

Fall Brides



Why a Fall Wedding?

You don't have to look too far when trying to decide if a fall wedding is right for you. One glance outdoors at the changing leaves and gorgeous fall foliage is enough to make it an easy decision.

The fact that it is an off-peak season is also attractive to many brides and grooms because of the cost breaks offered by venues, vendors and entertainers.

Yes, there are many advantages to a fall wedding. But it is right for you? Read on for some of the biggest benefits of getting married in the fall, and then make your decision depending on your goals.

IDEAL WEATHER

When considering a fall wedding, it's important to understand recent weather trends in your area. Holding your wedding indoors or outdoors in the fall greatly depends on the type of weather your region experiences in the months of September, October and November.

The West Coast and South will likely still be sunny and temperate during the fall season, while northern and Midwestern states may see a dip in temperatures. Ask local



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wedding planners and venues about their past experiences with fall weddings.

Follow their recommendations, but the ultimate choice is up to you. If you're planning an outdoor wedding, it's smart to make a backup plan in case the weather doesn't cooperate.

Finally, don't be afraid to travel if your home base isn't

ideal for a fall wedding. You don't necessarily have to leave the country to experience a destination wedding, as seven out of 10 occur in the continental United States.

According to the website, GroupTravel.org, 350,000 destination weddings take place annually. Las Vegas is the category leader for weddings with over 100,000 per year.

ALL YOUR FAVORITE COLORS

Choosing your wedding colors is one of the most fun – and important – decisions related to your wedding. And there is no doubt that the fall season offers an opportunity to take advantage of a color palette that guests will remember for years to come.

Deep reds, oranges or

browns offer a great backdrop to pair with other natural palettes. Emerald green or glitzy purple can make for an elegant touch if you're looking to add a little flair to the more earthy tones of fall.

Whatever you choose, it's obvious that the fall holds a distinct advantage over other seasons when it comes to the natural colors of the outdoors.

Find a Local Wedding Planner

There are many things to consider when looking for a local wedding planner.

You'll need someone who is patient and flexible enough to go with your boldest visions, but also someone who is firm enough to negotiate and manage contracts with vendors and venues.

Since every wedding is different, it's important to find a local wedding planner who can take your goals and make them happen.

A local wedding planner can take some stressful things off your plate, plus they live and breathe wedding planning, making them ideal partners to help come up with ideas or details you haven't considered.

ASK YOUR FRIENDS

Referrals are the best way for local wedding planners to grow their business. Everyone knows someone who has gotten married or can point you to someone who has. And, odds are, someone you know has worked with a wedding planner.

Find a bride or groom who you respect and ask them about their wedding planner experiences. You can also pose the question to your social media following to see what type of feedback you receive.

Even after you have gotten a few referrals, do your own research by speaking with some planners to see if they



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would be a good fit for your wedding day. You'll find that some local wedding planners specialize in larger weddings, while others may concentrate on smaller ones.

Depending on your needs, you'll want to find a local wedding planner who can turn your wedding dreams into a reality.

FIND A CERTIFIED WEDDING PLANNER

When shopping for a local wedding planner, be sure to interview a few before making your final decision. Reputable professionals will be honest when it comes to their experience and the type of qualifications they possess.

While certainly not a neces-

sity, you may consider finding a local professional who holds credentials with the American Association of Certified Wedding Planners. This professional organization features a bevy of trained or certified wedding planners. The organization provides support, resources and networking for wedding planners, as well as

professional development, certification and continuing education.

Ask your potential wedding planner if they are part of the AACWP or any other wedding planning groups. These types of credentials will only help solidify that you're working with someone who takes their profession seriously.

Think Outside the Box

With the overall natural beauty found during the fall season, it's no wonder why so many couples are opting for unique venues to host their special day.

Fall lends itself to a variety of enchanting venue ideas indoors or outside. You can access the great outdoors to take advantage of the fall beauty or invite the colors inside with a unique theme.

No matter which location you choose, the season provides a bounty of outstanding options when it comes to choosing your colors, decor and attire.

THINK OUTDOORS

The temperate weather and the beautiful colors make the outdoors an ideal option for planning a romantic, memorable wedding.

Vintage farms. Thinking rustic? Consider a local country farm for your venue. These venues combine the best of both worlds – classic outdoor beauty and reclaimed barns. Many vintage farms offer plenty of space for a large guest list. You'll also be supporting local farmers, as many have found ways to host events to supplement their regular revenue streams.

Wineries and breweries. Wineries offer breathtaking



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views and spacious indoor or outdoor options for your festivities. And while you've likely celebrated a wedding at a local winery, have you considered a brewery? This is a trendy option that offers industrial backdrops for photos and reception celebrations, not to mention plenty of drink options for your thirsty guests.

Local forests. Looking for a stunning, sustainable location for your wedding? You won't

find a venue more fitting than your local forest. Nature-lovers agree, forest-theme weddings offer beautiful, serene locations for getting married to your special someone.

STAY INDOORS

Due to the uncertainty of Mother Nature, many couples opt for an indoor wedding during the fall season. Fortunately, fall color palettes and decorations can be easily

adapted indoors.

Castles. Frequently found along the east coast, step inside a storybook castle venue to host the wedding of your dreams. There are many of these venues that were built in the 1880s and have since been reclaimed and restored to their original glory.

Historic hotels. For a more intimate setting in fall, small historic inns, lodges and hotels can help whisk you and

your guests away to a simpler, more understated time that is equal parts charm and nostalgia.

Large estates. Watch the leaves change color against the stunning, spacious exteriors of large, historic estates. You likely have one of these restored mansions in your neck of the woods, and they create an idyllic setting for a unique indoors ceremony or reception.

Wedding Statistics to Consider

Sometimes, seeing how other couples are planning their weddings can help you making decisions while you start to put together your special day.

Check out these statistics from the research company, The Wedding Report.

- 41.5% of couples moved their 2020 weddings to 2021.
- 7% are or have canceled altogether (some likely married but canceled the full event).
- 46% of couples are cutting their budget by an average of 31%.
- 58% of couples are cutting their guest count by an average of 41%.
- 2021 is seeing a surge of 650,000 weddings, bringing the total number of weddings to 2.77 million versus a normal year of about 2.12 million.
- Spending will be reduced in both budget and guest counts. 2021 average spending will be about \$21,600, resulting in a total market of \$60 billion.

WHAT THESE STATS MEAN FOR YOU

Prepare now. Depending on where you live and the current demand for weddings, it may be tough to secure a venue. If you're planning on getting married in 2021 or 2022, you may have to get creative with your venue space, especially if



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more traditional space options are booked out for many months. Call around and start your planning process early on. That way you're able to overcome any scheduling issues due to the pent-up demand for ceremonies and receptions.

Enjoy engagement. According to data from

TheKnot.com, two out of every three couples said they felt stressed during the planning process in 2020. Another 54 percent felt uncertain, and nearly half of all respondents reported that they were overwhelmed. As difficult as it may be, experiencing a wedding date delay can be a great excuse to enjoy your engage-

ment for a longer period of time. Take local trips with your love and find new ways to spend time together. You just might find you're closer than ever as your wedding gets closer.

Be flexible. If your reception is in a region where you anticipate more events than usual around the time of your

planned date, consider alternative days of the week. Top-preferred vendors could potentially be available during these dates. With a little flexibility, you could land great venues and vendors for your special day, even during such an uncertain, high-demand time for couples getting married.

COVID Concerns: Feeding Guests

If we've learned anything during the pandemic, it's to expect the unexpected. As venues begin to open back up, we'll likely see a change in how weddings are experienced, at least in the near future.

And while some states have completely relaxed gathering and masking protocols, it's ultimately up to you on what, if any, precautions you'd like to put in place for your wedding day.

Read on for some expert tips on what to consider when planning your wedding.

FOOD SERVICE CONSIDERATIONS

If you're concerned about protecting your guests from potential exposure to COVID-19, there are certain precautions you can take. There is no evidence to suggest that handling food or eating is associated with directly spreading COVID-19, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

However, people sharing utensils and congregating around food service areas can pose a risk.

The CDC recommends that you limit food or beverage service in areas in which people



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are more likely to congregate as that may encourage unmasked interactions.

Here are a couple of other suggestions from the CDC to discuss with your venue and vendors:

- Use touchless payment options as much as possible, if available.
- Ask customers and staff to exchange cash or card payments by placing them on a receipt tray or on the counter rather than by hand to avoid direct hand-to-hand contact.

- Make sure staff is cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as pens, counters, or hard surfaces between use and encourage patrons to use their own pens.

- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or side-walks and signs on walls, to ensure that people remain at least six feet apart when waiting in line to order or pick up.
- If a cafeteria or group dining room is used, serve individually plated meals or grab-and-go options, and hold

activities in separate areas.

- Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars and drink stations.

CONSIDER A MICROWEDDING

In the face of the pandemic, many couples are opting for more intimate wedding ceremonies, tabbed "microweddings" by the wedding expert site, TheKnot.com. These types of events typically include a guest list of up to 50 guests and

considered a cross between an elopement and a big, traditional wedding.

With smaller guest counts, you may be able to stretch your budget. According to The Knot 2019 Real Weddings Study, the average overall guest count was also down, while the average cost per guest went up.

Consider allocating your budget to nicer hotel options for your guests, or unique transportation ideas to get everyone to and from your various venues.

Set Up a Fun Photo Booth

You want to provide ways for your guests to remember your special night. What better way than to give them a fun keepsake they can hang on to for years to come?

A photo booth makes this a possibility. With fun props and hilarious photos, you'll have high-end mementos for every guest who participates.

HIRE A COMPANY

Many photographers have integrated the photo booth into their professional services. If it's in your budget to do so, you can hire a photography company to set up and manage the booth during your entire reception.

Be sure to get a full quote for the project so you're not surprised on wedding day. Any professional photographer should be able to tell you how much a booth setup will be, as well as how long it will take them to prepare and tear down the booth.

Let them take care of the heavy lifting, including selecting the spot, providing the equipment, bringing the props and handling the dissemination of photographs to each guest while you sit back and enjoy your special day.

GO DIY

If you're on a tighter bud-



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get, you may find yourself putting together a DIY booth. Fortunately, with a little planning, this is a totally do-able project.

First, consider your location. Your DIY photo booth should be located where guests can easily find it. Be sure to never interrupt the

flow of your event, which means placing it in dance floor corners or unused coat closets.

If your reception is outside, you'll probably have more space to find a suitable location. Just make sure guests can easily access it for some memorable photo fun.

THINK VIDEO

Video and virtual reality booths have also caught fire in recent years. You may need to enlist the help of professional videographers to pull off this type of booth.

Guests can act silly or deliver a special message via video, and then download the file

with a special link from the company.

This is a great way of producing a tangible parting gift for each guest.

You may also be able to immediately upload some of the videos to your wedding website or social media platforms, as well.

A DIY Wedding Checklist

As a bride or groom, planning a wedding can be a beautiful experience. Some of the benefits are being able to control all of the creative decisions along the way.

It can also be a lot to handle if done incorrectly.

Fortunately, there are some tried and true things to remember when putting together a plan for your wedding. Follow along with the checklist below to make sure you're not forgetting anything as your special day nears.

CREATE A BUDGET

Paying for your wedding doesn't have to break the bank. With proper planning, you can pull off the event of your dreams if you stay within a pre-determined budget.

How much you're willing to spend will be determined by what is available to you, either through your own savings or financial help from family members.

Either way, creating a realistic budget will help you stay focused as you secure things like the venue, band, food and photographers.

RESERVE THE VENUES

Once you've landed on a wedding date, choose the venue or venues where your event will be taking place.



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Many couples are following the recent trend of holding the wedding ceremony and reception in the same building.

This can cut down on logistics and travel for guests, making it a one-stop-shop for all of your wedding festivities. No matter what you decide,

it's important to lock down your venues early, especially with the boomerang effect many planners are anticipating as once pandemic-delayed weddings are starting to happen again.

GET INVITES OUT EARLY

There are certain compo-

nents of any wedding that take more time than others to execute. Invites are one of them. Unless you're creating each one by hand, you'll be depending on a printer and any related shipping delays before they can go out to your guests.

Consider using a local

printing company to handle your job. They can work with you on printing and shipping your invites at a good cost.

Make sure the invite process is collaborative with your spouse. Forgetting to invite someone from your family or friend network is something you definitely want to avoid.