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Your guide to the perfect wedding

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Put more you into your wedding day

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 livingtoday.com. (Family Features)



Applying for a Marriage License

All persons proposing to be joined in marriage within the State of New Hampshire must first obtain a marriage license. Marriage license applications may be applied for at any town or city clerks' office in the state. To be married in NH you do not have to establish residency. A couple wishing to marry in the State of NH may complete an application at any NH city or town clerk's office regardless of their place of residence. This includes out-of-state residents as well. Once a valid license is issued, the couple will be free to marry within any city or town in NH.

Both parties must be present to complete the marriage license application unless one of the parties is in the military and unable to return to New Hampshire before the ceremony. If this is the case, please contact the city clerk's office for instructions. As it does take about half an hour to process and issue marriage licenses, we ask that couples plan accordingly, and come in to obtain their marriage licenses by 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, with the exception of Thursdays evenings when couples must come in by 5:00 p.m.

Marriage licenses issued by municipal clerks within the State of New Hampshire are only valid for ceremonies taking place within New Hampshire. Couples planning weddings that will take place outside New Hampshire must contact the location where the marriage will occur for licensing regulations.

♥ License Validity Period

Marriage licenses are valid for 90 days from the date of issuance. There is no longer a waiting period and the license may be used the same day. The State of New Hampshire does not require blood tests prior to marriage. Couples do not need to obtain licenses in the community in which they live or in the community where they are getting married.

♥ Fee

The fee to obtain a marriage license in New Hampshire is \$50. The

marriage license fee is payable in cash or by debit and/or credit card, no checks are accepted. The license fee is set by RSA 457:29 and is payable to the City Clerk at the time the intentions are filed. Certified copies are available after the ceremony has taken place and the marriage license has been returned to the clerk's office. Certified copies are \$15 for the first copy and \$10 for subsequent copies issued at the same time.

Certified copies of the record can be obtained for a fee from the city or town clerk where the license was filed if marriage was prior to 1989. If after 1989, a certified copy should be able to be obtained at any city or town clerk in the State.

♥ What to Bring with you when applying for a license

Applicants must bring a document that proves their identity and age such as a driver's license, non-drivers ID or passport. If either party applying for a marriage license has been married before they must present a certified copy of the document that ended their most recent marriage when applying for a new marriage license. In addition to a photo ID and certified documents that ended the previous marriage (when applicable), please be prepared to provide the following information when applying for a marriage license:

- Full Name
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- Race
- Ancestry
- Years of Education
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- Mothers full maiden name and state of birth

♥ Penalty

Any person shall be guilty of a Class B Felony if he/she willfully and knowingly makes any false statement in an application for a certified copy of a vital record. (NH RSA 5-C:14). All information on the application shall be entered accurately. Falsification of any fact can cause great hardship to you at a later date and may make you liable for criminal prosecution.



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Wedding Planning 101

First comes the proposal then comes the wedding planning. There are dozens of decisions that need to be made before it's time to walk down the aisle, which can be overwhelming for brides and grooms.

To help make it less stressful, these tips from Macy's can help couples through the entire wedding-planning process, from on-trend apparel and accessories for the entire wedding party to all the essentials to create a perfect registry.

♥ Dressing the Ladies

When it comes to bridesmaid dresses, the mix-and-match approach is trending in popularity. Start by deciding on a color palette, such as lilac, champagne and petal pink. Then have each bridesmaid choose her favorite style within that range of hues. Bring it all together by choosing a uniform look for makeup, shoes and accessories.

There is no better time to thank the ladies than the morning of the big day. A few



thoughtful gifts can go a long way, such as matching robes, tumblers to stay hydrated throughout the day and cosmetic cases to stow makeup essentials.

♥ Dressing the Gents

Similar to bridesmaid dresses, groomsmen attire can be dependent on the venue and overall event aesthetic. While a suit can fit the bill for a country club wedding, a city affair may call for the sleek finishes of a

tux. Tuxedo accessories, such as cuff links or bow ties, make great groomsmen gifts and are classic pieces they can use time and time again.

♥ Creating the Perfect Registry

When building a registry, it's never too early to start. People want to give gifts as soon as they know a couple is engaged. Start by taking inventory of what you already have, what you need and what you want to upgrade. It's also recommended to update the registry regularly so there are enough gifts to choose from, especially if there is an engagement party and bridal shower coming up. To get started, some popular registry items include stand mixers, craft beer glasses, Dutch ovens, bath towels and vacuums. For extra guidance, couples can speak to advisors who can help with the full registry building process at Macy's stores.

For more wedding ideas and inspiration, and to find the right attire and gifts for your wedding planning, visit macys.com. (Family Features)

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Wedding bands to fit every personality

It's one of the toughest decisions for any bride and groom — and, no, we don't mean where to seat feuding relatives at the wedding reception.

We're talking wedding bands, symbols of eternal love, and the most important pieces of jewelry a man and woman will ever own.

In the search for the perfect wedding bands, many couples turn to platinum to ensure they are getting the best value for their money. With a bevy of styles and a range of prices — a platinum band can be purchased starting at \$1,000 — it's easy to find a ring that best suits the bride's personality.

"No matter what 'type' you are," says style expert Michael O'Connor, "you're guaranteed of getting the best possible ring for the price because platinum, being naturally white, will not fade or change color, lasting over a lifetime of wear."

What's your ring type? Read on:

♥ **Down-to-Earth.** This no-nonsense bride has been planning her wedding for years — with the stacks of bridal magazines to prove it — and knows exactly what she wants.

Ring type: Instead of anything too delicate or dainty, look for a heavier, more solid design. A simple platinum band or one



Rebecca Wilhite Photography
with a bezel set diamond ensures a timeless look.

♥ **Adventurous.** She's a risk-taker who's

feeling so daring about her nuptials that she may even have considered eloping. (Well, at least a destination wedding.)

Ring type: A dynamic personality requires a stand-out ring, so go for a platinum band set with colored stones or intricate engraving.

♥ **Social butterfly.** This people-pleaser loves to entertain and wants to ensure that her wedding day is special for every single guest.

Ring type: A small, discreet gemstone, like a single solitaire, displayed in a flush cut on a platinum band will provide just the right adornment.

♥ **Quirky.** This bride is looking for ways to inject her and her partner's personalities into every aspect of the wedding day, whether through DIY details or a choreographed first dance.

Ring type: A platinum tension setting with an unconventional gemstone creates a unique look.

Lastly, wedding bands are important symbols of your lifelong commitment, so even if your band styles don't match, at least look to share the same metal. To learn more, visit www.preciousplatinum.com/designgallery. (NewsUSA)



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Sample Menus

Saying 'I Do' and enjoying it too

Here are a few tips to keep your wedding day bliss from turning into the honeymoon blues.

♥ **Marriage Planning:** Once the ring goes on, the race to plan the perfect wedding begins, giving couples little time to think about the marriage itself or how their wedding spending decisions could affect their future. But smart couples are now setting aside time to address pre-wedding issues such as what they will do when it comes to financial planning, spending money, raising children and family politics. With nearly half of all newlyweds taking on debt to finance their "big day," couples should take every opportunity to make their wedding-related and everyday spending count toward their future.

One unique new rewards program, uTANGO.com, offers couples \$10,000, \$100,000 and even \$1 million in cash rewards to stay married and shop with uTANGO's 250-plus merchants such as Expedia, Target.com, Nordstrom.com and BlueNile.

♥ **Destination USA:** While destination weddings, especially to international locales, continue to be one of the hottest wedding trends in recent years, they can also present challenges such as increased costs, security concerns, language barriers and unreliable

vendors. A less expensive alternative is to pick a centrally located U.S. city like Chicago, known for fantastic wedding and party venues, choice accommodations and activities to suit any taste and budget. It may not be as exotic as Tahiti, but couples often find that more family and friends can attend and planning challenges are drastically reduced when the nuptials stay stateside.

♥ **Managing wedding expectations:** For many brides, planning the perfect wedding is a major life event decades in the making. With this in mind, it's easy to see how wedding expectations can get out of hand in a hurry. With wedding euphoria taking over, busy brides and grooms can quickly lose sight of spending, causing the perfect wedding to turn into fights over money. By managing expectations of what a "dream" wedding should be, it is still possible to have a lovely and elegant wedding without breaking the bank.

♥ **Bridezilla-free zone:** The term "Bridezilla" has been used to describe a difficult, unpleasant, perfectionist bride whose obsession with planning the perfect wedding day leaves frustrated family, friends, bridal vendors and even her groom distraught in her wake.

Belligerent Bridezillas beware: Horror stories of fist fights, hair pulling, kicking and screaming from out of control brides-to-be have put wedding planners, vendors and bridesmaids on the offensive. Some wedding vendors now go as far as to include language in their contracts reserving the right to cancel if the bride's behavior is determined to be "out of control or abusive." So, whether you hit the gym or hit the spa, have a plan in place to handle wedding-related stress and keep Bridezilla at bay.

♥ **Just say "no":** Brides place such demands on their bridesmaids these days that it is not uncommon for them to decline, even when it's one of their best friends. Not only is the financial responsibility of being a bridesmaid staggering, but the time commitment demanded by some brides is also daunting.

The massive to-do lists handed out by brides, coupled with the obligatory appearances for shopping, parties and showers, can leave bridesmaids feeling underappreciated, overworked and broke after the wedding is over. Brides should be upfront about both time and financial expectations with their friends when asking them to join their wedding party and



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Martie Duncan is a nationally renowned wedding expert who has worked in the bridal

industry for more than 20 years. Duncan has consulted on episodes of "The Oprah Winfrey Show" and the film "My Best Friend's

Wedding" and is currently editor in chief of the uTANGO.com LifeMatters e-magazine (www.utango.com/LifeMatters). (NewsUSA)

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The many colors of love: engagement rings get a makeover

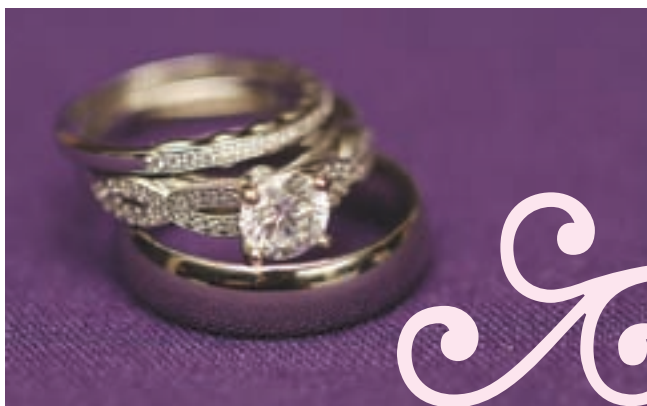
You can thank Kim Kardashian and Kanye West for setting the bar so high when it comes to getting married. The average cost of a wedding — sans a honeymoon — has now soared to more than \$31,000, according to the wedding planning website TheKnot. And experts say the “images of celebrity wedding extravagance,” a la last year’s \$12 million “Kimye” nuptials in Florence, Italy, are influencing couples’ spending choices.

Another reason for the jump, experts say, are the engagement rings. “People want big rings like the ones celebrities wear,” says Jason Kordvani, president of product development at Davani (davanijewelry.com), a family-owned company specializing in colored gemstones that has an almost 50-year reputation for creating some of the most gorgeous engagement rings around.

Obviously, you don’t have to shell out that much to have the wedding of your dreams. But with this being the prime time for popping the question — 39 percent of all marriage proposals occur between Thanksgiving and Valentine’s Day — there is one trend that’s become both a must and a potential money-saving opportunity. Personalization, experts say, is on the rise.

Here’s what we mean:

♥ **The engagement ring.** If you’ve been reading the glossies, you know that celebs like Elizabeth Hurley and Jessica Simpson are



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breaking from tradition and wearing engagement rings with colored gemstones. Not only does this take fashion to a whole new level, but colored gemstones have also become a way to customize an engagement ring. And while it needn’t be her birthstone — Simpson’s is ruby, but Hurley’s sapphire jibes with the month her then-fiance was born — the right romantic touch can make for the ultimate in personalization. “It can also be the month a couple met or her favorite color,” says Kordvani. Whether sapphire, emerald, ruby or some other stone, Kordvani notes, couples are also often pleasantly surprised to discover

they can get a “larger, more important-looking ring at much less cost than a diamond.” Davani Jewelry itself offers styles ranging from the more affordable Davani Bridal to the show-stopping Luxury Collection.

♥ **The reception.** The bad news here is that spending on cocktail hours jumped 7 percent. So think signature cocktails rather than an open bar.

♥ **The wedding venue.** “When couples get married, they’re really looking for interesting, unusual details,” Lorin Holmes, co-founder of VermontWeddings.com told USA Today. All things considered, the \$50,000 price tag to hold a reception at the New York Public Library—anything cultural or historic is also hot — makes the average venue booking fee of \$14,000 a little less jaw dropping. For more information, visit www.davanijewelry.com.

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5 easy I Do's: how to look your best on your wedding day

Every bride-to-be wants to look and feel her best on her wedding day. For nearly one-third of adults in the United States, looking and feeling their best means losing weight — an average of 39 pounds, according to a recent survey. In addition, 1 in 5 adults surveyed say they would resort to “extreme measures” to achieve their desired weight loss. Fashion and bridal designer Pnina Tornai, who has teamed up with Nutrisystem to help brides embrace a healthy diet plan, is a 26-year veteran of the wedding industry and a 16-year veteran of a happy marriage. As you prepare for your wedding day, first say “I do” to these simple tips to be on your way to happy and healthy ever after.

♥ **Eat five to six small meals a day.**

Eating smaller, balanced meals throughout the day promotes greater weight loss and maintenance. Plans like Nutrisystem take the guesswork out of eating by delivering portion-controlled meals to your door.

♥ **Fill your plate with vegetables.**

Adding vegetables to your plate is a filling, calorie-saving way to eat. Plus, many vegetables are full of fiber, which makes you feel full faster, and controls the speed of your digestion so that you stay feeling full longer.

♥ **Don't skip a meal.** Skipping meals hurts your progress. When you starve or



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severely restrict calories, your metabolism slows down, causing your weight loss to slow as well.

♥ **Drink your water.** Staying well hydrated will help you feel full, aid digestion and circulation, and help your body eliminate waste and toxins aiding in weight loss.

♥ **Manage stress.** Mental health is as important as physical health, so don't neglect

it. Wedding stress is normal, but find ways to decompress, including having a glass of wine with friends, trying a yoga class, or taking a spa day. Finally, remember that long-term weight loss is a marathon, not a sprint. In order to look and feel your best on your wedding day, don't crash diet, as the results never last. Rather, take steps to change your lifestyle overall. (NewsUSA)

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Wedding Checklist

12 Months Out

- ☐ Determine your budget
- ☐ Make a guest list
- ☐ Hire a wedding planner
- ☐ Decide formality and overall theme
- ☐ Select the venue
- ☐ Select the caterer

11 Months Out

- ☐ Choose color theme and start thinking of overall design. Hire vendors who book up quickly, including your photographer, band, DJ, and videographer

10 Months Out

- ☐ Start shopping for your wedding dress
- ☐ Book hotel-room blocks for guests
- ☐ Create your wedding website
- ☐ Take engagement photos

9 Months Out

- ☐ Buy your wedding dress
- ☐ Send save-the-dates

8 Months Out

- ☐ Register for gifts
- ☐ Select the bridesmaids' dresses and schedule fittings within the month
- ☐ Meet with potential florists

7 Months Out

- ☐ Book the rehearsal-dinner venue
- ☐ Hire the ceremony musicians
- ☐ Order rentals items, such as specialty chairs, linens, draping, lounge furniture, white dance floor, etc.
- ☐ Hire an officiant

6 Months Out

- ☐ Start looking at invitations
- ☐ Hire a lighting technician



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5 Months Out

- ☐ Book transportation for guests, if needed
- ☐ Book the bride and groom's transportation (limo, specialty car, etc.)
- ☐ Book the honeymoon
- ☐ Buy or rent the groom's tuxedo
- ☐ Begin premarital counseling

4 Months Out

- ☐ Have your final tasting with the caterer
- ☐ Choose your cake
- ☐ Buy wedding bands
- ☐ Select groomsmen's attire and schedule fittings within the month
- ☐ Hair and makeup trial

3 Months Out

- ☐ Order the invitations and hire a calligrapher
- ☐ Create or plan your wedding
- ☐ Brainstorm guest list and gift bags
- ☐ Book a photo-booth
- ☐ Write your vows
- ☐ Select readings
- ☐ Meet with the officiant and him or her to the altar
- ☐ Start crafting any centerpieces you haven't already

2 Months Out

- ☐ Send the wedding invitations (with RSVPs due 2-3 weeks before the wedding)
- ☐ Send out rehearsal cards (these can be included with the wedding invitations)
- ☐ First dress fitting
- ☐ Pick up your marriage license
- ☐ Buy wedding-pa
- ☐ Do a floral mock-up
- ☐ Give the song selection to the band or DJ
- ☐ Give the song selection to the ceremony musician
- ☐ Buy all small items: place numbers, toasting flutes, cake stand, cake knife, gift box, ring-bearer accessories, a cute hat, and a garter. Also consider pashminas, flip-flops, and guests to change into, as well as baskets for the bride to buy any signs ("Welcome," "Book," "Dancing Shoes")

1 Month Out

- ☐ Assemble gift bags
- ☐ Pay your vendors

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- ☐ Create a seating chart
- ☐ Order or make your escort cards and place cards
- ☐ Have a final venue walk-through
- ☐ Put cash in tip envelopes for your planner to distribute. You don't need to tip people that own their own business, such as photographers, videographers, and florists. It's customary to tip the following vendors: musicians, DJs, hair stylist, makeup artist, drivers, bartenders, and servers. Many couples tip the wedding planner as well.

Final Week

- ☐ At this point, your wedding-planning checklist is basically complete.

Take care of things like:

- ☐ Refreshing your hair color
- ☐ Getting your eyebrows done
- ☐ Manicure
- ☐ Pedicure
- ☐ Getting a massage (why not make it a couples massage?)

Other than that,

the only things left to do:

- ☐ Final dress fitting (a friend or bridesmaid should come with you so she can learn how to bustle if your dress requires it)
- ☐ Pack your bags for the honeymoon (don't forget your passport if you're leaving the country!)
- ☐ Any edible crafting

Day of the Wedding

- ☐ The big day is finally here! All your careful preparation and creative planning have come to fruition, and it's time to enjoy the wedding. Here's what to do the morning of:
 - ☐ Stay off your feet as much as possible
 - ☐ Eat breakfast
 - ☐ Drink water
 - ☐ Take your dress and veil out of the bag early on and have someone steam them if needed
 - ☐ Lay out all the items (rings, invitations, etc.) that you want your photographer to capture

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Getting engaged? How to spend your dollars wisely

The average cost of a wedding — excluding the honeymoon — has now soared to \$31,213, according to the wedding planning website TheKnot. And experts cite the “images of celebrity wedding extravagance,” a la last year’s \$12 million “Kimye” nuptials in Florence, Italy, as at least one factor influencing couples’ spending choices.

Obviously, no one’s saying you have to shell out that much. But with this being prime time for popping the question — 39 percent of all marriage proposals occur between Thanksgiving and Valentine’s Day — there is one trend that’s become both almost a must and a potential money-saving opportunity.

“Personalization,” TheKnot reports, “is on the rise.”

Here’s what you need to know:

♥ **The wedding venue.** Scenic farms with barns are big with brides and grooms. “I think it has a lot to do with photography,” Lorin Holmes, co-founder of VermontWeddings.com, told USA Today. “When couples get married, they’re really looking for interesting, unusual details.” And hey, when you consider the \$50,000 tab to hold a reception at the New York Public Library — anything cultural or historic is also hot — the average venue booking fee of \$14,000 starts to look pretty good.



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♥ **The reception.** The big news flash here is that spending on cocktail hours jumped 7 percent. So think signature cocktails — TheKnot’s spiked chocolate milkshake recipe sounds yummy — rather

than an open bar.

♥ **The engagement ring.** If you’ve been reading the glossies, you know the splash celebs like Elizabeth Hurley and Jessica Simpson made sporting ones with colored gemstones. And while it needn’t be her birthstone — Simpson’s is ruby, but Hurley’s sapphire jibes with the month her then-fiance was born — the right romantic touch can make for the ultimate in personalization.

“It can also be the month a couple met or her favorite color,” says Jason Kordvani, president of product development at Davani (DavaniJewelry.com), a family-owned company specializing in colored gemstones that has a nearly 50-year rep for creating some of the most gorgeous engagement rings around.

And here’s the kicker: Whether sapphire, emerald, ruby or some other stone, as Kordvani notes, couples are also often pleasantly surprised to discover they can get “a larger, more important-looking ring at much less cost than a diamond.” The firm itself offers styles ranging from the more affordable Davani Bridal to the show-stopping Luxury Collection.

As if thinking of those Kimye nuptials, he adds: “People want big rings like the ones celebrities wear.” (NewsUSA)



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In between the guest list, the flowers and the perfect three-tier cake, it can be hard to find time to shop for your wedding rings. However, it is important to remember that most of the wedding details are fleeting and gone after a few hours of enjoyment, while your rings are enjoyed forever. So, whether you are having a smaller gathering or a more traditional affair, this important to-do on your event checklist should not be overlooked, especially since your rings mark your commitment to one another and will last a lifetime.

Jewelry and style expert Michael O'Connor has a few tips that are sure to help you find matrimonial bliss when it comes to ring selection:

♥ **Create a budget.** There are many details to consider when planning a wedding that can quickly drain your budget. It is important to set aside money for a lifelong symbol like your wedding bands. Not sure how much to budget? Consider that couples spent an average of \$2,079 on wedding bands, according to the CN American Wedding Study. And since the age-old rule for purchasing an engagement ring is to spend two months salary, plan to spend one month's salary for the two wedding bands. Check out the

"Budget Calculator" at www.TheKnot.com.

♥ **Shop together.** It is a good idea to shop for rings together. In fact, 80 percent of couples do, which isn't a surprise since your rings, which don't have to match, should reflect your personal styles and tastes.

♥ **Plan ahead.** Don't wait until the last minute to go shopping for your wedding bands, they're simply too important. Plan to start shopping for your rings six months prior to your "I do's." Not only do you need time to research and shop, but you also need to allot time for custom orders, sizing and engraving.

♥ **Invest in quality.** Because you want your ring to last a lifetime, it is important to put thought into the quality of metal you choose. Platinum 950 is the most durable precious metal and will last a lifetime. It's 30 times more rare than gold, and for wedding bands set with diamonds, its natural whiteness will ensure the diamonds sparkle and stay secure. It is no wonder that Hollywood's A-list designers such as Tacori, DeBeers, Ritani and Kwiart are all choosing Platinum in their designs. But don't worry, you don't have to be a star to own a Platinum ring. Platinum engagement and wedding rings are available for a wide variety of budgets -; making it an affordable luxury. Some

resources that offer popular price points include Lieberfarb, Scott Kay and Blue Nile. "As the ultimate metal, Platinum's unmatched durability and beauty make it a top pick among designers and 81 percent of brides," said Michael O'Connor.

For more information, visit www.engagementguide.com and www.preciousplatinum.com. (NewsUSA)



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Create a personalized bridal shower

Hosting a bridal shower? Make it special for the bride and add personal touches for an affordable, yet spectacular soiree. Here are a few tips.

♥ **It's all about the bride.** Take into consideration the bride's personality and style. Is she a romantic? Use floral accents, lace and ribbon for a vintage-style shower. Is she a modern fashionista? Create your own feminine and flirty heart-shaped place cards or invitations.

♥ **Save money.** Requesting that fellow bridesmaids pitch in for food, floral arrangements and parting gifts.

♥ **Use materials you have around the house to create one-of-a-kind decorations.** For instance, a glass cylinder can be transformed into a colorful and unique centerpiece with just a little fabric and ribbon adhered with Perfect Glue 1, which works on a variety of surfaces.

For tips and project instructions, visit www.perfectglue.com. Perfect Glue, which can be found at craft and home improvement stores, can be used for a variety of projects and home repairs. (NewsUSA)

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If your wedding is coming this Autumn, find wedding bliss

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 historic 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.

♥ **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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Brides: wellness travel is on the rise

Studies show that a honeymoon or a yearly vacation is invaluable for health, with benefits varying from lower stress levels to cardiovascular improvements. Adding to these benefits, many travelers are now combining traditional vacations with wellness-geared getaways.

A panel of experts at the annual International Travel Mart in Cannes, France, predicted that, by 2040, 90 percent of luxury tourism will include some aspect of health and wellness.

The global market size of the wellness tourism industry is growing rapidly — faster than travel in general — and is predicted to account for \$678.5 billion by 2017, compared with \$438.6 billion in 2012, according to Statista Inc.

Much of this growth can be attributed to the maturation of the baby boomer generation, which is more health-conscious than preceding generations. These travelers look for a vacation that integrates their daily healthful routine with traditional aspects of travel. But it's not just baby boomers who are



looking to travel in good health — the active family travel market is burgeoning and is expected to continue to grow as well.

So, what is wellness travel? The trend covers all aspects of health, including nutritious menu options, spa offerings and fitness activities. Across the globe, tourism professionals are responding to growing demands by introducing whole food, vegetarian and vegan menus, spa packages

and active excursions. Hiking, cycling, paddle boarding and kayaking continue to gain popularity.

Tall ship cruise specialist Star Clippers is one travel company that offers a complete wellness experience. Shoreside the cruise line features complimentary water sports and adventurous shore excursions that include mountain biking and kayaking in some of the most beautiful destinations in the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

Onboard, guests are invited to participate in yoga on deck under billowing sails on select yoga-

themed sailings, and most cruises afford the opportunity to climb the mast for an exhilarating workout. Massages are available on each ship, and flagship Royal Clipper features a full-service spa. Healthy gourmet meal options are available on all three ships in the fleet for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

For more information, visit www.starclippers.com. (NewsUSA)



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Want to take the road less traveled? Here's how

Off-road driving on scenic, challenging trails can be fun, but it's completely different than cruising down the road; keep these tips in mind to stay safe and avoid getting stuck.

♥ **Soft obstacles:** When you plan to tackle sand, snow, or mud, deflate your tires to improve your traction by decreasing the tire footprint. Maintain momentum, and if your wheels start spinning in the sand or snow, ease off the gas a bit. In mud, keep the wheels spinning to help clear the mud from the tires.

♥ **Hard obstacles:** When you approach large rocks, logs, or ditches during off-road driving, take them at an angle, so only one tire engages the obstacle and the other three remain on level ground to maximize traction. Place one tire on the obstacle, then drive over it slowly to help protect the underside of your vehicle.

♥ **Hills:** Always have an escape plan in case your trek doesn't turn out as expected. However, you can increase your odds of safely taking on hills by approaching them straight on for maximum traction to all four tires. Use the highest gear possible to comfortably take



the hill.

Having the right vehicles and tires makes for an unparalleled off-roading experience, according to Pearse Umlauf, president and CEO of Jeep Jamboree. "Jeep Jamborees are off-road adventure weekends that bring down-to-earth people to enjoy their Jeep 4x4s in the outdoors," said Umlauf, who works to coordinate operations for safe use and maintenance of off-road vehicle trails in the U.S. and worldwide.

He noted that BFGoodrich Tires will be the

official tire of Jeep Jamboree in 2017.

When you are ready to head to the backcountry, Del Albright, Off-Road Motorsports Hall of Famer, and BFGoodrich Performance Team Expert, has 50 years driving experience with tires on trails.

"The All-Terrain T/A KO2 tire is my tire of choice, with a rugged, durable design that makes it ideal for off-roaders who want to torture test their vehicles or just enjoy the backroads," he said. Albright also is a longtime advocate for conservation and preservation of trails for off-roading use. One of his favorite trails, the Rubicon Trail in Lake Tahoe, California, was at

risk for closure due to erosion concerns, but Albright helped lead a group of volunteers to fix the trouble spots and preserve the trail for off-roaders and other outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy. Some of his other favorites include Rausch Creek Off-Road Park (Pennsylvania), San Hallow State Park (Utah) and the Hatfield-McCoy Trail (West Virginia).

For more information about BFGoodrich and off-road adventures, visit bfgoodrichtires.com. (NewsUSA)

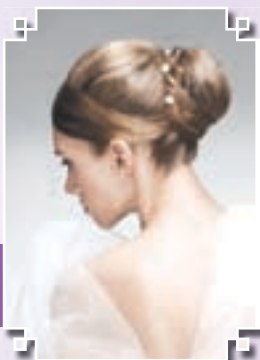
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Couples can save with oceanside nuptials

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.



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