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# Bride & Groom

Your guide to the perfect wedding



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# Before you marry, meld a perfectly accessorized home

Ideally, decorating a first home together begins with the furniture and accessories near and dear to both the bride and groom.

Designer Home collections make it easier than ever to meld female and male sensibilities in home décor by offering products to suit a variety of styles. Bedding, furniture, fabrics, area rugs, flooring, storage accessories, table linens and window coverings are all designed to work in traditional and more updated settings. Here, florals and neutrals work remarkably well together, and tactile fabrics add depth, style and colorful nuance. No matter which room is the newlyweds' favorite, bedrooms, baths and living rooms all can be decked out in style. For the latest in designer styles for the home, couples can check out the Liz Claiborne Home collection on [www.jpennney.com](http://www.jpennney.com) and [www.qvc.com](http://www.qvc.com).

♥ **Setting the tone.** Choose a color scheme together, and creatively arrange furniture and accessories around it. Find a neutral ground to meld his love of earth tones, for example, with her love of soft fabrics. A mélange of colors and fabrics -- on everything from comforters to window valances -- will inspire looks ideal for both Mr. and Mrs.



♥ **Splish, splash.** Create an understated, clean look in the bath for him, but add accessories with a dash of color to satisfy a bride-to-be's lively outlook. Bold shower curtains, wastebaskets and vanity items inject

freshness and personality.

♥ **Boudoir basics.** Usher in a new home with a fresh set of bedding; couples can look for a variety of styles and colors designed to be dressed up or left as is for a classic look. Decorative pillows, shams, coverlets and throws complete the look and are a great way for wedding guests to add to the couple's cozy love nest.

♥ **Staples of style.** If he loves a more modern style, but she wants a retro feel, furniture options in leather, fine fabrics, hardwood and wicker can readily mesh both personalities.

♥ **Merging moods.** She's a homebody; he likes beaches and picnics. For bedrooms and living rooms, couples can combine sensibilities with bedding and furniture lines that bring the outside in, and vice versa. Try mixing a table from one line with a chair from another -- mixing it up is a playful way to punch up the personality of a room. Just like in the corporate world, mergers can either run smoothly or be a headache. By considering the sensibilities the bride and groom share -- rather than just the differences -- creating a first home together can be one merger full of fringe benefits. (NewsUSA)



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# Ways to make your outside wedding more comfortable

While it's been popular in the past to bring the outdoors inside using trees and floral arrangements, a recent trend for many wedding venues is to create a homey space outdoors. Guests don't need to rough it just because you've chosen to host your ceremony or reception outside. Your outdoor venue can become more comfortable, as well as more stylish, with just a little help from Rental HQ.

♥ **1. Cover your chairs.** Seating can be made more comfortable and look much more elegant than you might expect, whether your venue is a park, a beach or a backyard. All it takes is stylish chair covers, which can be easily rented to accommodate any size wedding.

♥ **2. Dress up your tables.** Rented linens provide an essential touch of class to any outdoor venue, setting the right stage for your tableware and special centerpieces. Choose colors to complement your reception's theme and floral arrangements or any other decor.

♥ **3. Protect against the elements.** Plan for the time of year in your area and you can weather almost any circumstances. Even if the forecast is warm and sunny, you'll still want a tent and/or table umbrellas, if not to safeguard against a possible shower, to tame the sunshine. You can even rent misting fans to help your guests stay cool. The outdoor wedding section of Rental HQ is a great place to get ideas and research your options.

♥ **4. Provide a foundation.** A variety of flooring will ensure the safety of the bride's train and sure footing, even for those sporting heels. Rentable floor mats and decking can help guests navigate the terrain from the parking lot to the venue. Multiple choices include tiles, carpet, turf or even a portable dance floor that can turn your backyard into a nightclub.

♥ **5. Light up the night.** For an evening outdoor event, stringing lights or lanterns is often insufficient. You'll want your guests to be able to see - and photograph - your special day. Renting adequate uplighting



for your nighttime reception is a must-do. Focus on important areas such as the dance floor, the table where the cake will be presented, buffet tables or special floral arrangements. Choose LED lighting specially made for outdoor events, which is waterproof and will not create too much heat. You can choose different colors to create magical effects.

♥ **6. Homey furniture.** Consider renting a few couches or comfy chairs to create a seating area where older family members can gather and greet guests, or your tired bride or groom can put up their feet for a few minutes while they chat with family and friends. Stage the area with a coffee table set up with the guest book so guests can sit comfortably while they jot their well wishes to the married couple.



Any outdoor wedding can be made special, no matter what the decor. To find a rental store near you or to research furnishings, lighting or other equipment you might need, visit the wedding section on RentalHQ.com. Planning for your special day is easier than you think with all of the right tools at your fingertips. (BPT)



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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 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](http://www.preciousplatinum.com). (NewsUSA)



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# Coupling finances: What all newlyweds should know

It's a catchphrase that's been described as perhaps the first "I do" for newlyweds, and it's especially relevant as we head into wedding season. Because as much as you may think no two people have ever been more in love than you are - hey, look at the size of that engagement ring! - the truth is that it could be less than smooth sailing ahead if you're not on the same page when it comes to financial matters. "Couples have a very hard time talking about money," Joan Atwood, a Hofstra University professor of marriage and family therapy bemoaned on an NPR "Money Coach" segment on the issue. "I would say it's the last taboo."

Ready to break it? Read on.

♥ **Set common goals.** You probably discussed this in a dreamy sort of way while dating. You know, a large house with a swimming pool ... yearly vacations. But turning those reveries into reality requires habitually saving to pay for them and finance your later retirement years - not to mention deciding whether both partners contribute equally or based on salaries. "The median ages for brides and grooms are 29 and 31, respectively, these days," said Andrew Peterson, a vice president at Fidelity Investments (fidelity.com). "So while people may come into a marriage with their own



assets, they need to take some time after the wedding to sit down and start getting organized as a couple."

♥ **Be transparent.** There's no law that says you have to put all your cash into a joint savings account - some couples do, some don't - but at the very least you'd be "less than truthful" by not divulging any outstanding debts. And then figuring out, together, how to pay them down.

♥ **Safely store your information.** Quick: What's your new spouse's Social Security number? And what other vital information don't you know if a sudden need arises?

Exactly.

To truly mark your financial coupling, you might consider using an online service like FidSafe.com that lets you store, access

and share all your new family's important records and documents anywhere via a web browser or iOS app. Not only is it free and simple to use with handy checklists, but even before it was officially introduced two years ago by Fidelity - Get it? "Fid Safe" - Barron's magazine gave the service five stars for being what it called "the first cloud-based safe deposit box we've seen that's secure enough to organize everything from financial statements, insurance policies, and real estate records to a will, IRA benefits, and even passwords."

"With all the other things on their to-do lists, newlyweds typically don't focus on all the important financial and other documents they need to begin married life on a solid footing," said Peterson. "This makes things easier for them from the start, as well as through the years as they have even more joint documents to retain - including those related to perhaps buying a house and having children." You get up to 5GB of storage, which leaves plenty of space left over once you download your new marriage license and the receipt for that engagement ring.

♥ **Investigate this option.** Do you both get health insurance through your employer? Congrats. You may have just saved yourselves some money. (NewsUSA)

*Paul Howe photographs weddings by blending a photojournalism style with the more traditional formal photographs to capture the individual personality of each wedding.*

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# 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 appreciated.** 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](http://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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# Destination weddings, planning check list

## 6-12 MONTHS BEFORE

- Determine an estimated budget guideline
- Contact wedding coordinator to choose a wedding date
- Discuss with your travel agent the vacation destination wedding
- Indicate if you would like a symbolic or legal ceremony
- Explore your wedding vision: ceremony/reception location, time of the day, estimated number of guests
- Select your wedding package
- Send deposit to coordinator to reserve your selected date
- Once deposit is received and processed, a formal confirmation of the email is sent
- Coordinator will email forms, pictures and options
- Sign-up for your Honeymoon Registry
- Begin clarifying your wedding vision: theme, colors, extras
- Work with the resort or travel agent to make guest reservation and secure a room block
- Be sure you have your passport and all documents needed; if you are planning a legal wedding, the coordinator will be sure you know what legal forms are needed
- Secure photographers, videographer and DJ, band (be sure to speak to your wedding coordinator when booking outside vendors)

## 4-6 MONTHS BEFORE

- Determine additional wedding events (welcome cocktail party, rehearsal dinner, day-after brunch)
- Start planning outside resort activities like golf, tours, etc.

## 2-3 MONTHS BEFORE

- Finalize guest list and room requirements
- Confirm ceremony and reception locations
- Select decor option, choose flowers, pick the cake
- Book ceremony musicians with coordinator
- Share with the coordinator any special readings or songs requested for the ceremony
- Finalize reception chart, seat cards and send to the wedding coordinator
- Start working on menus
- For legal ceremonies, send completed paperwork to coordinator (MUST be received at least 2 months prior)
- Send guests information on how to book their trip
- Confirm all decor, floral, cake and extras with coordinator
- Confirm menus for all events
- Book hair and make-up appointments at the spa for bride and bridal party

- Have programs, menus, place cards, etc. printed
- Confirm timeline of event (i.e.: seated for meal, first dance, father daughter dance, cake cutting, etc.)
- Confirm that all special requests have been planned for

## 3 WEEKS BEFORE

- Review your wedding contract and make final amendments
- Send guest list of those not staying at the resort to the wedding coordinator
- Be sure the wedding coordinator has your travel schedule and your final guest list, seating charts and events

## UP TO 1 WEEK BEFORE

- Arrive at the resort (based on type of ceremony you will have)
- On-site meeting with coordinator to go over all event details and make any last minute changes or additions
- Have a trial hair & make-up run through at the salon
- Set-up spa day with bridesmaids, mother and others
- Arrange for welcome bag room drop if desired
- Arrange a private dinner on the beach - just for the 2 of you
- Leave your wedding dress & groom's attire with your coordinator to have steamed and prepared

## 1 DAY BEFORE

- Have a welcome cocktail party, rehearsal dinner or welcome dinner if desired
- Arrange for special room drops (champagne, flowers, petit fours) to be sent to parents or wedding party
- Bride & Groom: Get an early night sleep.

## WEDDING DAY

- Have a nice breakfast
- Go to your hair appointment (remember to bring your veil & flowers)
- Your coordinator will check in with you throughout the day as she organizes everything. Today is YOUR day and she will be with you every step of the way
- RELAX, SMILE & make the most of this beautiful, memorable day

# Life's biggest moments take center stage in new UP TV Series

As warm weather approaches, so does wedding season, and family-focused entertainment network UP TV heads down the aisle with a pair of new, unscripted series set to debut this summer.

The series, "Our Wedding Story," takes viewers inside the relationships between the brides and grooms. With exceptional and cinematic storytelling, viewers will get to live each couple's love story - from the moment they met to the walk down the aisle.

In "Crazy Beautiful Weddings," viewers go behind the scenes with busy wedding planner Lynzie Kent. Wedding planning is an art and a science, and Ms. Kent brings her style and people skills as she navigates diverse tastes, the couples' visions and various venues, to create one-of-a-kind celebrations for her clients that will make the big day something to remember.

"On UP, our viewers have seen the families in our beloved series exploring new relationships, planning weddings and having kids," Amy Winter, executive vice president and



general manager of UP TV, says in a statement announcing the shows.

"By greenlighting new series that focus on those specific life moments, we invite our audience to experience all of the joy and excitement that many different couples are going through as they share their personal journeys of life's biggest moments," she says. The pair of wedding programs complement new episodes of two existing shows that highlight another one of life's

biggest moments - the journey to parenthood.

This spring, UP premieres new episodes of its groundbreaking series, "Expecting," which follows expectant parents as they prepare for a new addition to the family. With no producers or camera crews, it is the first show that asks couples to turn the lens on themselves, to give the audience a peek into one of life's most exciting and personal journeys - welcoming a child.

Also premiering in April is "Born Every Minute." The series takes viewers inside a hospital maternity unit to experience the joy, excitement and drama as babies are delivered.

UP is available on DIRECTV, DISH, Verizon Fios, ATT U-verse, Xfinity and local cable. For more information about the family-friendly programming and where you can find the channel, go to UPtv.com.

To find more details on social media, check out UP TV on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Uptv>, on Twitter on @Uptv, and on Instagram at UP\_TV. (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 "romantic" 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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# 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

## 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 ceremony
- Start crafting any favors 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 ask guests to change into flip-flops as well as baskets for the ceremony. Buy any signs ("Welcome," "Wedding Book," "Dancing Shoes")

## 1 Month Out

- Assemble gift bags



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- Pay your vendors in full
- 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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## When saying 'I do' means a move: 5 tips for combining households

Getting married means a whole lot of changes, not the least of which could be moving to a new house or apartment. Whether you're getting a brand-new place for the both of you or one of you is shifting all your earthly possessions to join your spouse, it's a good idea to take proactive steps to make crossing that new threshold a little easier. Here are a few tips for taking some of the stress out of moving day - for both of you.

♥ **Declutter.** Before moving, go through your possessions, as individuals and then as a team. Even if you're moving to a larger space, it's better to start fresh with items you know you like or need, and it will save you moving things you don't really want to keep. After you've each discarded old, unused or disliked items, take inventory of common household items to see if you have duplicates. Do you both have toasters, blenders, a full set of silverware? Decide as a team which of them you prefer. If the other is still in good shape, donate, recycle, or if too old and damaged, discard.

♥ **Plan ahead to save.** Whether one of you is moving or you both are, you can save a lot of money by doing the move yourself. It's remarkably easy to rent a truck, and you don't need a commercial license. Driving a moving truck isn't difficult, but it is different from driving a car. Be careful to use your mirrors to navigate turns, avoid sudden lane changes or stops and make sure to allow extra time. Plan ahead by reserving your truck at least two weeks in advance.

♥ **Pack smart.** Nothing hurts more than moving your prized possessions, only to find them damaged when you arrive at your new digs. Your best bet is to pick up sturdy boxes, strong tape and bubble wrap at your truck rental store so that you know everything you pack will arrive at your new home in the same condition as when you packed it. You can also get labels to use on your boxes so you know which items belong in the kitchen, the bathroom or the bedroom.

♥ **Be space conscious.** You'll need about 150 cubic feet of space for the furnishings of each room in your current home. In other words, a 12- or 16-foot Penske rental truck should accommodate the contents of most small apartments or condos. When loading a moving truck, do what the pros do. Heavier items should be loaded in the back of the truck, while lighter items should be placed in front and on top. When in doubt, follow the helpful tips offered by Penske's Truck Wizard.

♥ **Share the burden.** Invite friends, family and members of your wedding party to help you move - but be sure to make it a party! Ordering plenty of pizza and drinks for the post-move party will be a big hit. Perhaps you could pick out special items or photos as mementos of your friendships or family events during your decluttering to gift your moving helpers.

These tips will help you and your new spouse handle the big move-in gracefully, economically and efficiently, so you can start your life together with as little stress as possible. (BPT)



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# Tips for planning your wedding photos like a pro

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. "The finest wedding photography is more than a series of still pictures. It's physical poetry -- it tells the story of the day and portrays the essence of both people and place." To this end, PPA, the largest international nonprofit association created by professional photographers, has taken the guesswork out of the process by offering six tips to help you plan your wedding photos like a pro:

♥ 1. Book far in advance. The best photographers get booked quickly -- sometimes as much as a year in advance -- so don't wait until the last minute 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.



♥ 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. Ideally, he or she is a PPA photographer. PPA photographers do more than just snap pictures. They have the technical expertise and artistry to make you look your best and bring your vision to life. They also abide by a strict code of ethics that makes a real difference.

♥ 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? Would you rather have a photojournalist approach or a mix of all styles?

♥ 5. Work with your photographer to create a detailed shot list. PPA 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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# Nanjing, China: Come for the history, stay for the food

Savvy travelers know Nanjing as a hidden treasure, offering an array of rich historical and cultural sites for visitors to explore. Located in Jiangsu Province just outside of Shanghai, this city of more than 8 million sits along the Yangtze River, with the majestic Purple Mountain rising in the east. One of China's four ancient capital cities, Nanjing enjoys a relaxed pace compared to megacities like Beijing and is easy to navigate, with modern public transportation and plenty of taxis. Once you've enjoyed Nanjing's cultural traditions and historical attractions, relax and enjoy the remarkable hospitality and incredible food.

Here are a few highlights of the perfect Nanjing travel itinerary.

♥ **1. Travel back in time.**

Nanjing is one of China's most significant cities, having served as the capital of 10 Chinese dynasties and regimes over 1,800 years. Located in the Purple Mountain scenic area, the Xiaoling Tomb of the Ming Dynasty is one of the largest imperial tomb complexes in China and mausoleum of the dynasty's founding emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang. When approaching the tomb, be sure to see the half-mile long Sacred Path, guarded by four pairs of stone warriors and 12 pairs of mythical creatures. Also constructed in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Nanjing's City Wall was once one of the longest city walls in the world. More than 15 miles of the wall are still intact, welcoming visitors from around the world. In Nanjing's walkable downtown area, the Presidential Palace is a massive compound where Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat-sen was declared the first provisional president of the Republic of China in 1912. It later served as headquarters for Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang government (1946-49).

♥ **2. Revel in the culture.**

Nanjing Museum is one of the first museums established in China and is still one of the country's largest. Visitors explore exhibits ranging from ancient civilization through the early days of the Republic.



The Sacred Path leads the way to Ming Dynasty-era tombs in Nanjing.

Nanjing is home to distinctive folk arts such as Nanjing Cloud Brocade, one of the most exquisite and sophisticated weaving methods in Chinese history, dating back 1,600 years. At the Cloud Brocade Museum, visitors watch expert craftsmen weave the intricate textiles, incorporating materials such as silk, gold, silver thread and peacock feathers. Visit the Nanjing Folk Museum to see traditional handicrafts such as Chinese puppet shoes, clay figurines and paper cuttings. Visitors can watch handicraft demonstrations or participate in workshops to learn the techniques. Explore the rich Buddhist traditions of China at Nanjing Niushoushan

Cultural Park, a centuries-old sacred site that contains an opulent palace built into the side of the mountain.

♥ **3. Take part in a festival.**

Plan your visit in February or March, and you may see countless red lanterns lighting up the streets near the Confucius Temple during the Qinhuai International Lantern Festival. Dates are based upon the lunar calendar and change annually. In late February through mid-March, enjoy the Nanjing International Plum Blossom Festival, showcasing 35,000 beautiful plum trees scattered throughout a 250-acre park on Purple Mountain. In June, the Nanjing Dragon

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Boat Festival hosts dragon boat races, with festivities including traditional food such as zongzi - rice dumplings with nuts, wrapped in bamboo leaves. September and October mark the Hairy Crab Festival, celebrating the peak time to enjoy the delectable crustaceans from nearby Gucheng Lake.

♥ **4. Enjoy the beauty.**

The Qinhuai Scenic Area is a must-see, including gardens, historic architecture, shops and the breathtaking Confucius Temple. Take a leisurely boat cruise on the Qinhuai River to admire the sights while you enjoy local snacks and listen to traditional music. Xuanwu Lake Park is a former imperial lake garden showcasing a distinct color for each season: pink cherry blossoms in spring, emerald lotus leaves in summer, golden ginkgoes and red maples in autumn and snow-covered pines in winter.

♥ **5. Satisfy your cravings.**

Discover Nanjing's culinary scene, known for refined dishes that focus on seasonal ingredients while balancing taste and color. Nanjing is famous for its duck, as well as river fish and shrimp. Nanjing salted duck is the city's signature dish. Other popular choices include Peking duck, pan-fried beef dumplings, pidu noodles, soup buns and sesame pancakes. You'll never run out of options to try when exploring Nanjing's exciting, delicious cuisine.

Visiting Nanjing is easier than you can



At Nanjing Niushoushan Cultural Park, visitors learn about ancient Buddhist traditions.

imagine. Nanjing Lukou International Airport is 40 miles from the city center, and nonstop flights are available from several North American gateways. Many visitors travel by bullet train to Nanjing, as it is 3 1/2 hours from Beijing and just 90 minutes from Shanghai. More than 100 hotels offer a variety of options, from budget to luxury

accommodations, including international brands like Jumeirah, Fairmont, Shangri-La, Hilton, Sofitel, Renaissance and Westin. Make your trip to China memorable by exploring all it has to offer - through the vibrant, historic city of Nanjing. Ready to plan your Nanjing experience? Visit [gotonanjing.com](http://gotonanjing.com) for more information. (BPT)

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## Pop the question with the perfect song

(NewsUSA) - Enhancing a once-in-a-lifetime event, such as a wedding proposal or ceremony, with the right song takes the experience to a whole new level. It adds a personal touch that makes for ongoing memories, as couples have the opportunity to play the song at anniversaries or other special events through the years.

Just in time for anyone planning to propose on Valentine's Day (or any day), an original song called "The First Time," by Del Henry, makes its debut February 1, 2019, on multiple channels, including iTunes, Amazon Music, Apple Music, Tidal, Spotify, Pandora, YouTube Music, Google Music Store, Shazam, and many more.

The release of the song coincides with a release of a video. The video version of "The First Time" being released is, in fact, the first time the song was performed live, at a wedding as a gift from the groom to the bride, and her reaction says it all.

"How can I say, in a most simple way/My living started when you came that day/ How can I tell you when all's said and done/ My Heaven started with you as the one."

Many couples can relate to these lyrics. The song stands out as an example of the power of music to capture a moment and move an audience, so it is both a personal and a shared experience.

Many of the guests seen in the video of the song's debut are as emotional as the bride, because the lyrics evoke memories of their own shared lives and ongoing love stories.

"It's truly a story about how and why couples come to the moment when they want to be together "eternally," says David Shewmaker, the Minister conducting the ceremony.

"As a Groomsman, I could see Brandon's live performance and saw the audience's response, which was electric and moving. I was hearing the song for the first time too," says Tim Delany, a 23-year-old college graduate.

Lyrics such as "The first time I felt your eyes touch mine/The first time I felt your smile" can be part of the setting of a proposal on Valentine's Day or any day, but they are equally appropriate for an anniversary, whether a first or a fiftieth, or simply to thank someone for bringing joy to your life.

Use the song to show your affection for someone who matters to you, share the heartwarming video, and appreciate the skill of 18-year-old musician Brandon D. Henry, who performed "The First Time" for its first time at the recent wedding, accompanied by master guitarist Dave Murdy. Watch the video of the song at: [www.LisZenUp.com](http://www.LisZenUp.com)

Song: "The First Time" - LIVE

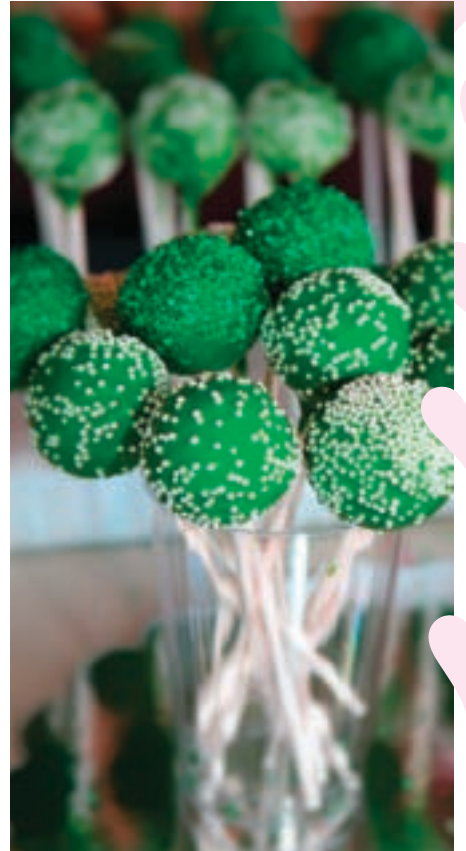
Producer: Del Henry. Band: LisZenUp HouzeBand

Lyrics Written by Del P Henry Jr

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Lead Vocal by Brandon D Henry

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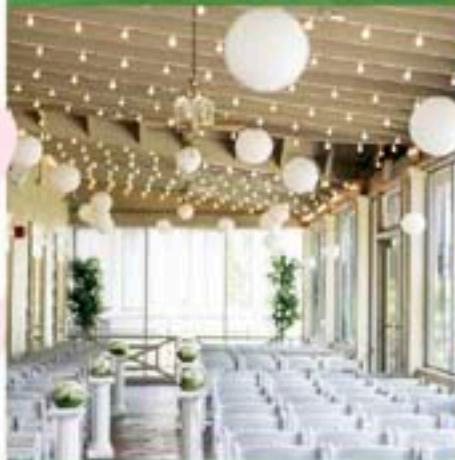
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# Marrying households: 7 savvy moving tips for newlyweds

If you're planning a wedding or you've just tied the knot, congratulations! Getting ready to start the next chapter of your life with the one you love can be an exciting time, filled with anticipation about your future together.

That said, combining two households can take considerable planning and preparation, especially if both parties own troves of treasured possessions. As you are getting ready to make the transition into a single house or apartment, consider how the following suggestions may make your move easier.

♥ Pare down possessions. After unwrapping your wedding gifts, take an objective look at your collective furniture, household goods, clothing and other items. Where do you see duplicates? Whose décor are you more likely to use? Are those old clothes you've had since high school really worth keeping? Now is the time to be generous in donating unneeded items to a local charity (or selling them on Craigslist).

♥ Nix the shopping blitz. Although those wedding checks and gift cards are burning a hole in your pocket, postpone your purchases until after you move so you don't end up needlessly hauling them to your next locale.

♥ DIY on the moving. Rather than shelling out a small fortune hiring a moving



company, simply rent a truck that you can drive without a commercial license. As a rule of thumb, seek 150 cubic feet of space for the furnishings of each room in your present house; that means a 12- or 16-foot Penske rental truck should accommodate the contents of a small apartment or condo. Remember to reserve your truck at least two weeks ahead, and ask for the discounts provided to AAA members and military personnel.

♥ Invest in packing supplies. This is not the time to skimp by using flimsy

containers, newspapers and cheap tape to pack up your treasured belongings. Save yourself time and frustration later by picking up sturdy boxes, labels, tape and bubble wrap from your truck rental store so you can ensure everything arrives at its destination safe, unbroken and easy to unpack.

♥ Party on. Inviting friends and family to help you with your move can be a win-win for all; many hands make light work when it comes to loading and unloading your truck, and you can offer incentives by springing for pizza and beverages at your new home afterward.

♥ Learn how to load. Apply logistical strategy to filling up your moving truck, perhaps by following the guidelines offered by Penske's Truck Wizard. In general, heavier items should go in the back of the truck, with lighter items in front and on top.

♥ Practice makes perfect. Driving a moving truck isn't difficult, but it's definitely different from driving a car or pick-up. Take time to familiarize yourself with those differences; for example, you must use your mirrors to navigate turns, you should avoid sudden stops or lane changes and give yourself extra time. Need more information about the advantages of renting your own moving truck? Check out [PenskeTruckRental.com](http://PenskeTruckRental.com) for details. (BPT)

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