

Summer Weddings



2022 Summer Wedding Trends

Some wedding trends, like a focus on sustainability, remain but there are several twists on the way — from the return of pearls to non-traditional flower girls.

'80S REDUX

Blame *Bridgerton*, but it appears that the return of Regency-era fashion is now being combined with a little '80s flare. So, corset bodices ... but also puffy sleeves! After years of Zoom weddings and socially distanced ceremonies, brides are looking to make a statement.

A FLORAL TWIST

Back in 2013, wedding flowers were bold and bright. A couple of years ago, the trend began moving toward more neutral colors. Look for brides to start mixing it up this summer, as neutral color palettes get a boost with splashes of bold accents.

NON-TRADITIONAL FLOWER GIRLS

Your flower girl doesn't have to be a "girl," or even a woman at all. Grandmothers will be dropping petals down some summer wedding aisles, while a "flower man" takes over at others. Mix it up to add a bit of fun.

GOING OLD-SCHOOL

The classic black-and-white



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color pattern is also set to return in a big way, as traditional styles and simple lines take center stage after years of exciting experimentation. What's old is new again!

ELABORATE DRINKS

If the color scheme is simple, then why not give your cocktails a boost? This summer will be marked by ever more interesting ingredient choices, made complete with eye-catching details like gar-

nishes, stir-sticks and sparkles.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability trend continues, as eco-conscious weddings dresses and lab-grown engagement rings are joining hip picks like biodegradable cutlery.

GOING GREEN

In this case, it's the color green, a hot new color for bridesmaids dresses. Emerald engagement rings are increas-

ingly popular, too. Some adventurous brides are incorporating shades of green too, as they tie in their ceremony with the simplicity and grounding qualities of nature.

PEARLS

The return of Regency-style fashion was dubbed "regency-core." So, call this trend "pearl-core," as these traditional gems move well beyond the choker. Look for pearls everywhere from wedding cakes to

decor, accessories like veils and capes, to shoes and manicures.

SMALL PLATES

Rather than tried-and-true sit-down dinners built from a series of serving stations, look for summer weddings with their own kind of progressive dinner featuring appetizer-sized portions. There's an increased opportunity for food adventures, and it's so much easier to mix and mingle.

Dress-Shopping Mistakes

Buying the most important dress you'll ever wear doesn't come with a handy manual. But there are certain typical missteps you should try to avoid.

RUSHING TO DECIDE

With so much to consider, from shape and fabric to cut and size, the process of shopping for your summer wedding dress can be simply overwhelming. But rushing through the experience can leave you regretting your decision when the big day finally arrives. Don't settle on a particular style, or even color, too early in the process. Go past initial online searches and your first fitting. Instagram and Pinterest are great resources nowadays for discovering new gown ideas. Seek out designers, blogs and salons where you can see the dresses on real people. Remember the perfect dress probably won't be one of the initial ones you try on.

BUYING TOO EARLY

It's tempting to purchase as soon as you're engaged. After all, gowns may take anywhere from 4 to 10 months to complete. Shipping time, multiple fittings and alterations can add to the lead time. Even so, don't order a dress too early. This is a huge investment,



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often running well past the \$1,000 threshold, so there's no need to purchase before you're ready — either personally or financially. Purchase too early and you might miss out on a dress that better fits your pocketbook (and taste). Take advantage of sales opportunities. Savings here can be

put to use elsewhere on your special day.

TOO MANY VOICES

Every bride wants to surround herself with friends and family as a wedding day approaches. Moms may provide valuable insight, while gal pals are always there for

emotional support when planning becomes overwhelming. But you'll want to cull the group down to a trusted confidant or two when deciding on a dress. This isn't the time for sweeping group discussions, or someone telling you only what you want to hear. (You'll also want to check how many

guests are allowed in the room at your bridal salon beforehand; many limit it to only a handful of guests, including the bride.) Your mother or a trust bridesmaid can help make the experience as relaxed as is possible — while also giving you clear, considered advice.

Destination Weddings

The summer wedding season is predicted to be one of the busiest in memory after two years of pandemic-related uncertainty.

Whether newly engaged or ready-to-reschedule, here's where couples will be headed for destination weddings in 2022.

XCARET, MEXICO

With a glut of scheduled (and re-scheduled) weddings, some hometown venues are simply overbooked. So why not get away from it all? Xcaret is located less than an hour away from favorite vacation spots like Tulum and Cancun in Mexico's delightful Riviera Maya sub-region, but it feels like a world away. White-sand beaches, azure-blue water and lush greenery surround picturesque resorts and charming, authentic wedding venues that will make your day unforgettable. Eco-theme parks also make for great getaways for your guests.

FLORIDA

Miami's beautiful weather, throwback architecture, exciting cuisine and gorgeous coastlines always beckon. But if you're looking for a more private experience, consider Naples. This romantic city overlooks the Gulf of Mexico, with a number of venues situ-



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ated directly on their local beaches. Many hotels feature balcony areas that are perfect for your ceremony, with large ballrooms to accommodate the reception. Or head right out to the water afterward.

CAP CANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

This gated private community inside Punta Cana is a great destination for those looking

for new all-inclusive venues — including adult-only resorts. Or go for the luxury of a five-star hotel. Either way, your ceremony will be uniquely positioned for incredible views on the eastern side of the Dominican Republic, where the Caribbean meets the Atlantic Ocean. This is also a great spot for active couples and their wedding parties, with nearby sailing, snorkeling, golfing, horseback rid-

ing and adventure theme parks.

THE AMERICAN WEST

Orange County excels at versatility, with scores of options whether you're hoping for a specific view, cuisine, venue or style. Looking for something classic and traditional? Absolutely. An oceanfront vista? Sure. A themed event at Disneyland? That too! Elsewhere, Oregon's

Willamette Valley is an increasingly popular wedding spot for wine lovers, in particular as Napa sites become more and more difficult to schedule — and more at risk for fires. Willamette trips are cheaper, too. More adventurous types will be heading to Montana, where mountains cascade behind wedding photos as the sound of the natural world envelops the ceremony.

Skipping the Cake

Cake seems to go with weddings like brides and grooms. But don't be afraid to buck with tradition when it comes to dessert.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Wedding cake traditions date back at least to ancient Rome. There were mentions in the medieval era, too. Early

recipes relied on barley and wheat, long before newlyweds happily smashed desserts in one another's faces. Instead, according to *Gastronomica*, they'd eat just a few crumbs from these scone-like creations as one of their first acts as a couple. The British started the tradition of stacking these scones, buns or cookies as high as they could, creating a forerunner for today's tiered cakes. Sugar became more affordable into the 18th century, bringing on the advent of white icing. Brides originally handed out the cake to wedding guests, before it became a shared activity. The cake-cutting ceremony followed.

NEARLY CAKE

Couples are increasingly choosing something besides cake, as intricately designed petit fours, ice cream, cake pops and sorbet move onto the menu. Cupcakes have been the fastest-growing alternative, since they boast a cake-like quality, have an



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advantage of being very portable and can be stacked. Cheesecakes and pies can also showcase summer's freshest fruits — and they'll link back to earlier wedding traditions. Back then, a ring was hidden in the wedding pie and whoever found it was thought to be the next to marry — similar to our bouquet-tossing tradition today.

TINY TREASURES

Miniature items are likewise easily transported as guests mix and mingle. Match different donuts, Madeleines, cream puffs, macarons and pies — or do something more exotic like banana beignet bites or tiramisu pudding shots. Summer weddings can sometimes get steamy, so consider tiny frozen creations like

sorbets or daiquiris. Setting aside the tried-and-true cake option opens up a world of new options.

DO BRUNCH INSTEAD

Stack cinnamon rolls with cream-cheese icing for a fresh take on dessert that will delight your guests. Or stack them without icing, then place a fountain for dipping

nearby. Try a pancake or waffle tower. They will resemble the traditional tiered cake, while giving you a chance to let your imagination run wild with decorative ideas like greenery or blooms. Then instead of cutting the cake, you can pour the syrup together as your first married act. The result is a symbolic sweet!

Keys to a Great Toast

Raising a glass at a wedding is an opportunity to make a great impression, or fall flat on your face. Here are the keys to a great toast.

WHAT YOU'LL DO

People have been toasting one another for centuries. That might make it feel nearly impossible to stand out when you're asked, as the maid of honor or best man, to deliver the perfect post-ceremonial speech. Some get nervous and freeze up, while others might be prone to saying the wrong thing. It's important to relax in the knowledge that you were selected because of the important role you've played in their lives. You're among friends.

KEEP IT CLASSY

This toast will be made among all of the most important people in this couple's lives, including older family members, lifelong friends, and coworkers. The message is meant to offer words of encouragement as they make the transition into married life. The best way to meet that standard is to avoid off-color remarks or jokes, and vulgarities of any kind. If alcohol is being served as the reception, know your limits. Drinking tends to lower inhibitions, and that can lead to slips of the tongue.



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KEEP IT SHORT

Once you've resolved not to embarrass yourself or your newly married friends, keep in mind what you've been asked to do: Make a brief speech. The accent is on brief. They've already had a momentous day, and their schedule likely still includes several tra-

ditional benchmarks like the father/daughter dance. Ask the couple how long they're allotting for toasts. If they leave the decision up to you, aim for three to five minutes. Anything longer than that, and you're liable to lose the gathered crowd's interest anyway. Anything less and they

may feel that you didn't care enough to properly prepare.

KEEP IT SWEET

Humor can be a great ice-breaker, and everybody wants to keep the laughter going at joyous occasions. But be picky about what you discuss in a toast. The best examples of

these speeches are met with a mixture of smiles and tears, as you balance humor with more personal anecdotes. Whatever you do, avoid embarrassing stories — in particular about past relationships. This isn't the time or place for a trip down that particular memory lane.

Make it with Paper

Paper-based touches at your summer wedding offer affordability and versatility — and, because the material can be recycled, they play a role in sustainability, too. Here are some great ideas for do-it-yourself brides.

CRAFTING OPTIONS

Paper can add new levels of creativity to everything from reception centerpieces and guest books to wedding party favors, aisle decorations and place cards. The options are all but limitless, as paper options originally meant for craft and scrap-booking open the color palette to every texture and hue. Earth tones and natural papers, for instance, are perfect for weddings in rustic locales. Die-cutting machines can add pizzazz to any creation. Head over to Pinterest and Instagram to find material options that will fire your imagination.

DESIGN IDEAS

Among the hottest trends in paper crafting are flowers, and they're perfectly suited for weddings, of course. Cut and fold floral patterns and shapes to create one-of-a-kind crafts that are beautiful and affordable — and they never die. Beyond the usual bouquets and boutonnieres, you can also use them for things like hair decorations. Add a handmade paper bow to the wedding cake, then take your vision to the next level by pleating the same paper and wrapping it

around each layer of the cake. Punch holes out of favorite old books or meaningful sheet music in the shape of a heart to make your own confetti. You'll have an extra special craft for the reception table or for showering the couple with as they depart. Cut out butterfly shapes to create a cool new detail on your flower arrangements.

MAKE IT FUNCTIONAL

Beat the heat at your summer wedding by cutting out intricate individual patterns in circular sheets of scrap-booking paper, then fold them into a handy fan. Attach crafting sticks to make their sturdier. Everyone will have a handmade take-home favor. Upgrade your photo area with a glamorous paper-made crescent moon and stars. Just remember to bring plenty of glitter to your crafting table. Place cards and thank you cards are easily personalized in ways that some major manufacturers might never imagine — and it will all match the color and font of your personal wedding theme. Ombre wall decor and paper garlands also add wow-factor colors without breaking the bank.



Apps and Your Wedding

Diving into the world of wedding apps can be a time-consuming and confusing journey. Here's how to know which one is right for you.

CAN'T GET STARTED?

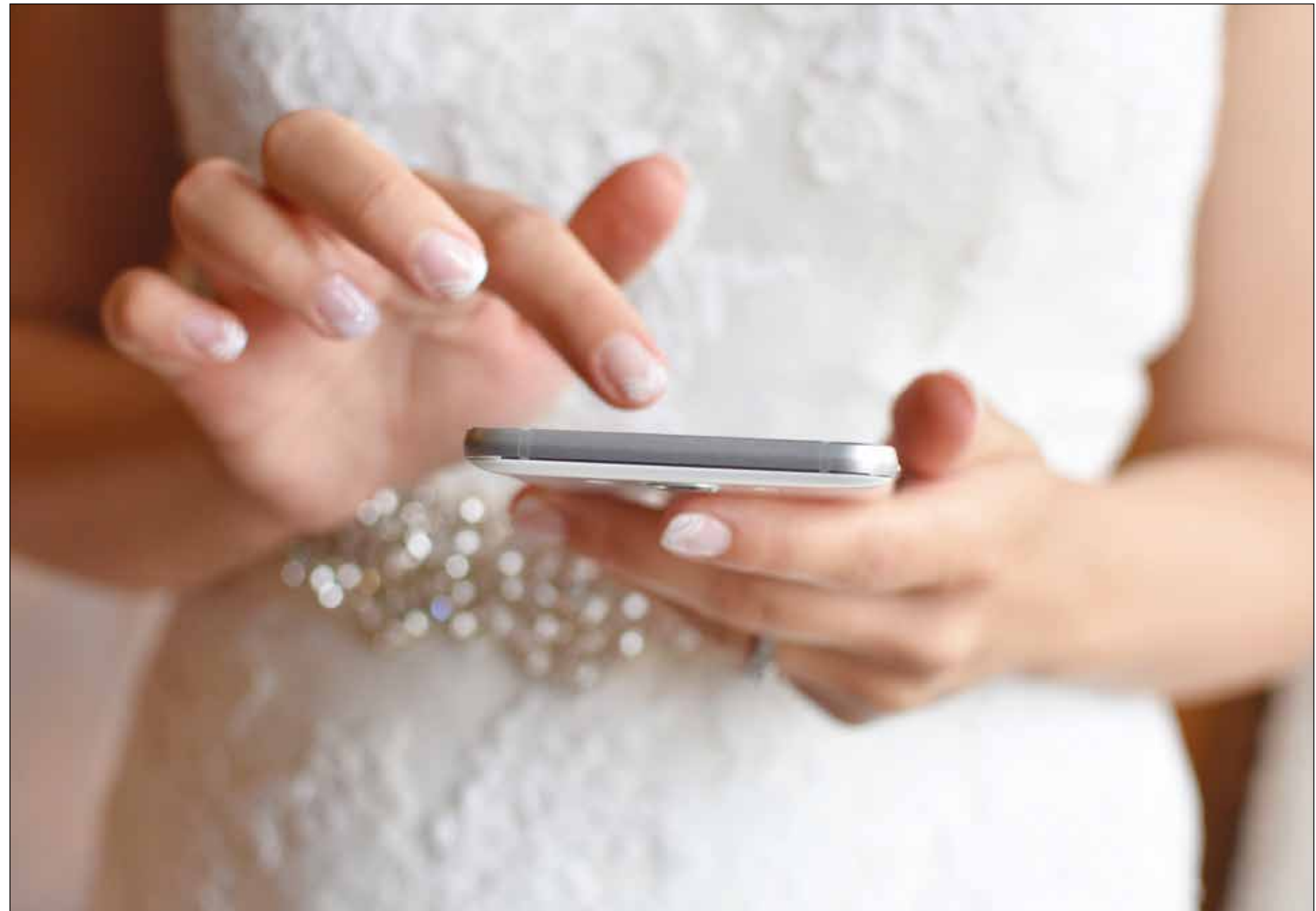
Wedding Wire links engaged couples with thousands and thousands of vendors and venues, with millions of reviews written by real-life newlyweds. This will help you narrow things down if you're not sure about location or pricing. There are also checklists, and templates to make and keep a budget, so you can stay on track.

PLANNING WITHOUT A PLANNER

The free Wedding Happy app works like an online personal assistant, with preloaded tasks to guide engaged couples every step of the way. You can set up reminder alerts that a wedding planner would normally handle for signpost moments in the run up to the wedding, like invitation mail outs or putting down various deposits. Your event details can also be shared with anyone in your wedding party.

BUDGET CONSCIOUS

Mint wasn't designed with weddings exclusively in mind, but the popular money-man-



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agement site provides an easy-to-use budgeting system to help you track costs. You can sync this free app with your credit cards and bank account to monitor spending.

INSPIRATION NOTES

Who hasn't seen a cool Instagram centerpiece and wondered who made it? Carats and Cake provides expansive details on everyone who

works their weddings, from florists to caterers to photographers. Eliminate the summer wedding guesswork by digging into their reviews and portfolios. You can also book these vendors through the same site.

DESTINATION DETAILS

Destination weddings are all the rage, but where? The Venue Report offers a directo-

ry of trendy hotels, can't-miss event spaces and party spots. From the south of France to the wilds of Montana, the site helps you filter results by price, capacity and place. Information about fees is also included, as well as direct contact information.

COOLER GIFTS

Household appliances are fine and all, but what about

something even cooler? You can find all of the basic essentials on Zola, as with any standard department-store registry. But the app also links you up with higher-end and specialty items like Waterford Crystal stemware, the Sonos sound system, or comfy Matouk bedding. There are also group-gifting options that offer your guests the chance to go in on pricier items together.