

A young woman with long, wavy blonde hair is wearing a large, elaborate floral crown. The crown is composed of various flowers, including pink and white hydrangeas, white roses, and small white baby's breath flowers. She is looking upwards and to the right with a soft smile, her hands gently touching her face. The background is a solid, warm beige color.

SPRING BRIDES

Multi-Functional Venues

Spring can be the perfect time of year for an outdoor wedding. Unless it is rainy outside. Or snowy. Or cold.

Come to think of it, the spring can be a downright perplexing season to throw a seamless wedding celebration.

Fortunately, you're smart enough to be prepared for any climate curveballs that may be thrown your way.

The temperamental inconsistencies of Mother Nature come springtime make multi-functional venues the perfect choice for a bride-to-be. Especially in colder regions, it may be best to find a venue that offers both indoor and outdoor entertaining spaces.

WEATHER BENEFITS

The obvious benefit of having both indoor and outdoor options is in the case of a forecasted rain or snow storm. By keeping an eye on the weather starting a couple of weeks before your big day, you can make an informed decision on which portion of the venue you will decorate and for what purpose.

Many wedding planners suggest starting your plans with an outdoor ceremony before moving inside for the reception. Your guests will be happy to sit through chilled temperatures or a light drizzle to watch you



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get married but may not stick around in such conditions for a late-night party.

COST

While the benefits are

many for choosing a multi-functional venue for your wedding day, cost may not be one of them. Renting out both a facility and an outdoor area can, in some cases, double your venue

price tag.

Be sure to compare all options when making your venue list. You may be able to find a company or organization that offers discounted costs for renting multiple

parts of its facilities.

If the more expensive venue still tops your list after some research, you may be able to find other areas of your budget that are more flexible.

Join an Association

Are you an up-and-coming wedding planner looking to make your mark? Maybe you're a bride-to-be hoping to find a certified, highly trained planner to make your wedding dreams come true.

The wedding industry is ripe with professional associations that boast highly qualified rosters of experts ready to help guide both junior planners and brides through the planning process.

FOR THE PLANNER

If quality training from a panel of experts is what you're after, you should consider joining a professional association. Organizations such as the Association of Bridal Consultants have launched careers in the wedding industry for decades and can help grow your expertise in the field, too.

The ABC fields more than 4,000 members across 50 states and 27 countries. Other associations exist throughout the nation, giving you plenty of options to choose from when trying to get your career off the ground.

FOR THE BRIDE

Experience, experience and experience — this is what a bridal consultant has to offer a bride-to-be who may be confused or overwhelmed at the thought of throwing an amazing wedding.

Consultants have been there and done that multiple times over and are ready to help put your worries to rest. Certified wedding planners have undergone professional training and have had their hands in many successful celebrations.

KEY PARTNERS

Bridal consultant associations are generally linked with key vendors are proven to enhance and support a great wedding. Musicians, catering operations and floral businesses are all on the list of associations, which will be able to point you toward quality options.

Other partnerships often held by professional associations are ones with honeymoon or travel agencies. You can save time and costs by consulting your local association for ideas on your dream experience. Consultants also will be able to give you ideas for great trips and the most popular locations for an unforgettable honeymoon.



Spring Wedding Fairs

I imagine a place with unlimited and free expertise that can help you build your dream wedding. Now imagine that such a resource is right in your backyard.

Odds are, you're in luck. Many bridal associations and local tourism organizations partner on an annual basis to bring spring wedding fairs to their areas. The fairs are filled with vendors and consultants ready to give you great resources and connections for building the perfect wedding.

Check in with your local tourism group to find out when and where the closest bridal show is scheduled. Then make a list of questions and potential ideas for your celebration.

Attending a bridal fair is a unique experience because of the energy and enthusiasm in the room, as many potential brides buzz through the venue with questions and excitement.

Not getting married anytime soon? That's OK. Even if a wedding for you, a friend or family member is not in the immediate future, your local wedding fair can still be a fun experience filled with games, food and drinks.

FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS

The greatest benefits of attending a spring bridal fair involves the face-to-face interaction you will be able to experience. Caterers, cake designers, photographers, DJs and floral designers fill the rooms at bridal fairs, ready to offer ideas, pricing plans and samples of their work.

You will be able to interface with these professionals to build relationships, helping you decide if you can see yourself working with them on something as large as your wedding.

OPEN HOUSES

Some of the most creative — and marketing-effective — spring bridal fairs take place at popular wedding venues. Included with their fair activities is a behind-the-scenes tour of the facilities and amenities offered.

Getting such an exclusive look into what has made the venue such a popular hotspot can help you narrow down your options. You will also gain information on pricing or availability that may influence your decision.



Choosing a Caterer

Even though their methods for catering may be pretty similar, every restaurant is not the same when it comes to handling your wedding.

There are numerous factors that come into play, ranging from cooking specialties to availability of resources.

Before deciding on your final choice for caterer, make sure to ask the below questions — along with any others specific to your wedding — to make sure you find the one most aligned with your nuptial needs.

- **Do you have a license?** Get this one out of the way quickly, because some venues will not allow an unlicensed food operation on their sites.

- **What is your price range, and can I get a quote on paper?**

Making sure you have a written quote will help resolve any confusion come payment time.

- **How many weddings have you catered for in the past couple of years?** This answer may be one of the most important, as you want to make sure the company is experienced and up to the challenge.

- **Are you specialized in a certain cooking style or methodolo-**

gy? This is crucial if you're looking for a specific type of food for your reception, such as French cuisine or seafood.

- **Will you be providing chairs, silverware, linens and equipment?** A “no” answer to any of these questions could lead to higher costs for you and more stress in trying to coordinate different vendors to fulfill these needs.

- **Do you only cater one event per day?** You want to make sure you have the full attention of the organization and its staff during your wedding.

- **Are you easy to get in touch with if I have questions throughout the meal-planning process?** Every caterer will surely answer ‘yes.’ A good follow-up question is for a list of references, just to make sure you can conduct your own research.

- **Do you also do wedding cakes?** Having the same company handle snacks, dinner and the cake means one less vendor for you to find during the planning stages.



Best Spring Honeymoons

The planning is over, and the big day has come to an end. It's time to reward your efforts with a once-in-a-lifetime trip.

Choosing where your honeymoon will take place can be a challenge — but try to make it a fun one. If you're not sure where to spend your post-wedding experience, consult with a wedding planner or travel guide. They will have many options across different locations and price points.

STAY CLOSER TO HOME

You may think beaches and warm weather when trying to figure out the perfect honeymoon spot. Don't forget that we have both right here at home.

Many brides and grooms are ditching the idea of international travel for an old-fashioned road trip, which can make for great conversation, stops in historic locations and intimate stays in luxurious hotels across the country.

You can start with the West Coast if you're looking for the sandy stuff, as the springtime climate in California is much warmer than the national average. And with natural attractions such as downtown Los Angeles and the Santa Monica Pier, you can be in honeymoon heaven without even hopping on a plane.

A trip out east can be just as



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beautiful along the historic highways that connect our country's most illustrious cities.

Opt for an all-inclusive stay in one of the many elegant tourist towns of South Carolina to make your honeymoon extra special.

GO GLOBAL

With temperatures in the low 80s and hurricane season months away, the spring is the perfect time for a trek to the Caribbean. From casinos and restaurants to sailing and water festivals, the Caribbean

is loaded with opportunities for exciting honeymoon fun.

If you don't mind chillier conditions, Europe can be your best bet. You may actually experience a warm spell if you decide to check out Ireland or Italy, but odds are you won't be spending much

time soaking in the sun.

Choosing a location for your honeymoon is all about your personal preferences. So make a list of what you've always wanted to see and experience, and work with your soon-to-be spouse to decide on the best option.

Hair Tips & Tricks

The springtime has a way of awakening and unleashing the natural beauty around us. Unfortunately, it can have the same impact on your hair.

Humidity and warmer weather can send your hair into a frizz—the last thing you want to worry about on the day of your wedding. No one knows your hair better than you, so being prepared for potential issues can help save you a hair headache.

The key to applying the right product or employing the most effective treatment method is trying them out weeks or months ahead of your wedding day.

Be patient if you're forced to try many different options and products.

Your hard work and persistence will be rewarded with the perfect hair day on your special day.

APPLY THE RIGHT PRODUCT

With a bevy of options on the market, staying local can be your best choice when it comes to purchasing the right anti-frizz solution. Your local beauty supply store will have many choices in stock, and its professionals can walk you through the various treatments.

Another benefit of actually seeing the product in person before you buy it is an opportunity to try it, which many local shops will allow to build customer loyalty. Dish out any



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details that may help your hair consultant make an informed recommendation for overcoming your biggest challenges.

Follow all manufacturers' directions for applications. The last thing you want is a dampened hair mess distract-

ing from your beautiful smile and dress as you walk down the aisle.

KNOW YOUR HAIR

No matter what you're working with, it's important to understand how your hair

reacts in springtime situations.

Curly and straight hair react differently to humidity, so know what to expect if you're planning on changing up your usual hair style for your wedding day.

In most cases, frizz is

caused by hair trying to soak in the moisture from the air. The coarser and dryer your hair, the worse the frizz buildup can be. That's why using a moisture-infusing product can make such a big difference in fighting fly-aways.

The Gown

Ah, the wedding dress. So many hours of research, fitting and re-fitting for only a few hours of glory.

But once your special day comes and goes, deciding what to do with the gown can be a difficult choice for many brides. Should you keep it stored away as a memento of your wedding day or let it go?

KEEP IT

When deciding to keep your gown, it's important to determine why. Are you hoping to one day hand over your dress to your daughter? If so, keeping the gown in a basement, attic or back of the closet may not be an ideal storage option.

Garment professionals recommend you properly clean and store your gown for optimal life span. Simply shutting it away and forgetting about it can lead to a ragged, faded garment after even a short period of time.

DONATE IT

If you have no future plans to give away your dress to a family member or friend, why

not donate it to charity?

Organizations such as Brides Against Breast Cancer use donated dresses to put on their Nationwide Tour of Gowns effort, which raises funds to contribute to programs for cancer patients and their families.

Check in with your local charitable organizations or consignment shops to see if there is a need for donated dresses in your area.

SELL IT

Another option for your gown after your wedding is selling it to make back some of your own costs. This may be a great option if the dress is very valuable and if the company you bought it from has a flexible buy-back program.

There are also a variety of online options for selling your gown. Many companies buy and sell pre-owned wedding dresses. Just don't expect to get top-dollar out of these bargain services.

