

JUNE 2023 BRIDAL PLANNING GUIDE

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How to choose the right wedding officiant

Receptions may get their fair share of attention, but the ceremony is the true centerpiece of a wedding. This is the part of the day when the couple will exchange vows and pledge their love and devotion to one another. It's also the time when the wedding license is signed and the union becomes official.

An officiant is an essential part of any wedding. This person is responsible for leading the ceremony and ensuring that all requirements are met so that the marriage is legal. He or she will guide the exchange of

vows and helps set the tone of the wedding.

Officiants vary depending on the ceremony, including religious, non-denominational or even family or friend. Since the officiant's role is so significant, it is important to give careful consideration to potential officiants before making a final decision.

Know the rules governing your ceremony location

If you will be having a religious ceremony in a house of worship, there may be some restrictions regarding who can officiate the wedding. Tradition-

ally, a priest/minister, rabbi or imam must preside over a ceremony in a house of worship. Even though there are some limitations, you may be able to choose the religious leader with whom you are friendly or whose sermons speak to you.

Know what you want

Some officiants may not have formal training or lots of experience officiating weddings, particularly if couples ask a friend or family member to do the honor. Leaving it entirely up to the person may not be the wisest choice, as you



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Officiants feature prominently in a wedding. Choosing the right person to perform this important function is a big decision that requires careful consideration.

may be surprised by what the officiant says. It's best to give the officiant a list of guidelines to see if the person will meld with

your vision. When interviewing officiants, note what's most important to you. It also can help if couples try to determine if an officiant's sense of humor aligns with their own.

officiant should have public speaking skills and be able to relate to the audience. Someone who is shy or stumbles over words might not be the right person to put in front of guests.

Check for skills
Professional officiants treat this as a business and have amassed skills throughout the years. They likely will have websites and reviews that you can read through. Consider attending an upcoming wedding to see how a particular officiant performs on the big day.

When selecting an amateur, know that an

Has the time
Of course all the details cannot fall into place if the officiant is booked or doesn't have the time to tackle such a big component of the wedding. The officiant needs to meet with you several times, write the ceremony, attend rehearsals, and actually officiate. It's important the person you ask has the flexibility to meet all of these responsibilities.

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7 ways to incorporate some personality into your wedding

Weddings present an opportunity to embrace time-honored traditions. However, couples can be as tradition-minded or as unique in their wedding details as they desire. There's certainly room to let personalities shine through during both the ceremony and the reception.

Increasingly couples are seeking ways to set their celebrations apart from the scores that came before them. While one may not want to banish all customs, there are several ways for couples to inject their own personalities into the proceedings. Here are seven ways to inject some personality into a wedding.

1. Have custom-designed rings made. Couples can work with jewelers to have rings made to their specifications rather than buying only what is available in the cases. Furthermore, the rings do not have to be matching sets. A couple can select ring styles that complement one another but may be slightly different in design.

2. Cut out the cake. Many couples just aren't fans of traditional sponge cake with buttercream or fondant overlay, so why have that expensive, multi-tiered confectionary creation at the wedding? Instead, serve a more popular dessert. Dessert artists can whip up many impressive options and present them in dramatic (or cake-like) fashion. What about a tower of decadent brownies or a stack of fruit-and-cream-filled crêpes?

3. Write the vows. Vows present

an excellent way for couples to let their personalities shine through. Couples can showcase humor, compassion, quirks, and more with the messages they share with one another.

4. Customize table numbering. Seating cards traditionally guide guests to numbered tables around the reception hall. There is no rule that the tables have to be organized by numbers, however. Those who like movies can name the tables by movie titles. A couple that loves to travel can make the tables destinations around the world. Keep in mind the catering staff may ask that numbers also accompany the alternative system for ease of serving dinners and keeping orders straight.

5. Make a grand entrance. Couples need not feel beholden to taking a limousine to and from their weddings. Fans of the movie "Batman" can rent a Batmobile replica. Those who couldn't get enough of "Breaking Bad" may want to roll up in an RV. There's also the option of a horse-drawn carriage or a sports car.

6. Serve custom cocktails. Traditional drinks can be given custom names that pertain to details of the couple's lives or how they met. If someone is a microbrewer or makes his or her own wine, these boutique beverages also can be served.

7. Create a monogram. Use the monogram on save-the-dates, invitations, the home page of a wedding website, the ceremony program, and



METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS

Couples can allow their creativity and personality to shine through on their wedding day.

even on cocktail napkins at the reception. The continuity will help set the tone for the wedding.

Couples can allow their creativity and personality to shine through on their wedding day.



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How to tip wedding reception staff

Couples need not feel beholden to the many traditions that have become commonplace at wedding ceremonies over the years. Such traditions can be fun ways for couples to connect their ceremonies with those of their parents', grandparents' and even older generations, but couples can still pick and choose which traditions, if any, they want to embrace on their wedding day.

One tradition that's not as flexible involves tipping wedding reception staff. It's customary to tip reception staff, as these hardworking individuals earn much of their wages through tips. Though it's always welcome to give exceptional staff members more than the standard suggests, the following rundown, courtesy of the wedding experts at The Knot, can help couples know how much to tip wedding reception staff.

• **Wedding planner:** A wedding planner likely isn't expecting a tip, as these talented professionals typically work for a predetermined fee. But The Knot estimates that around half of all couples tip their wedding planners. The standard is between 10 and 20 percent (up to \$500), but couples also can consider a nonmonetary gift.

• **Hairstylist/makeup artist:** Gratuities are generally commonplace for hairstylists and makeup artists. Gratuities should be between 15 and 25

percent and can be given when the professionals have finished their work.

• **Delivery persons and setup staff:** A tip between \$5 and \$10 is sufficient for delivery personnel, such as the individual delivering the cake or flowers. Couples can always tip more if delivery staff are delivering more items over a lengthier period of time. For example, if the reception tables and chairs are being delivered to the reception, couples can tip delivery personnel a little extra.

• **Officiant:** Tipping officiants is not so simple. Couples who tie the knot outside a religious venue typically hire an officiant for a flat rate, and such individuals do not need to be tipped. Couples who are getting married in a house of worship may not pay their officiant directly, but a donation to the church or synagogue may be expected. Tips are not necessary in either of these examples, but couples can invite their officiant to their receptions if they so choose.

• **Musicians:** The standard for ceremony musicians is between \$15 and \$20 per musician, while reception musicians each receive around \$25 to \$35. A wedding DJ may be accustomed to receiving a tip between \$50 and \$150.

• **Reception staff:** A tip for reception staff is typically included in the contract, so couples should consult their contract to determine if they've al-



METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS

Contracts should always be consulted before tipping staff, but couples also can feel free to go the extra mile when tipping exceptional staff members.

ready tipped the staff. The Knot indicates the standard tip for reception staff is between 15 and 20 percent while the maître d' is typically tipped separately at around \$200 to \$300.

• **Reception attendants:** Attendants include bartenders, waitstaff, parking attendants, bathroom, and coatroom staff. Like the reception staff, attendants' tips may already be included in the contract. If not, the restaurant standard of 20 percent applies to wedding receptions as well. Parking lot attendants and coatroom/bathroom

attendants can be tipped at around \$1 per guest.

• **Transportation:** Gratuities for drivers are typically included in the contract as well. If not, a tip reflecting 15 to 20 percent of the total bill is the standard.

Gratuities reward the hardworking individuals who help to make couples' wedding days more special. Contracts should always be consulted before tipping staff, but couples also can feel free to go the extra mile when tipping exceptional staff members.



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The tradition behind bridal veils

Though couples can plan wedding ceremonies and receptions how they see fit, many weddings are steeped in tradition, some of which may be more subtle than others. One long-standing wedding tradition revolves around a bride's attire. Historians differ regarding the origins of the bridal veil, but some trace this tradition all the way back to Ancient Greece. Others suggest bridal veils were first popularized within the

Roman Empire by people who believed that the veil protected the bride from evil spirits as she walked down the aisle. Traditions surrounding bridal veils even differ within various faiths, so the veil may signify one thing at a Jewish wedding and something entirely different at a Christian ceremony. Veils also have long been seen by some as symbolic of purity. Despite their long-held position in wedding lore and tradition,

veils are no longer seen as a must-have. Nor are brides who choose to wear a veil beholden to having it cover their face as they walk down the aisle. In fact, many modern brides now flip their veils over their head as they walk down the aisle en route to saying, "I do." Regardless of how brides who opt for veils choose to wear them, there's no denying the enduring popularity of this tradition.



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