



Winter
Weddings



How Much Should Your Wedding Cost?

When planning your wintertime wonderland of a wedding, one topic probably surfaces to the top of your mind: Cost.

The national average wedding cost is \$33,931, according to The Knot's 2018 Real Weddings Study, and this number excludes the honeymoon.

Stick with credible local vendors and start the process of mapping out your wedding costs months in advance. The more preparation time you give yourself, the better chance you'll have at finding great deals and sticking to your budget.

START WITH QUOTES

To estimate how much you'll spend, get quotes based on your wedding style, date and location.

Here is a collection of the average vendor costs for weddings in the United States, according to The Knot.

- Reception venue: \$15,439
- Photographer: \$2,679
- Wedding/event planner: \$2,002
- Reception band: \$4,247
- Reception DJ: \$1,292
- Florist/decor: \$2,411
- Videographer: \$2,021
- Wedding dress: \$1,631
- Groom attire: \$283
- Wedding cake: \$528
- Ceremony venue: \$2,382
- Ceremony musicians: \$797

- Officiant: \$286
- Catering (price per person): \$70
- Transportation: \$856
- Favors: \$245
- Rehearsal dinner: \$1,297
- Engagement ring: \$5,680
- Invitations: \$386
- Hairstylist: \$123
- Makeup artist: \$102

STICK TO A BUDGET

Even once you plan how much you'll be spending on your wedding, it can be difficult to stay on track. The problem is that those extra dollars add up in a hurry. Before you know it, you may be forced into a tough spot of having to choose between vendors or accessories.

The best way to stay on budget is to keep a detailed journal of all your spending. From the minute your wedding purchases begin, save the receipts and log them into a spreadsheet. There are multiple mobile applications available that make this as easy as entering them into your phone.

EXTRA COSTS

Don't forget that you'll need to also budget for a marriage license. Application fees vary by state, county, city or other conditions. The standard license fee is \$27.50 in New Orleans, \$50 in Boston and \$100 in Santa Barbara, California, to give you an idea of what a license may run for you in your local region.

Bachelorette Party Planning

One of the most enjoyable parts of your wedding planning experience is taking a breath to get some quality time with your girlfriends.

A well-organized bachelorette party can take your mind off the day-to-day stresses of getting your wedding day put together.

It can also be a great way to reconnect with your besties one last time before your marriage kicks off. When it comes to setting the details for your bachelorette party, that responsibility should fall on your maid of honor and bridesmaids.

Share these tips with them to make sure your special girl time ends up being one of the most memorable moments of your last days of singlehood.

WHO SHOULD HOST THE PARTY?

There are no rules set in stone as to who should host a bachelorette party. Often the maid of honor and bridesmaids do the honors but you can also pick any of your other friends, relatives or co-workers who may want to get involved.

The key is to set the expectation with how you would most like to spend your day or weekend with the ladies. Are you looking for some adventure with hiking, water



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skiing or ziplining? Maybe you're more of a cabin in the woods kind of girl surrounded by quiet nature and modern amenities. Or perhaps you'd like a night out in the big city with multiple stops at local restaurants and bars.

Whatever your preference, it's important that you share this with whoever is planning your party. That way you're not surprised or disappointed

when your party turns into something you're not typically into.

WHO SHOULD BE INVITED?

This can be a tricky proposition, especially if you're expecting a large group of attendees at your wedding. The last thing you want to do is to let down someone who may have been expecting to

attend your bachelorette party. Work with your party hosts to make sure everyone you'd like to invite makes the cut. Anywhere from 10 to 20 guests at your bachelorette party is usually ideal.

ARE GIFTS NECESSARY?

The bachelorette party is not a gift party like your bridal shower is, so presents aren't necessary. That said, this is a

great opportunity for guests to give the bride silly or memorable gifts.

You might ask everyone to bring a gag gift or maybe something nostalgic tied to an inside joke or past experience together. As the bride-to-be, make sure to let your party know that gifts are not required and that you're just looking forward to everyone celebrating with you.

Invest in Winter Accessories

Having the right winter accessories as a bride can make the difference between coziness and chilliness on your wedding day.

When building your dress design for your wedding ensemble and the outfits of your party, keep in mind the need for accessories to really help tie your look together. Read on for a few specific ideas for accessories you should consider before you walk down the aisle.

GLOVES TO KEEP HANDS TOASTY

Frozen hands are not a good look on your wedding day. Many companies have produced pretty options for your winter wedding when it comes to gloves or hand warmers. Shop around at your local boutiques for accessories that you may not find at the big box stores or online.

CAPES & VEILS

An outdoor winter wedding definitely requires layers — for everyone involved. Go with a faux fur stole or cardie to keep your shoulders from shivering. You could outfit your bridal party with long-sleeve dresses for an extra layer of protection.

UNDER YOUR DRESS



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A cold, blistery day can do a number on your legs. Give yourself a shield against the cold by wearing thick tights under your dress. Long Johns for the groom and men in your party can help them stay comfortable during your vows.

JEWELRY AND DESIGN

You can find winter wonderland theme bridal and

wedding accessories from your local jeweler that include snowflake accessory sets, crystal candle holders, and crystal jewelry. When it comes to colors, think shades of silver, sapphire and navy blue, red and emerald.

PRINCESS TIARAS

Check with your local wedding shop or jeweler to see if they offer crystal snowflake

bridal tiaras. Shimmering bursts of rhinestone and crystal flowers can help make your headpiece one-of-a-kind for your special day.

EARRINGS

Find a glamorous pair of wedding earrings featuring gemstones that match your overall color scheme.

The gemstones can match crystals embedded in other

parts of your outfit.

WEDDING FAVORS

Your winter-themed accessories can even stretch into your guests' party favors. Snowflake bookmarks or white candle votives make for perfect items. Package your favors in sleek white boxes with colored accents and white satin bows for a nice wintry touch.

Think of your Guests

Your guests deserve the best experience possible when celebrating your special day with you. There are many ways you can keep them top of mind to show they you've been thinking about them just as much as the overall day.

Considering you may have multiple generations coming to your wedding, including grandparents and young children, how you make them feel comfortable can be very different. Work with your local wedding planner to analyze your list of guests to make sure you've got all your bases covered when it comes to giving everyone a day to remember.

GIVE THEM TIME

Snowy or rainy weather means bad traffic, so build in extra time for guests to get from your ceremony to your reception. If possible have your ceremony and reception in one venue. This would make transport in bad weather even easier.

Consider building in extra time into the festivities at your reception as well. Many weddings are slammed with back-to-back mini events like

the speeches, parent-child dances and dance-offs. Why not give your guests a more elegant, peaceful reception experience by starting off low key?

Especially if they have had to battle wintry weather during their travel, a nice break in the action will be well-received.

KEEP GUESTS WARM

Looking for a way to keep your guests nice and warm? A hot drink on arrival is a considerate idea. Hot chocolate or tea is the perfect treat on a wintry day.

When it comes to your wedding party, you can outfit them in bold color peacoats or neutral capes to help them

fight the chill. Your friends will be thankful that you thought of their comfort ahead of time.

KEEP THE KIDDOS COMFY

What wedding ceremony or reception would be complete without a bunch of children running around? If you're using kids for your ring bearer

or flower girl, then you'll need to consider their warmth and comfort for your winter wedding.

Think cozy, chic blankets for any children in the audience and shawls for any kiddos in your wedding party. You want them remembering how special this day was, not how cold they were throughout.



Winter Wedding Style Tips

Winter weddings allow for some of the most breathtaking backdrops for your special day.

You can choose to get married in the mountains or a snowy, sleepy countryside. You can also go glam with high-end city buildings that provide enthralling views of your favorite downtown.

Whatever you decide, your winter wedding style should match whatever theme or look you're going for with your overall wedding experience.

FOOTWEAR: STAY WARM AND STYLISH

Boots can be a stylish bridal shoe option for winter weddings, especially since you may not be able to predict the weather. Rain and snow can do a number on heels, so boots may be your best bet.

And with today's trendy boot options, you don't have to sacrifice function for fashion. Find a stylish tall boot that complements your dress and gives you adequate protection from the elements. Remember that your dress is likely going to cover your boots from view, so don't feel like you need to match your colors or overall theme.

GLITTER GLAM

Looking to add some pop to your wedding party's dresses? Add glitter or sequins to help them stand apart. These materials are easy to find in the win-



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ter time, and they add a great deal of depth to dresses, scarves or other accessories.

Remember, simple is better. Overdoing it with glitter is a surefire way to take the attention off the simplicity of your overall design and can make your theme look tacky. Work

with your local wedding planner to devise ways to incorporate glitter into your wedding party's dresses, accessories and flowers.

BRING IN NATURAL ELEMENTS

One way to make your win-

ter wedding one with Mother Nature is by integrating various materials from the great outdoors. Wreaths of pine branches or berries are perfect for adorning the bride and groom's chairs or buffet tables.

Look for unexpected ways to sneak in a little green to really

make a statement, no matter what your color scheme is. Seasonal prints are also natural and in style this year. Consider implementing flannels or bold stripes into some of your decor pieces, including table runners or bouquet ribbons.

Perfect Winter Wedding Photos

Great photographs can make your wedding day live on forever, so don't skimp on their importance when you're planning out your wedding budget.

Depending on how much you're willing to spend, you can find local professionals who will take care of both photography and videography services. Decide how important quality photos and videos are to you, and then reach out to at least three local vendors to see who best fits your personalities and budget goals.

Read on for a few more tips that will make finding your perfect wedding photographer a snap.

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Before engaging with potential photographers, compile a list of questions that will show you they are the right fit for you.

Have they taken winter wedding photos before? It gets dark much earlier in the winter so you're looking for a photographer with experience adjusting to these conditions.

Do they offer print and online access to your photos? Understanding how your photos will be delivered once they are edited is a key detail



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to hammer out now.

RESEARCH ONLINE

When you're looking for your perfect winter wedding photographer, take a look at their websites for testimonials and sample photography. Make sure their style works with what you're envisioning for your wedding photos.

If you don't like the way

their photos look online, you're probably not going to like how yours turn out. Pay attention to testimonials so you can get a sense of the photographer's skill set, customer service and experience shooting winter weddings.

If the vendor checks all your boxes, request a free quote you can talk over with your future spouse. Make sure

there is a signed contract that outlines both parties' responsibilities, including payment, arrival time, length of the photography session and number of locations.

THINK LOCAL

Even if you're looking to splurge on your wedding photography, you may find the best talent right in your own

backyard. Start small by asking your family and friends about photography services they have used in the past.

Referrals are usually the bread and butter for wedding photography businesses. Someone with great testimonials and strong word of mouth will be your best bet as you try to land on a vendor you can trust.

How to Cut Wedding Costs

You'll remember your special day forever. If you rack up tons of debt in the process of planning it, your financial situation can also last a while, and not in a good way.

The minute you start planning your wedding, it's time to put on your cost control cap and get to work. With a few simple tips and some discipline, you can make your wedding a cost-effective event while still wowing your guests and making special memories.

HIRING HELP

A strong local wedding planner is an essential piece of pulling off a successful — and budget-friendly — wedding day experience. Once you budget for a wedding planner and define their roles, you may still be concerned at the amount of work that has to be done leading up to your wedding.

When it comes to hiring help for your special day, don't be afraid to rope in your friends and family members. Asking a friend to bartend or make decorations can save you big bucks in the long run without compromising the overall quality of your ceremony and reception.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Where you get married matters, especially in the winter-



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time months. There are many holidays that may compete with your wedding day at the end of the year, making locking down a venue a more difficult and costly feat.

On the other hand, if you can wait until January or February, you may be able to find a lower price tag on venues, as many ceremony sites, reception halls, photographers

and other vendors will offer lower rates during off-peak months.

Looking to tie the knot in a major metropolitan area? You can expect higher prices and increased competition for venues and other services as well. Consider looking outside major cities for cheaper locations. Trade in city skyscrapers for country landscapes and you

may find your venue cost substantially decreased.

STAY DISCIPLINED

If you're feeling pressure from your relatives or friends on how your wedding should go down, don't forget this day is all about you and your spouse. Your wedding spending should align with your income, regular expenses and other financial

goals versus breaking the bank to make other people happy.

Once you've established a budget, decided the kind of wedding you want and begun to compare costs. And then stick to your number. Expect a few pop-up expenses along the way but be steadfast in hitting your budget so you start your marriage off in a smart, financially responsible fashion.