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# Bride & Groom

Quarterly guide to the perfect wedding



October 2015 - Brought to you by Granite Quill Publishers

# 5 trendy wedding registry gift ideas for casual lifestyles

A wedding registry should reflect how you really live. Not everyone focuses their social life on formal dinner parties with the kind of fine china, silverware and crystal found on traditional wedding gift lists. Today's registries reflect current lifestyles with new twists and trends. "Wedding registries are trending toward more casual, hip and high-tech kitchenware, such as nonstick woks instead of chafing dishes and iced tea makers instead of tea pots," says Peter Giannetti, editor-in-chief of HomeWorld Business. "Also, registries are not as bride-centric as they used to be. With both brides and grooms involved, gifts such as high-tech coffee centers and growlers for craft beer are becoming more popular."

Selecting gifts at a variety of price points is both good etiquette and good strategy. Big-ticket items give guests the opportunity for a grand gesture, and they also make great group gifts. Be sure to include moderately priced items that are appealing and distinctive, so that everyone can feel good about what they give. For many, it is more satisfying to give something that's special and specific, rather than one small piece for a set.

On-trend wedding registry gift ideas

1. The growler is becoming a new must-have



for those who love locally brewed craft beer, while also wanting to lead eco-friendly lifestyles that avoid the waste of excess disposable packaging. Created for filling with craft beer, the Reduce Vacuum Growler features double wall insulation that protects the beverage for full flavor enjoyment at just the right temperature.

2. Teatime is now cool, because 85 percent of the tea consumed in America is iced, according to The Tea Association of the USA. One to consider is an iced tea maker that offers a fully customizable iced tea brewing experience from either loose tea or tea bags. The Capresso Iced Tea Maker lets you adjust to taste from regular to extra strong, and it brews into a beautiful 80-ounce glass pitcher.

3. Pepper and salt mills are focal points on the counter or the table, in addition to being everyday essentials. A unique choice that ties into popular décor trends is the Collection Antique from Peugeot, which combines iconic shapes with rustic aged beech wood. Designed and produced in France, these are keepsake mills with a lifetime warranty on the mechanisms.

4. The wok has evolved into a versatile everyday pan for quickly prepared meals with delicious, fresh ingredients. You should look for a high quality nonstick wok engineered to professional grade standards. The Kyocera 12.5-inch Nonstick Wok with Lid features an exclusive ceramic nonstick coating and can be used for braising, pan-frying, roasting, searing and stir-frying.

5. Coffee lovers appreciate a true bean-to-cup experience and who wouldn't want a professional-style coffee bar in their own home? The JURA IMPRESSA C60 produces specialty coffee beverages in a flash. A high-performance conical burr grinder and fine foam technology for feather-like milk foam help make this machine the choice for happy couples who would rather sip their java at home versus the coffee shop. (BPT)

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# Find wedding bliss this fall wedding season

Caterers, event halls and wedding planners are gearing up for fall wedding season, one of the busiest times of the year for hopeful couples. Fall guarantees exquisite photo opportunities without the heat of summer -- and the wealth of in-season decorations are beautiful and affordable.

In fact, September and October are the most popular and third most popular months for weddings, respectively.

If you're planning a fall wedding this season, read on for some helpful tips:

**1. Keep warm.** Since outdoor fall weddings have the potential to get chilly, keeping your guests warm is a must. Offer hot cocoa and homey baskets of soft blankets or cozy shawls. Set up fire pits or outdoor heating stations where guests can shake of the chill.

**2. Location, location, location.** Select a locale that is known for its fall scenery. For example, as much as it's known for history, Valley Forge and Montgomery County, Pa. is celebrated for its brilliant autumnal hues and stunning landscape -- a picture-perfect place for memorable fall nuptials in a histor-



ic area of southeastern Pennsylvania. Named among the top 10 national parks for fall foliage, the 3,500-acre Valley Forge National Historical Park offers a perfect fall backdrop.

Learn more at [www.valleyforge.org](http://www.valleyforge.org).

**3. Incorporate fall colors into the wedding party wardrobe.** Chocolate brown compliments a variety of fall color schemes, and it's flattering for most women. But if brown doesn't suit the plans, burgundy is another great fall shade that makes the bridal white pop.

**4. Select in-season flowers and decorations.** Unless the bride has her heart set on lily of the valley or orchids, there are beautiful in-season flowers to choose from. Dahlias, chrysanthemums, asters, roses, zinnias and sunflowers all create elegant bouquets and floral displays with a lovely hint of fall. Add some crab apples for a playful, non-floral element.

**5. Mix and match gourds, pumpkins and squash.** Pumpkins can be tacky or a little too reminiscent of Halloween, so class them up by serving pumpkin soup, pumpkin cocktails or tiers of mini pumpkins. Gourds also make eye-catching vases, and all three can be arranged as charming centerpieces. (NewsUSA)

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# Relaxation and sophistication favored choices for bachelorette parties

"Bachelorette parties are as unique as the women they celebrate," says Michael Belot, general manager of Destination Kohler - home to AAA five-diamond and Forbes five-star hotel that hosts scores of brides, bridesmaids and weddings each year. So what are the things that brides and bridesmaids tell the Destination Kohler team they must have for their bachelorette soirees? Belot points to five in-demand elements:

### 1. Spa time

Whether it's a group mani-pedi, a yoga class or a lunch of delicious, healthful spa cuisine, bachelorette groups crave spa time. Parties are looking for spas that offer a comprehensive list of salon services, familiar and new massages and body treatments, and easy access to luxury accommodations. For example, at Destination Kohler, bachelorette groups often book rooms in the Carriage House, which is located above the Forbes five-star Kohler Waters Spa. Participants can spend the day in their spa robes if they choose. "Kohler Waters Spa is by far the most popular request and activity among bachelorette parties, and is often the center of the trip," says Garrett Mersberger, manager of Kohler Waters Spas. Playing to this trend, many resorts have created female-centric spa packages like the Girls Getaway.



### 2. Great food

Forget the pigs in a blanket, deviled eggs and other de rigueur finger foods long associated with bridal showers. Modern bachelorette groups are looking for dining options that are luxurious and delicious, or that accommodate lifestyle needs such as gluten-free or low-calorie diets. Spa fare often fits well with this preference. Resorts with multiple dining options afford bachelorette guests the opportunity to dine lightly for lunch and then enjoy a more indulgent dinner.

### 3. Bonding activities

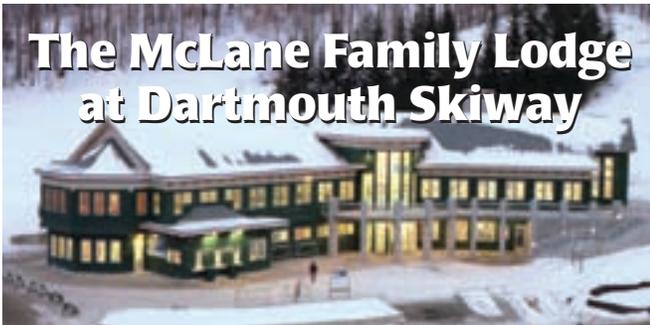
Hitting the bar and dancing the night away are no longer the only bonding activities for bachelorette groups. From yoga classes and golf outings to wine and chocolate pairings, brides-to-be are looking for more diverse, sophisticated activities they can do with their girlfriends.

### 4. A location "away from it all"

Nearly a third of respondents in the Bridesmaid Census said they didn't want to go crazy for a bachelorette party, they just wanted to enjoy time with their friends. Perhaps it's because their lives are about to change dramatically. Maybe it's a need to reaffirm the girlfriend bond that has seen them through life's ups and downs to reach this happy point in their lives. Whatever their reasons, a growing number of brides are looking for a bachelorette experience that transports them and their closest friends far away from their daily routines. Some fulfill this wish by choosing a resort location far from home. Others may choose accommodations that are more intimate. At Destination Kohler, bachelorette parties can also opt to stay at Sandhill, the resort's luxury private cabin that sits on 350 natural acres just a 10-minute drive from the resort.

### 5. Personalization

Twenty-three percent of surveyed brides said they wanted a bachelorette party that was deeply personal and tailored to their individual tastes and interests. For some, that's a spa experience. For others, a golf getaway. Even when they've booked a bachelorette package, brides and their bridesmaids are looking for ways the resort can customize their experience. Add-ons are popular, from spa treatments to wine tastings. (BPT)



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# Tips for planning your wedding photos like a pro

The last thing you should be worrying about is whether your photographer will be able to capture your big day. The key? Prepare yourself so that you can accurately evaluate the "right" photographer for you.

"The best photographer will take the time to build a rapport with you and use his or her experience and creativity to capture the mood, personality, ambiance and even the geography of your wedding," says PPA (Professional Photographers of America) photographer Berit Bizjak. To this end, PPA has taken the guesswork out of the process by offering tips to help you

**1. Book far in advance.** The best photographers get booked quickly -- sometimes as much as a year in advance -- so don't wait to book your photographer.

**2. Show them the money.** Now is not the time to skimp on your photo budget. Call around and get a price range for services, and remember: after the cake is long gone, and the dress is stored away, your wedding photos will be the only things left to share and enjoy for years to come, so don't cut too many corners on your photography budget.

**3. Make sure your photographer is**



**a real pro.** Only hire someone who has liability insurance, experience taking the style of photos you want, backup equipment and a plan for when things go south. They have the technical expertise and artistry to make you look your best and bring your vision to life.

**4. Request to see a full gallery of real weddings.** Look at full wedding coverage (not just a small selection of each wedding's

best moments) to see a photographer's true style and get a sense of how he or she might tell your "story." Do you prefer more artistic or traditional poses?

**5. Work with your photographer to create a detailed shot list.** Wedding photographers can also help you create that shot list, as they know what key moments tell a wedding story and can prepare for those. But talk about your must-haves, and walk through the entire program with your photographer ahead of time. Share your expectations ahead of time to ensure that he or she captures the key shots, while remaining attentive and available to catch the best candid moments.

**6. Plan your post-wedding photo strategy ahead of time.** Almost as soon as the festivities are over, you'll be eager to look at the photos so you can relive your big day over and over again. Ask your photographer for teasers or a "sneak peek" and a timeline for when the rest of the pictures will be available. Will they give you an online gallery for family and friends to choose the images they want? Again, knowing these things ahead of time will make things easy on the back end, sparing you any heartache. (NewsUSA)

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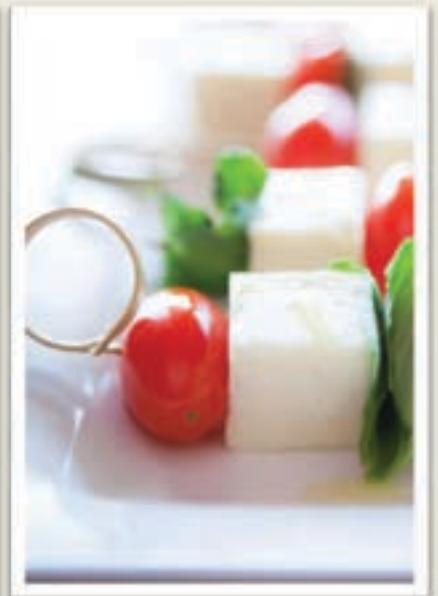
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# Tax tips for newly married couples

"In between the flurry of wedding planning and bridal showers, few engaged couples stop to think about how getting married will affect their income taxes," explained TaxAct spokesperson, Shaunna Morgan. "While it's important to understand the tax consequences, keep in mind that you can still do your own taxes."

## Name changes

Your name(s) and Social Security number(s) are critical elements of your tax return. Both identifiers must exactly match the information the Social Security Administration (SSA) has on file. That means if you legally change your name after you get married, the SSA needs to know about it. To get a Social Security card with your new name, you'll need to provide proof of identity, such as a marriage certificate, fill out an application and either mail it or deliver it in person to your local SSA office. You'll want to do this long before you file your income tax return.

## New address

If you're moving, remember to report your new address to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The fastest way to make the change is to complete Form 8822 available on the agency

website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## New filing status

Once you've said, "I do," you'll have the option to claim one of two filing statuses on your tax return: married filing jointly or married filing separately. If you and your spouse each earn an income, you might consider running the numbers to determine if you have a lower combined tax by filing one way versus the other. Some tax software packages do the calculations for you so it's easier to make an informed decision when selecting a filing status. TaxAct Deluxe, for example, gives users a Joint vs. Separate Analysis report that does all the calculations so you can see your estimated refund amounts for each filing status. For many couples, married filing jointly results in lower income tax liability.

Keep in mind that no matter when in the year you get married, you are considered married for the full year. Even if your big day is December 31, you will have a married status in the eyes of the IRS for the entirety of that tax year.

## Changing your tax withholding

Any time you have a life change you should revisit your Form W-4. Getting married

is definitely one of those times. If both you and your spouse work, you'll likely have a higher combined income, which may put you into a higher tax bracket. In order to ensure the right amount of tax is withheld from your paycheck, you'll want to update your Form W-4 to ensure you aren't having too much or too little tax withheld.

## Affordable Care Act premium tax credit

If you or your spouse receive health insurance through a government-sponsored marketplace and receive advance payments of the premium tax credit to help offset the cost of your premiums, you'll want to review your coverage after the wedding, and notify the marketplace of your newly married status. Reporting this change will help you avoid having too much or too little premium assistance paid and ultimately, help you steer clear of owing additional money or getting a small refund when you file your taxes. If you elect to keep your coverage "as is," separate from your spouse, or wish to add your spouse to your coverage, you should notify the marketplace of your special changes in coverage. If you elect to go under your spouse's health plan, be sure to cancel your marketplace coverage. (BPT)

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# Wedding checklist

## 12 months or more before the wedding

- Announce your intention to marry to BOTH sets of parents. Arrange to have them meet if they haven't already.
- Determine type (formal, semi-formal, informal), style and theme of the wedding.
- Sit down with your fiancé and ALL parents and discuss the wedding budget, and who will pay for what.
- Get or make a wedding organizer (a 3 ring binder with pockets works great). Use it to store all your information, contracts, ideas, photos, etc.
- Speak with your clergy/officiant and review synagogue/church requirements.
- Come up with 2 or 3 possible wedding dates and start looking for ceremony and reception venues.
- If you are using one, start looking for and book a wedding consultant.

## 9 to 11 months before the wedding

- Start looking for and interviewing all the remaining vendors:
- Photographer
- Videographer
- Caterer (if needed)
- Officiant (if needed)

- Florist
- If any vendor you like is available on your date and is within your budget, book them IMMEDIATELY!
- Together with your parents, begin compiling your preliminary guest list.
- Start getting ideas by looking through bridal magazines, going to Bridal Fairs and doing research on the internet.
- Finalize your wedding colors, theme and style.
- Select your attendants (bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, flower girl and ring bear) and ask them to honor you by being in your wedding.
- Choose and purchase your wedding rings.
- Begin looking at honeymoon options. Discuss where you both would like to go, and if needed visit a travel agent.
- Start looking for a wedding gown, veil, accessories and your attendants attire.

## 6 to 8 months before the wedding

- Start planning ceremony and reception music choices.
- Finalize and purchase your wedding gown, veil, and accessories.

- Finalize attire for attendants
- Start pre-marriage counseling
- Start looking at invitations
- Sign up for your gift registry
- Send save-the-date cards/newsletter

## 4 to 5 months before the wedding

- Finalize your floral arrangements.
  - Place wedding announcement in local newspaper
  - Order wedding stationary .
  - Start shopping for bridal party tuxedos
  - Book limo/transportation
  - Start planning the wedding decorations
  - Arrange accommodations for out of town guests (book blocks of hotel rooms)
  - Select wedding cake
  - Start making arrangement for rehearsal and rehearsal dinner
  - Book calligrapher
  - Decide on wedding favors
  - If you decided not to use a Wedding Coordinator, consider asking a close friend not in the wedding party to be your Wedding Coordinator/Personal Assistant.
- ## 3 months before the wedding
- Order wedding cake and groom's cake
  - Meet with your officiant to discuss ▶



details of the ceremony

- Finalize the guest list
- Reconfirm the rehearsal dinner plans
- Buy the cake knife, guest book, toasting glasses and garter
- Choose gifts for your attendants, parents, helpers.
- Have the male members of the wedding party, including fathers, fitted for tuxedos.
- Reconfirm honeymoon arrangements.
- Start writing your wedding vows, if you are doing them yourself.
- Start addressing the invitations (or drop them off with calligrapher)

### **2 months before the wedding**

- Send out invitations
- Schedule a hair and make up consultation to do a trial run.
- Start making/buying wedding favors
- Obtain wedding license
- Schedule first wedding dress fitting.
- Write thank you notes for any gifts that may start arriving.
- If you are having one, begin putting together your ceremony program.
- Meet with vendors (caterer, florists, etc.)
- If you are changing your name, complete the proper documents.
- Finalize music selections for the ceremony and reception and turn them in to the DJ/Band/etc.
- Have formal wedding portrait taken.

- Finalize music selections for the ceremony and reception and turn them in to the DJ/Band/etc.
- Meet with your officiant to finalize ceremony details.
- Reserve room for wedding night.

### **1 month before the wedding**

- Confirm honeymoon your reservations.
- Meet with photographer and/or videographer to discuss last minute details.
- Start working on the reception seating chart.
- Have final wedding gown fitting.
- Finish (and print) the wedding program.
- Finalize wedding vows
- Confirm all final payment amounts with your vendors as well as date, time, etc.
- Pick up marriage license.

### **2 weeks before the wedding**

- Finalize reception seating chart.
- Confirm delivery time and locations with florist.
- Contact any guests who did not respond to the invitation.

### **1 week before the wedding**

- Pick up wedding gown, attendants' gowns and all accessories.
- Give final guest count to reception venue
- Reconfirm everything with vendors one last time.
- Make sure men get their final fitting for their tuxedos.

### **1 day before the wedding**

- Attend rehearsal.
- Attend rehearsal dinner. Give attendants their gifts.
- Have a manicure and/or a pedicure.
- Put together the tip envelopes (for the vendors) and give them to the designated "tip person" (generally the best man).
- Confirm wedding day transportation.
- Reconfirm hair and make up appts.
- If you have access to the ceremony and/or reception venues, bring everything over there that you may need.
- Layout everything you need for the next day in a safe place (marriage license, dress, shoes, etc.).
- Speak with everyone in the wedding party and make sure everyone knows where to be at what time.
- Try to go to bed early and get some sleep.

### **Your wedding day**

- Eat breakfast, even if you think you aren't hungry.
- Share a private moment with fiance.
- Have your hair and makeup done.
- Give the best man the groom's ring.
- Begin dressing two hours before ceremony is scheduled to begin.
- Spend a quiet moment looking at yourself in the mirror before you walk down the aisle.



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## Budget-conscious brides trim bill with destination weddings

Tying the knot isn't what it used to be. The wedding industry is as profitable as primetime football, celebrities compete for the shortest, most gimmicky marriages (72 days or less?) and the exotic appeal of a romantic getaway has led to the widespread popularity of destination weddings.

One in every 10 weddings features an exotic locale, or at least a location neither the bride nor groom calls home. While there's no absolute explanation as to why destination weddings have started a bridal takeover, the hefty price of typical weddings is reason enough for many -- especially if Daddy isn't footing the bill.

"If done correctly, destination weddings can be a cheaper alternative for everyone. Guests don't have to buy expensive gifts, just a ticket. All the money spent on the wedding party, venues, refreshments, cake, reception and decor is significantly reduced if not cut altogether," explains Nini Pardo, wedding planner at Stay in Costa Rica, an accommodations and rental management company.

The author of "Destination Weddings for Dummies," Susan Breslow Sardone, says the traditional American wedding costs an average of \$28,082, whereas destination weddings average around \$20,600.

"Some of the cost difference is definitely a result of resorts and hotels capitalizing on the trend. Many now offer the full wedding package with wedding planners, musicians, photographers, etc. We employ full-time wedding coordinators, like myself, to craft intimate weddings at our Los Suenos Resort," Pardo adds. "We've found it really appealing to budget-conscious brides."

Budget-conscious brides have become a trend as well, according to Patricia MacArthur, executive director of WeddingStar.com -- a go-to authority on all things wedding-related. MacArthur says more brides are trimming expenses by taking the DIY route for guest favors and some decorative elements.

For tropical weddings especially, many of the cheaper, DIY options are more easily packed into suitcases. For instance, colorful fabric is being used to replace flowers and native delicacies are replacing towering cakes. An extra tip from the experts, when considering the perfect setting to make your vows and possibly trash the dress: look at locations that are one flight away from you and most of your guests. Direct flights tend to be cheaper and less hassle. To learn more about saying "I do" in Costa Rica, visit [www.stayincostarica.com](http://www.stayincostarica.com). (NewsUSA)

# Brides and grooms: don't forget to buy each other a present

If you're reading this story, you're probably one of the approximately 825,000 couples who've just gotten engaged since Thanksgiving and are now planning your wedding. So here's perhaps the single most important reminder -- and grooms do seem to need more reminding than brides -- anyone will offer: Tradition holds that you both exchange wedding presents.

(Yes, grooms, even though you just bought her an engagement ring.)

But what to get?

"Gifts should come from the heart," says WeddingChannel.com.

Well, yeah. But that still leaves a lot of room for error. So here's some tips to keep in mind whether you two opt for some type of jewelry -- the traditional and most popular choice -- or something else.

**Practicality can wait.** Etiquette dictates that gifts be exchanged at one of three times: the night before the wedding, the morning of the ceremony, or right before you leave on your honeymoon. So you could see where this has the potential for becoming a bigger disaster than Chernobyl if the groom's idea of "practical" is, say, a toaster.

**Being uniquely personal is appreci-**



**ated.** One of the best examples we've heard of is a guy who had a photographer secretly capture the moment he proposed in New York's Central Park, and then presented the results to his bride on the day of their wedding.

"So cute!" read a typical blog post.

The downside, of course, is that pulling it off requires imagination and -- in this instance -- a lot of advance planning.

**Jewelry can be "traditional" without being boring.** Case in point: the very hot Argyle diamonds trend (www.diamondswithastory.com), which fulfills the quest of even the most eco-minded couples for diamond fashion jewelry since the stones are produced in a socially and environmentally responsible way from the Argyle mine in Australia. And the diamonds, themselves, come in gorgeous neutral shades like champagne, cognac, silver and gray.

"If your bride likes something different from what all her friends have," says jewelry and style expert Michael O'Connor, "then the Argyle diamond bracelets, necklaces and earrings are perfect and available at many retailers across the country -- I've even spotted women at gyms wearing the diamond pendants. And the cufflinks for men are truly elegant."

Perhaps because prices start at as little as a few hundred dollars for some pieces, O'Connor calls them "the ideal gateway gift." Meaning, you can use other occasions -- think birthdays and anniversaries -- to add to your collection through the years. Yes, brides and grooms, you'll soon have to start planning your next milestone together. (NewsUSA)



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# Wedding gifts for grooms: a tradition brides shouldn't ignore

The answer is: Yes, it's expected.

But it's also a chance for all you brides out there to truly show you know that not everything is about you on your wedding day. That there really is another person involved (that would be the groom) who deserves a bit of recognition, too.

We're talking wedding presents -- specifically, yours to your husband-to-be.

Tradition does, indeed, hold that both you and he exchange gifts. And while it's true that some guys are initially shocked to learn your engagement ring doesn't also count as a "present," that's no excuse for you to waver.

"Giving him something that's just for him will make him feel really special," advises BrideBox.com. Here's what you need to know now that it's prime time for weddings:

**When to exchange them.** Etiquette dictates that the hand-off occurs at one of three times: the night before the wedding, the morning of the ceremony, or right before leaving on your honeymoon. Think it's bad luck to see the groom before the nuptials? "Many couples choose to courier gifts via bridesmaids or groomsmen just before the ceremony," says Brides.com.

**There's a thin line between "roman-**



**tic" and "mushy."** Some of you may be tempted to compile a "love notes" journal of every bit of correspondence you've ever sent your groom. Even assuming he's the type who wouldn't consider that a bit "over the top," there's always the chance he might be left wondering, "Okay, where's my real present?" --

especially if his gift to you is a serious piece of jewelry.

**The consensus choice.** There's a reason a watch invariably makes everyone's short list: It's the perfect statement of who he is or aspires to be. (It's also a lot more impressive than a flask, which for some reason also gets a few votes).

No less a taste arbiter than MarthaStewartWeddings.com favors Baume Mercier's Clifton line -- as elegant as the original 1950s model that inspired it -- for the way it "easily transitions from big day to every day."

Like the Swiss watchmaker's timelessly charming (and affordably luxurious) Classima line, it comes with a choice of straps, dial faces and a variety of what's known as "small complications" that go way beyond just telling the hour. You can shop them at the Baume Mercier e-boutique or by calling 1-800-MERCIER, where free engraving and wrapping are available.

**Fun fact.** One writer at AskMen.com says he's "heard of women giving their husbands watches in the ceremony instead of a wedding ring." If so, the answer is: No, just like your engagement ring, that wouldn't also qualify as a wedding present. (NewsUSA)

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# Beat-the-clock beauty tips from head to toe

Let's face it, lack of time is one of the biggest burdens in every woman's life, especially when it hinders your grooming routine. Think about how much time it can take to get polished: 30 minute pedicure, hour long facial, 40 minute blowout, and viola! You've already lost more than two hours. It's about time (pun intended) to rethink your beauty regimen and go sans salon. The right at-home products can give you the results you want - while dodging the investment of time and money in salon trips. Check out these beautifying at-home shortcuts to help you look and feel your best, with a lot less effort:

## DIY beach waves

Who doesn't love beach hair? Just because everyday isn't a vacation doesn't mean you can't have fresh-from-the-beach salt-water hair at home. Making sea salt spray in your kitchen is easy and provides that amazing look in no time. Combine hot water (not scalding), sea salt, your favorite hair oil (like coconut or argan), leave-in conditioner and some water-based gel. Apply generously to towel-dried hair, braid loosely and let it dry. Make this mixture and save it in an old shampoo bottle, so you can use it whenever you're in to mood for a fast, easy, and fabulous hairstyle.



## Pamper your feet with an at-home pedi

At-home pedicures are a great way to pamper yourself - without having to devote time to visiting the salon. The experience can be more than just polishing your nails, however. Smooth and renew the rough skin on your heels and toes with the new Dr. Scholl's DreamWalk Express Pedi Foot Smoother. This electronic hand-held device makes it easy to buff away dry, rough skin, leaving feet looking and feeling smoother. The user-friendly contoured design has no sharp blades. In addition, a nice time saver, is that you don't need to soak your feet prior to use. Visit [www.drscholls.com](http://www.drscholls.com) to learn more.

## Give yourself a fresh, glowing face

Facials can take up to an hour and can be costly. If you're looking for a simple way to get glowing skin without spending a hefty amount of time and money, try an at-home facial. Start with a gentle, natural exfoliator, like salt or oatmeal. Next, soak a washcloth in warm tap water, wring it out, drape it over your face, and let it sit for a few minutes. This helps open pores. Remove the washcloth and apply your favorite mask, following the manufacturer's directions for application, duration and removal. After removing the mask, apply a light moisturizer. You will feel fresh, revitalized and your wallet will thank you.

## Body exfoliator

Exfoliating your skin removes dead skin cells from the skin's surface, leaving a healthy and glowing look. Lack of exfoliation can lead to dull and dry skin. You don't need to go to an expert or even buy an expensive product to exfoliate your body. Combine one part olive oil, five parts sea salt, and a lemon together to make the perfect at-home body scrub in seconds.

Keep extra portions of the scrub in a mason jar in your bathroom and use on dry skin before rinsing off in the shower. You will feel refreshed and glowing when you step out. (BPT)

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# Popping the question over the holidays? What every guy should know

Congratulations, guys, on being so in love that you can save yourself at least one big headache this holiday season. Yes, for those wondering, if you're planning on popping The Big Question -- marriage, that is -- a diamond engagement ring can also count as her Christmas or Hanukkah present. "If a guy's gonna pop the question eventually, he might as well use the opportunity to avoid shopping for a holiday gift and kill two birds with -- ahem -- one stone," the Washington Post declared.

And you won't be alone: While 39 percent of all marriage proposals occur between Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day, what sane-thinking male wants to be the one who waited till February to give his girlfriend a ring she was expecting in December?

Ergo, to help you out, it's time to separate some myths from facts when it comes to the whole engagement ring-buying process. (Alternate Plan Alert: For those not quite ready to propose -- or, for that matter, who have other diamond jewelry lovers on their holiday lists to shop for -- we've also got some tips for you.)

**MYTH:** You need to be prepared to spend two



months' salary on a ring.

**FACT:** That's just a guideline. Your financial circumstances -- and your girlfriend's taste -- ultimately rule.

**MYTH:** There's no way of telling whether a diamond has been produced "ethically" or not.

**FACT:** This is a big issue for some couples, so know that the Diavik mine in Canada's North West Territories, for one, has gone to great lengths to provide buyers with proof that it's adhering to international standards of labor, health, safety and environmental practices in producing the

nically sized diamonds of good color and gem quality it's famed for.

"Each certified gem is laser-etched with a unique number that indicates the date mined, and each gem's unique optical fingerprint is recorded in an international database so that it can be positively identified," says an expert in the field, noting that many insurance companies offer discounted rates in such cases.

**MYTH:** Most women want a pear-shaped diamond engagement ring.

**FACT:** Round diamonds are the most popular.

**MYTH:** You must pick the ring out yourself in order to maximize the effect.

**FACT:** Thankfully, no, so you've dodged a bullet there. But if you prefer shopping stag, at least have your girlfriend's hints in mind.

Finally, about those other diamond jewelry gift-gifting tips we promised. "Classic diamond stud earrings will never go out of fashion," says jewelry and style expert Michael O'Connor, "and diamond line bracelets can be worn with any outfit." (NewsUSA)

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