trained professionals who are experienced in dealing with increased traffic and difficult driving conditions.

Be sure to shop around, though, because there can be a big difference in the services provided, the age and upkeep of their fleet, and pricing — in particular during the busy prom season.

GETTING STARTED

Talk to your friends as early as possible. You certainly won't be the only ones trying to book a limo during prom season. Decide early on how many will be in your group, so you can inquire about a specific vehicle. Then get several quotes to see how they compare.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Limousine rental companies

are required to have proper insurance, according to the USA Limo Guide. Still, the level of coverage can vary, so check with prospective companies to find out exactly what they have. Ask for documentation or other certificates confirming annual grades for driving records and safety.

CHECK REFERENCES

Even with all of that documentation in hand, word of mouth is still one of the most important ways to perform a background check. Ask friends, neighbors and classmate parents about their past experiences with local limo services. How did their rides go? Did they feel like they got their money's worth?

HIT THE ROAD

It's time to sign, but be aware of hidden costs: Find out if they offer split packages that charge only for driving before and after prom, not for the entire time you spend at the dance.

Ask about any extra fees for parking or fuel, and whether the start time includes travel time for pickup or when everyone boards the limo. Also find out if a gratuity has already been added for the driver. You'll want to know, whether you are paying or your parents are.

