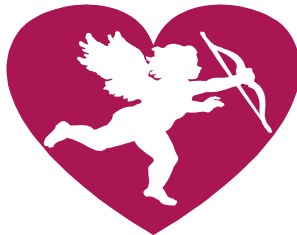


Planning Your Wedding Day

WEDDING GUIDE



Everything you need to know about planning your Big Day.

Compliments of

Fresh Entertainments



Phone: (0141) 569 4163 Mob: 07545 186899
Website: www.freshentertainments.com

Planning Your Wedding Day

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Appendix

Planning Your Wedding Day

Congratulations!

- 🔔 **Congratulations - You are about to start planning one of the most exciting events in your life!**
- 🔔 **Every bride-to-be will agree that organising a wedding day is brilliant fun - there's choosing your dress, planning your guest list, finding the perfect venue, deciding a colour theme and hundreds of other details to finalise that will make your day really special.**
- 🔔 **To help you plan efficiently, we have produced the Fresh Entertainments Wedding Guide. In it you will find suggestions for everything you need to help you make those all-important decisions, however, Fresh Entertainments cannot be held responsible for any omissions in this guide or choices made by the bride, groom or their families!**

First Things First

- 🔔 **As soon as you are engaged, the traditional way to let everyone know is to put an announcement in a local or national newspaper.**
- 🔔 **Check prices for the insertion first.**
- 🔔 **The usual wording is as follows:**

The engagement is announced between Amanda Jayne White, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs L S White, of Thornton Hough, Cheshire, and Paul Michael Smith, only son of Mr and Mrs J R Smith, of Heswall, Cheshire.
- 🔔 **Before setting the Wedding date, decide what sort of ceremony you want and check the church, synagogue, register office or licensed civil venue is available on the day. (see Deciding the Type of Wedding)**

Planning Your Wedding Day

Introduction

Most couples don't have the luxury of a limitless budget, so this is one time in your lives where careful, creative budgeting really pays off. However, deciding where to spend and where to save can be the hardest choice. There are so many possibilities in creating a memorable, modern celebration. Invitations, selecting the dress, your ceremony and the reception party, not to mention your first night and the honeymoon!!

Preparing for a wedding - your wedding - is not as bad as what some might tell you, but it will certainly help if you can remember to maintain, more often than not, a sense of humour!

The secret is to consult with each other, and other members of the family, especially parents, every step of the way. To give yourselves lots of time for arrangements to be organised and to be prepared for some things not to go to plan.

Although planning a wedding does involve lots of hard work it is, nevertheless, an enjoyable exercise, even if it might not always appear to be.

Money

Whether you're planning a very traditional day or an informal celebration chances are you'll need to trim costs somewhere along the way. You may fall in love with an incredible designer dress that costs more than you anticipated and therefore will need to spend less on another part of your wedding.

Remember that, although it's your day, it's your friends and family that make the day special. Accept offers of help from talented people within your social circle. Most people are delighted to help out on a special occasion, so don't feel embarrassed to ask.

Planning Your Wedding Day

Tradition Checklist

🔔 Traditionally the Bride's parents pay for:





















- 🔔 **Press announcements**
- Wedding clothes for the Bride and her attendants**
- Flowers for the church and reception**
- The Photographer / Videographer**
- Transport**
- The Reception**
- Catering**
- Entertainment**
- Wedding stationary**
- The Cake**

🔔 Traditionally the Groom pays for:

- 🔔 **All fees connected with the church (except flowers) or fees for the registrar and civil license.**
- Bouquets for the bride and bridesmaids, flower sprays for both mothers, buttonholes for himself, the best man and ushers.**
- 🔔 **Engagement and Wedding rings.**
- Presents for the attendants and the best man.**

The groom normally pays for the honeymoon and first night hotel, but nowadays brides often contribute. Who pays for the bridesmaids dresses can be tricky. Bridesmaids and other attendants frequently pay for their own clothes, if this is the case, you should give them some say in what they wear on the day. If you're paying, you should choose the outfits worn.

Planning Your Wedding Day

| BUDGET CHECKLIST | TICK | COST |
|--|------|---------|
|  RING(S) | () | £ _____ |
|  WEDDING STATIONARY | () | £ _____ |
|  BRIDES WEDDING CLOTHES | () | £ _____ |
|  GROOMS WEDDING CLOTHES | () | £ _____ |
|  ATTENDANTS CLOTHES | () | £ _____ |
|  CEREMONY FEES (Celebrant / registrar, Music etc.) | () | £ _____ |
|  WEDDING TRANSPORT | () | £ _____ |
|  PHOTOGRAPHER / VIDEOGRAPHER | () | £ _____ |
|  FLOWERS | () | £ _____ |
|  RECEPTION VENUE | () | £ _____ |
|  DECORATION (Balloons, flowers etc.) | () | £ _____ |
|  CATERING | () | £ _____ |
|  DISCO / ENTERTAINMENT | () | £ _____ |
|  WEDDING CAKE | () | £ _____ |
|  THANK-YOU GIFTS | () | £ _____ |
|  GOING AWAY OUTFIT | () | £ _____ |
|  FIRST NIGHT | () | £ _____ |
|  HONEYMOON | () | £ _____ |
|  INSURANCE | () | £ _____ |
|  OTHER | () | £ _____ |
| TOTAL | | £ _____ |

Planning Your Wedding Day

DECIDING THE TYPE OF WEDDING

Church Weddings

Many couples solemnise their marriage vows in church. The basic arrangement for weddings in the Church of England, Church of Wales and Church of Ireland are very similar. A wedding service can take place on any day of the week, from 8am to 6pm, but bear in mind that Saturdays during the summer get very busy and booked up quickly.

When you first visit your minister, take along your baptism certificates. You will be asked to fill in a form with details of your birth and occupation, plus those of your fiancée and both fathers. The minister will tell you about the church fees and explain the system of calling the banns. The banns are usually called on three consecutive Sundays before the wedding. If one of you lives in a different parish, the banns are called in both.

If you want to get married in another parish, you must have been resident there for at least six months and on the church electoral role for the banns to be called. Alternatively, you can apply for a common licence, which requires you to be resident in the parish for fifteen days before the licence is granted. In exceptional circumstances, a special licence may be applied for from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Speak to the minister about this.

On your first visit, ask the minister if he/she will allow photographs to be taken inside the church and/or recordings or videos to be made of the ceremony. If you are marrying during a religious festival, your choice of flowers for the church may be restricted. Check this with the minister before placing your order. You can ask the minister to give you details of other couples marrying on the same day so that you can see whether they will share the cost of the flowers.

You can also ask the minister and organist about music. Some will only allow religious music, others a more secular choice. If you want to bring an outside organist or choir, check with the resident organist first. Music for a church wedding normally includes organ pieces before the service, an organ piece or hymn at the entrance of the bride, a hymn before the marriage, a hymn or psalm after the prayers, a choir or organ piece during the signing of the register and music for the exit of the bride and groom.

Some ministers object to the litter that confetti causes and only allow the bio-degradable type, such as rose petals. If this is the case or for an alternative, latest trends suggest that instead of throwing confetti, the guests blow bubbles, which can look really romantic when caught on the photographs or the guests carry balloons in colours to match the bridesmaids' dresses and possibly featuring the names of the happy couple. (These can normally be purchased from balloon firms specialising in celebration balloons). Check and tell your friends or put a note in the order of service if necessary.

Nearer the day, the minister will ask to see you and your fiancée again. He/She will explain the meaning of the vows, go through the service with you and probably arrange a rehearsal so everyone knows what to do during the ceremony.

Planning Your Wedding Day

DECIDING THE TYPE OF WEDDING

Church Weddings(cont.)

The minister will ask you which version of the Marriage Service you would like. The first version, from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, is rather archaic, and the bride has to promise to obey her husband. The second version is the one updated in 1928, where the basic format is the same but the language is modified and the bride does not have to promise to obey. The third version, the Alternative Service Book, was introduced in 1980 with a modern format. The bride is given the choice of whether or not to obey and there are variations and alternative prayers.

Roman Catholic weddings

When you first see your priest, take your baptism and confirmation certificates. Since Catholic priests do not act on behalf of the state, you must obtain a certificate or licence to marry from the local superintendent registrar - check details with your register office.

For a marriage to take place between a Catholic and non-Catholic in a Catholic or Anglican church, a dispensation must be obtained - speak to your priest.

Church of Scotland weddings

Provided they are conducted by an authorised minister, these can take place anywhere. There are no residency requirements but 15 days' notice must be given at a register office.

Divorce and other special circumstances

The question of divorce and remarriage in church remains contentious. The general rule, which is upheld by the Church of England, is that the full marriage service is not permitted where there is a living divorced partner. Other denominations, such as the Methodists and the United Reform Church, sometimes allow a person who has a divorced spouse still living to remarry in church. The decision taken by any church will be made on the merits of each case. In the Roman Catholic Church second marriages can only take place if the partner(s) concerned have been widowed or the previous marriage has been annulled. Church of Scotland ministers are more likely to agree to solemnise second marriages for divorced persons, but this is not a foregone conclusion. Widows and widowers may remarry in church.

If the bride is marrying for the first time she may wear what she likes, as may the groom. If the bride is marrying for the second time, the general rule is to choose a simpler form of wedding dress, usually with a hat or a headdress of flowers. The groom usually wears a morning or lounge suit.

Planning Your Wedding Day

DECIDING THE TYPE OF WEDDING

Service of blessing

This Church of England service may take place at the discretion of the minister when a couple can't marry in church because of different religious convictions or because one or both has been divorced. Since it is not a marriage service, a civil ceremony must precede it. The ceremony is very simple and involves a confirmation of the couple's vows. It often takes place without such formalities as a choir and hymns. The minister gives a brief address and prayers are said to bless the marriage followed by a gospel reading. The number of guests, music and so on should be discussed with the minister. Formal invitations can be worded as follows:

Mr & Mrs Charles Smith request the pleasure of your company at a Service of Blessing following the marriage of their daughter.....

Civil ceremonies

Couples may have a civil ceremony because they have different religious beliefs or none at all, or are divorced and are unable to marry in church.

Register Office Weddings

You can get married in any register office in England and Wales, not only your local one. However, you must "give notice" of your intention to marry at your local register office. If you and your fiancée live in different areas, you must visit each office. Giving notice entails providing various personal details and signing a declaration that there is no legal impediment to the marriage. You can be married by certificate, meaning that 21 days (not counting Sundays, Good Friday or Christmas Day) must elapse between giving notice and the wedding day itself. You can also be married by licence, which is a quicker (and therefore more expensive) route. Only one day needs to elapse before you can be married. Whether you marry by certificate or licence, the notice to marry is valid for a year and the wedding must take place between 8am and 6pm. Most register offices are only open until noon on Saturdays, and are usually heavily booked in advance. Check with the superintendent registrar how many guests you'll be able to seat in the register office.

The Ceremony

This is fairly brief, usually around 20 minutes. The bride and groom declare that there is no lawful impediment to the marriage and call upon people present to witness it. The couple then sign the register, followed by two witnesses, the registrar and the superintendent registrar.

What to Wear

There are no conventions about what to wear at a civil ceremony. Couples usually wear something smart: for the bride this can be long or short, white or a colour with or without a hat, headdress or flowers. The groom normally wears a suit and buttonhole, but it is all a matter of personal taste.

Planning Your Wedding Day

DECIDING THE TYPE OF WEDDING

Licensed venues

In recent years over 2,000 venues in England and Wales have been granted a licence by the local authority to hold civil weddings. These include hotels, stately homes, restaurants, museums, theatres and even football clubs. To qualify for a licence, the buildings must be permanent (boats without fixed moorings and gardens are therefore ruled out), open to the public and unconnected in any way to religion. Your local register office will have a list of approved buildings throughout England and Wales for a small fee from the Registrar General for England and Wales. Couples wishing to marry in any Approved Premises are now able to book registrars up to two years in advance (prior to 21st October 2005 it was 12 months in advance).

Some licensed venues will hold ceremonies only if the reception is being held there too, while others offer ceremonies only, so check the situation when you book. Many venues now employ wedding co-ordinators to help couples to organise their wedding.

Civil Ceremonies elsewhere

In Ireland, civil weddings have to take place in a register office. One partner must be a resident for at least seven days in the area in which the couple wish to be married.

In Northern Ireland, civil weddings also have to take place in a register office. There is also a residency requirement that one partner must be resident for 15 days in the area in which the couple wish to be married.

In Scotland, again, civil weddings must be held in a register office, although there are no residency requirements.

Alternative Ceremonies

You can hold a vow-exchanging ceremony reflecting your beliefs and personalities in the location of your choice. However, since this is not legally recognised, it must take place in addition to a civil ceremony. The British Humanist Association (0171 430 0908) can provide booklets and information.

Music and Readings

You can have music and readings at civil ceremonies, provided they are non-religious. It would be suitable to have music before the ceremony, for the entrance of the bride, during the signing of the register and for the departure of the bride and groom. In a register office, recorded music may be the easiest option. For a licensed venue, you could choose live music. Registrars are normally happy to allow a couple of readings during a civil ceremony, which could be taken from poetry, novels or songs as long as they have no religious connotations. Consult your registrar to make sure that he or she is happy with your choice of music and readings.

Planning Your Wedding Day

DECIDING THE TYPE OF WEDDING

Weddings Abroad

Lured by the prospect of a romantic ceremony on the beach, an increasing number of couples are flying to exotic destinations to get married. The Caribbean, United States, Sri Lanka, Bali and the Maldives are all popular destinations. Many tour operators now offer all-inclusive wedding packages and can advise on the legal requirements for marrying in different countries. The basic rule is that a wedding abroad is legally recognised in the UK if it is legally binding in the country in which it takes place. In general, you should allow at least 12 weeks for all the paperwork to be processed.

Tour Operators:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Barrhead Travel | (0800) 144 4060 |
| British Airways Holiday Weddings | (01293) 722 648 * |
| Caribbean Connection | (01244) 355 300 |
| Caribbean Escapes | (0171) 581 3517 * |
| Cosmos | (0161) 480 3929 * |
| Couples | (0181) 900 1913 |
| Elegant Resorts Caribbean | (01244) 897 999 * |
| Elegant Resorts Worldwide | (01244) 897 888 * |
| Harlequin | (01473) 407 408 * |
| Hayes & Jarvis | (0208) 748 5050 * |
| Kuoni | (01306) 747 007 * |
| Sandals | (0171) 581 9895 |
| Super Clubs | (01749) 677 200 |
| Thomson | (0161) 911 8338 |
| Tradewinds | (0870) 751 0009 |
| Tropical Places | (01342) 825 123 * |
| Virgin Holidays | (01293) 744 2656 * |
| Wedding & Honeymoons Abroad | (0161) 969 1122 |

* These operators advertise hotels which offer free weddings as part of the price. However, don't be afraid to ask other tour operators what they have available.

Planning Your Wedding Day

THE WEDDING COUNTDOWN - CHECKLIST

Soon after your Engagement

- Set the date for the Wedding. ()
- See your Minister, Priest, Rabbi or Registrar to arrange the ceremony. ()
Check whether your Minister or Registrar is happy for the photographers / Videographers to take pictures of or film the ceremony.
- Decide with both sets of parents how many guests will be invited and work out a budget and a guest list. ()
- Book the Reception venue and Caterer, get at least three estimates. ()
- Book your entertainment with Fresh Entertainments ()
- Book a Photographer and Videographer if you want one. ()
- Order your Wedding Cake. ()
At least 4 months is required for a traditional fruit cake.
- Choose your Attendants, Best Man and Ushers. ()
- Choose your Wedding Clothes. ()
Allow up to 9 months for a made-to-measure dress.
- Choose your Attendants wedding clothes ()
- Organise Flowers, including buttonholes, bouquets and flowers for the church and Reception. ()
- Start looking at Honeymoon destinations and consider booking early, particularly if you are going peak season. ()

Planning Your Wedding Day

THE WEDDING COUNTDOWN - CHECKLIST













Three Months Before The Wedding

- Organise a comprehensive Wedding Gift list. ()
- Choose the Wedding Ring(s) ()
- Talk to the Minister/Registrar about the order of service, music and readings. Discuss what views the Minister and organist have on different types of music at the Wedding. ()
- Order Invitations and envelopes, plus extra stationary for the reception such as place cards, menus and favours. ()
- Arrange your order-of-service sheets and ask for them to be delivered to the Best man at least 7 days before the Wedding. ()
- If you plan to send out wedding cake after the day, order boxes from a stationer. ()
- Arrange Wedding Transport or speak to family and friends about borrowing cars. ()
- Buy going away and Honeymoon clothes. ()
- Arrange the hire of Formal wear for the Groom, Best man and other male members of the Bridal party. ()
- Send out Invitations at least six weeks before the day. ()
- As guests reply, make a list of Acceptances and Refusals. ()
- Choose Thank-you gifts for attendants and Best man etc. ()
- Make appointments with your Hairdresser or Beauty salon to discuss hair and make-up requirements. ()
- If you are changing you name, allow at least six weeks for a new passport. ()
- Notify your bank, building society doctor, dentist etc. ()
- Book your first night Hotel. ()

Planning Your Wedding Day

THE WEDDING COUNTDOWN - CHECKLIST






One month before the Wedding

-  Check your Fiancée has chose the Ushers and arranged hire of their Formal clothes. ()
-  Confirm the food and drink numbers and arrangements with the Caterers and Reception venue. Work out a formal seating plan, if necessary. ()
-  Meet with the Florist to confirm requirements for the Flowers. ()
-  Consult the Minister and Organist / Registrar about final decisions on the music for the Wedding. ()
-  Send thank you letters for Wedding presents as they arrive and make a note of who has given you what. Make a note on your acceptance / refusal list of who is / isn't able to attend. ()
-  Visit the Hairdresser with your Headdress or Veil to try out hairstyles. ()
-  Practise your make-up if you are doing it yourself. ()
-  Check whether you need visas, inoculations and order foreign currency for your Honeymoon. ()
-  Check your Wedding clothes and try on the whole outfit, including the headdress, shoes and underwear. ()
-  Have a dress rehearsal at the place of worship if possible. ()
-  Check if traffic delays are expected on the day, for the route to the place of marriage. If necessary allow extra time. ()
-  Arrange to have your honeymoon luggage sent to the Hotel or the Reception venue depending on when you are travelling. ()

Planning Your Wedding Day

THE WEDDING COUNTDOWN - CHECKLIST

The Big Day

-  An hour before the ceremony is due to start the Ushers should be at the church to seat the early guests.
-  Twenty minutes before, the Best man should ensure the Groom is at the place of worship.
-  As the guests arrive the Ushers should show them to their seats and hand out the service sheets.
-  The Brides mother should arrive at the church five minutes before the ceremony.
-  The Bride and her Father should arrive a few moments before so that the chief bridesmaid can arrange the brides veil and any photographs can be taken without holding up the proceedings.

Planning Your Wedding Day

Getting Organised

Insurance

Time and money go into arranging a Wedding, so it makes sense to think about insurance. There are policies which offer protection against such things as damage to the dress, weather damage to the marquee, the loss of deposits due to cancellation of the wedding, theft of wedding presents and so on. Get a range of quotes before you take out a policy and read the small print carefully to check they offer exactly what you are looking for.

Flowers

A wedding would not be the same without flowers. They have played an important role with the bride and her bridesmaids carrying bouquets, the bridegroom, the best man and the ushers sporting buttonholes, the two mothers wearing sprays or corsages, and the church and reception being decorated with them.

So choosing a good florist is essential. One of the best ways is to go by personal recommendation or ask the florist for photographs of past work - the good ones will be only too pleased to show you how creative they can be.

Once you have chosen your florist don't be afraid to ask for advice if you are unsure of what you want. Browse through magazines for inspiration, ask your dressmaker for fabric samples of your own and the bridesmaids' dresses so that the florist can use toning flowers, and ask her to make sketches of her ideas.

Don't forget that a bouquet has to be practical. It should be easy and comfortable to hold and not hide any particular design feature of your gown.

When it comes to decorating the church it's always best to check with the minister first, then choose flowers which will best suit the size and the character of the church itself, and don't forget to ask about other weddings taking place at the church on the same day, maybe you could share the cost with the other couple(s).

A few larger arrangements will have more impact than lots of smaller ones and they are best placed high up to catch the light. Remember that lighter, creamy shades are more striking and likely to flatter the bride than darker colours which can get lost against the dark background of the church.

Planning Your Wedding Day

Getting Organised

Flowers (cont)

The cheapest flowers are those in season. Find out what's in bloom at the time of your wedding, a simple guide is:

Spring: Daffodils, Mimosa, Tulips, Narcissi, Anemones.

Summer: Stocks, Roses, Cornflowers, Delphiniums, Alatroemeria, Larkspur, Gladioli, Antirrhinium.

Autumn: Ranunculus, Solidago, Sweet Williams, Dahlias, Michaelmas daisy, Blooms (large headed single chrysanthemums).

Winter: Chrysanthemums, Carnations, Ivy, Twisted Willow.

As an alternative to separate posies for your flower girls, buy hoops from a toy shop, give them a coat of paint to match your colour scheme and decorate them with ribbons and flowers, they're easy to carry and they'll really enjoy showing off!

Reception Decoration

Even the most ordinary of rooms can be transformed into a colourful, atmospheric venue for your wedding reception through careful choice and placement decorations.

A strategically placed archway of balloons provides a wonderful setting through which the bride and groom can enter the reception. A Cloud Nine (three floating heads of balloons linked by a tulle) can be a perfect backdrop for the top table, while a bouquet of balloons on other tables complete a wonderfully warm welcoming picture.

Foil or latex balloons can be ordered in virtually any colour and in almost endless variety of designs. Their finishing touch is too important to leave until the last minute, consult the experts in plenty of time to avoid being disappointed.

Alternatively, you could make your own table decorations. Buy some plain terracotta flower pots from a garden centre and paint to match your colour scheme, then fill with seasonal flowers - simple but effective.

Long stemmed, single flowers like gerberas, roses, agapanthus, iris and sunflowers are easy to arrange in tall glasses and look stunning as table centre pieces.

Planning Your Wedding Day

Getting Organised

Beauty & Hairdressing

Wedding day radiance is something every bride hopes will be hers on her big day. However, somehow in the run up to the momentous occasion, thoughts of how you look can get swept aside by a pressing wealth of plans, arrangements and last minute anxieties.

Take heart, looking your best will come naturally if you take a bit of time to experiment with your make-up beforehand.

If you have opted for a traditional white gown, the easiest way to simulate the colour is to wrap a white towel around your neck, when trying different make-up colours. Choose a moderate, not glaring light, to study the effect against your skin.

Although you might normally prefer bolder shades, try toning down the colouring. Brides should look fresh and dewy rather than studied in their make-up, so keep tones pink rather than red. Avoid purple tinges for lipstick and eye-shadow, they can make you look as if you are about to faint.

A little experimenting beforehand will help to get the colouring and make-up routine right for the desired effect.

While you are rehearsing the overall look, it's worth spending some time looking at your nails and giving yourself a manicure, or visit a salon and have someone else pamper you!

Hair is the next area for consideration and again the best advice is to try different styles, with your hairdresser if possible, well before the big day.

If you're having highlights or colouring, do so well in advance so you have time to get used to the effect.

Have your style cut at least one to two weeks before the big day, and treat yourself to a good conditioning treatment, either in a salon or at home.

If you are not doing your own hair, remember to book your appointment with your hairdresser well in advance of your big day to ensure availability.

Don't forget to ask your hairdresser about special bridal packages, some salons may give you a discount if you book several appointments in advance, leading up to your wedding day.

Planning Your Wedding Day

Getting Organised

The Cake

No wedding day is complete without the cake, yet it is surprising how such an important feature can sometimes be almost overlooked.

Most confectioners positively encourage ideas about design from their customers. The cake provides you with lots of scope for creativity. The traditional choice is a three-tiered fruit cake, but why not have a chocolate cake, flavoured sponge or French croquembouche?

Cakes now come shaped like piles of wedding presents, buildings, honeymoon luggage, animals or even vases of flowers.

It is important to remember when ordering the cake that it needs to be big enough to provide a slice for everyone at the reception, plus any absent friends to whom you would like to send a piece.

However, remember that the rules about ordering, baking and storing the cake are the same whatever your demands about size, shape and colour.

A good, rich, moist mixture should be ordered four months or so in advance and left for at least six weeks before it is iced so that the flavours can develop.

There really is nothing like forward planning if you want the perfect cake to complete the picture on your wedding day.

Drinks

A wedding reception is an occasion when people drink a great deal - usually all you provide. It's reasonable to assume that your guests will drink one or two glasses as they arrive, up to three with the meal and another glass with the toasts. If you are catering for your wedding yourself, order drinks on a sale-or-return basis.

The traditional wedding drink is champagne, but if this is beyond your budget there are now a huge number of alternative sparkling wines to choose from. These can be served throughout the reception. Alternatively, you may want to serve wine with the meal and keep the sparkling wine for the toasts. You could offer your guests aperitifs such as sherry, and beer is often more popular with younger guests.

Another idea is to offer an initial glass or two on the house and provide a cash bar for additional drinks. Provide plenty of soft drinks for children and for adults who prefer them or who are driving. Tea is also always welcome.

Planning Your Wedding Day

Getting Organised

Entertainment

Many people make the mistake of booking too much entertainment for their evening reception, choosing a live band followed by the disco. Remember that the photographs, dinner and speeches often take longer than expected, so you will probably only have time for one or the other.

Fresh Entertainments provide high quality, professional entertainment for a wide variety of events. Being totally committed to providing customer satisfaction means maintaining extremely high standards.

Combining 'up to date' Digital equipment with spectacular modern lighting displays and just the right sound, Fresh Entertainments will create the right environment for your guests to truly enjoy themselves.

From your initial enquiry to the presentation at your wedding, you will find our staff have the experience, creativity and knowledge to help you plan your celebrations to the smallest detail.

A pre-wedding meeting to discuss your particular requirements for your special day is available, at your convenience. Let us know your special music requirements and we guarantee they will be met.

Your presenter will arrive and set up his equipment, before your guests are due, so that he can ensure the sound quality and lighting levels are correctly set for the night.

With sounds from the 50's through to Y2K there is something for everyone. So if you like to Waltz, Tango, Rock & Roll, Jive, Line Dance, or you prefer something more up to date, we have it all!

It's polite to offer your entertainers something to eat at your reception, but they will not expect a full three-course meal! Agree in advance the time at which they will take a break and ask your venue or caterers to provide some snacks and sandwiches.

A magician or clown is great fun, but hiring one isn't essential to keep your very young guests amused. Instead, organise a separate play area for kids and provide plenty of toys and colouring materials to keep them entertained.

Planning Your Wedding Day

Getting Organised

Photography

Wedding photographs provide a permanent record of one of the most important days of your life. Your big day is unique. It is impossible to repeat and too precious for you not to have the best possible memories of it.

Professional photographs do cost money - and for good reason. You are paying for expertise and experience, care and consideration, a way of marshalling your relations into some resemblance of order, as well as capturing those special, less formal, less posed moments which make the day memorable.

Be sure you are hiring a professional photographer who can deliver the goods. Do your homework. Ask your married friends who they used and if everything worked out.

Ring around photographic firms and ask, not just about the service they provide, but also for samples of their work, details of the professional associations to which they belong and whether or not they are insured.

Make sure, too, that he will be there for all the key moments throughout the day - right through, if required, to your first dance together as man and wife. A professional photographer should give you his undivided attention - do make sure that he is not going to disappear for half-an-hour on another engagement and check that he or she will be looking after you in person.

A bit of checking could save you years of regret later, and don't forget that the best photographers have bookings sometimes years in advance. So book early, especially if you are marrying on one of the peak Summer Saturdays.

Once you have found and booked your photographer, why not make his life easier by telling him exactly what you want?

Before you sign any kind of agreement, check with your photographer exactly what's included in the cost, whether you get a set of proofs and also the price of reprints, which can substantially increase the initial outlay.

Arrange a meeting a few weeks before the wedding to discuss the arrangements, confirm the shooting schedule and timetables, and plan in detail the special pictures required, so that on the day he can just get on with his work in the least disruptive way.

After your big day, spread the cost of your wedding photographs by only ordering your absolute favourites straight after the event. Some photographers will happily organise more reprints for you a few months later, giving your bank balance a chance to recover!

Planning Your Wedding Day

Getting Organised

Videography

You really do get what you pay for when it comes to wedding videos, but there are questions you can ask to ensure you're getting the most for your money. Check that the company has up-to-date equipment, anything digital is a good sign. Before you book, ask to watch a video (as opposed to a demo) of one of the wedding they've covered so that you can assess their style.

Transport

Every bride likes to arrive in style and the wedding cars play an important part in the proceedings.

They should be booked well in advance and a chauffeur-driven limousine will add an extra touch of glamour. These days it is possible to book any style of vehicle from a state-of-the-art saloon to a vintage car.

It is wise to go and look at the cars before you book them to ensure there is plenty of room inside for a comfortable ride when taking the style of the gown into account.

Get a written quote of exactly what is included, such as mileage and flowers, as this will differ from firm to firm.

If you want something more romantic, then a horse-drawn carriage may be the answer, and will provide the opportunity for some wonderful photographs.

If you can't afford cars for the whole party, ask a friend with an unusual, sporty or stylish car to chauffeur you.

If your house is near your church or wedding venue, cut down on transport costs by organising one car to do two trips, the first with your bridesmaids and the second with you and your father.

The travel arrangements are the responsibility of the Best man. Apart from getting the Groom to the church on time he should also ensure that everyone has transport to the reception, so is usually the last to leave the church.

Planning Your Wedding Day

The Big Day

The Ceremony

The ushers should be the first to arrive at the church to direct guests to their seats and give out order-of-service sheets at the church door. The bride's family and guests sit on the left of the aisle, the groom's on the right. The bridegroom and best man should arrive at least 20 minutes before the service so that photographs can be taken before the arrival of the bride.

One of the ushers should direct the bride's mother to the front pew while the bridesmaids wait for the bride outside the church. Even if either or both sets of parents are divorced, it is considered appropriate for them to sit together for the service in the front pew, and current partners should be treated as honoured guests.

The bride and her father should arrive a few moments before the service is due to begin so that photographs can be taken and the chief bridesmaid can arrange the bride's veil.

If the service is fully choral, the procession down the aisle should be choir, minister, bride on her father's right arm and attendants.

When they reach the chancel steps, the bridegroom and best man should take their places on the bride's right and the bride should hand her bouquet to her chief bridesmaid. If there are no bridesmaids, the bride should hand her bouquet to her father. He can give it to the bride's mother or put it on the front pew to be collected when the bridal party goes to sign the register.

The Order of service

After the entrance of the bride there is often a hymn, followed by readings, possibly another hymn or psalm and an address from the minister.

The marriage follows.

The bride's father takes her right hand and gives it to the minister, who passes it to the groom. The vows are taken and the ring(s) passed to the groom by the best man, or the minister receives the ring(s) on the face of the prayer book before offering them to the bride and groom. Both the bride's father and the best man then return to their seats in the front of the church.

The bride and groom follow the minister to the altar for prayers. The congregation may then sing a hymn, followed by the final blessing. Led by the minister, the bride and groom go to sign the register, usually followed by their parents, the best man and chief bridesmaid.

At the same time as the register is being signed and witnessed by two adults, the choir may sing or the organist may play a piece of music. When the formalities are over, the bridal procession leaves the church as follows: bride and groom, small attendants, chief bridesmaid and best man, bride's mother with groom's father, groom's mother with bride's father.

Planning Your Wedding Day

The Big Day

The Reception

Make your arrangements well ahead and confirm them with your venue or caterer in writing. If you are having a seating plan, give yourself plenty of time to work it out. Keep the manager of your reception venue informed about the number you have invited. You will be expected to pay for all food you have ordered, even if some guests do not turn up. Normally you will only be charged for drink consumed.

There are different approaches to a reception: you may want drinks with canapés, a formal sit-down hot meal, a buffet, or perhaps even a barbecue or an afternoon tea. A sit-down meal will probably be more expensive than a buffet or canapés. Of course, the cheapest way is to cater for a reception is to ask friends or family to do it for you.

Providing well for your guests should be a priority since some may have travelled a long way to be with you on your special day. Avoid inviting more guests than you can afford to feed properly and make sure there are plenty of chairs, even at a canapé reception, so your guests can sit down if they wish.

At the reception, the bride and groom arrive first, then their parents. A formal receiving line is arranged as follows: the bride's parents, the groom's parents, the bride, the groom, the attendants. If you don't want to have a formal receiving line, you could simply meet guests as they arrive at the door.

Some couples hire a toastmaster to act as a master of ceremonies. If you don't have one, your best man can assume this role at the reception. Liaise with the toastmaster or best man over the sequence of events.

Traditionally, the timetable for a reception is as follows:

The receiving line, the meal (the minister, if present, should be asked to say grace), the speeches and toasts, the cutting of the cake (some couples prefer to have this before the speeches), the departure of the bride and groom.

The Top Table seating plan is as follows:

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Chief Bridesmaid | Groom's Father | Bride's Mother | Groom | Bride | Bride's Father | Groom's Mother | Best Man |

Planning Your Wedding Day

The Big Day

The Reception (cont)

Once the guests have finished their meal , the traditional sequence and content of the speeches is as follows:

The toastmaster or the best man calls upon the bride's father (or a close personal friend) to make the first speech:

He will usually make reference to the joy the bride has brought to her parents over the years and how proud they feel on her special day. He will probably outline a couple of events in her life, a mix of humorous and more serious tales, and perhaps talk about the couple's happy time together, especially if they have known each other for some time. He can then welcome his new son-in-law to the family, offer a little advice to the newly-weds - perhaps based on his own experiences of married life - and then make a toast to the health and happiness of the couple.

It is then the turn of the bridegroom to take the floor:

He replies on behalf of himself and his new wife and thanks everyone present for their attendance, their good wishes and their gifts. He should thank both sets of parents for their help and support over the years and, in particular, any help they have given in preparing for the wedding. The bridegroom may go on to relate a short tale concerning himself and the bride - maybe their first meeting, or any good fortune or bad luck they have experienced along the way. It is also the bridegroom's job to thank the bridesmaids and pages for their help during the service. He may also at this point give them each a small gift, usually a small piece of jewellery. He makes a toast to the bridesmaids.

It is then the best man's turn:

It is the job of the best man to respond on behalf of the bridesmaids, thanking the groom for his good wishes and the gifts. He usually goes on to make a speech as full of humour as possible without straying over the bounds of good taste. He could make reference to the beauty of the bride and the groom's good fortune in marrying her and then relate one or two tales about times he and the groom have spent together (as tasteful as possible!). Some best men feel the need to read out messages from the many and varied cards received by the couple, but this tends to go on too long and should be kept to a few from, maybe, absent friends or relatives living abroad. He then toasts the Bride & Groom.

The cake cutting ceremony

Is usually done immediately after the speeches. This allows guests a photo opportunity. The bride and groom make the first cut, then the cake is taken away to be sliced and distributed amongst the guests. Some couples prefer to make the first cut for the photographs, then take the cake home and distribute slices with their thank you notes,

Planning Your Wedding Day

The Big Day

The Reception (cont)

The Departure of the Bride and Groom

How formal the departure of the bride and groom from the wedding breakfast or reception varies tremendously.

Traditionally the bride and groom are the first to leave the reception, giving their guests the opportunity to bid them farewell and wish them luck on their journey as man and wife.

Recently, this tradition is being disregarded by couples, who prefer to stay with their guests until the end of the evening. As has 'throwing the bouquet' and 'removing the garter' ceremonies. The choice is up to the individual couple.

For a more formal exit:

At a designated time during the evening the guests are requested to form a human arch, under which the happy couple will pass, before leaving for their secret destination or indeed, their honeymoon.

Alternatively, the guests form a circle with the bride and groom in the centre. The presenter will play some appropriate music whilst the bride and groom select dancing partners from family and friends, either methodically or randomly. Once they have made their way round the circle, the presenter announces their departure and the guests follow them to their car to wave farewell, before returning to the reception.

Planning Your Wedding Day

The Honeymoon

If you're booking your honeymoon some time ahead of your departure date, phone around for a good deal - many travel agents offer fantastic deals on holidays booked well in advance.

Booking an all-inclusive honeymoon is a great way to keep the costs down and can really help when your planning your wedding budget - you pay just one price upfront that covers everything from water sports to cocktails, so you know exactly how much of your wedding budget is free to be allocated to your honeymoon. Another brilliant cost-saving tip is to take advantage of free wedding packages offered at selected hotels at certain times of the year, where you'll receive lots of goodies like a wedding cake, sparkling wine and bouquet, absolutely free.

Fly out on a weekday, rather than a weekend - this can often work out to be significantly cheaper.

Book your honeymoon out of season when prices are at their lowest. In the Caribbean, low season is generally June to November, in the Maldives it is June to September, in Kenya low-season is April to July, and in Europe the winter months are cheaper.

If you love the outdoors, why not sleep out under the stars on a camping honeymoon? Eurocamp (01565 626 262) offers amazing packages and has campsites at plenty of beautiful European destinations, including the Pyrenees, Venice and Florence, and romantic settings such as a wooded valley by Lake Maggiore in Italy - perfect for honeymooners who want to go back to nature.

Ask for honeymoon vouchers for your holiday of a lifetime instead of presents. Contact honeymoon specialists Kuoni on 01306 744 444 for more details.

If you're getting married abroad, choose a package which offers free weddings as part of the price. See page 15 for details, those with asterisks are tour operators with hotels offering these packages.

Planning Your Wedding Day

TRADITIONAL MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

Music for your Wedding is your own personal touch. Below are suggestions of Classical song titles which are suitable for organ music.

The Prelude -

Whilst guests arrive

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------|-------------------------|
| <i>Air from Suite No3</i> | 5.27 | <i>Bach</i> |
| <i>Canon in D Major</i> | 6.26 | <i>Pachelbel</i> |
| <i>Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring</i> | 2.53 | <i>Bach</i> |
| <i>Ave Maria</i> | 4.23 | <i>Schubert</i> |
| <i>Adagio in G Minor</i> | 6.26 | <i>Albinoni</i> |
| <i>Greensleeves</i> | 4.41 | <i>Vaughan Williams</i> |

Processional -

Brides arrival and procession

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| <i>Bridal Chorus</i> | 1.48 | <i>Wagner</i> |
| <i>Arrival of the Queen of Sheba</i> | 2.46 | <i>Handel</i> |
| <i>Trumpet Voluntary</i> | 2.50 | <i>Clarke (Purcell)</i> |
| <i>Trumpet Tune</i> | 2.49 | <i>Stanley (Purcell)</i> |

Signing of the Register & Hymns

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------|------------------|
| <i>Largo from Serse</i> | 3.14 | <i>Handel</i> |
| <i>Air from Water Music</i> | 3.53 | <i>Handel</i> |
| <i>Canon</i> | | <i>Pachelbel</i> |
| <i>Ave Verum</i> | | <i>Mozart</i> |
| <i>Flower Duet</i> | | <i>Delibes</i> |

The Recessional -

Celebratory and joyful triumphant music for the Bride & Bridegroom as they leave the Church or Civil Ceremony

| | | |
|---|------|--------------------------|
| <i>Wedding March</i> | 4.47 | <i>Mendelssohn</i> |
| <i>Grand March from Aida</i> | | <i>Verdi</i> |
| <i>Ode to Joy</i> | 2.45 | <i>Beethoven</i> |
| <i>Royal Fire Works – The Rejoicing</i> | 3.49 | <i>Handel</i> |
| <i>Trumpet Voluntary</i> | 2.50 | <i>Clarke (Purcell)</i> |
| <i>Trumpet Tune</i> | 2.49 | <i>Stanley (Purcell)</i> |
| <i>Spring from The Four Seasons</i> | 3.19 | <i>Vivaldi</i> |
| <i>Tocatta in F from Organ Symphony No5</i> | 5.06 | <i>Widor</i> |
| <i>Overture from The Marriage of Figaro</i> | 4.16 | <i>Mozart</i> |