

Spring Brides



Questions to Ask Your Florist

Your florist is responsible for the blooms that are so important to making your wedding day perfect.

Those posies can cost a pretty penny, too, so you need to make sure you and your floral professional are on the same page. Here are some questions The Knot suggests you ask your florist.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A FLORAL DESIGNER?

Ask your florist about their years of experience. What kinds of weddings have they participated in? Do they have photos? Can you talk to the brides?

DO YOU EMPLOY SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES IN YOUR BUSINESS?

More and more couples are insisting on greener ceremonies. Florists, with their use of plants, water and other goods, need to use green practices. Talk to your floral professional about sourcing the blooms for your wedding and make sure they use responsible vendors.

WHAT FLOWERS DO YOU RECOMMEND FOR OUR WEDDING?

Ask florists what flowers you can use to maximize your budget and your style.



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Because florists have seen many weddings, they can recommend flowers to dazzle your guests and complementary decor.

HOW DO YOU SUGGEST WE MAXIMIZE OUR BUDGET?

Floral arrangements and bouquets are going to be a big line item in your wedding budget. Make sure you can cover everything you need by

asking your florist for seasonal blooms or other ways you can make the most of the money you have.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICING?

Not only should you make sure you are crystal clear on the pricing, you need to know what's not included. Ask about any common service that there may be an extra charge for and make sure you factor

that into your accounting. Some florists might charge extra for design, delivery, setup or delivery.

WHAT IS YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLE?

You and your florist will need to be in conversation in the days leading up to your wedding. Avoid any problems by making sure your communication styles sync. Ask whether your florist prefers

calls, texts or emails, and ensure that it works for you as well.

WHAT ARE THE DAY-OF LOGISTICS?

Know what your florist may need from your venue or any other vendors that you're working with. Ask when the flowers are arriving and whether the florist will need help unloading or setting anything up.

Reception Trends to Watch

Wedding receptions are a once-in-a-lifetime party. You'll be more likely to look back at yours with fondness if you choose classic themes and avoid fly-by-night fads.

Here, though, are some trends growing popular for wedding receptions.

SPLIT DECISION

More couples are going with a ceremony on one day and the party on another. That way vendors, friends, family and the couple themselves can give each event their full attention. Of course, there may be more in travel charges, but you may save on venue rental by not having to reserve each space for as long.

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

Wow your guests with experiences at the reception such as drone performances, fireworks and shows. Live music is a great idea, but turn it into a vibrant concert rather than just an afterthought.

TO-GO BOXES

Make wedding cakes or other sweet stuff grab-and-go so guests can focus on dancing and having fun. Plus, it gives them a late-night snack.

LIVE STREAMING

Ask your photographer or videographer to live stream the ceremony and the party so that people who can't be there in person can still share in the love.

Have them record any comments so the couple can read them later.

DIGITAL GUEST BOOKS

Skip the old-fashioned paper book for a digital guest book that will give the happy couple a lasting, immersive experience. Allow guests to share photos, videos, audio messages and more.

SUSTAINABILITY

Look for greener options for your reception, such as recycled or recycling friendly dinnerware, favors that use less plastic and food and florals that come from close to home.

NON-FORMAL MENUS

Go for a more personal menu rather than sticking with a menu that's more formal but more generic. Use family recipes (and share them!) or pick a dish from a favorite dinner date.

SMOKE MINES

Go viral with TikTok craze smoke mines to express the sheer joy of being married. Colorful clouds of smoke can be seen in the daylight, unlike fireworks, and have the same wow factor.

ICE SCULPTURES

What's old is new again, and that means ice sculptures, obviously. Wedding ice sculptures can do dual duty as a shot luge or dessert display to make it an interactive experience for your guests.



Bridal Etiquette to Know

Social media is filled with tales of bridezillas gone wild. That doesn't have to be you. Stay calm and remember your wedding is a celebration.

Follow these simple rules of etiquette.

CONSIDER THE MEMBERS OF YOUR WEDDING PARTY

Particularly when it comes to the attire, keep the comfort of your wedding party in mind. If you allow them to choose their own outfits, keep your suggestions and comments kind and remember most of the eyes will be on the happy couple.

Also remember to properly thank the officiant and offer an appropriate fee in a sealed envelope along with a handwritten note of thanks from you and your spouse.

INVITATIONS

Allow plenty of time to address, assemble and mail your invitations. Try to develop a system to make sure each invitation gets sent on time, and don't be afraid to ask friends and family to help. Include registry information and any other appropriate inserts, such as maps or directions or hotel information.

If you don't want children to attend, do not put "no



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children" or "adults only." Instead, address it to who is invited. An invitation sent to Mr. and Mrs. Jones includes only Mr. and Mrs. Jones, not their children. If children are welcomed, they'll be mentioned individually or the Jones family would be the addressee.

GIFTS

There are a lot of rules surrounding wedding gifts. The

late Emily Post, an etiquette expert, says the prohibition against asking people not to bring gifts in fact puts an emphasis on gifts. Remember that friends and family who have attended a first wedding and given a gift are under no obligation to give another wedding gift to the same person, even if the new marriage is to a different person.

Instead of including the disclaimer on the invitations,

Post says to take care of such a request personally. It should come from the couple or close friends and family.

SEND THANK-YOUS

Weddings are one of the biggest events in someone's life. Don't forget to thank the people who supported you with their presence or their gifts. Emily Post says the couple should personalize thank-you notes and reference both the gift and the giver. Be

enthusiastic, but don't gush.

WHEN IT COMES TO GUESTS

If guests RSVP with children written in, have the wedding host call and explain if children are not invited. Post advises to stay strong, but be clear.

Making exceptions isn't fair to other guests who found childcare for the duration of the event.

Wedding Keepsakes to Save

Your wedding day is one you should remember forever, but between the jitters, the adrenaline and everything else going on, it could well be just a blur.

Keep that from happening by making sure to save these keepsakes.

GRAB A KEEPSAKE BOX

Grab a box that's sure to be large enough to hold everything you want to keep and pick one that is sturdy enough to handle moves, remodeling and, hopefully, decades of love. Consider having it engraved with the date or initials or both.

WHAT TO PUT IN IT

Now you need to fill it up. Choose items that will remind you of your special day, that you can pull out and go through together in years to come.

- **Vows:** Make or buy personalized vow booklets and write your own vows in them. Or consider having a calligrapher write them for you.

- **Flowers:** Preserve your bouquet or part of your bouquet, depending on what you have room for. The whole bouquet can be professionally preserved in a shadow box or glass dome — talk to your florist about where you can get this done.



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- **Attire:** Preserve part of your wedding gown, the groom's bowtie or pocket square, the bride's shoes or jewelry and more. Make sure the shadowbox or other container is acid-free and consider adding silica desiccant packets to control humidity.

- **Invitation:** Keep a wedding

invitation and frame it to hang in your new home or add to the box. Consider adding any ribbons from the ceremony, printed napkins or other personalized decor.

WRITE A LOVE LETTER

Write love letters to each other the night before the

wedding and put them in the box. Open them and read them after the ceremony, or even on a subsequent anniversary. Loss for words? Write about your excitement for your wedding day, your hopes and dreams and goals.

Include a wedding venue blueprint, map or illustration.

ADD LOCAL FLAVOR

Pick a bottle of wine or liquor from the city in which you got married, or choose another local treat such as candy, honey or coffee. Even if you plan to live in that city forever, life can take funny turns and this way, you'll have something to remember it by.

Menu Ideas for the Big Day

Love isn't just in the air at a wedding, it should also be on the plate.

Get away from generic menus and go with food you love to create a memorable meal on an even more memorable day.

START WITH THE CONTRACTS

Before setting the menu, check the regulations for your chosen venue. There may be in-house catering services you must use or a list of preferred vendors you need to choose from. If you do choose another caterer, you may also have to pay an additional fee, and that should be included in your budget.

CONSIDER THE VIBE

Think about what type of food you want to serve and whether it matches the style of the ceremony you have in mind. There's plenty of room to bend the rules, but bear in mind dietary restrictions, cultural requirements and the abilities of your vendors. Look for caterers that have prior experience with the type of menu you have in mind.

MAP OUT A BUDGET

Set a budget and stick to it. Talk to vendors and be honest about your resources and rely on their expertise to maximize what you can afford. Ask your catering team for ideas that match your ceremony's



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style and your personality.

Traditionally, a plated wedding menu will start with appetizers, then move to a salad course, entrée and wedding cakes and desserts. A buffet menu also starts with appetizers, then includes salads, sides, proteins and, lastly, wedding cake and desserts.

STATIONS

Serving foods that lend themselves to it, such as appetizers and desserts, at serve-yourself stations is a fashionable idea that also gives guests some control over their own dish.

Think things like a coffee bar, an ice cream station or crostini bar.

DON'T FORGET THE DRINKS

Ask your caterer about what kind of drinks they make available. If local laws and your venue allows, you may need a separate vendor (and budget) for alcohol. Budget allowing, ask your bartenders to come up with a signature cocktail for your wedding.

TAKEOUT

Think about having to-go or takeout boxes for your guests to take desserts, cake or even whole entrees with them. This will encourage them to enjoy the party and the dance floor while they can and have a snack to enjoy when they get home or back to their hotel room.

Finding the Perfect Venue

The wedding venue is the backdrop for your dream day.

It should reflect who you are as a couple and it should be able to comfortably host the wedding of your dreams. No matter where you're getting married, the perfect venue is out there.

WHERE TO FIND IT

Wedding website The Knot has a database of venues that you can search by category (reception venues, hotels, rehearsal dinners) or by name, and of course, by location. You can filter the results by price, capacity, outdoor space and more. Other websites, such as Wedding Pro, Wedding Wire and more have similar databases. Search as many as you can to find the perfect place to exchange your vows.

WHEN TO BOOK IT

Ideally, you should book the wedding venue 12-18 months out.

It's one of the first steps you should take after getting engaged because the venue controls so much else about your ceremony.

Online research is great, but you should also visit the venue in person. If you are using a wedding planner, have them come with you and look over the contract to make sure the venue can really accommodate the type of wedding you have in mind.



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BUDGET

The venue will take up a sizable portion of your budget. Know your bottom line before you sign anything. Nothing is more disappointing than finding the venue of your dreams and then learning you can't afford it. If you're finding the

budget a hardship, consider looking at locations in the off-season when there's less demand and prices may be lower.

CAPACITY

Have a rough idea of your guest list before you start

visiting venues. Each venue will have a maximum capacity and it's up to you to make sure you don't surpass that. Finalize that list before you secure a venue.

HAVE A BACKUP

Just in case, pick a venue

and a backup venue, especially if you're planning on an outdoor wedding that is subject to Mother Nature.

When booking a venue, ask whether they have an alternate space and make sure you can visualize your ceremony there, too.

Be Sure to Show Appreciation

Weddings involve a lot of vendors and a lot of service staff. In the U.S., those staff typically receive a tip for exemplary service.

Here's a handy guide for who and what you should tip to keep at your side as you budget.

PHOTOGRAPHER AND/OR VIDEOGRAPHER

Tip the main photographer and videographer 5-15% of the contract cost, or \$50-\$200 per team member. Give the team lead a sealed envelope with the tip and a handwritten thank-you note at the end of the reception.

WEDDING DJ

Tip the DJ \$50-\$100 in a sealed envelope at the end of the reception. The same goes for a live band and any sound technicians. Tip these folks \$25-\$50 per band member or technician. Ask an attendant or the wedding planner to tip the musical staff at the end of the reception. They may give a lump sum to the bandleader or individual envelopes can be handed out to each person.

WEDDING PLANNER

Tip the wedding planner 15-20% of their total fee or send them a nice gift. Present it in a sealed envelope with a thank-you note at the end of the reception. Gifts should be sent right after the honeymoon.



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HAIR AND MAKEUP

Tip beauty professionals 15-25% of the total bill, just like you would in a salon. You might consider tipping more for any emergency situations. Hand the tip out at the end of your service.

WEDDING DELIVERY AND SETUP

Set aside gratuities for any staff delivering and setting up

things for the ceremony. Think of the team setting up the sound system, tents, or tables and chairs.

Tip them \$10-\$50 per person and work with the catering manager or venue coordinator to make sure everyone is included. This tip should be dropped off the day before so the person accepting deliveries can distribute the tips accordingly.

ALTERATIONS AND TAILORING

Tip the team who alters your dream dress if they do excellent work. Tip your tailor \$20-\$30, more if extensive work was required. Hand it to them in a sealed envelope at your final fitting.

CATERING

Bartenders, waitstaff and other members of the

catering team sometimes have a gratuity built into the contract.

If it's not, or if you want to include more, 15-20% of the food and drink fee is traditional, along with \$200-\$300 for the maître d'.

Have an attendant or family member give the envelope to the maître d' at the end of the reception, after the final bill is presented.