

Fall Brides



Rain, Rain Go Away

If the rain just won't come back another day, the smart bride will come prepared with a robust contingency plan.

Here's how to plan for a wedding that will stun even in the most inclement weather.

OUTDOOR WEDDING, INDOOR BACKUP

Should any part of your dream wedding be set in the great outdoors, have a pre-booked backup plan in place. This can be a building on site for a reception or the ceremony itself or a rented tent complete with sidewalls ready to go. Establish a firm deadline on when the decision to punt to the weather-friendly option will take place. That deadline should be 24-48 hours before the event and include a decision tree for informing the vendors of your decision.

OTHER PREP

Rain isn't your only concern for a fall wedding. In many areas of the country, weather can turn on a dime in fall, ranging from summer heat to wintry chill in less than a day. The wind might blow in, threatening hats, hairdos and floral arrangements.

- **For heat:** Offer non-alcoholic beverages and water as well as lots of shade, seating and even fans to keep guests cool. Have them arrive close to



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the start of the ceremony to keep them from waiting in the heat. Start the ceremony on time.

- **For cold:** Have warm beverage stations featuring tea, cocoa and coffee. Set up portable heaters near seating areas and set out large baskets or totes

with lap blankets for guests to use.

- **For wind:** Weigh down flower arrangements to keep them stable and take down heavy hanging decor that the wind may rock. Talk to vendors about how they secure their tents and ensure they'll have

staff on site to handle it on the day of, if needed.

PURCHASE INSURANCE

You can purchase wedding weather insurance against financial losses from unforeseen conditions, such as weather, that can cause you to cancel or

postpone the nuptials. You should purchase policies well in advance of the big day — ideally as soon as you start paying deposits — and make sure you know exactly what it covers. Many policies will cover hurricanes, for instance, but not standard rain.

Golden Hour Photos

The golden hour is the time of day, about an hour before sunset, when the light hits just right. Plan your wedding photos right and you can take advantage of the best lighting on your big day.

“That last hour of light is a total gift,” photographer Stacey Ambrosio told *The Knot*. “It cools down, the light softens and it creates the most beautiful, relaxed setting for photos.”

Talk to Your Photographer

Your wedding photographer, ideally, will be familiar with both the venue and with how the sun hits it. Talk to them about potential photo sites and times, and, if possible, walk the grounds with them to pick out possible sites for the best photos. You can even look up the exact sunset time for your date and venue location and plan from there.

BUILD IT IN

Good times to sneak out for some golden hour photos are during the cocktail hour, right after the ceremony, or between the main course and dessert at a plated reception. Think about your golden hour photos as you plan the timeline of your wedding and leave room for a quick, half-hour photo session in any convenient gap you find. Don't forget to add time for adjustments to hair and make-

up or even an outfit change.

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

Assign someone or ask the wedding planner or a photographer's assistant to help flag you down when it's time. Have hair and makeup help waiting, and meet at your planned location to start the shoots. Be willing to get creative with what's going on outside; nature can sometimes introduce surprises for even the most meticulously planned weddings.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Sunsets happen sooner in mountainous areas than at the beach or in other areas. Keep that in mind when you're planning your timeline.
- Have everything ready to go. The best golden hour light can last as little as 15 minutes, so be prepared when it's time to go.
- Communicate with the guests and the wedding party ahead of time so that everyone is on the same page when it comes to landing those stunning golden hour portraits.



The Colors Are Green and Green

An astonishing 98% of couples consider sustainability when planning their weddings and 78% of them say it's important, the Sustainable Wedding Alliance says.

The average wedding, Wedgewood Weddings and Events says, produces 400 pounds of garbage and 63 tons of CO2. But there are ways to limit your big day's big impact on the environment.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NATURE

When it comes to a fall wedding, don't fight nature; use it to your advantage. Let the gorgeous array of fall color provide a picture-perfect backdrop for your wedding. Plan the big day so it takes maximum advantage of available sunlight, cutting down on electricity usage.

Instead of shelling out for flowers imported at great cost to the budget and the planet, opt for seasonal blooms. Work with your florist to select locally grown flowers for foam-free arrangements. Since it's fall and options may be limited in some areas, you can consider potted plants that can be replanted after the celebration or natural elements beyond flowers, such as branches or seasonal fruits



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and vegetables.

SOMETHING OLD, SOMETHING BORROWED

When you can, choose vintage or secondhand gowns, suits and other attire. Also consider rental services or choose new garments that are sustainably sourced and ethically produced.

Jewelry can have lab-grown stones and recycled metals in-

stead of mined stones.

PICK THE RIGHT VENUE

The venue is an important part of keeping your wedding eco-conscious. Pick one that has your same values when it comes to the Earth. Look for:

- Energy-efficient lighting and climate control.
- Offers recycling, composting or uses other sustainable waste management practices.

• Has buildings with sustainable features built in. LEED certification is a bonus.

- Practices good water management for your area, including recycling gray water, planting native landscaping and wastewater treatment.
- Allows for the use of recycled disposable paper products or offers reusable plates, silverware and other commonly disposed of items.

INVITATIONS

Make your own contribution to saving the earth with eco-friendly wedding invitations. Digital invitations and RSVPs use no paper at all (and save on postage). Wedding websites can give out registry and other important information. You can also use recycled paper with soy-based inks, plantable seed paper or tree-free paper options.

Go Past the Pumpkin

Pumpkins are the prince of fall wedding decor, but there are lots of other options to choose from if you feel like the pumpkin is on the basic side. Here are some other ideas to use in your fall wedding decor.

APPLES

Apples are a great seasonal choice for fall decorating — and for the menu. Consider adding crisp apple ciders to your drink menus and pair them with spicy foods and piquant cheeses. Apples come in a whole spectrum of colors, including deep reds with highlights of gold, yellow and green. Look for rich gold Ambrosia apples, deep dark Arkansas Black apples, sagey green Ashmead's Kernel, vibrant red Envy apples, speckled pinkish Fuji apples, or gold Opals.

PEARS

If you're looking for a different shape, look no further than the pear. These delicious fall fruits come in a range of colors and even some different shapes. Poached pears make for an elegant addition to the wedding meal, and the fruit plays well with richer meats. Look for Bartlett pears in bright green and deep red, burnished red-gold Durendieu pears, speckled Forelles, and creamy yellow Nijisseiki pears.

POMEGRANATES

Pomegranates are one of the world's oldest cultivated fruits. With their glossy, jewel red

outsides, they make for a striking addition to any wedding decor. Furthermore, they're an ancient symbol of fertility, unity and even love. In Eastern traditions, pomegranates are presented to newlyweds as a wish for prosperity.

FIGS

These fall treats come in a variety of colors as well, including green, yellow and deep purple. They're great for charcuterie boards, served fresh, dried or as a preserve. Look for Panache figs, which have stripes of green, yellow and deep purple. Black mission figs are one of the most commonly available figs and have a deep purple skin that's nearly black. Kadota figs are a buttery yellow and Smith figs are a grayish color.

CRANBERRIES

For some differences in size, look no further than the tiny, ruby red cranberry. Cranberries are grown on evergreen vines in bogs or marshes that are flooded to protect the plants from winter's cold temperatures and to help with the harvest. Use these as additions to clear glass vases anchoring bouquets or arranged among flowers in centerpieces.



The Veil: An Elegant Addition

Bridal veils have their roots in ancient Greece and Rome. They were originally brightly colored to hide the bride from evil spirits and jealous onlookers.

Wearing a veil symbolized modesty and purity back then and, in arranged marriages, it ensured a nervous groom couldn't back out if he didn't like how the bride looked.

For many families, veils are treasured heirlooms that are passed down for generations, often standing in as the something borrowed or something old in her ceremony.

LENGTH

In days gone by, veil length often correlated with the bride's social standing. Longer veils made of more expensive materials were a showy symbol of wealth. Today's veils can extend from the shoulder to the floor and beyond. Birdcage veils are a mere nine inches long, barely covering the bride's face. Veils then move down to the shoulder, elbow, waist, hip and fingertip. Waltz veils are 60 inches long, followed by floor veils at 72 inches, chapel length veils at 90 inches and cathedral length veils that trail behind the bride at 114 inches long.

HOW TO CHOOSE A VEIL

The veil should match the



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bride's dress silhouette and coordinate with the amount of detail on the dress. A simpler veil should go with detailed gowns and a more adorned veil can go with minimalist gowns. Veils are usually a shade lighter and should

complement the dress's train. If you're planning on using a family member's veil, bring it with you to the bridal shop for your appointment so the experts there can help you pick the perfect dress to go with your treasured veil.

VEIL ETIQUETTE

The veil is worn primarily for the ceremony and formal photos.

If a blusher is worn, it should be delicately lifted by the groom or the father of the bride at the altar.

The veil is removed before the reception for the bride's comfort.

It can be swapped out for a shorter veil for dancing.

For outdoor ceremonies, consider adding veil weights to keep it from flying around.

Made For Walkin' Down the Aisle

Brides don't have to walk down the aisle in dainty ballet flats or towering heels. If the boot fits, wear it.

Boots are great for fall and winter brides, who may be dealing with chilly or otherwise inclement weather.

BOOT HEIGHTS

Boots look great with any length of dress so long as you take into consideration the boot's height up the leg. Ankle boots or booties are a great choice for brides who want to show off some leg while keeping their toes warm and comfortable. Rain boots are another great option, especially for an outdoor or farm wedding anywhere there's a chance of rain. Cowboy boots are a solid choice for the cowgirl bride and come in a range of toe shapes, heels and embellishments to match any dress.

Also consider materials. Boots come in as many forms as they do shapes and sizes. Consider suede for a warmer, cozier feel. Leather is durable and stretches to fit your foot. Silk or satin boots add a touch of class. Ask the experts at your bridal store for ideas on how to achieve your perfect look.

HEEL HEIGHTS

Consider how much of a heel you want on your boot. This is important when it comes to hemming your dress or even your veil if it's long enough. Heeled boots are a good way to achieve height without the discomfort of a stiletto because boots typically have more of a wedge heel than a spike, though that's certainly an option. Take into account your height in relation to your groom and bridal party and don't forget to accommodate veils and hair.

SWITCH IT OUT

For a wedding that starts indoors and moves outside, where it's wetter or muddier, consider switching to a pair of boots that may be more comfortable. You could even choose to wear a family member's heirloom pair of boots to pay respect to them and to serve as your something borrowed or something old.

If you do opt for a gorgeous pair of your own boots, talk with a cobbler or the vendor preserving your wedding dress for how to keep those boots looking their best. Maybe you could pass them down to the next generation and start a new tradition.



Buying a Gown with Sleeves

Fall is the perfect time to make a statement with sleeves.

With its brisk temperatures, especially after the sun goes down, many a fall bride can be thankful she has some sleeves, even if they are a bit lacy.

LEAVE IT TO THE PROS

When shopping for a wedding dress, it's easy to get overwhelmed. Professionals can help. Make an appointment with a local bridal boutique for a fitting. They'll have you try on gowns in a variety of sleeve styles or even be able to recommend gowns with detachable sleeves or other solutions for a sleeve that you may not have even thought of, such as a shrug or an elegant bolero.

AT THE BOUTIQUE

When you go to the boutique, wear seamless, nude undergarments and bring a strapless bra with you, even if you don't plan on buying a strapless dress. Bring a pair of shoes that are about the same height as the shoes you plan to wear on your wedding day. Keep makeup minimal to avoid staining dresses and bring plenty of snacks and water. These are

weighty gowns and an initial consultation is not the time to be hangry.

For sleeves in particular, you want to test your mobility by bending your elbows, reaching and hugging to make sure you can move in them. Consider the material as well. Is it breathable? Comfortable? Does it stretch? Is it itchy? Does it pull at the shoulders or the armpit?

Be honest with your stylist about your preferences, likes and dislikes. That will help them find the perfect gown for you.

SIZING AND ALTERATIONS

Bridal gown sizing doesn't match street clothes sizing and may vary from brand to brand. Try not to worry about the sizing and instead choose a dress that looks great for you. The stylist may even recommend ordering a size or two up and having alterations done to ensure the best fit on your big day. Most shops offer in-house alterations or can recommend a nearby shop to do the work for you, and yes, that can even include adding custom sleeves.

