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Wedding Money Saving Tips

Introduction

Hello and thank you for taking a look at this money saving guide.

I'm sure we would all like to be in the situation where money was no object and could plan a wedding purely on the basis of what we wanted rather than what we could afford. In reality most of us need to keep within a budget whilst still trying to have the best day possible.

In 2008 weddings in the UK reportedly cost just under £20,000 on average, including the honeymoon. Many couples expect it to be much less than this and are surprised by how much everything comes to. When you note down all the items required it can be quite a shock. Of course it's possible to have a wonderful wedding for much less than this figure, the question is what's important to you and your partner. If something is really important to you then you may not be willing to compromise on that aspect of the wedding but can save money elsewhere on things that aren't so important.

Over the following pages you will find dozens of money saving ideas and hopefully within the list you will find some suggestions that help save money on your wedding. Naturally it's a good idea to carefully plan your wedding and the budget from the start and keep track of expenditure. It's unlikely that you will keep exactly to the budget so allow for some contingency and be prepared for some flexibility in order to get the kind of wedding you want.

I hope you have a wonderful wedding and that it doesn't cost too much!

Peter Burnett,

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Money Saving Ideas

Plan ahead allowing more time to find good deals and to avoid last-minute purchases.

Avoid the peak summer season. May to September are the busiest months, at least in the UK where the weather tends to be better. In my experience August is the most popular month and gets booked up first.

Avoid the most popular days of the week, Saturdays are the most popular followed by Sundays and Fridays. You may be able to save money by booking a wedding on a weekday from Monday to Thursday. Check with vendors whether they have off-peak rates or whether they are willing to give you a discount in this situation.

Use the internet as well as getting suggestions from friends, compare prices but make sure you get the quality you need as well as a good price. There are several sites devoted to saving money on weddings and giving ideas and instructions for DIY options.

Limit the number of bridesmaids, ushers, page boys and flower girls. They could still be guests but you would save on the dresses, suits, flowers etc.

Limit the number of guests. The number of guests is usually the single largest factor in the cost of the reception. A smaller guest list may mean you can hire a smaller venue or room and save on food and drink. Often couples come under pressure to invite lots of people but if your budget is tight try to invite only the people you really want there on the day.

Another option is to invite people for the ceremony or evening only instead of the whole day.

Get married in a friend's garden by hiring a marquee. If you know someone with a large garden or a field on a farm this can be a great location for the reception. If you can arrange your own catering and drinks this can be cheaper than paying hotel prices.

Try to keep everything at one location. Get ready, married and have the reception at the same venue. This helps to save on things like transportation and decoration costs.

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Use a restaurant with a function room. Private restaurant rooms tend to be cheaper than hotels and can have a more cosy atmosphere.

Announce your date via the internet instead of buying invitations and save on stationery and postal costs.

Print your own invitations. Pick up some design ideas and put together your own design. If you have a pre-wedding shoot with the photographer ask them if you can use an image for the invitation. Instead of using a reply card that you have to pay for, ask for replies by email or phone.

Avoid buying a wedding dress by looking at other types of dress that don't come with the premium of a wedding dress. An off-white, champagne, or other colour may also be less expensive than a white dress.

You could make your own veil with the right kind of material and a comb or tiara.

You may not need a professional make up or hair stylist unless the look you want is difficult to do. Perhaps one of your bridesmaids could do it, practice the style before hand to make sure it goes smoothly. Wedding magazines are a good place to get ideas and instructions.

Buy a dress that fits when you order it! You may plan to lose weight before the wedding but if you don't it will be more expensive alter the dress if it is too small.

For jewellery see if you can borrow some from a friend or family member. It also meets the tradition of having something borrowed. Instead of buying you can look at renting jewellery for the day.

Have a single stem instead of a bouquet of flowers. A simple and elegant single stem can make just as strong a statement as a large bouquet.

Choose in-season, locally grown flowers. Flowers that don't have to be flown in should be cheaper.

Give your florist a colour scheme, not specific flowers. This allows them flexibility so that they can pick out the most affordable flowers for your colour scheme. If you wish you can provide a list of flowers that you want to avoid.

Keep centrepieces simple. Large centrepieces can be expensive and take up a lot of room, not to mention getting in the photographer's way when trying to get shots of your guests! A simple bowl filled with water and floating candles is a good option.

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Consider not having favours, or provide something simple and not specific to the wedding, such as normal sweets or chocolate, perhaps decorated with ribbon.

Make your own centrepieces and favours. Using supplies from craft stores you can put something together that costs less and can be more personal.

Skip dessert and just serve wedding cake.

Consider having a buffet rather than a full sit-down meal.

The meal doesn't need to be huge, think about having less courses but choose a main dish that is filling.

Some venues may let you bring in your own catering and alcohol. An outside caterer may be able to give you a better deal than what's offered at the venue.

Skip the cake or use a non-wedding cake.

Something I've seen quite a lot recently is the use of cupcake trees instead of a multi-layered wedding cake. They look good and are less expensive.

You could have a plain cake decorated by a friend or family member instead of buying an expensive wedding cake.

Limit the drinks budget, set a maximum tab for free drinks after which guests need to pay for their own drinks or limit the type of drinks available. Alternatively limit the time the free bar is open, for example by having a "happy hour".

Hire high-quality suppliers instead of amateurs. You need people that know what they are doing and won't mess things up.

Go through the list of items and drop things that aren't essential to you.

If you're hiring musicians, you can save money by limiting the amount of time they are required to perform. Alternatively, the venue may be able to provide background music of your choice instead.

Look for package deals that give you everything you want but at a discount. For example with the photography you may be able to get a discount if you buy prints and albums at the same time.

Ask about special offers or smaller packages that haven't been mentioned. Don't expect them to offer you the cheapest deal unless you ask.

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Negotiate with vendors, they may be willing to offer you a better deal depending on your specific requirements and their current situation.

Include services or wedding items on your gift list. If you know someone who works as a professional musician, photographer or other wedding vendor, ask them for their services or a discount as a wedding present. They'll save money on buying you a gift, and you won't have to pay someone to provide the service. You may also be able to get things like your wedding album or prints paid for this way.

If you have any more suggestions please do let me know and they can be included here.

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