

15 Simple Tips to Save Money on a Wedding

A wedding is one of the most expensive life events - if not the most expensive - for many people. If you're on a tight budget, even if you're getting contributions from the bride and/or groom's parents, figuring out how to pay for everything can seem completely overwhelming.

You need a venue for the ceremony and reception, flowers and decorations, food and beverages, and more. And you obviously don't want your guests thinking that you skimped on throwing a great ceremony and reception. Plus, you probably want a little cash left over for the honeymoon.

Financial stress can put a real damper on planning for the happiest day of your life. But it's normal. Start by listing all the expenses involved and creating a detailed budget. Then, use the following tips to save money on a wedding to help yourself stick to that budget.

Ways to Control Your Wedding Costs

1. Be selective with the guest list. Each additional guest increases costs. So, while you may be tempted to invite everyone you and your betrothed have ever met, aim for the smallest event you're comfortable with if you're trying to save significant money.
2. Get married in the late fall, winter, or early spring to get lower venue pricing outside of peak wedding season. Also, weeknight and Sunday rates are generally cheaper than Saturdays.
3. If you're not invested in the idea of a magical wedding ceremony, get married at the courthouse, then have a reception for your guests.
4. Shop around for your venue(s). The closest, most convenient place may not be the cheapest. If you have the ceremony in a house of worship, it's often easy and affordable to have the reception there too. But don't

overlook public event spaces, recreation centers, campgrounds, a public park (check with your municipality first), a friend or family member's home, restaurants with private dining rooms, museums, and other possibilities.

5. Send out digital invitations and thank you notes online. There are free options through websites like [Joy](#) or [Evite](#).
6. If you have skills or products that may be of value to other business owners, like a caterer, baker, florist, or photographer, offer to barter to reduce the costs of their part in your wedding.
7. Consider whether you have friends, family members, or colleagues who can handle something like wedding photography, doing the bride's hair and makeup, bartending or DJing at the reception, decorating, officiating, or driving guests from the ceremony to the reception. They should be willing to do it relatively cheaply or may even offer their services for free as a wedding gift.
8. Go with a buffet over table service. And don't worry; people like assembling their own plates.
9. Rather than automatically going with a catering company, check pricing from local restaurants that do catering.
10. Buy the alcohol yourself, rather than paying the marked-up prices through your venue or caterer. And don't feel obligated to have an extensive liquor and cocktail selection; a few wine and beer options and one or two mixed drinks can suffice.
11. Instead of a towering wedding cake, save by sticking to a smaller cake with two tiers for the photo op and getting some sheet cake; the wedding cake itself doesn't have to feed everyone, and each tier adds significantly to the cost.

12. Get your wedding dress from a department store, which is more affordable than a bridal shop. Or, if you don't mind a gently used wedding dress, find a bridal shop that sells secondhand wedding dresses. You can also look for a once-worn or never-worn wedding dress on sites like [Stillwhite](#), [Nearly Newlywed](#), and [Wore It Once](#).
13. Borrow accessories from friends or family members instead of buying them.
14. Skip the tropical flowers and opt for local, seasonal options. You can even purchase some nice potted plants rather than going through a florist. Or, if your florist allows you to supply vases, you can get them cheaper than you would through them.
15. Don't get carried away with decorations, and shop around for affordable options. You can even get mason jars, bags of glass beads, candles, and other nice-looking items at a dollar store or other budget-friendly stores. Putting together decorations by hand instead of buying pre-made products can yield serious savings. Check craft stores, too.