

The title 'Wedding Decorum' is written in a decorative, serif font. 'Wedding' is in a lighter, outlined font, and 'Decorum' is in a darker, solid font. A small floral ornament is placed to the left of the word 'Wedding'. The text is set against a light pink rectangular background.

Wedding Decorum

A tilted rectangular frame shows a wedding scene. In the foreground, there are white flowers. In the background, a bride in a white dress and a groom in a dark suit are standing near a window. The floor is covered with colorful confetti.

**The Do's
and
Don'ts
of Weddings**

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Wedding Decorum:

The Do's and Don'ts of Weddings

Your wedding allows you to be a celebrity for a day. But just because you're the star doesn't mean that you can make your own rules. Sure, you can have most things according to your personal choices, but then everyone is as part of the occasion as the couples are. So regardless if you have the urge (and the right) to do something totally unorthodox, it's best to stay slightly grounded to tradition as well.

A wedding is one of the most potentially taxing occasions of a person's existence. From the time of the engagement until the wedding planning stage, the couple goes through the most stressful days of their lives. What's with the flood of questions, and preparations? And since times have changed and wedding celebrations have greatly evolved, traditional norms of etiquette went through changes, complicating things further.

In order to simplify things a bit, we must first accept the fact that etiquette is only meant to show respect for other people. Adhering to its rules does not mean losing one's individuality. Thus, when faced with an issue that concerns etiquette, just think of its impact on other people. Because even if the wedding is your life's most memorable moment, it is probably theirs' too.

Meet the Parents

You and your fiancée may have come to an agreement, but that doesn't mean you leave your parents out of it. Tradition insists that the parents of the groom and bride meet prior the wedding date. Customarily, the groom's parents initiate the introduction. However, nowadays, it is irrelevant who makes the first move. If it

is hard for both parents to meet personally, a phone call or a letter can be an alternative.

In the event that the groom's parents and/or the bride's parents are divorced, the parent who maintains the closest relationship with the groom should be the one to arrange the meeting with the bride's parents. If in case none of the parents make a move, it is the couple's responsibility to make sure that both sets of parents meet in order to avoid awkward situations later on.

Since most weddings are a bride's thing, the parents of the groom are usually left out in the dark with regards to the preparations. To prevent this from happening, it is advisable to inform them about your plans especially about the date, location, style, and the size of your wedding. They may want to get involved in some way such as in helping with the preparation or finances.

The Bill Please

Who takes the responsibility of paying the bill? Traditionally, the parents or the family of the bride is responsible for it. However, this is mostly rare nowadays. Majority of marriages has the couple splitting expenses between themselves or their families.

Invitation Guidelines

When you're going to invite a person who you know is engaged, married, or is living with his better half, the partner should also be invited as well. A single invitation bearing both persons' names are sent to couples who are living together. Separate invites should be sent person who are engaged or have a long term relationship but are not living together.

When inviting single persons, it is a thoughtful gesture to let them bring a date. However, this is not necessary. If your budget will allow them to bring their

dates, you can find out the names of each of their dates and put their names on the invites as well. If you haven't found out who they're bringing to the wedding and you need to send the invites, the inner envelopes may simply include "and guest" as an indication that they are each allowed an escort to the wedding.

Kids in attendance sometimes spell disaster in weddings. Thus, if you want it to be a strictly-for-adults-only affair, ensure that you have made that clear to your guests. Guests who are under 18 years old may not be given their own invites but may have their names included in their parents' invite. Thus, if you're not inviting a couple's children, their invite should only bear the couple's names.

Children who are beyond 18 years old and are invited should be given their own invites, whether or not they are still living in the same house with their parents. That means, if you did not send them invites, then they are not invited to the occasion.

If you think that some guests may insist on adding their children's names on the reply cards, you may print the names of the persons you have invited on their reply cards too. This will give them a clear understanding that they are the only ones you invited to the occasion.

Guests who bring other people along should know that it is not appropriate to do so unless their invites suggest that they may bring along a date. But if your wedding doesn't allow guests to bring in their escorts, you have every right to say no to their request.

If you are not sure whether you should invite people who are quite far from the location of the wedding, think about the kind of relationship that you maintained with them. If they haven't seen you or spoken with you for years, wouldn't it be awkward to finally be hearing from you again? If you don't want your invite to sound like you are soliciting gifts, skip those people. But if you feel that they need

to know anyway, send them wedding announcements since these won't obligate them to give anything.

When sending invites, make sure that they are sent around 6-8 weeks prior the date of the wedding. Thus, it is advisable to have them printed at least 3-4 months before the occasion. If you feel that some guests would need to be informed earlier, send them save-the-date cards in advance. This way, they won't miss the wedding.

Whether you're having the invites printed or you are printing them out yourself, check that you have around 25% more than the actual number of invited guests. You'll never know how many errors you are going to make and just how many more people you will try to squeeze in later on.

Etiquette on Gifts

Even if it is customary to receive plenty of gifts on your wedding, make sure you realize that this is a privilege. Don't ever think that you are entitled to receive one from your guests.

Gifts should not have a place on the invites. Keep in mind that there is no polite way to solicit for monetary gifts. However, you may inform your guests about your preference through word-of-mouth.

There are no specific guidelines as to how much guests should spend on their gifts. In short, gifts are not mandatory, but are simply charming gestures. Furthermore, gifts received before the wedding date should only be used after the occasion.

The Controversial Dress Codes

The guidelines on the proper wedding attire have changed over the years. However, tradition has set some standards on styles, lengths, and fabrics that have served as very effective basis for most people.

The dresses of your bridesmaids and other members of the entourage should be as formal as that of the bride's wedding dress. In the past, the length of the dresses should be about the same as the bride's gown. But nowadays, as long as the style and fabric of the dresses match that of the bride's wedding gown, shorter lengths have become totally acceptable.

Guests who are attending evening weddings are almost always required to wear formal attire. That is, men wear suits, or in some occasions, black tie. The lengths of the women's dresses should be according to the style of the wedding and its location.

Some people's greatest worry when attending a wedding is that they might stand out in the crowd by being either underdressed or too dressed-up for it. Bottom line, it is always a must to adhere to what the invite says. If it says black tie, there's no way that the couple meant it some other way.

Shall We Dance?

Who gets to dance with the bride first? It has been customary that the groom dances with the bride first. The groom's father then gets his turn just as the groom is dancing with his mother. The bride's parents are then given their chance to dance with the couple. After both parents had their turns, the reception then opens the dance floor to all the guests.

Those mentioned do not entirely cover every aspect of a wedding. Thus, to give a more comprehensive guide on the soon-to-be-wed couples, here are some of the most frequently asked issues about weddings.

Q: Should guests have a say on the menu?

While it is not mandatory, it is still a thoughtful gesture to allow them to share their ideas or inputs on food. After all, you want them to enjoy and feel comfortable during the wedding. You really don't have to conduct a 100% guest survey, but just keep in mind that there may be vegetarians present during the celebration too.

Q: Are wedding favors necessary?

The wedding favors can be your sincerest expression of gratitude to your guests for being a part of the occasion. Moreover, these will serve as great keepsakes for your big day.

Q: Should the bridesmaids pay for their own dresses and accessories?

It has always been an accepted custom that the bridesmaids are responsible for their own wedding attire and accessories. That is why it is appropriate to give each of them a gift as a token of your gratitude.

Q: What is the most appropriate number of bridesmaids?

It is actually your choice. But you don't want your wedding to look like one giant parade. Six bridesmaids is considered by some as plenty. But at least, if one or two won't be there for some reasons, no one will notice you're one bridesmaid short.

Q: Is it ok not to invite co-workers?

Of course, it is. Especially if they're not the people you maintain close friendships with, then there is no reason why you should stretch the budget for them. Just tell

them politely that the wedding is going to be attended only by your family and that your budget does not allow you to hold a big one.

Q: When should “thank you notes” be sent out?

Sending these out about three to four weeks after the occasion is appropriate. Remember though that these should never be typed, but should be handwritten. Make sure that you include the guests’ names and your very own thank you notes to them.

Q: Should my RSVP state my bridal registry?

No, this is not appropriate. This will look like you are soliciting gifts from your guests. Instead, have your own wedding website. This will allow you to provide all the details of your wedding, with links to the bridal registry.

Q: Is it proper to dance with both fathers in my life?

This is your wedding. And even if there are certain traditions to live by, you can still get away with your own rules. If you are close to both fathers, then by all means dance with both of them. However, if you feel that you will be creating a tension by doing so, then refrain from doing it.

Q: Should I use the gifts I received even if I call off the wedding?

Your wedding gifts and those that were given during your shower should be returned in case a couple’s wedding is cancelled or is annulled prior to their living together.

Weddings entail so many preparations that some people do not have the time to check if they have everything under decorum. Since wedding celebrations have vastly evolved throughout the years, there really is no definite standard for them.

During the preparations, what you have or how much you spent on them is not really important. You may have the best and the most expensive wedding essentials the world can conceive, but they don't really serve that much purpose any way you look at it. The important thing is you have found someone whom you love to have close for the rest of your life.

And what better way to celebrate this magic than by having the people who matter most witness it? You don't have to go over etiquette book to do things right. So before you make or alter any wedding plans, see everything from your guests' point of view. What you don't like seeing or hearing, won't be pleasing to them as well.

Anyway, granting that you only have your closest family and friends on your wedding, you can ease up on decorum. Because no matter how you planned your wedding to be, they'll surely let you get away with it. After all, you don't get to celebrate your big day often.

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