

Your Wedding, Your Way—Three Areas to Save on Wedding Expenses

It Will Cost You

It's your day. And for the average American couple, the day will cost you about \$30,000. With all the stress surrounding planning and budgeting for your big day, here are three areas where you can trim your costs significantly while still enjoying the wedding of your dreams.

A Picture Paints a Thousand Words...at a Price!

Photography is an expense that often shocks couples. Common sense and some negotiation can help ensure you stay within budget.

- Find new talent. An up and coming photographer may be more flexible on price as they work to build their portfolio. Just ensure that you like their style before committing.

- Book fewer hours. Realistically, how often will you be viewing seven hours of wedding photos as the years pass? Consider capturing fewer hours around the ceremony and reception for big savings.

- Really need a coffee table book? Wedding albums cost dearly. Why not get your photos on disc or consider an online album instead.

- There's a registry for that! Yes, some photographers now offer online registries. So, instead of getting another place setting of your china pattern, Aunt Hazel can defray the cost of your memories of the day.

Eat, Drink and Be Merry

A huge portion of a wedding budget, use some of these ideas to keep your catering costs under control.

- Think appetizers and drinks rather than a sit-down meal. Schedule your reception at a time when most guests won't be expecting a full meal. Other ideas that are popping up are luncheon, tea and brunch receptions, all of which can save you money.

- Skip the full bar and offer wine, beer and just one, special cocktail that's a personal favorite or complements your wedding colors.

- Rather than a massive wedding cake with an equally massive price tag, consider a smaller cake to cut for photos and supplement with sheet cakes.

A Rose by Any Other Name...

...might cost less! Wedding flowers are costly. Why pay more than necessary for something that will live on only in the wedding photos?

- Go for the greens. Designing with more greens and fewer blooms, can save money. There is a huge array of greenery and vines that is far less costly than blossoms. You can achieve dramatic results from a few well-placed blossoms among a palette of varying textures and shades of greenery.

- Think seasonal. Ask your florist what's in season and which are the most reasonably priced blossoms available when your wedding is planned.

It's no fun to start married life overwhelmed by the cost of your nuptials. With some effort and planning you can save a considerable amount of money—maybe for the honeymoon!