

BRIDES & Grooms

WEDDING GUIDE



5 tips to enhance your wedding decor

Some simple steps can yield big results when planning your wedding.

Wedding days are meant to be filled with love and celebration, and what better way to ring in the new stage of life as newlyweds than with a well-decorated venue to match the joyous occasion. Whether a couple is on a tight budget or picky when it comes to theme ideas, these decorating tips can help add more flair for the big day.

Use a natural venue. Many couples choose wedding venues that require immense amounts of decorations, but a venue with organic scenery or a beautiful view can help alleviate the stress. Consider having the ceremony near a garden or beach with enough natural surroundings to keep guests in awe.

Make the cake a centerpiece. Wedding cakes are almost guaranteed to be filled with flavor, but they can also serve as a decorative centerpiece for the reception. Choosing a cake topped with flowers, highlighting bright colors and placing it in a prominent spot at the reception can grab guests' attention while also keeping them eager for a bite.

Choose table accessories that pop. Leave guests in amazement as they make their way to their seats for the reception with beautifully decorated tables. Table accessories can be anything ranging from patterned table runners to flowers

in full-bloom placed in simple, elegant vases. If you are not having a formal sit-down reception, try using paper lanterns or hanging flowers from the ceiling to create an eye-catching atmosphere to remember.

Add classic lighting. At times, finding the right lighting to match the mood of a wedding venue can be tricky. In this case, less may actually be more. Try opting for a classic candlelit ceremony or reception to create a more romantic setting. This can save both money and countless hours spent attempting to configure elaborate light fixtures, and also provide a timeless feel.

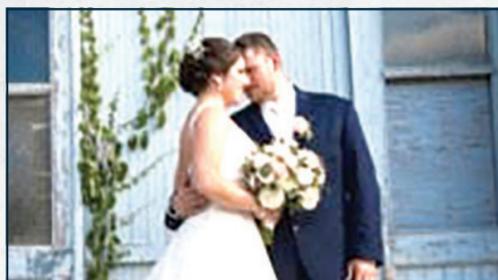
Place engagement photos around the venue. With any wedding, you want the day to feel personal and intimate for the couple and guests alike. Consider decorating the venue with engagement photos of the soon-to-be spouses as they popped the question. This can allow the newlyweds to reminisce while guests view those cherished moments and revel in the occasion.

For more tips to prepare for life's special moments like marital bliss, visit elivingtoday.com.

[Article courtesy of Family Features]



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Put more 'you' into your wedding day

Don't be afraid to add your imprint to your celebration.



[Photo courtesy of Getty Images]

A wedding day is filled with symbolic tradition, from varied religious customs to the never-ending circle reflected in the rings and the types of flowers accentuating the celebration. Even with all the traditional rituals to consider, nearly every bride and groom can find ways to give their special day some unique touches that reflect their personality and love.

Music sets the mood for every wedding, and it's an easy place to put your own spin on the celebration. Whether you forgo the traditional bridal march entirely or simply look for an arrangement that gives an updated twist to the classic version, let guests know this isn't your average wedding by setting the festivities against a soundtrack that lets your true character shine.

The wedding party is intended to be a collection of those nearest and dearest to the bride and groom, who help ensure the day goes off without a hitch and who lead fellow revelers in celebrating the start of the new couple's life together. That being said, there's no reason this group must be limited to women on her side and guys on his, or even that it's limited to humans - a beloved pooch can make for an adorable ring-bearer, after all.

Photography is an essential element of your big day, but think beyond the images you'll capture throughout the wedding and reception. Photos lend a personal touch, no matter what your color scheme or theme. Integrate photos of the

two of you at various stages of life, together as a couple and with loved ones (perhaps even some you're honoring in memoriam). You can display these at a table with the guest book, as part of the table centerpieces, or even on the gift table. Or take things digital and load all your images into a slide show set to music.

Make favors meaningful. Forgo more common items like bubbles and chocolate, and instead send a little of yourself home with your guests. Maybe it's a memento from a place with special meaning to you both, or a bottle opener shaped like a bicycle to represent the way you met. Just think about the moments and things that define you as a couple and do some searching online. You'll probably be surprised by how quickly the options pile up.

Serve up a menu that shows guests more about your life together. Your loved ones can order basic beef or chicken anywhere. Instead, give them a glimpse into you. Make your main course the same food you enjoyed on your first date or during another monumental moment in your courtship. Or plan the entire menu around a region that you hold close to your heart.

Weddings are filled with traditions, but that doesn't mean you can't put your own touches on the day for a special event filled with memories that are uniquely your own. Find more advice for life's special moments at elivingtoday.com.

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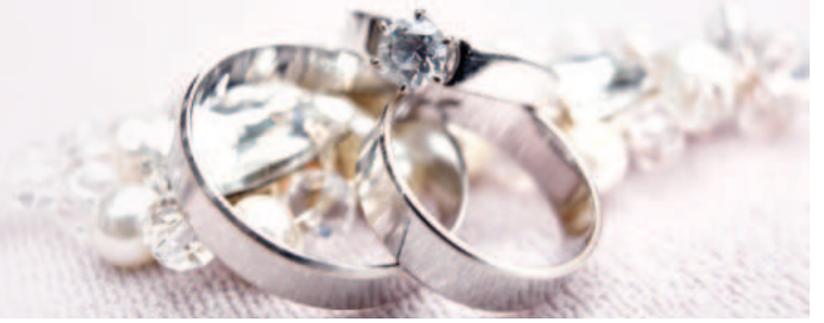
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Simple tips for a better wedding registry

Bridal registries can help the couple - and friends and family looking for the right gift.

For some couples, the idea of registering for wedding gifts is an exciting way to start planning for the home they'll be sharing as newlyweds. For others, the registry is just one more chore to check off the wedding to-do list.

Regardless of where you fall on the love-it-or-hate-it spectrum, most experts agree a registry is a good idea, especially for couples who will be setting up a home together for the first time. Keep these tips and etiquette guidelines in mind to get the most out of your registry.

Take inventory of what you have and what you need. For couples who've lived alone or together, the registry may be a way to fill in gaps for necessities neither of you already have. It's also a good way to begin upgrading the less expensive kitchen items and furnishings you had as college students or singles. Make a list of your needs and wants so you don't forget any essentials. If you're still in doubt, request a checklist from the store where you'll be registering so you can do some planning.

Register for things at a wide range of price points.

The whole purpose of a registry is to make it easy for your guests to get you things you'll like and need. Part of making it easy is recognizing your guests have diverse financial situations. While it's customary to gift the bride and groom, not everyone can afford an extravagant gift, especially if they've spent money on travel and attire to attend. While it's a good idea to offer modest options, don't shy away from bigger ticket items that a small group might chip in

on together.

Keep access in mind when you choose where to register. Avoid stores that are local or regional if you have many guests who live out of the area. Also avoid the temptation to choose online only options, as some guests will prefer to see what they're buying. Aim for a mix of large national stores and online retailers.

Plan to block off at least a few hours for an in-person registry. It will take time to get everything set up. Trav-

eling through the store, debating options and making your selections could take longer than expected. Also be sure to ask how you can add to or edit your registry after your initial visit.

Get your partner involved. There are bound

to be some parts of the registry your partner may not care about, but asking for input and making decisions together lets you both share in the excitement. Focus on things you'll each find useful as you settle into your new

home. For example, the person who will be responsible for taking out the trash should get to pick the new kitchen trash can.

Find more inspiration for planning your way to wedded bliss at eLivingtoday.com.



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