

# Winter Weddings



# A White Wedding

The elegance of a classic white winter wedding is hard to match. With snowy weather and colder temperatures, white is the color that represents the season.

White is a calming color that reflects all of the principles of what a good marriage is founded upon: peace, love, compromise and sustainability. It also is an extremely versatile color option that opens the doors for boundless combinations.

Get creative as you plan your white wedding, and remember that there are no limitations on your creativity.

## A WHITE WARDROBE

As a bride, you want to stand out. If your dress is bright white, you'll probably want to set your bridesmaids up with off-white selections or even a complementary color that fits your theme.

For groomsmen, black suits work well with vibrant white vests and ties. This balance of black and white will help bring to life whatever color you decide on as your primary choice.

Don't forget the kids. Your flower girl and ring bearer will look equal parts adorable and grown up in matching all-white outfits.



## WHITE DECORATIONS

When it comes to folding white into your decorations, consider the size of the rooms. White has a way of making a room look larger, so consider mixing in plenty of color if your ceremony and reception are in expansive spaces.

Some ways to mix white

into your decorations include white roses in tall floral centerpieces or white paper lanterns if your wedding is taking place in a warm-weather destination.

## COLOR VERSATILITY

White goes with anything. Choose red roses and decora-

tions for a vintage look or modernize your overall design with earth tones like rich oranges and deep greens. Depending on whether your ceremony is indoors or outdoors, there may be ways you can creatively play with the colors that are already around you.

Having a serene ceremony near a wooded area? Working in the earth tone strategy can be a home run. Holding your ceremony and reception indoors obviously opens up your choices, so work with your local wedding planner to choose the colors that work well with the space.

# The Naked Cake Trend

**T**rendy, simple and oh so delicious, naked cakes are all the rage in today's weddings. The mostly unfrosted delicacies have received a boost in popularity thanks to celebrity ceremonies across the world. But you don't have to be a famous actress to bring the delicious beauty of a naked cake to your wedding.

By using cake layers connected with only minimal amounts of frosting, these wedding desserts offer a light, bright sweetness in every bite. If the trend continues, naked cakes will be the hottest dessert choice for many weddings to come.

## ADD SOME FLAIR

Less icing doesn't have to mean less flair. There are plenty of creative additions that can result in a stunning, well-rounded cake.

Add fruity or flowery touches to really make your naked cake pop. Accent the frosting with a top layer of juicy strawberries or blackberries. Drizzle on some white chocolate or add dollops of whipped cream for added fla-



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vor.

These additions will accent your cake with interesting colors. You can even mix in some romance by adding a unique wedding topper or sliced figs, which are recognized in many cultures as a symbol of peace and bounty.

## A WINTER (OR SUMMER) TOUCH

Thinking of designing your cake specific to the season? Top it with natural elements such as evergreen branches or cranberries for a special touch. Keep the icing white to convey a look of classic tradi-

tion.

Looking to warm up your guests with your dessert? Add some rich, bold flavor with melted salted caramel on top of the cake. Offer complementary drinks such as warm apple cider and black coffee to push your sweet course to

a new level.

Chat with your local cake-maker for other ideas on pulling off the perfect naked cake. Your guests will surely point to your beautiful dress as the highlight of your wedding, but your unique cake won't be far behind.

# Protect Your Wedding



There's a reason the wintertime hasn't traditionally been the most popular season for weddings. Inclement weather, snowy conditions and potentially hazardous travel circumstances make planning a winter wedding quite a challenge.

Armed with the knowledge that Mother Nature can get in the way of a perfect cold-weather wedding, smart brides and planners should always be prepared for the worst-case scenario.

This can require having to move venues or update your guests of any changes at the last minute.

Fortunately there are steps you can take to make sure you and your guests are protected in the case of a winter-time curveball. Check them out below and put them into practice as you plan your upcoming ceremony and reception.

## INSURE YOURSELF

Investing in wedding insurance can be one of the smartest decisions you make while planning your wedding. Sure it costs a little bit extra, but consider the alternative: A blizzard rips through your town the night before your wedding and you're out the deposit you already put down on your venue.

For an extra few bucks, you can protect yourself from this disastrous dilemma. Most venues, photographers, DJs, videographers and florists offer some type of wedding insurance, and some service providers may even agree to reschedule their services for free in the case of snowy weather.

When it comes to logistics, try to plan the ceremony and reception in the same venue. This will help keep your guests from having to commute across snowy roads or walk across slushy parking lots.

## SMART SELF-CARE

People are more likely to get sick in the winter, which is a fact you should consider when planning your wedding. The last thing you want to see happen is yourself or a member of your wedding party falling under the weather due to a wintertime cold, flu or fever.

Make sure your bridesmaids and groomsmen are doing their part to remain healthy during the winter. Urge them to take steps to prevent disease, such as frequent hand washing, getting enough sleep and taking vitamin C.

On the day of the wedding, urge them to wear extra layers if they don't get in the way of their dresses or suits. Consider recommending the same strategy to your friends and family members, who can then spread the word to your remaining guests.

# Working with a Live Band

Looking to heat up your wedding reception? Hiring a live band always does the trick — if you can find one that meets your expectations. Many brides and grooms have found that securing a high-quality live band can be a challenge.

A lot of local bands have busy schedules on the weekends, so reach out months in advance to secure a solid booking. The right band can be worth this foresight, especially if they can play a strong mix of popular songs from across all music genres.

Drumroll please ... here are three tips to hiring a live band your guests will be talking about for years to come:

**1. Strategies for finding a band.** When you're looking to source and secure a band, look no further than your local network. Even if you aren't necessarily active in the regional music scene, odds are you know someone who is.

Start well in advance by attending concerts or events where local bands are playing. Ask your friends and family members for recommendations and let them know you're looking for a versatile



wedding band that can play to all crowds. Check your local newspaper's advertising section and search the web for bands in your area. You'll have a great band on the hook in no time.

**2. Do your homework.** There are many ways to vet a live band before signing the contract — and before even meeting with them. Most

bands have an online presence to display music, sell merchandise or list upcoming events. Start there.

Once you have put together a list of four or five local bands you'd consider hiring for your winter wedding, start making plans to connect with them. Reach out through their agent, or if they're smaller, just send an email to request a meeting.

**3. Give them VIP service.** You've hired a band and the wedding day has arrived. It's important to put someone in charge of the band's setup and sound-check processes. You're obviously going to have a bit too much on your plate to handle this, so choose a trustworthy friend or family member — preferably someone with knowledge of the music

industry — as the key point of contact.

This person will be in charge of making sure the band has accurate power and creative lighting. Depending on the size of the band, you also should consider setting up a private room for the band for them to practice any final touches and rest between sets.

# Collaborating with a Florist

The right florist is critical to the overall wedding experience for both you and your guests. If you have a florist in mind for your special day, it's important to work with him or her early in the process to make sure your expectations are well defined.

Look for a collaborative spirit and creativity in your florist. The combinations they are putting together for your bouquet should match not just your color scheme but also your overall personality. Be sure to meet early and often with your florist to make sure you're on the same page with your flower, color and presentation preferences.

## SET A BUDGET

Professional flowers and accessories can take up a large chunk of any wedding budget, so it's crucial to your bottom line to set aside the right amount of money. Ask yourself what you're looking to pay. Even if it looks like flowers may exceed what you have budgeted, there are creative ways to shift your wedding funds around to make it happen.



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Don't be afraid to negotiate with florists, as it's an expected part of doing business. They may be willing to take your rate, especially if their business traditionally slows down in the winter months.

## MAKE A LIST

Online tools and websites have made it easy for brides and grooms to research their

potential vendors, including florists in the local area. Sit down with your local newspaper or favorite mobile device and get searching.

Look for special rates for winter weddings and take notes about what kinds of packages your florists offer. They may sell a bundle that includes a bouquet, corsages and decorative accents. It

never hurts to negotiate a better deal if the shop owner seems open to it, so test the waters before throwing a reduced rate out into the open.

## CONTRACT, PLEASE!

Even if you personally know the florist you are considering hiring for your wedding, you should still always

have a signed contract that outlines specifications, project deadlines and final cost estimates.

Be leery of professional florists who don't offer a standard contract for their work. Signing a contract protects you in the case of not receiving full services, and can help you get your money back in the event of a disagreement.

# All-Natural Decorating Ideas

One of the best ways to make your wedding day stand out is with unique, nature-inspired decorations. From the centerpiece to the cake, nature can find its way into your wedding to make a lasting impact on your guests.

The wintertime is the best season for infusing nature into your wedding because of its broad range of colors and materials. Let the rustic charm of Mother Nature take over your decorations at your venue of choice. Just be sure to ask if there are any limitations on what you can bring into the space.

## CENTERPIECE IDEAS

Your winter wedding ceremony will spark great emotion from your guests, while your reception tables will bring them together for laughter and conversation deep into the night. You can enhance their experience by adding colorful, all-natural centerpieces to the tables.

Show off your creativity by incorporating your personality into the centerpiece. Go with fresh, seasonal flowers for a big statement. Incorporate wood or wood-



tone containers for a natural feel. Your guests will marvel at your attention to detail as they celebrate your special day.

## NATURAL MATERIALS

When it comes to finding natural materials for your wedding ceremony and reception, there are many options that can come straight from the great out-

doors.

These include leaves, acorns, twigs, evergreens or even fresh fruits like apples or cranberries. Of course, you can add artificial materials such as glass icicles, marbles or fake snow for added effect. There is no limit to your creativity when it comes to pulling together a natural decoration scheme.

## GET YOUR GUESTS INVOLVED

To really push your wedding into a level of natural sustainability, encourage your guests to recycle their cups, napkins and any other items that can be reused.

Use invitations made from recycled paper and include the same type of material for the RSVP cards that your

guests will send back.

You also can ask your guests to avoid wrapping your gifts in paper and instead use eco-friendly bags that you may be able to reuse for weddings you attend in the future. This level of commitment to the environment will make for the ultimate all-natural wedding while also making a statement about your values.

# By the Numbers

Couples are getting thriftier. Couples are spending more than ever. The more you research, the more conflicting information you find.

So just how much money are couples spending on their weddings and honeymoons? How does today's spending compare to that of years past?

The Knot releases an annual Real Weddings Survey. Last year's edition covered every thinkable statistic related to the wedding day, from the most popular colors to the average number of groomsmen picked for the ceremony.

Here are some of the highlights from The Knot's study, broken down into various categories:

## WEDDING COST

- **Average wedding cost:** \$32,641 (excludes honeymoon; more than \$1,000 more than 2014 weddings and more than \$5,000 up from five years ago)
- **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

## ABOUT THE BRIDE & GROOM

- **Average marrying age:** bride, 29; groom, 31
- **Most popular month to get engaged:** December (16 percent)

- **Average length of engagement:** 14.5 months
- **Most popular month to get married:** October (17 percent) and September (15 percent)

## ABOUT THE WEDDING

- **Average number of guests:** 139
- **Average number of bridesmaids:** five
- **Average number of groomsmen:** five
- **Popular wedding colors:** ivory/white (47 percent), blue (39 percent), pink (30 percent), metallics (34 percent), purple (21 percent)

## THE PERFECT LOCATION

The top 10 most expensive locations to get married in 2015:

- New York (Manhattan), \$82,299
- Illinois (Chicago), \$61,265
- New York (Westchester/Hudson Valley), \$57,501
- New York (Long Island), \$56,950
- New Jersey (North/Central), \$55,389
- Massachusetts (Cape Cod), \$54,334
- Rhone Island, \$50,266
- New York (Outer Boroughs), \$46,682
- California (Palm Springs), \$44,646
- Louisiana (New Orleans), \$44,178

