

## *Things you need to know for your Wedding Day*

- **Venue/Banquet Hall Costs: Tax and gratuity** is always another expense for every wedding/hotel venue in the US. So don't think of the per plate price, think of the City & State tax and gratuity which is normally up 25% of your final bill. So, if you are having 75 people at \$75 per person, that comes up to \$5,625 and on average—plus the average 20-23% tax/gratuity fee. Your total is roughly about \$6,925. You may give a tip to your vendors or the venue Host/Hostess by check or mail if they do an exemplary job.

### **Top things when starting the planning process:**

- **#1! -- Choosing a Wedding Venue:** This comes at the top of our list for a reason, it's a huge factor when planning a wedding. If you wait too long, you may not get your date, so be warned: Couples are booking their venues up to 24 months in advance! There are also many other factors to consider:

- How many guests can the venue hold?
- Can we afford this venue? (The average price starts at \$100+ per person)
- Will it be easy for everyone to get too? (Be sure there is ample parking and nearby public transportation)
- Is there local accommodations for all the guests? (Hotels should be located in a very short driving distance to venue to be sure there is less stress on your guests who are traveling from out of town). You too may want a lovely accommodation to celebrate your first night as husband and wife before traveling to your honeymoon.
- Is the venue weather permitting? (Is there a plan “B” if it rains on your outdoor wedding?)
- The best advice here is to sit down with the venue owner and your planner to discuss all these points. We suggest doing a little research on the venue first to see if it fits your main criteria, but the best thing you can do is visit the venue, speak to the team and see if you fall in love - and - that it hits all the marks on “LCF&D” (“look, colors, feel and design”).

- **Outdoor space/park-lawn property/beachfront:** This is always an extra fee because the venue has to pay property tax and upkeep of the grounds. An enclosed venue will be about \$50 less per person than what an outdoor venue charges. A venue with outdoor property will charge as much as \$200 per person, on average or charge a separate outdoor “Ceremony Fee” which can run as much as \$2,000 for altar, chairs, and wedding décor accessories. Many opt for the free indoor wedding ceremony space and just take beauty shots outdoors in the property for no charge.
- **Timing:** You want to avoid paying for extra overtime for your wedding reception (up to \$700 an hour). Please be cooperative to be sure you are on time for your wedding and reception. Lateness takes away from enjoying your most important day together. If your wedding is at 3PM and your Reception is at 4PM - be on time. You don't want to cut into your party time and be late, keeping your guests and Officiant waiting - they count too as part of your important day. Time is money and a 5-hour event is more than enough time for your day. They have a right to charge late fees and will bill your credit card for overtime charges.
- **Feeding your vendors:** Your vendors (photographer, videographer, DJ), planner must be fed, and you will be discounted 50% off guest dinner price.) Sometimes a banquet hall will allow the vendors to eat for free

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as they are there to work and won't be sitting at your tables, so do ask your venue about reduced pricing for vendors.

- **Kids:** Most wedding professionals advise couples to make a note on their invites as follows: "*Adults Only Invited.*" Why?
- Very often, the price of a plate is the same for children. If a child is 5, and the per-person fee is \$125, some venues will charge the same. This is an important question to ask and you should have a venue that offers special meals for kids. So, think clearly if you want kids at your event, particularly an event that is in the evening. As much as we love them, they are not the best behaved in weddings. Kids run around and then fall exhausted, often crying in the middle of your reception (jumping, running tirades, etc.—well, it happens a lot).
- **More on Kids:** We recommend hiring a nanny/babysitter or close family member to sit with them and have fun with them at the table doing arts and crafts and then taking them to a hotel room after the main wedding highlights so parents can just have a great time and relax. Children do need to be occupied for at least the two hours of your reception, and a designated person with them makes all the difference—encouraging fun, laughter and a bit of discipline. The photographer will take wedding portraits before, during and after the ceremony. After the grand entrance to your reception, just after dinner and little dancing, your babysitter can give them a change of clothing after dinner. A cute jogging suit to match the colors of your wedding would be fine after the dinner. Be sure they get to see the cutting of the cake and get shots with you by the cake after you cut it as husband and wife.
  
- **Beauty recommendations:**
  - Brides to be: Getting your hair done (as well as your bridesmaids) the morning of your wedding day at your favorite salon or one near the venue will save lots of dough. Hair people are ridiculously expensive if they come to you. But, if you have the budget, do it. It's part of the great experience of you being *Queen for a Day*.
  - *Please! Please! Please!* Invest in the correct undergarments so that your wedding dress looks flawless. Nothing worse than a bride tugging on a bra or undies during her day. Yikes!
  - Makeup artists are absolutely essential. Please hire one. It makes all the difference in your photos. Every venue (or if you choose to get ready at a hotel) gives time at the bridal suite. Be sure you allow plenty of time for prep; and of course, your photographer and videographer will get those beautiful shots of you and your bridal party.
- **Paying homage to your groom**
  - ✓ Make a "love notes" journal with a different poem, saying or message from the heart in a little blank-page lined book. Have the best man give it to him while he dresses.
  - ✓ Engrave his wedding band with a meaningful message
  - ✓ Plan a private moment after the vows before cocktails for intimate photos and a great kiss
  - ✓ Include his favorite foods – how about a groom's cocktail station with “food on a stick” – kebabs of his favorite meats with assorted sauces, or how about a fun groom's cake made into the shape of his favorite car flavored with cognac or beer?! He'll love it!
- **Paying homage to your Bride**
  - ✓ Grooms: Arrange for a “his & her” massage a couple of days before your wedding.
  - ✓ Be sure to get her a lovely piece of jewelry on her wedding day. Have your best man or a family member bring her a lovely box with either a bracelet, gemstone for her other hand, a lovely ankle bracelet. She will be just thrilled.

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- ✓ Arrange for a special breakfast in bed the day after the wedding, with all the fixings and an intimate lingerie outfit to change into before you start your day in your hotel room (woot, woot!)
  - ✓ Arrange for your bride to take some boudoir photos for him with a specialized photographer. Have the photo set up in your bedroom to greet her after you arrive back home from your honeymoon
- **Favors:**
    - Favors are kind of old-fashioned these days. However, if guests take away anything, it's usually a confection or dessert to enjoy with their cafe con leche the next day! Some couples order bagels, cream cheese and the NY Times as their party favors! We do recommend that at each place setting, they receive a "thank you magnet" with your photo with a rented tux and bridal gown or a fun matching outfit with wedding props. It's a nice keepsake and inexpensive - about 65 cents each and eliminates a formal thank you card later (you can always update your wedding website with your wedding photos or send an email thank you with a few photos attached).
    - Another great gift is a candy/dessert station, and, if the venue offers it, do provide custom favor boxes ordered from Amazon. They can eat that with or in lieu of the wedding cake or pack up some goodies for home. If you want a traditional favor, get soaps, lotions, small kitchen gadgets – order something that your guests can actually use. For a destination smaller wedding, beach towels or beach tote bags are great hits!

Some Tips:

### **Breathe and/or meditate/pray.**

Meditation doesn't have to be in the form of closing your eyes, chanting and/or sitting in Lotus pose. It can be as simple as inhaling and exhaling by slowly counting to 10. A great time to try this out is in the hair and/or makeup chair or take a few moments in your suite before everything starts by yourself and say a prayer.

### **Hire a day-of coordinator/planner.**

The wedding day can be extremely chaotic, especially if the bride is the point of contact for all the vendors. Hiring a day-of coordinator to allow you to enjoy the day while they ensure your vision comes to life is an investment you won't regret.

### **Hydrate and don't deprive yourself when it comes to food.**

Eat healthy, high-protein, energy-boosting, easily portable and non-messy foods. Snack on things like turkey roll-ups, hard boiled eggs and cashews and almonds. Avoid too much caffeine (you don't want to be jittery) and stay clear of foods that are too salty so you don't get too thirsty. You can always have a mimosa to calm your nerves, but it's also important to stay hydrated. If it's hot, get a Gatorade with electrolytes and mix with water or lots of ice. Your tummy will feel good and you will be hydrated and not have 'dry mouth' when you state your vows.

### **Have a great time and try not to stress on stuff.**

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Laughter is the best medicine to get nerves out. Let loose with your bridal party and reminisce on fun memories, watch funny YouTube videos, dance, put on a great playlist and so on. There's no point stressing over things you can't change at that point, so your best bet is to just have fun and enjoy this very special day.

When we take a minute to breathe, acknowledge what's in and out of our control, and fully take in and enjoy the experience with the people we love, everything else falls into place. Remember to absorb everything that's happening and to celebrate your wedding day.

*Once you lock eyes with your partner, and feel the love, you'll realize that's the only thing that matters.*

Our heartiest congratulations on the great love you share, your engagement, and your future lives together.

Best wishes,

Your East Coast Event Services Wedding Team

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