

## **Introduction**

Congratulations on your engagement!

Planning a wedding can be very challenging and this e-book will help you with your preparations.

In this book you will find many helpful money-saving tips. One hundred twenty six to be exact. They'll help you squeeze the most out of your wedding budget, whatever the amount may be.

Not sure how to deal with your brand-new in-laws? Take the ten tips offered to heart and you will be on your way to having a civil, if not a good relationship, with your groom's parents.

Also included in this guide is a detailed list of wedding tips and real-life -- not the stuffy, never-gonna-use -- etiquette advice.

Last, but not least, there is a comprehensive to-do list for the last 360 hours before the big day. With this 15-day countdown you will find additional pointers and advice.

In order to finish your last-minute wedding tasks as efficiently as possible, we suggest you buy yourself a small notebook or calendar that fits into your purse. Using this e-book as a guide, mark down what needs to be done each day for the last two weeks before your wedding. This way you will have a list at your fingertips of what you still need to do.

Enjoy your day. Remember to relax and don't worry about the little glitches that might to happen.

## **Cutting Wedding Expenses**

The average cost of a modern North American wedding, with all the frills, is usually between \$19,000 to \$35,000.

That's a lot of money, even if the price includes every little (and big) expense like the cost of the honeymoon, engagement and wedding rings, and the groom's underwear.

If money is a concern, the following tips will help you cut costs. Pick and choose which ones will benefit you the most.

Don't feel bad about cutting corners. Remember it's the atmosphere, not the cost, of a wedding that makes it beautiful.

1. Eliminate response cards with your invitations. Instead, have your phone number or your mother's phone number printed on the invitation with a request to R.S.V.P by a certain date.
2. Include reception information on the ceremony invite to save paying for the printing of another card. One less card to mail also means fewer stamps to buy.
3. Order your invitations from a discount bridal outlet.
4. Print your invitations on your computer using good quality paper available at most office supply stores.
5. Buy your invitations, but design and print your wedding programs on your computer.
6. If you plan to order invitations, opt for thermography ones. Engraved invitations or those printed on a letterpress cost more. Choose a lower quality paper.
7. Order invitations in white or ecru. Colored paper costs more.
8. Don't order a tissue insert with your invitations.

9. Hand deliver invitations to local guests.
10. Send out electronic invitations if you and your guests have regular access to e-mail. This saves time addressing and mailing envelopes. You'll also cut out the costs of stamps, as well as save a few trees.
11. Borrow or rent a wedding dress to wear.
12. Buy your wedding dress from a consignment shop.
13. Buy a white or cream formal or bridesmaid dress instead of buying a traditional wedding dress.
14. Consider making your own veil or headpiece. Ribbon and lace glued to clear combs make great, inexpensive hairpieces.
15. Borrow a veil.
16. Buy a confirmation veil instead of a wedding veil.
17. Forgo the veil.
18. Hire a seamstress to complete the alterations to your dress. Bridal shops tend to overcharge for this service.
19. Get married during the week instead of on a Friday or Saturday. Most weddings occur on these days so hall managers increase the cost of renting. Sunday night hall rentals are also often cheaper.
20. Avoid holiday weddings because around holidays many of the services you need (caterers, DJs, limousines and photographers) will cost more.
21. Opt for a casual wedding instead of a formal one.
22. Buy display wedding dresses or last year's styles.

23. The best times to buy discounted wedding dresses are in April, May, late September and October. These are the times when bridal shops are most anxious to get rid of a surplus of dresses or last year's styles.
24. Buy a gown from a bride who has cancelled her wedding. You can find advertisements for these types of dresses in newspapers, on library bulletin boards and occasionally in bridal shops.
25. Apply your own makeup.
26. Fix your own hair.
27. If you're getting married in a church, see if the church has its own wedding coordinator. These coordinators will usually charge a lower fee, especially if you're renting the facility, than an outside coordinator.
28. Purchase your jewelry and bridal accessories from department stores instead of specialty jewelers, lingerie stores and bridal salons. Keep an eye out for holiday sales and you might be able to get what you need for cheaper than you ever imagined.
29. Borrow formal jewelry to wear on your wedding day.
30. Make your own garter, although this requires some sewing talent so that you have one that doesn't fall to your feet half way up the aisle.
31. Try buying your dress from another city or town than the one you live in. You might be able to find better discounts.
32. Don't buy new shoes for the wedding. If your gown is long enough, no one will see your feet so you can get away with using a pair of shoes you already own.

33. Order a slab cake instead of an elaborate multi-tiered wedding cake. Rent a Styrofoam cake if you want photos with a tiered cake.
34. If you have your heart set on a real tiered cake, order half-sheet rectangle tiers instead of round ones. This can make the cost of the cake 25 to 50 per cent cheaper than the traditional round tier cake.
35. Serve fancy, frosted cupcakes instead of wedding cake.
36. When ordering your cake, keep in mind that not everyone at the reception will want some. Some may have diet restrictions; others could be trying to lose weight. You don't need to buy enough cake to feed everyone.
37. Crown your cake with flowers or a family trinket instead of a custom-made or store-bought cake topping.
38. Don't buy a cake knife. Instead, ask the caterer or baker to supply one.
39. Make sure your photographer will allow you to keep the proofs. Better yet, see if you can purchase the film from her. You will probably need to order pictures before the photographer will consider selling the proofs.
40. Hire a non-wedding photographer.
41. If you have a friend who is handy with a camera, and owns a good quality one, ask him to be your photographer. Pay him an honorarium or buy him a wonderful gift.
42. Place disposable cameras on each table at the reception and allow the guests to take candid shots. Hire the photographer for the ceremony only.
43. Hire a student photographer.

44. Hire a photographer for the formal shots of you and your groom, the wedding party and your families. Use candid shots for the ceremony and reception.
45. Shop around for the best deals. Avoid spur-of-the-moment decisions. Don't be afraid to negotiate with vendors.
46. Rent a hall that allows you to bring your own alcoholic beverages. Depending on where you live, you will still need to purchase a license to serve liquor.
47. Find a reception hall that offers a package deal. A package deal includes hall rental, bartender, linens, cake and catering. This saves you from having to hire or rent people and items separately.
48. Have an adult-only reception. This can cut down on your guest list and saves you from buying extra food you know children will like.
49. Post seating assignments on a rented or borrowed easel instead of purchasing place cards. You'll only need one easel per table and the guests can decide who sits where at each table.
50. Don't assign seating. Allow guests to sit where they choose. Be sure to reserve a couple of tables for the immediate families.
51. Cut the number of people invited to a dinner reception to no more than 60.
52. Get married in the evening and have a later reception. Halls and community centers will often offer a discount for late evening rentals. Just make sure you don't try this on a Friday or Saturday night.
53. Buy flower bunches from street vendors and use them as table decorations.