



FALL
Brides



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The Autumn I-Do Trend

Statistics say that the fall wedding season is gaining in popularity. According to The Knot, 2015 figures showed a real shift from summer to fall weddings.

About 39 percent of couples recited their vows in autumn, a full six percentage points more than summer-season nuptials.

Dig into more wedding statistics below from The Knot's Real Wedding Study and let them inspire you to wed in the fall.

2015 WEDDING STATS

- 39 percent of couples got married during the fall season in 2015.
- In 2015, only 33 percent of couples opted for summer nuptials, down from 39 percent in 2014.

AVERAGE SPENDING

- Average wedding cost (excludes honeymoon): \$32,641 (up from

\$31,213 in 2014)

- Most expensive place to get married: Manhattan, \$82,299 average spend
- Least expensive place to get married: Alaska, \$17,361 average spend
- Average spent on a wedding dress: \$1,469
- Average price of wedding cake: \$575
- Average cost of invitations: \$445

BRIDE & GROOM INFO

- Average marrying age: Bride, 29; Groom, 31
- Average number of guests: 139
- Average number of bridesmaids: 5
- Average number of groomsmen: 5

BY THE MONTH

- Most popular month to get engaged: December (16percent)
- Average length of engagement: 14.5 months
- Most popular month to get married: October (17 percent) and September (15 percent)
- Popular wedding colors: ivory/white (47 percent), blue (39 percent), pink (30 percent), metallics (34 percent), purple (21percent)

ABOUT THE WEDDINGS

- Percentage of destination weddings: 21 percent (down from 24 percent in 2014)
- 22 percent of weddings have a theme reflecting the couple's

personalities

- Wedding planners are also becoming an integral part of the wedding planning process, with 26 percent of couples hiring a planning professional in 2015 (up from 19 percent in 2010).
- Professional DJs are also on the rise with 66 percent of couples hiring one (up from 61 percent in 2010).
- On average, the bride's parents contribute 44 percent of the overall wedding budget, the bride and groom contribute 43 percent, and the groom's parents contribute 12percent (others account for the remaining 1 percent).

A Dose of Adorable

Your wedding plans involve a comprehensive set of responsibilities and tasks that include a host of important matters, such as your dress, decorations and the honeymoon.

Embedded in those plans is the choice of that special little guy that will bear that all important ring.

HOW TO CHOOSE ONE

How do you choose that cute wedding party member with the biggest responsibility? Most weddings only incorporate one ring bearer, but many families have a number of equally loved nephews and male cousins. You do not want to make any of them feel left out or create an atmosphere that one of them is your favorite, so the choice can be difficult.

Age will have to be a top consideration, because you want your ring bearer to be old enough to follow directions. Traditionally, ring bearers are three to eight years old according to the experts in the industry. Younger boys could work if they are mature for their age.

Their personality and nature are important too, because some might be introverted or shy. They might prefer to just watch the wedding. Others might love that attention and



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the limelight. On the other hand, if they are too active, they might get bored with the pomp and circumstance. Take all of these factors into consideration when choosing your ring bearer.

THE PERFECT CLOTHES

Make sure your little guy is ready to strut proudly down the aisle with the perfect clothes. Consider the designer,

color and obviously, the price if you're the one footing the bill for the ring bearer.

Many times the ring bearer will mimic the groom's ensemble. If you have trouble finding anything in his smaller size to match, try finding an outfit with colors that match the overall theme of your wedding.

The main key is to make sure your ring bearer is wearing comfortable clothes and

shoes that are the right size and fit correctly. You want him to enjoy the experience too.

PREPARING HIM

If your ring bearer is anxious about his part, explain to him about how proud you are of him. Puffing up his confidence can only help the situation. Reassure him that he is perfect for the job and that his responsibilities are important to the

day in general.

Practice his role several times to help him remember and get comfortable in the environment. Another good idea is to place someone along the aisle or the center who he knows and will encourage him down the aisle.

You might be pleasantly surprised as he rises to the occasion. Make sure you reward him for his efforts.

Writing Your Own Vows

There is nothing more priceless than writing your own wedding vows. These carefully chosen and spoken words will reveal the essence of your love for each other and serve as special memories that can literally last a lifetime.

If you're considering writing your own vows, there are some steps to take before making your final decision. Read on for tips on how to work together with your spouse to prepare your special vows.

THE GROUNDWORK

The first thing to do is to make sure you both agree on the idea of writing your own vows, and if so, whether you will write them together or keep it secret until the wedding.

To make sure you stick to a reasonable time limit, make sure to build in a specific word count. Vows that last five minutes or more may be a bit excessive, so keep the words smooth and concise.

Be sure to discuss the idea of reciting your own vows with your officiant. Some may prefer traditional vows, but there may be a way for you to also work in your own wording. Let the officiant know what you are thinking and be open to different ways to pull it off.

PERSONAL VOWS

A good place to start when writing your vows is how you met. Pinpoint that first moment you laid eyes on your spouse and bring back the mem-



ories with poignant words. Another good idea is to borrow quotes from books or poetry that have a special spot in your relationship.

After describing the beginning, move to the present. Now is a good time to describe the personal and enduring traits — loyalty, strength, humor — that caused you to end up here on your special day with your

spouse.

Finally, end your vows with your hopes and dreams for the future. Promise all the things you are prepared to do to make your marriage last forever.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

There are no rules for writing your own vows, but it's best to follow the

cues of your relationship. Be authentic. You know your spouse better than anyone else, so understand whether the moment will call for humor or more serious, sensitive words.

Maybe you want to deliver one powerful sentence or sing your vows. There are countless ways to express your love, so take the time and put in the effort to kick off your marriage the right way.

Choosing a Facility

After the wedding, you will want to celebrate your new lives together with your guests. Where you choose to do so should come down to size, cost and overall fit for your party plans.

Selecting the right facility for your reception can be a challenging part of the wedding planning process. Enlist the help of a local planner to come up with options that meet your requirements, and try to get this step done early in the process.

Most reception halls and community centers will require a down payment well in advance of your event. That's why it's crucial to hammer out all of your research on the front end.

CONSIDERATIONS

The reception facility is the backdrop to the wedding party. There will be many things to consider in your search.

You might get ideas from receptions you have attended. Ask friends and family for places that are reputable and affordable.

When searching for that perfect reception venue, you might consider any themes in your wedding. The reception is an extension of the main event, so be sure to check if the facility can accommodate your special ideas or requests.

SPECIFICS

Location has to be considered when choosing the right reception facility. This will be the case especially for a destination wedding but also for a



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local one.

You don't want to travel a long distance to a reception and neither do your guests. Keep logistics in mind when settling on a facility.

Size counts too, because the venue needs to comfortably accommodate the number of wedding guests you expect. This applies for safety reasons,

also. Consider the atmosphere and mood you want to create for that first event of your married life.

FACILITY IDEAS

The traditional place for a reception has been a church fellowship hall, multi-purpose room or basement. Some still prefer this, and that is perfect-

ly fine. Whatever meets your needs on your wedding day will be appreciated by your family and friends celebrating with you.

Additionally, local civic centers and halls can be rented for your reception. Wineries make great reception venues, especially if you're looking for stunning scenery. If you're plan-

ning a smaller wedding, you may have a family member or friend offer to let you use their home.

There numerous options when it comes to choosing the perfect facility for your reception. Consider all factors before making your final decision and stick with your choice.

Open the Door To Nature

One of the hottest trends in wedding planning today is bringing a touch of nature into the experience. You can easily achieve this goal through strategic additions to your invitations, decorations and even meals.

If Mother Nature is on your invite list and you appreciate all things outdoors, there are many ways to make your fall wedding the perfect nature-inspired event.

CHOOSE A THEME AND SPOT

Nature is full of plants and animals and beautiful landscapes, and it evokes feelings of peace and calm in many people. This means there are numerous natural themes you could design into your wedding to create a pleasing atmosphere.

Use an earthy color palette that matches the fall season. Pumpkin, sage and brown would be a great mix of colors.

Your nature-inspired palette can be carried through to your bridesmaids dresses, too. Choose complementary, casual and comfortable outfits that play well with your main colors for a stunning pairing.

A natural location in the woods or other beautiful outdoors setting can be the perfect backdrop to your fall wedding or reception. This can be a cabin by a lake, a park or a nature preserve. You also can consider the beach or a local wine vineyard for a beautiful backdrop. Talk the decision over with your spouse and make sure to check with the land authority for any rules on maximum number of guests, fires, trash or alcohol.

Use an earthy color palette that matches the fall season.

DECORATIONS AND MEALS

You can incorporate your natural theme and colors into your invitations and decorations. Check with local printers to find materials that are designed and printed on recycled paper. This is a great way to make a sustainable impact on the environment while building your wedding plans.

Natural fabrics include materials such as linen or cotton and make great options for tablecloths. Create fabulous bouquets with your favorite flowers. Pick fresh wildflowers or any variety of flower in season and loosely bind them with your bouquet for a cute design touch.

The menu for your natural-themed wedding might encompass organic, locally sourced wine and food for the reception. Work with your local sustainable food organization or farmers to find out what is in season at the time of your wedding and give your guests the freshest meals possible.

To end your nature-themed wedding, consider planting a tree after your ceremony or giving away flower seed packets as party favors. The possibilities are endless. Just be creative and let nature inspire you.



Bridal Skin Care

The right products and care techniques can help you achieve great skin with a healthy glow on the most special day of your life.

Skin hydration and your dietary choices both play a role in how good your skin can look, so be ready to make necessary choices to ensure that perfect complexion at your wedding and reception.

DAILY SKIN CARE

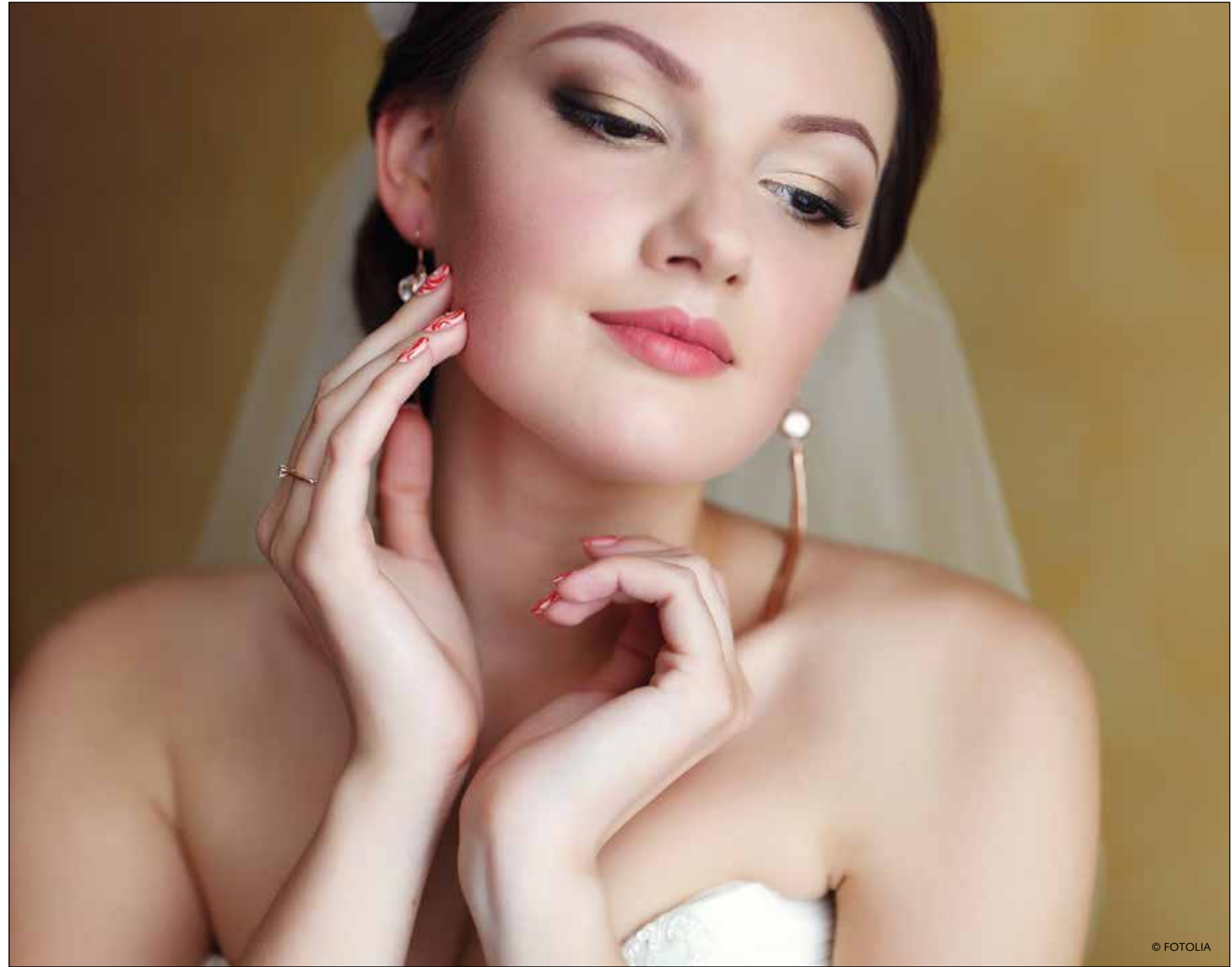
The best strategy to great wedding skin is developing a daily skincare routine well ahead of time. Even if you haven't always followed a regimen or have avoided using sunscreen at times, it's not too late to pamper your skin for your wedding day.

The first step is cleaning your skin daily. Use makeup remover first for mascara and lipstick. Always use your hands to apply your favorite cleanser, because washcloths can contain built-up bacteria.

A regular facial at your local spa will refresh your skin, so don't be afraid to treat yourself as part of your cleansing routine. Your local spas and dermatologists have more in-depth procedures, such as microdermabrasion, which can exfoliate layers of bad skin. Check in with these local professionals to see what can be done to help you reach your skin care goals.

DIET

One of the most overlooked factors in the health of your skin is diet. Eat the wrong foods and your skin may endure breakouts or extra oils — especially on your face. A healthy,



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balanced diet is key to maintaining a healthy glow, so be sure to be diligent about your diet choices in the months leading up to your wedding day.

Your daily diet should include all the nutrients essential to healthy skin. Some superfoods that contain these nutrients are grapefruit, broccoli and lettuce. All skin types crave water so stay hydrated by drinking

plenty of clear liquids. Watermelon is a super food that provides vitamins and fluids to your skin, so be sure to work in plenty of these types of snacks.

MAKEUP

Some brides will choose to wear makeup to enhance their skin while others will go natural. This is a personal choice. All that matters is you

feel beautiful while you're exchanging your vows.

If you plan to wear makeup on your wedding day, mix a small amount of moisturizer with it to keep your foundation and skin from drying out. This also will help soften your complexion. Every bit of extra moisture matters on what can be a long day of photos, smiling, dancing and celebrating with your loved ones.

International Honeymoons

Your honeymoon is the final aspect of your wedding plans. This part is all about celebrating your newfound love together, and many couples desire the romance and adventure of an international honeymoon.

These trips require additional health and safety considerations, so make sure you do your homework.

With a little research and proper planning, you can turn your cross-border honeymoon into a once-in-a-lifetime experience that you'll be talking about throughout your marriage.

SELECTING THE SPOT

Choosing your perfect international location will be a challenge, because you have to consider both of your interests before you settle on a spot.

Exotic places in paradise locations such as the Caribbean are popular for many reasons. They are breathtakingly beautiful, and they offer many peaceful excursions that can add to the experience.

Some couples prefer adventure over leisure. Others want to visit a piece of their heritage, especially if they share it together. To prepare for an international honeymoon, be aware that all countries requires certain documentation and identification, as well as passports. Look into these requirements now; you might need to apply and obtain these things well ahead of time to make sure you can legally make the trip.



SAFETY FACTORS

When you agree on a possible destination, safety is the next priority. There are many things that could compromise your honeymoon, so be vigilant of your location, past crime rates and any unrest that may be happening in the area of your destination.

Check with credible sources on the safety and security of the area. Another option is to ask someone you know who has been there in the past. One of the biggest factors to consider is the weath-

er conditions. Some exotic locations are prone to tropical storms and hurricanes during the fall season. It is especially important to be aware of this while making your plans.

SAFE, EFFECTIVE PLANNING

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, some types of international travel — especially to developing countries and rural areas — have higher health risks. Here are some tips from the CDC:

- Ensure that you are up to date on all your routine vaccines, as well as travel vaccines.
- Make appointments with your health care providers four to six weeks before your departure date.
- Be careful what you eat and drink, and use insect repellent.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching animals, especially monkeys, dogs and birds.