



## Money Saving Wedding Secrets

The Biggest Money Traps:  
How to Reduce your Wedding Costs



Your wedding is one of the most exciting  
(and expensive) times of your life.  
The tips contained in this booklet will help you reduce the  
seemingly endless costs that go with this big event.

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This booklet is available free of charge from my website.

# Reducing the Costs of Your Wedding

Like many other brides-to-be, you're probably wondering how to reduce wedding costs. While every bride has her list of "must-haves", there are bound to be a few areas where you can cut back.

Below is a list of the biggest wedding money traps. These are the things that are going to eat the most of your budget.

1. *Wedding Date*. The date you choose for your wedding has a big impact on how much it will cost. Spring and summer months are more popular and come with higher price tags. Many venues even have a minimum charge for weddings during these months. By planning your wedding during the off-season, you can receive the same quality of services at greatly reduced rates.
2. *Time of Day*. Daytime weddings can be significantly less expensive than evening or nighttime weddings. People are more likely to drink more in the evening. Additionally, a dinner meal is more expensive than a lunch meal.
3. *Catering*. The foods that you choose to serve your guests will probably be your biggest expense. If a twelve course sit-down meal is going to break the bank, try something like a buffet or a dessert-only reception.
4. *Alcohol*. While most people do serve alcohol at their weddings, the choice to do so is up to you. You do not need to offer a full open bar. You are free to limit the amount of alcohol that your guests are served or only serve less expensive types. Additionally, you can offer a cash bar, where guests pay for their own drinks.
5. *Wedding Venue*. The actual venue of your wedding can vary greatly in cost as well. Holding your ceremony in a local park is going to cost you less than holding it in a luxury hotel. Keep in mind, though, when choosing an inexpensive location, you may need to pay additional costs to decorate it the way you would like.
6. *Flowers*. Flowers are also a large expense for a lot of weddings. Save money by using flowers that are in-season and limiting the amount of flowers that you use. There's no reason to blanket the location with flowers.
7. *Photographer*. Choosing a well-known wedding photographer could cost you your first-born. To save money, hire a photographer who's just starting out.
8. *Cake*. Wedding cakes can also be a ridiculously huge expense. Save money by ordering a large sheet cake that gets cut up in the kitchen before serving. That way you only have to spend money on a small display cake. Alternatively, cupcakes or several small cakes make good options.
9. *The "W" Word*. Simply say the word 'wedding' to a vendor and prices suddenly double! Vendors know that brides are desperate buyers who are willing to spend anything to get the 'right' thing for their wedding. When shopping around, try to avoid using the word 'wedding' when asking for price quotes.

By knowing ahead of time where your money is likely to be spent, you can plan more easily. You don't need the best of everything. A few small sacrifices can help significantly reduce the cost of your wedding.

## 5 Ways to Cut Wedding Alcohol Costs

To booze or not to booze? That is the question. On one hand, we want to be gracious hosts and make sure that all of your wedding guests are having a great time. On the other hand, serving unlimited amounts of alcohol can cost quite a bit.

How can you cut wedding alcohol costs but still keep your guests happy? Here are five things you can do which won't cause you to take out a loan.

1. *Don't Offer It.* To many people, this seems like an unthinkable solution. After all, guests need their alcohol right? Some people have valid reasons for not serving alcohol. Perhaps the bride and groom simply don't enjoy drinking. Perhaps there are guests who are recovering alcoholics and the bride and groom want to be considerate of these people. But you don't have to have a specific reason why you're not serving alcohol. It's your party and there's no rule that says you have to serve alcohol. If you are treating the guests, then they have no right to complain about what is served to them.

2. *Offer a Cash Bar.* A cash bar allows your guests to purchase alcohol if they want it. Often, non-alcoholic drinks are free. This method seems fair because it allows guests who want to drink the option of drinking, but keeps you from getting stuck with the bill. However, some people view this as being a bit rude. It depends on the nature of your friends and family and what is considered normal with you.

3. *Serve Beer and Wine Only.* Beer and wine are often the cheapest choices when it comes to alcohol. By serving only beer and wine, you will keep people happy (most people enjoy one or the other), but also keep your own costs down.

4. *Serve a Punch.* Another way to cut wedding alcohol costs is to serve a punch. Many venues offer an alcoholic punch as a way to keep alcohol costs down. This is a great option if your guests are not beer and wine lovers.

5. *Create a Signature Drink.* Venues will often provide lower rates if only one type of alcohol is being served. They can do it because it is easier for the bartenders to make just one kind. Creating a "signature drink" can be a way of expressing the two of you as a couple.

Having a beach wedding? How about serving Mai Tais? Is the city more your thing? Try a Cosmopolitan!

Remember, the choice to serve alcohol or not is a choice that only you can make. You know your guests and your own budget the best and it's your job to find a way to keep both happy.

# How to Save Money on Wedding Rings

Many people get so caught up by planning the wedding festivities that they almost forget about the rings!

When they finally do start to look at wedding ring prices, they're shocked at how much they can cost.

These 10 tips will help you to save money on your wedding rings.

1. *Don't Buy Platinum.* These days platinum is the most popular metal for wedding bands. But it's expensive and you don't need it. Most people won't be able to tell the difference, and if they can, they probably don't care.

Opt for a cheaper metal such as gold, white gold, silver, or even titanium.

2. *Diamonds Aren't a Necessity.* The diamond industry has done a good job of making you think that you need to have diamonds in your engagement or wedding rings. Other stones can look just as lovely without costing as much.

3. *Check Auction Sites.* You may be able to get a good deal on rings through an auction site. Not all things on auction sites are second-hand. These days, many stores realize the wide audience they can reach by using auction sites and they use them to auction off brand new products.

4. *Get a Set.* You may get a discount if you get your rings as part of a set or trio (two wedding rings and an engagement band). Check around for the best deal.

5. *Use a Family Heirloom.* If you're lucky enough to have had jewelry handed down to you, there's no reason you can't use that. Using a family heirloom can be special and give the ring even more meaning.

6. *Use a New Jewelry Designer.* Sometimes your local college or art school can have a budding young jewelry designer who's willing to sell their pieces at a deep discount in order to expand their portfolio.

7. *Check for Local Sales.* Many jewelry shops have big sales during Christmas and Valentine's Day. Visit the stores during these times and you could get a great discount.

8. *Choose a Thin Band.* Wedding bands are often priced according to their weight. A thicker band will weigh more and thus be more expensive.

9. *Check Online Sites.* Make sure that you check online and see where you can find the best deal.

10. *Upgrade Later.* So you can't afford your dream wedding bands now. No big deal. Get what you can afford now and plan to upgrade them for your 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, once you are more settled and have more money.

The important thing to note is that buying your wedding rings requires just as much planning and effort as planning every other part of your wedding. If you wait until the last minute, you'll find yourself paying a lot more than you would have liked.

# How to Save Money on Wedding Invitations

Do you want to save money on wedding invitations? The most important thing to think about when you're looking for cheap wedding invitations is where you can cut costs and what things are on your must-have list.

These suggestions will help you to save money on your wedding invitations.

1. *Do-It-Yourself.* Many people shy away from making their own wedding invitations because they are worried that they will look unprofessional and cheap. This doesn't have to be the case. There are many DIY wedding invitation kits available that you can purchase which are just as elegant as the wedding invitations that you can buy from a regular printer. It may take up some of your time, but the cost savings will be significant.

2. *Simple is Best.* If you decide to go with a printer, then simple invitations will always be the cheapest. Stick with a black font. Don't go for all the bells and whistles (or ribbons and lace), and make sure that you choose a standard shape for the invitation. Oddly shaped invitations may end up costing more at the post office.

3. *Know How Many You Need.* Every year, money is wasted when couples order too many wedding invitations. Before you order, make sure you have a very good idea of the number of people that you want to invite. Then only order that number of invitations, plus about 25 extra for mistakes and last-minute invites. Worried that you might make a mistake when you are writing the envelopes? Order extra envelopes. There's no need to order extra invitations for mistakes on the envelope writing.

4. *Don't Include a RSVP Card.* Including a separate card for people to RSVP may be the tradition, but it's a sure way to double your postage costs. Instead, ask people to RSVP by telephone or email. You can even create a special website about your wedding where people can leave a message that they plan on attending.

5. *Send Online Invitations.* Online invitations may be tacky in some circles, but completely normal in others. If all of your guests are regular email junkies, then sending invitations by email is a way to send your invitations for free. Many websites will also allow guests to RSVP right on the site.

6. *Shop Around.* Just because a website comes up first in your search for 'cheap wedding invitations' doesn't mean that they are the cheapest. Make sure you check out a wide variety of sources.

A small local printer may be able to match the prices of the online giants and even throw in a few extras.

By cutting just a few corners you will be able to drastically reduce the costs of your wedding invitations.

## Five Areas Where Expenses Should NOT be Cut.

With wedding costs soaring and everyone so focused on how they can save money on their weddings, is there any areas where you should NOT try to save money? There sure are. In fact, I know of five of them.

1. *Your One Must-Have Item.* This item varies by couple, but there's undoubtedly one thing that you really want and if you don't have that one thing you're going to regret it for the rest of your life. For some people, this means being able to invite all 200 of their closest friends. For others, it may be a particular wedding dress. Go ahead and spend the money. You can find ways to save from other places.

2. *Food and Drink.* There are many ways that you can save money on catering costs for your wedding guests. But the one thing that remains constant is that if you're going to have a wedding reception, you must at least serve something. Your guests have taken the time to come and they've very likely brought you a present. Feeding them is really the least that you can do.

3. *Gifts for Your Wedding Party.* The people in your wedding party have worked very hard to make sure that your wedding goes smoothly and is as perfect as you hoped it could be. They deserve to be recognized for this. You don't have to buy expensive gifts for them, but you do have to get them something.

4. *Information for Out of Town Guests.* Your out of town guests are spending a lot of money to be with you on your special day. They may have to buy air tickets, hotel rooms, and rental cars; all on top of your wedding gift. You don't have to be responsible for paying these costs, but make sure that you make things as easy for them as possible. Take the time to put together a local information package. Let them know the best hotels, how to get around town, and where all the good restaurants are. Your guests will really be flattered that you took the time to do this.

5. *Thank You Notes.* Thank you notes simply need to be written. You cannot just say thank you at the reception. You cannot send an email. You cannot call them on the phone. It's tacky.

Thank you notes need to be hand written and sent in a timely manner. You don't need to use expensive stationery, but you still need to send them.

Your guests were kind enough to give you a present. You should be kind enough to give a proper thank you.

These are all small but important details that you cannot dismiss. You may be able to save money on some of them, but you cannot forgo them completely. They will make your guests happy.

## Choose an Off-Season Wedding

Are rising wedding costs bringing you down? Choosing an off-season wedding may be just the thing you need to have the wedding of your dreams and still stay within your budget.

The most popular wedding dates are in the late spring and summer. Unfortunately, these dates also come with a hefty price tag. Wedding vendors are well aware that this is the busiest season and they can charge much higher rates during these times, and brides and grooms (or their parents) will happily pay for them. Often, wedding venues will have a minimum charge for weddings held during the peak season.

Marriage celebrants are also busy during the peak season and you may have a hard time securing your favorite. Many well-known celebrants are booked months, if not years ahead of time for the popular wedding dates. If you are not organized about this, you may miss out and not be able to get the marriage celebrant that you truly want.

But frugal brides know that having an off-season wedding could save you fifty percent or more off the cost of your wedding!

Because wedding venues are so desperate for your business during the autumn and winter months, there are likely to be no minimum charges. They are also more likely to throw in a few extras such as a room for the couple (if at a hotel), or an extra bottle of champagne. You also have more bargaining power. A venue's space is likely to go unused during the autumn and winter months, so they may be more willing to negotiate a lower price for you.

Furthermore, other wedding vendors are less busy during the off-season and they too will fight for your business. Photographers, caterers and musicians in particular will try to underbid each other. You are likely to get the exact vendor that you want for a fraction of what you'd pay during the peak season.

You also will not have to fight for your guests attention. Spring and summer are busy times for almost everyone; it's when most people plan their holidays and have a lot of weddings to go to. If you hold your wedding during an autumn or winter month, your guests are more likely to be able to come.

Spring and summer are indeed great times to have a wedding, but when you compare the cost of having your wedding during the peak-season vs. off-season, the autumn and winter start to look good.

# How to Save Money on Flowers

Are you wondering how to save money on flowers for a wedding? The cost of flowers can vary widely depending on a number of factors. Many frugal brides-to-be realize that the types of flowers that they choose to use in their wedding can mean serious savings.

Here are some ways that you can save money on flowers for a wedding:

1. *Use In-Season Flowers.* Flowers that aren't normally available during the time of your wedding are going to be more expensive. Instead ask your florist which types of flowers will be in-season and base your wedding planning around that.
2. *Buy Your Flowers Wholesale and DIY.* If you or another member of your family happens to be creative, you can order flowers wholesale online and make your own arrangements. If you choose to do this, make sure that you have a cool place to store the flowers. You don't want them dying before the wedding.
3. *Chose a Date When the Venue Will be Decorated.* Many churches and other wedding venues are beautifully decorated during certain parts of the year. If you plan your wedding near Christmas or Easter, for example, the church should already be decorated and you won't have to spend money on your own flowers.
4. *Use Artificial Flowers.* Yes, some fake flowers look cheap. But there are many artificial flowers available that look quite real. Using fake flowers has an added bonus that they will never die and you can keep your bouquet forever.
5. *Create a Simple Bouquet Yourself.* There's no need to have 50 roses in your bouquet. Instead, why don't you pick some wildflowers and create a bouquet out of those? A bouquet like this can fit in with a wide variety of wedding themes.
6. *Have Less People in Your Wedding.* Everybody who's in your wedding needs to get flowers. Bridesmaids need bouquets and groomsmen need boutonnières. If you reduce the number of people in your wedding party, then you'll reduce the amount of money that you have to spend on flowers.
7. *Carry a Single Flower.* Instead of carrying a large bouquet, you can carry a single flower. This can look very chic and will save you a lot of money. If you still want to carry a bouquet, perhaps the bridesmaids can carry a single flower.
8. *Choose a Beautiful Venue.* Many venues are known for their natural beauty. A garden or beach wedding, for example, won't need much in the way of additional decorations. Their beauty stands alone. If you select a venue that is already beautiful, then you can avoid spending money on flowers simply to make things look pretty.
9. *Don't Use Flowers.* Who said that flowers were required? Do your own thing and carry a candle. Or don't carry anything at all. There are many different things that can decorate a venue just as well as flowers that aren't as expensive.
10. *Pick an Off-Season Time.* There are certain times throughout the year when flowers are known to be more expensive. If your wedding is close to Valentine's Day, Mother's Day or during the wedding season (September- April), then you can expect your wedding flowers to be costly.

In addition to these suggestions, speak with your florist and let her know what your budget is. She should be able to work within that budget.

Whether you choose to limit your selection, or eliminate flowers altogether, you can save money on flowers for a wedding.

## How to Get a Cheap Wedding Dress

Does paying \$10,000 for a dress that you're going to wear just one day make you reconsider your decision to get married? Don't worry. With a little bit of careful planning and effort, you can find the cheap wedding dress of your dreams. You don't have to pay an arm and a leg.

There's no real need to get a traditional white wedding dress. Many other dresses look nice and don't come with a wedding dress price tag. Before you spend a lot of money on a wedding dress, take a look at other dresses that come in white. Depending on the theme of your wedding, you may not even need a white dress at all.

The biggest obstacle to getting a cheap wedding dress is the fact that most discount sources are located online and you cannot try the dresses on. This is incredibly nerve-wracking for most women as trying on wedding dresses is very important. You need to make sure that a particular style looks good on you. Also, wedding dress sizes can vary greatly from the sizes that you are used to buying in the store. You need to have a good idea of what you are looking for.

To do this, visit wedding stores in your area and try on many different dresses. Many stores will not let you take notes because they don't want you to try to find the dress elsewhere. If there's a particular dress that you just fall in love with, try to remember the designer. At the very least, by trying on different dresses, you'll get an idea of what styles you like and what looks good on you.

Feeling guilty about wasting the time of the people at the wedding dress shop? Once you have a better idea of how cheaply you can get your wedding dress through online sources, you may be able to bargain with them. Let the shop know what the other prices you saw are and tell them that you'd prefer to work with them. They may be able to reduce the price in order to get your business.

The downside of buying your wedding dress online is that you still will probably need to have it altered. Make sure that you find a reputable seamstress in your area. It's best if you can get recommendations from former brides. Your wedding dress is important and it's pointless to save money getting it online, only to have a seamstress ruin it.

Just remember, the most important thing about your wedding is that you're making a promise to be with the man you love forever. The dress that you're wearing pales in comparison to that.

# How to Save Money on Wedding Catering

Wedding catering is undoubtedly one of the most expensive costs of a wedding. It often eats up over half of the budget!

Is all this spending necessary? No! With a bit of creative planning, you can drastically reduce the cost of your catering.

For example, the time of day that you plan your wedding will greatly affect the amount that the food costs. Lunch menus will be significantly less expensive than dinner menus; even if you are serving the exact same thing! If possible, try to plan your reception for earlier in the day so that you can serve lunch instead of dinner.

Another possibility is to hold your reception during a time of day where people wouldn't expect to be fed a full meal, such as during the afternoon or late in the evening. You can serve only hors d'oeuvres and wine, or dessert and coffee, for example. An afternoon tea party is a great theme that would reduce your catering costs. These types of receptions may not be as common, but they are catching on in popularity and they can be just as elegant.

If you do choose to serve a meal, you can save some money by offering a buffet instead of a sit-down meal. Buffets can be a great alternative because your guests are able to choose what they want to eat. This is almost always less expensive than a meal that is served directly to guests. Most caterers offer this type of meal.

You may also want to consider the types of drinks that you serve wisely. Alcohol costs can really add up, and choosing not to serve it could cut your catering bill in half. It's up to you whether you want to serve alcohol or not, but if you need to watch your budget, then you might want to consider serving less expensive alternatives such as beer and wine.

If possible, you can reduce the amount of time between when the reception starts and when the meal is served. If your reception is held at the same location as your wedding ceremony, there's no real need to wait a long time to serve a meal. By doing this, you will save money from not having to pass hors d'oeuvres around.

The cheapest of all ways to feed your guests is to design your reception as a pot-luck meal. This works best when the majority of your guests are not traveling from out of town. Every guest can bring a special dish that is shared between everyone. If you're going to opt for this, you need to make sure that the venue allows you to bring your own food. Some venues do not permit outside food.

It is possible to reduce your wedding catering costs, but you need to decide what is important for you and where you can make cuts. Once you know what can go, the rest is easy.

## 20 Cheap DIY Wedding Centerpiece Ideas

For many couples, wedding centerpieces created by a florist are way out of their price range. Even a simple arrangement could cost you your first-born child if you have many tables that need a centerpiece. Luckily, a bit of creativity could save you a small fortune. Check out these twenty creative ideas for wedding centerpieces.

1. *Artificial Flowers.* Before you start cringing at the idea of fake flowers, go to a store and check out the artificial flowers that are available. The quality has greatly improved in recent years. Using artificial flowers will significantly reduce the cost.
2. *Floating Candles.* These look elegant when lit up, providing a romantic atmosphere. Floating candles come in many different shapes and you should be able to find something that matches the theme of your wedding.
3. *Small Fruit or Ice Sculptures.* Check with local culinary schools. There may be a budding young chef who would be happy to create beautiful sculptures for a modest price.
4. *Small Cakes.* Instead of having one large wedding cake, buy several small ones in different flavors. You can even encourage guests to travel to other tables to sample the flavors. By doing this, you'll save on both centerpiece and wedding cake costs.
5. *Children's crafts.* If your family has a lot of children, and children will be welcome at your wedding, have them do some craft to use as your centerpiece. They will be delighted to help out.
6. *Mailbox with Paper and Pens.* Ask your guests to write a short piece of advice for the newly married couple. They can put their letters in the mailbox.
7. *Games.* If your family is not the type to dance wildly into the night, a few travel-sized games may be enough to keep people entertained.
8. *Photos of the Couple.* Have a lot of photos from your many adventures? Now's the time to show them off. Put pictures of the two of you together on each of the tables.
9. *Many Candles.* Using candles of varying heights can create a dramatic effect. Scented candles may be overbearing and interfere with the taste of the meal, so be sure to use unscented ones.
10. *Fruit.* A bowl of fresh fruit can be inexpensive and give a 'homey' feel to your tables. Plus, guests can eat them later!
11. *Lucky Bamboo Plants.* These work best with an Asian themed wedding, but they can look elegant in other settings as well.
12. *Baskets.* Fill your baskets with whatever you like. Artificial flowers, ornaments, or candy all make great choices.
13. *Glass Beads.* A bowl filled with colorful glass beads is simple but stylish. These can be purchased in many craft stores and you can choose colors that match the theme of your wedding.
14. *Cupcakes.* These are another wedding cake alternative. There are many cupcake trees available that can spruce up your table.
15. *Something Related to Your Hobbies.* If the two of you are avid bookworms, use a stack of your favorite books as a centerpiece. Wine lovers? How about a bottle of wine with a custom label? Choose something that matches your personality.

16. *Photos of Other Weddings.* If you have a lot of older married couples that will be attending your wedding, why not celebrate their love and commitment as well by showing pictures of their weddings?

17. *Seasonal Items.* In spring and summer, you may be able to collect wildflowers. In autumn colorful leaves are plentiful. And in winter, you can dress the table with evergreen.

18. *Polaroid Cameras and Scrap-Booking Supplies.* If your guests are crafty, let them create a special message for you by taking their pictures and creating a scrapbook page.

19. *Fortune Cookies.* A bowl of fortune cookies is fun for everyone. You can even have fortunes custom made for you wedding.

20. *Fishbowls with Fish.* You can go a step further and put the kissing gourami in the fishbowls. These are fish whose lips are extra puckered for kissing. Just make sure the fish all have a home when the wedding's over.

Your wedding centerpieces should reflect who you are as a couple. It doesn't have to be an expensive floral arrangement! These ideas should help you get started in finding the right centerpiece for your wedding. It's your special day, so enjoy it!

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This booklet is available as a free download from:

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