

FALL BRIDES



Why Get Married in the Fall?

Early summer might be more popular, but the fall is far more interesting.

Here's why you should say "autumn" when somebody asks, "When is the big day?"

THE COLORS

Scheduling your wedding in the fall really opens up your fashion color palette. Whether it's a tie, sash, cummerbund, hair accessory or corsage, bring in burnt orange, deep purples, natural greens and lively reds. They're naturally occurring this time of year, so you can liven up the decor with fresh-cut flowers and plants, as well. Trees dotted with leaves turning the traditional colors of fall will also provide a gorgeous backdrop for your wedding photos.

THE WEATHER

Autumn is a bit more predictable than summer, with fewer risks of pop-up June storms in the afternoon. Temps also fall as the leaves begin to change, and that serves to lower your risk of sweating through that gorgeous new dress.

Lower humidity means your carefully applied makeup won't melt off, either. You'll be avoiding the kind of scheduling conflicts that take place in the warmest months, when many plan their annual vacations. Flights are typically less expensive in the fall — and venues are, too.

THE FOOD

Apples are in season, opening up your wedding menu for all things apple — from after-dinner pie to a cider toast instead of champagne. It's just one of the seasonal foods that can add a bit of timely personality to your big day. Think hearty soups, pumpkin-spiced

items, spiked cocoa, roasted root veggies and bacon-wrapped figs. Your options for cocktails can now include hot-buttered rums and warming toddies. And all of it can take place before a blazing fireplace — or, if one isn't available at your venue, fireplace-scented candles.

THE ACCESSORIES

Of course, autumn is the perfect time of year for the classic long-sleeved gown. Add a comfy cape to your bridal ensemble as the nights grow cooler. Consider pairing knit shawls with the bridesmaids outfits, or tossing flannel blankets across the seating

arrangements. Bare branches arranged in tall vases add a touch of the season.

Arrange an assortment of pumpkins for a splash of color. Apples can double as place-card holders, while in-season flowers wind through centerpieces at your reception.



Choosing the Perfect Ring

Engagements are meant to be spent in hopeful anticipation of the big day. But you can end up stressing the whole time if you didn't consider all of the options before deciding on a wedding ring.

STYLE AND PERSONALITY

You're selecting jewelry that will symbolize a commitment meant to last until death do you part. That means the wedding ring has to fit the style and personality of your spouse to be. Those who don't normally wear a lot of jewelry, for instance, are probably not good candidates for larger multi-carat rings. Is their style modern and trendy, or timeless and traditional? Answering that question will help guide you. The wedding ring is also typically paired with an engagement ring, so make sure they both work in concert.

CUT AND CLARITY

When deciding on a stone, the American Gem Society recommends first examining it for cut and clarity. The cut refers to the way the diamond or other gem has been fashioned. This shape has a huge impact on the way the stone appears to the naked eye, and how it looks within the setting of your ring. Clarity speaks to



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the way light passes through the stone. Since they're naturally formed, stones may have blemishes that impact clarity.

COLOR AND CARAT

Diamonds were once only sparkling and clear, but are now available in an exciting variety of hues, including blue,

brown and yellow. This provides far more customization if you future spouse leans toward a certain place on the color spectrum. Carats are a measuring guide that refers to the physical weight of the stone. Remember to start shopping as early as six months in advance to allow time for your

rings to be completed.

COST

Properly evaluating the cut, clarity, color and carat are obviously crucial in making any stone selection. But don't forget cost. Study up on settings and materials, and their general cost. Then set a realistic goal

for your purchase, keeping in mind that there are not tried-and-true rules about how much to spend. Some jewelers work on commission, so you might experience a pretty hard sell. But that also leaves some negotiating room, which can work in your favor if they really want your business.

Bring the Outside In

There's no better season to incorporate nature into your wedding.

Wedding planners are increasingly bringing elements of nature into the bride's big day — but a sameness has crept in because most weddings take place in the summer. Break the cycle of beach-themed nuptials by bringing in a touch of fall.

LOCATION

The turning leaves and rich landscapes will add an easy-going naturalness to your event, connecting your wedding party with the wider world around them. You might choose an outdoorsy cabin nestled near a lake, nature preserve or park. Local vineyards also provide incredible backdrops. Just check ahead to make sure that there aren't rules in place regarding number of guests, or things like campfires — since they may be needed as a fall evening turns to night.

THEME

Building your wedding around a leafy theme is a no-brainer, because it fits the season so well but also because of their endlessly different shapes and delightfully changing colors. Take it up a notch by going with a broader harvest-themed look. If you're not the rugged type, consider gold spraying the leaves to add a touch of glam. Wheat and



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pumpkins add personality and intrigue. The most fun loving and adventurous brides might try a Halloween theme. A black-and-red color scheme adds a touch of Goth darkness.

DECOR

Select an earthy color palette that syncs with the world around you. Sage, oranges and

browns place your nuptials within context, and offer opportunities for unique season-focused twists. (These colors can be carried over to the bridesmaids and groomsmen outfits, as well.) Use natural material like cotton or linen for tablecloths. Consider materials produced with recycling paper. It's great for the envi-

ronment, but also fits into the larger color scheme. The setting is completed with in-season wildflowers.

MEAL

Think natural organics that are locally sourced. Local farmers and sustainable food organizations can help build a menu that places your event

within the context of the season. You'll be getting the freshest possible food sources, while supporting area growers who help put food on everyone's table. Once the meal is complete, everyone can be invited outside for a tree-planting event. You could also use flower-seed packets as party favors.

Jazz Up Your Invitations

Once upon a time, tradition ruled — but not anymore. Today’s weddings are highly personalized affairs.

The formats, rules and conventions of yesteryear have been replaced by contemporary styles that mix the old and new, all with an eye on making a one-of-a-kind experience. That attention to detail should include the invitations, too.

EXCITING MATERIALS

Gone are the days when invitations were embossed on a paper of standardized color, much less a standardized material. They now run the gamut from handcrafted items in exciting new shapes to bespoke luxury papers with personalized script. Jazz things up by choosing offbeat fonts or typesetting approaches then place them on a personally selected material, which may be anything from parchment or recycled paper to felt or cotton cardstock. Some might choose ivory papers threaded with gold, while others opt for linen cardstocks with printed flowers. That’s what makes this part of the advance planning so fun and interesting.

COLORS AND SHAPES

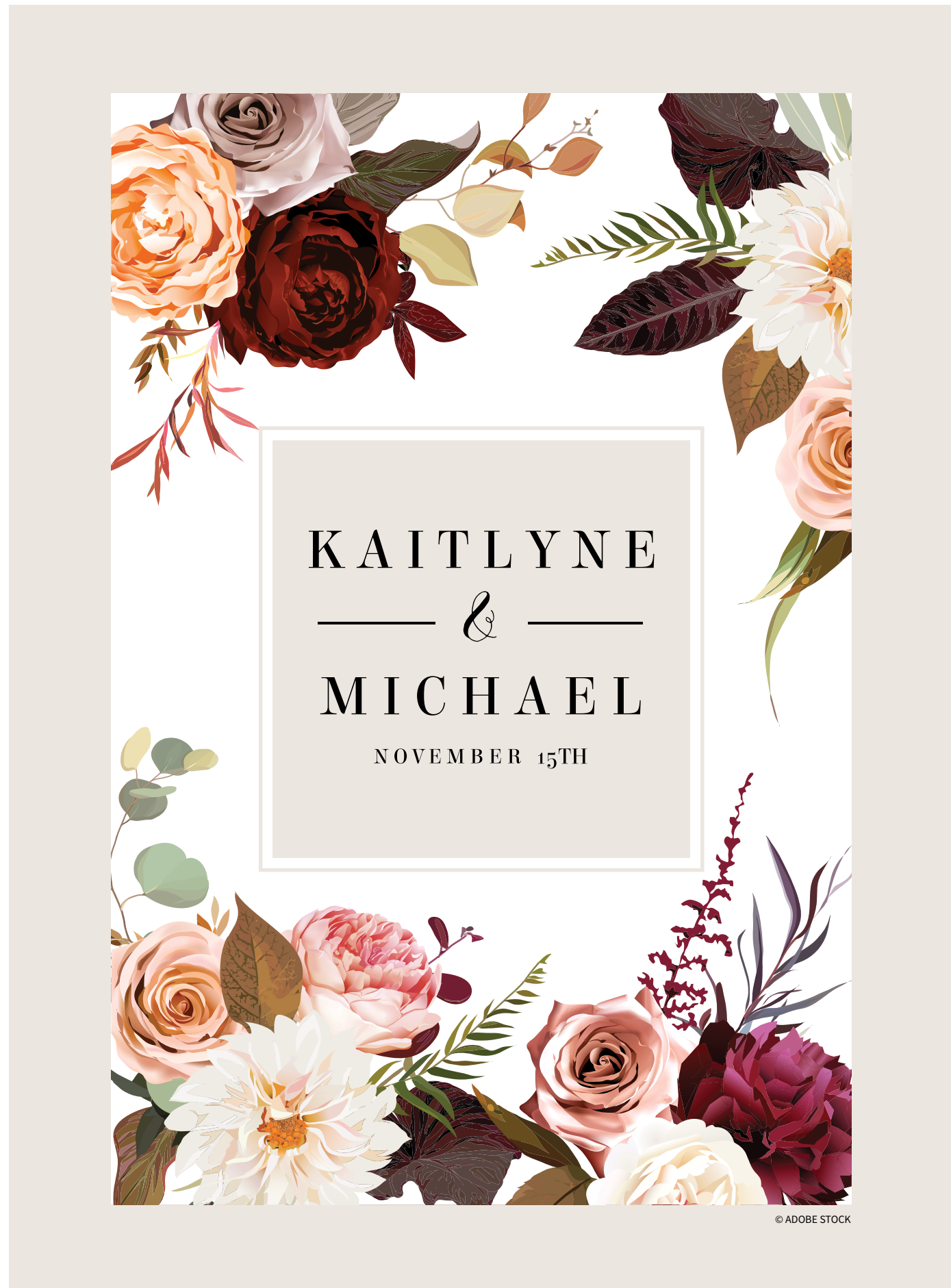
Want to really stand out? Skip the every-day whites or off-whites for something more unconventional. Your invitation may be colored to match the theme, the bride’s bouquet, or some consistent ele-

ment in the bridesmaids and groomsmen’s outfits. If you don’t want to go all in on a particularly nontraditional color, consider using it as a border around the edges of the invite — or only on the envelope. The shape of the card itself can reflect your sense of style, too. A heart might signify the timelessness of your love, while the Eiffel Tower or an Asian fan may represent familial bonds or a special memory.

OTHER PERSONALIZATIONS

An invitation must meet certain standards, even in an age of endless personalization options. It needs to announce the couple, while including time, date and place details for the ceremony. After that, however, the invite can go in a number of different directions. Perhaps add a favorite quote, lyric or poem? Maybe a note about how you met, or fell in love?

Sometimes customizations come down to supporting causes that are near and dear to your heart. The Knot, for instance, offers cards created by collectives of both black artists and female artists. Companies like Botanical PaperWorks, ForeverFiances and Paper Culture pair modern designs with a focus on sustainability.



Use the Colors of the Season

Tired of white, off-white and more white?

Fall provides an exciting array of colors to add spice — or, more specifically pumpkin spice — to your big day. Here's how to take advantage of all the options.

ORANGE AND BROWN

Falling leaves provide the color spectrum most associated with the season, from red and orange to yellows and browns. Get creative by pairing offbeat shades like maroon with dusty yellow, or rust orange with dark green, or blush with evergreen, or dark red, gray and copper. Wedding planners, florists and dress-makers may have other exciting combinations to share. Whatever you choose, you can't go wrong with these on-point shades when selecting flowers, centerpieces and candles. There's a cool irony involved when choosing this particular palette of colors: It's both the most traditional thing you could do for an autumn wedding and completely non-traditional at the same time.

JEWEL TONES

Planning an autumn wedding gives you a chance to take advantage of the rich, earthy tones associated with the season. Keep in mind, however, that you're not stuck with orange and brown. To add a new wrinkle, focus in on jewel tones — colors that mimic the vibrancy of a cherished gemstone. That means the green



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of an emerald, the red of a ruby and the deep purple associated with amethyst. Enliven accent pieces in your decor or outfits with these offbeat colors of the season — or go all out and fashion a gown out of these richly inviting tones.

CREATIVE IDEAS

If you're more of a traditionalist, you can always pair the typical wedding attire with shoes in an autumnal color. On the other hand, you can get even further outside a wedding's traditional white box by asking the baker to trade out the same old cake colors with something from this exciting new palette. Even if you decide to stick with a traditional white version, the cake topper can reflect the shades of the season. Bouquets of lush, in-season greenery can sometimes save a little dough while also adding a dash of fall-focused personality. Use the warm colors of autumn to your advantage by placing your ceremony in a natural setting, or setting up an exterior photo area to make the event "Insta-perfect."



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How to Avoid the Jitters

It's easy to feel overwhelmed as the wedding approaches.

You've hoped for, then planned for your nuptials for what seems like forever. Still, pressure undeniably builds as you get closer to the big day. It's a huge event, and a huge commitment. All of it can lead to second thoughts. The good news is, there are tried-and-true ways to avoid the jitters.

FOCUS ON ORGANIZATION

The first thing to do if you're feeling stressed about getting married is to plan. Then plan some more. The more prepared you can be as your wedding day approaches, the less worry you will inevitably have.

Once everything is selected, create a calendar so that you can stay on schedule in the days leading up to the event. Then take a day or two off before the wedding to center yourself for what's ahead.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

There won't be time, of course, for a multi-day spa retreat. You simply have too much to do. Still, it's smart to take a spare moment here or there to spoil yourself. Splurge on a quick facial or massage. Go to the movies, or meet your most trusted friends for a bite to eat or fun happy hour. Then try to get to bed as early as you can.

DELEGATE

It's easy to become overwhelmed when you feel responsible for every detail in such a complex undertaking. Remember that there are friends and family surrounding you who can manage some of these chores. Involve them

from the first, and then delegate authority so they can handle any last-minute issues during those final two days before the nuptials when you're supposed to be taking it easy.

VISUALIZATION

Visualization is a simple

form of role playing that can help you troubleshoot potential problems, compose yourself for big moments and ultimately feel more confident about how things are going to play out. Imagine walking down the aisle, saying your vows, kissing your partner and

throwing the bouquet. There is, of course, plenty of the pomp associated with a wedding so remind yourself that the day is really all about making a life-long commitment to one another. In the end, all of the other details really don't matter.



Some Blooming Great Ideas

Autumn offers a bounty of fresh flower ideas.

Picking out flowers for your wedding can be maddeningly difficult, since there are so many options. Having a fall wedding actually narrows the selection process down, if you choose to stick with season-appropriate colors or flowers that are naturally in bloom.

WHAT'S IN BLOOM

Garden roses, chrysanthemums, dahlias, orchids and calla lilies make up the most traditional list of options when considering in-bloom flowers for a wedding in autumn. Those with more unconventional tastes may consider Asiatic lilies, pampas grass or yarrow. Local garden shops, ag centers and florists can tell you more about what's seasonally available in your area. Finish off the decorative touches for your fall nuptials with the season's freshest fruit, berries, maple and oak leaves, wheat and twigs. You may also consider pairing your flowers with succulents, which will only enhance a season-appropriate earthiness.

COLORS OF THE SEASON

There are a variety of flowers that can coordinate with any fall-themed wedding. Amaranthus, for instance, blooms in burgundy and sage green. Orange-hued cymbidium orchids do very well without water, making them perfect for bouquets, bouton-



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nieres and other wedding arrangements. Even the more traditional options can adapt to your needs. Dahlias range in tone from cream to yellow and burgundy; chrysanthemums can boast light purple, orange and yellow blooms. We usually think of calla lilies as being white, but they also

grow in wine, mulberry and deep plum shades.

CHOOSING A FLORIST

Get in touch with a prospective florist as least three months in advance. If fall weddings are a popular choice in your area, you may need to extend your lead time to as

much as a year. Begin any conversation with a florist by discussing what flowers are available to fit your specific color preference and budget. The Society of American Florist also recommends asking for examples of previous weddings they've handled that fit within your price range. Bring photos

of your dress and the bridesmaids dresses to make it easier for the florist to match the arrangements. Find out if they offer vases, or if those will need to be rented elsewhere. Discuss how your flowers will be delivered and set up, and whether they provide preservation services following the wedding.