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Wedding Flowers Becoming Larger Than Life

Move over bouquets and centerpieces. Flowers are taking over weddings in a big way. While wedding trends come and go, flowers will always have a place at the wedding table.

The blooms brides and grooms choose and how they decide to display them can say much about the couple's style. Many modern couples are opting for statement pieces with their flowers to rival the big and bold ideas they're incorporating elsewhere into their occasions, such as in cakes and clothing. In fact, floral designer Tom Uberuaga says traditional hurricane vase centerpieces are outdated and only focus the eye on the middle of the table. He prefers guests enter the wedding and have their senses stimulated by flowers from all angles. Large flower installations, as well as blooms popping up in unexpected places, are some of the hot trends for couples to keep their eyes on.

Floral Chandeliers

There's no need to worry about seeing over table centerpieces or flowers getting in the way of photo moments. Thanks to hanging flowers and floral chandeliers, flowers are quite literally moving up in the world. Hanging floral pieces can add instant drama and make a large visual impact. Florists can hang flowers from beams over tabletops to increase visual impact, whether as individual baskets, single stems or floral swags. Hanging floral chandeliers are dramatic but naturally expensive. Think about a large installation that forces guests to look up into a sea of greenery and flowers. The smell and the sight can be breathtaking.

Welcome Wreaths

Why should wreaths only be reserved for front doors and holiday decor? A welcome floral wreath can be placed by the entryway to a chapel or reception hall with a heartfelt sentiment that shows guests how much they're appreciated.

Fairy-Tale Flowers

A floral curtain of hanging flowers can line a chuppah or drape the altar in beautiful blooms. Couples who would like a fairy-tale entrance also can make their debut as a couple by coming through a flower curtain at the reception. Martha Stewart Weddings says a cascade of flowers and greens can be romantic and elegant.

Dance Floor Blooms

Who says flowers have to be overhead or on a table? With a plexiglass dance floor, or one made from some other transparent material, flowers can be underfoot, creating a magical floral carpet.

Floral Necklaces

Brides needn't carry their bouquets, they can wear ethereal and whimsical floral pieces around their necks or on their waists instead.

Couples are urged to speak with their florists about the innovative ways they can make flowers an even more awe-inspiring component of their weddings.



Local vendors are often a go-to choice when couples are planning their wedding ceremonies and receptions. As the "shop local" movement grows in popularity, weddings present a prime opportunity to embrace this movement.

Couples may have different ideas regarding where to tie the knot, but local vendors can be hired regardless of geography. Brides magazine says the biggest factor influencing wedding location is the size of the guest list and the number of people who wouldn't be able to attend if the wedding was in a particular locale. Hometowns might be the traditional choice regarding wedding location, but the XO Group says one in four couples now host destination weddings.

Once couples choose a town

or city to host their weddings, they can begin exploring the benefits of working with locallybased vendors.

Familiarity

Local vendors will be familiar with the area and possibly even the location where the wedding will be held. That can help couples avoid having to give directions, discuss venue protocols, and handle other tasks that must be worked out with non-local vendors. For example, local photographers familiar with a particular venue will know all of the best places to get shots, and some vendors may have preexisting relationships with venue representatives that could ensure wedding day operations ao smoothly.

Proximity

Local vendors can meet with brides and grooms more readily throughout the planning process, making things less stressful on the happy couple. This also makes it easier to drop off deposits, attend meetings, make fitting appointments, or attend styling sessions.

Savings

Couples who travel for their weddings and employ local vendors will not have to pack as much. Using local vendors eliminates the need to bring along bulky dresses, decorative items, flowers, and much more. Plus, couples needn't pay to transport and house vendors brought along from back home.

Environment

Individuals who take great strides to conserve resources

by reducing their energy consumption and protecting the environment often find that shopping local is beneficial. Local vendors are more likely to source their materials from other local businesses, reducing their carbon footprints along the way. For example, local caterers may rely on local farmers for their foods, affording couples the chance to host eco-friendly or even farm-to-table weddings.

Customization

Working with local vendors often translates into getting more personalized service and attention than mass retailers or merchants can provide.

Going local when choosing wedding vendors is an increasingly popular choice among couples about to tie the knot.





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More Couples Are Embracing Edgy, Idventurous Weddings



Brides and grooms once flt compelled to conform to the trappings of traditional weddings. From uber-romantic vows to pastel colors to the penultimate white tiered cake, various wedding components were long considered must-haves. But modern couples are increasingly expressing their individuality, and even embracing more edgy and adventurous elements, when planning their weddings.

According to The Knot, a leading bridal resource and information site, today's weddings are not what they were just a few years ago. Bold colors, exotic cakes and nontraditional foliage, are just some of the elements modern couples are embracing to set their weddings apart.

Adventurous locales

Vineyards and catering halls can be great places to tie the knot, but couples who like to push the envelope are looking to more adventurous locales to impart their unique spin on their weddings. Sharing vows atop a mountain crest at the end of a favorite hiking trail or on a roller coaster at a theme park that harkens back to a first date are some adventurous places to tie the knot.

Outside-the-box menus

Couples may want to break with tradition by offering a wide selection of foods at their receptions. These foods can include items that fit with their specific ethnic cuisines, gourmet comfort foods (think cocktail franks wellington), or foods that fit with their dietary choices, such as organic or vegan options. Work with a caterer to provide a variety of tasty choices.

Bold wardrobe choices

Brides can put new spins on their gowns by adding color and texture. Sequins, bold embroidery, shorter hemlines, and whatever adventurous fashion style you want to impart can be considered. If white isn't your thing, that's okay, too. Yellow and slate gray look great together. Gentlemen can choose to wear a black suit or any combination of color and style they want to make a dramatic impression.

Full of flavor

Cakes don't have to be white with white buttercream. In fact, couples can make things even more tasty by incorporating favorite flavor combinations into their cakes. For example, a chocolate and caramel filling reminiscent of a candy bar might be something to consider.

Modern couples are embracing bold, unique and edgy components when planning their weddings. Putting an individualized spin on the ceremony and reception can make couples even more excited to tie the knot.

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The Evolution of Wedding

Wedding favors have changed — and in many cases for the better. Favors have evolved from the inexpensive trinkets purchased in bulk into more personalized mementos that guests can cherish.

Today's couples are interested in customizing their weddings and offering guests something meaningful, or at the very least, edible, so that favors don't immediately get relegated to the trash can. According to Heather Jones of Wente Vineyards in California, favors have moved from "goodie bags" toward items that are experimental and fun. Wedding planners from across the country offer these wedding favor trends that couples may want to incorporate into their own celebrations.

Welcome bags

Rather than take-home bags, welcome bags have replaced the traditional favor trinket at some weddings. Many weddings have become multi-day events that ask guests traveling from out of town to attend a wedding weekend. To help greet them and make their experience memorable, couples may fill a gift bag with items guests can use or enjoy during their stay like a bottle of locally sourced maple syrup or some handmade soaps from a nearby shopkeeper.

Experience gifts

Instead of a candle or a monogrammed cake server, think of experiences to offer guests. A coupon for free drinks at a nearby brewery, a tour of a local attraction while guests are in town or a group excursion for guests attending a destination wedding can be fun and will help guests create lasting memories.

Charitable donations

Some couples feel that favors are wasteful and would rather set aside a portion of their wedding budgets toward giving back. In such situations, a donation to charity in guests' names can be the way to go. Guests can vote on two favorite charities advertised on a special table at the wedding reception. The one with the most votes will get the proceeds.

Late-night snacks

After a night of celebrating, some guests may want the festivities to continue, but may need some extra sustenance to make it through a few more hours. Some couples are eschewing traditional favors in lieu of making room for extra food or bever-



age expenses that can include after-party treats. These may run the gamut from wood-fired pizzas to food truck vendors to extra desserts. A tasty take-home option also may be given, such as fresh zeppolis or beignets, or even a personalized bottle of wine. Even if the food and drink is not consumed right away, there's a good chance it will hit the spot when guests return to their hotel rooms.

Wedding favors are changing to keep up with the times and keep guests feeling extra special.





Wedding Receptions On-Site Catering All Inclusive



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Alfordable Bachelor & Bachelorette Party Ideas

Weddings can be expensive. Various sources estimate the average cost of weddings is anywhere from \$26,000 to \$31,000. Couples and their parents may bear the brunt of wedding expenses, but those who have accepted a role in the wedding party also can expect their share of expenses.

Taking into account gifts, wardrobes, makeup, bridal showers, and travel, including getting to and from the bachelor/ bachelorette party, bridal party members are on the hook for a lot of money when their friends or family members tie the knot. Many travel for their bachelor/



men and women like to



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bachelorette parties, and cost-conscious bridal party members may be concerned about how expensive such parties can be. Pulling out all the stops can be exciting, but there's no guarantee these types of parties will be more enjoyable than simpler soirées.

Taking steps to control costs can help costconscious couples and their friends. The following are some affordable ideas that can be fun for all involved.

• Bar or winery crawl: Partygoers typically want to enjoy a night out on the town, and traveling from one establishment to another can be a fun way to do just that. Everyone invited can set themselves apart with a signature item (hat, T-shirt, or colored clothing), and make the rounds.

• Attend a group event: Group events include sporting events, concerts. theater shows, or a night at a comedy club. Investigate discounted tickets for large

groups. Belt out the tunes:

Open mic nights at restaurants, bars and other establishments around town may make for a fun way for friends to share a few laughs together. Participants need not be professional singers to join in on the festivities.

• Camp out:

Get in touch with nature by enjoying a camping trip, complete with a campfire and a few brews. Spending time in the wilderness can restore focus and let stress melt away.

• Poker or game night:

Groups can gather around the poker table to test their skills in poker and other card games. With some free-flowing beverages and snacks galore, games can get pretty animated.

• Dinner party:

Hire a chef to visit your house and prepare a meal for guests. Serve a signature cocktail and let the conversation flow.

Bachelor and bachelorette parties can be affordable without sacrificing fun.



TOTAL BUDGET

45% RECEPTION

- ____ VENUE
- _____ CATERING & CAKE
- _____ RENTALS
- (FURNITURE, LINENS)
- ____ ENTERTAINMENT
- _____ FAVORS

12% PHOTO & VIDEO

- _____ PHOTOGRAPHER
- VIDEOGRAPHER
- ENGAGEMENT PHOTOS

12% FLOWERS & DECOR

- CEREMONY FLOWERS
- ___ RECEPTION FLOWERS
- ____ CENTERPIECES
- BOUQUETS & BOUTON-NIERES

3% MISCELLANEOUS

___ GIFTS ___ PARKING/TRANSPORTATION ___ CUSHION

3% CEREMONY

- _____ MARRIAGE LICENSE
- _____ OFFICIANT FEES
- ____ CEREMONY VENUE
- ____ CEREMONY MUSICIANS

12% ATTIRE _

- _____ WEDDING DRESS
- ____ ALTERATIONS
- ____ TUXEDO
- _____ WEDDING RINGS
- _____ ACCESSORIES
- _____ HAIR & MAKEUP

8% PLANNER _

- _____ WEDDING PLANNER
- ____ DAY-OF COORDINATION

3% STATIONARY

- ____ INVITATIONS
- _____ SAVE THE DATES
- ____ POSTAGE
 - ____ THANK YOU CARDS

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Post Engagement

ledding F

- Settle on a budget
- Start Gathering names + addresses for a guest list
- Narrow down 2-3 potential dates
- Create a wedding website

12 MONTHS BEFORE

- Finalize a wedding date
- Find & Reserve the venue
- O Book your celebrant/officant
- Choose your wedding party
- Find & book main vendors: photographer, videographer, catering, entertainment, florist
- Reserve a block of hotel rooms for out-of-town guests
- Begin shopping for dresses

11-9 MONTHS BEFORE

- Confrim theme + color palette
- Begin shopping for wedding party dresses + suits
- Have wedding dress altered
- Choose + order invitations
- Book any cars/transportation
- Research hair + makeup artists
- Research required insurance: venue, wedding, event
- Shop for hair accessories, jewelry, shoes
- O Set up gift registry
- Plan + book honeymoon

8-6 MONTHS BEFORE

- Send out save-the-dates
- Research and order cake
- Meet with celebrant/officant
- Research + order favors
- Book rehersal dinner venue
- Purchase wedding rings
- Ask wedding party members to plan bachelor/ette parties

5-4 Months Before

- Book wedding night accomidations
- O Work with florist on flowers
- Decide on a playlist
- Make any rental item arrangements (tables, chairs)
- Reserve any additional sound/ lighting equipment needed

3-2 Months Before

- Send wedding invitations
- Finalize menu with caterer
- Obtain marriage license
- Send draft run sheet to vendors
- Confirm ceremony running order with celebrant/officant
- O Begin to write vows
- Order gifts for bridal party, parents + each other
- Order menu cards
- Purchase wedding decor
- Finalize full day timeline
- Order rehersal dinner invites
- Schedule hair/makeup test run

2-1 MONTHS BEFORE

- Finalize seating arrangements
- Confirm details with vendors
- Order wedding programs
- Order thank you notes

lan' Checklis

- O Confirm honeymoon bookings
- Track RSVPs and follow up with non-responders
- Send out as many payments as possible
- Decide on a wet weather contingency plan if outdoors
- Meet with photographer/ videographer to discuss shots
- Organize guestbook, cake servers, candles (small decor)
- Confirm # of centerpieces, bouquets + boutonniers with florist

1 WEEK BEFORE

- Give final schedule to all important parties
- Give final guest count to caterer
- Confirm vendor arrival/delivery times for day
- O Break in shoes
- Waxing/threading
- Finalizing vows

DAY BEFORE

- Give rings + vendor checks to best man for the day of
- Manicure + pedicure
- Attend rehersal + dinner
- Orink lots of water
- Finish packing for honeymoon

PRACTICE VOWS. DRINK WATER. EAT. GET MARRIED.



Months of planning is par readings to honoring loved venue close to the ceremo- in the faith, and there may for the course for couples ones to immersing oneself ny site. This keeps guests, be some aspects of the about to tie the knot. Much in his or her faith, these of that planning concerns tips can help couples plan the reception, and rightfullytheir perfect ceremony.

so. Receptions last londer than ceremonies, and couples are often involved in every reception detail, from picking the appetizers to serve during cocktail preceedings, whether that hour to choosing the final entails writing your own song before everyone calls vows or choosing moving it a night. But it's equally important that couples de- thing to you. When given vote considerable attention ample attention, seemingly can preside over the certo their wedding ceremonies.

Give the ceremony equal footing with the reception.

Spend time trying to put a personalized spin on the music that means someminor details can make for a special, memorable ceremony.

A wedding ceremony might not last long, but it is the most crucial component of a couple's wedding day and can even set festivities. From choosing

Choose a ceremony location that is close to the reception site.

some of whom may be out-of-towners who have already traveled extensive- you have wiggle room, try ly, from spending too much to keep the ceremony to time on the road during thearound 30 minutes; othday of the wedding.

Get to know the

officiant.

The officiant should be someone with whom you both feel comfortable. This person should know you well enough that he or she are key places to draw atemony and add sentiments dress up the chairs/pews, that come across as authentic and personalized.

• Do your best to avoid especially lengthy ceremonies.

ceremony that you cannot cut short or modify. But if

erwise, you run the risk of guests getting antsy, especially if children are in the audience.

Decorate the ceremony space.

While the altar and aisle tention, couples also can ceiling (if allowed), and entrance to the space to make it welcoming and romantic. Even wedding ceremonies

that likely won't run long

Couples will need to meetcan benefit from some pre-If a ceremony will take the tone for the rest of the place in a house of worship, the religious requirements wedding planning. if they are getting married try to choose a reception



Features to Look for in an Outdoor Wedding Venue

Couples will remember their wedding day for the rest of their lives. The day a couple says "I do" is often the culmination of months of planning, and much of those efforts are dedicated to creating a special ceremony that will create cherished memories.

The choice of venue is a significant decision, and today's couples have more options regarding where to tie the knot than ever before. Many couples on the cusp of getting hitched are looking to do so in the great outdoors.

Nature took center stage at weddings in 2020, as many couples moved their ceremonies outdoors to adhere to government guidelines issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Couples considering outdoor venues for their weddings can look for certain features that can make the big day as special as it is safe.

• Backdrop

An awe-inspiring backdrop, whether it's the natural beauty of a mountaintop or a beach with the sound of ocean waves crashing into the shoreline, can make for great photos and a ceremony couples and their guests will never forget.

• Plan B

Couples may work hard to ensure everything goes off without a hitch, but ultimately the elements are in control during outdoor wedding ceremonies. So couples hoping to host an outdoor ceremony may want to look for sites that have a readily accessible indoor option just in case Mother Nature is not cooperating. Many reception venues are capable of hosting indoor and outdoor ceremonies as well as dinners, so this might be the best option for couples who want to have outdoor weddings during times of the year when weather is typically inclement or unpredictable, such as winter, early spring or late fall.

Lighting

What's awe-inspiring in person may be hard to capture on film. Couples may want to bring their wedding photographers along as they search for outdoor ceremony sites. Professional photographers can help couples determine which sites will make for great photos and which ones might make it hard to capture the beauty of the site's surroundings.

Accessibility

Couples will want to make sure all of their guests can be there to witness the ceremony. Before choosing an outdoor ceremony site, consider those guests who may have mobility issues, such as grandparents. A midday hike up a mountain might be doable for most guests, but it may exclude others from witnessing the ceremony. Try to find an outdoor ceremony site that's readily accessible to everyone. In addition, keep in mind that the more accessible a site is the easier it is to get away and get indoors if the weather takes a sudden, unexpected turn for the worse.

Outdoor weddings are wildly popular. Couples who find outdoor ceremony sites with certain features may rest easier knowing they and their guests are safe and sound no matter what Mother Nature has in store come the big day.



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