

The Ultimate Guide to Saving Money on Your Wedding

Are you about to tie the knot but worried about a tight budget? This guide can help you cut the costs for your wedding while ensuring that it still becomes a memorable event of your life. There are many money-saving strategies out there, but it's ultimately up to you and your future life partner to decide which ones make sense for your wedding plans.

The online version of this guide can be found here:

<https://dealhack.com/blog/wedding-savings-guide>

According to a [Motley Fool](#) survey, the average cost of a wedding in the United States is \$27,000. This can be attributed to the post-inflation pandemic that resulted in a huge increase in wedding services. Not everyone is willing or able to shell out that much money to get married, and that's totally okay.

Here are twenty tips to keep in mind whenever you decide to plan the details of your wedding:

1. Hire the best wedding planner—you.

Wedding planners are a great help in managing the complex preparations of a wedding. So why not make things simple so *you* can do the planning instead? Hiring yourself as your wedding planner means you call the shots on the entire planning and execution process. Choose where to outsource the food, cake, venue, invitations, and other tasks. Professional wedding planners usually charge thousands of dollars for their services. If you want to cut costs for your marriage ceremony and reception, the first step is to be your wedding planner. Be confident because it's *your* wedding, and you have the freedom of what—and who—to include based on your tastes and preferences.

2. Narrow down your guest list.

Your wedding is a special moment that should be celebrated with people who really matter to you. Aside from your partner, ask yourself, "Who are the people I want to spend this day with us?". Write down their names, and you'd be surprised that the list is shorter than expected. If the number of guests is more than you are comfortable with, don't feel guilty about shortening the list. After all, the more people you invite to your wedding, the higher the cost of food, invitations, and guest favors, not to mention you have to book a larger venue.

3. Get married on a weekday during the off-season.

Weekend weddings are popular, which usually makes them more expensive. Schedule your wedding on a weekday evening or morning to avoid more costly booking fees. There will also be less competition—everyone else wants to get married on the weekend. Some wedding venues and planners may also offer discounts during weekdays, so grab them if you can. Another advantage of a daytime wedding is that you can save money on food since breakfast or lunch meals cost less than dinner. Getting married during the day or afternoon also means that it's more acceptable not to serve alcohol—no need to worry about the liquor budget, then.

Most people schedule their weddings in spring or summer because the weather is generally more favorable for such occasions. The catch is that these are also when the venues are crowded and more expensive. There's nothing with getting married during the fall or winter seasons of the year—it's actually more preferable if you want to save money. There will be less demand, so wedding vendors and caterers will likely offer additional discounts.

4. Choose an inexpensive wedding venue.

The place where your wedding will happen will make or break your budget. It is a common practice for couples to allocate [30%](#) of their wedding budget to the venue. Keep in mind that you don't *have* to spend too much on where to get married—as long as it's in a place where you and your partner are comfortable. The ideal wedding venue does not have to be a church or a fancy hotel. The room does not have to be too spacious, but do not pick a place that's too cramped.

Indoor weddings are typically more expensive at indoor venues, so how about getting married outdoors instead? Beachside, garden or cliffside weddings offer something unique while still being cost-efficient. Consider venues like golf courses, parks (either nature or amusement), and farms if you want to go way beyond the traditional route. Ultimately, all that matters is choosing a place that best fits your wedding theme or has a special meaning to you and your significant other. Just remember to prepare an outdoor wedding for bad weather, like having an indoor area nearby or putting up a massive tent for the reception area. Non-traditional wedding venues are generally cheaper to book and organize due to a lack of demand.

5. Prepare your own wedding bouquet.

The average cost for a wedding bouquet in 2021 was [\\$2,300](#) because of the inflation caused by the pandemic. Instead of spending this much on flower arrangements, consider them yourself or with the help of some trusted people. There are plenty of DIY videos on YouTube and Pinterest that offer creative bouquet ideas. You might even have an artistic friend who can help with the arrangements. Using this strategy saves not just money but also the time you no longer have to spend on finding the right florist.

6. Plan the wedding food options carefully.

The guests at your wedding no doubt want you and your partner to be happy. In return, you should also give them a good time—and the best way to do that is by providing good food. Overspending on wedding food is a common mistake if you're not thorough with the planning and budget. Communicate with your catering provider on every detail regarding the food, drinks, utensils, and tableware. The time of day of your wedding also affects the type of meals, snacks, refreshments (alcoholic or not), and dessert options. Maybe you can save money by providing less expensive but more filling food rather than fancy-looking but smaller portions. Or repurpose any leftover appetizers before the ceremony and give them out again during the reception. Use whatever strategy to maintain a reasonable food budget as long as your guests enjoy the event.

7. Skip the cocktail hour and open bar.

Alcohol is a fun addition to a wedding but is not necessary. The concept of the cocktail hour started as a way for the married couple and their families to take more pictures together. Having an open bar with appetizers does the trick to loosen up everyone's inhibitions. However, that also comes with the cost of higher spending. So if you want to save money, consider abandoning the cocktail hour altogether and scheduling the reception immediately after the wedding. If you and your partner's families need more pictures together, you can always do them before the wedding ceremony.

Your guests will *always* expect free food during the wedding—and reasonably so—but free alcohol is not a requirement. Instead of having an open bar during the reception, let the guests pay for their alcohol. This is ideal if your venue has its bar and alcohol supply.

8. Provide your own supply of alcohol.

Do you want your guests the option to drink alcohol during your wedding? If so, providing a limited supply is better than having an open bar. Book a venue that lets you bring your alcoholic drinks, so you don't have to pay corkage fees while having the freedom to choose the drink options for your guests. It is usually cheaper to buy wine and champagne in bulk at your local liquor store. You could also purchase beer cases if your guests are more likely to prefer them over fancier drinks. Whatever gets them drunk and happy, after all.

Now that you have your limited supply of alcohol for the wedding, you no longer have to worry about overspending for an open bar. Ask if you have friends willing to serve the alcohol during the reception. You may even get to assign your bartenders if you know people with mixology experience.

9. Give out wedding party supplies that also count as guest favors.

Instead of spending money on party supplies and guest favors, why not combine them? Wedding favors can be anything as long as they remind the guests of your wedding. For example, you give out personalized drinking cups during the reception. Not just ordinary-looking ones but designed elegantly to reflect your personality or wedding theme. Your guests can drink from these cups *and* take them home as a remembrance of your wedding day. You can find other creative ideas on websites like Pinterest, Etsy, and YouTube.

10. Hiring a live band is not necessary.

Nothing makes a wedding more alive than having an actual band performing throughout the ceremony. But if you want to be more practical with your expenses, it's one of the things worth skipping. Some wedding packages include a DJ that can set up a custom playlist for your ceremony. You can also do that yourself—all you need is a laptop or phone and a functional sound system. Make sure that whoever operates your playlist does not mix up the songs meant for the ceremony with the ones intended for the party.

11. Be creative—not expensive—with your invitations.

Inviting people to your wedding seems like a simple task, but even that can go over budget without a good plan. There are so many ways to create a wedding invitation. You don't have to use expensive materials like lace and linen or services like professional calligraphy. Search the Internet for creative ideas or pre-made templates that you can edit and print from your computer. You should also consider posting additional details about your wedding online. [Eventbrite](#) has free RSVP tools to streamline your wedding invitation process.

12. See if you can DIY some things instead of outsourcing them.

Create a list that separates the aspects you can do yourself, the ones you can assign to friends or family, and the ones you need to acquire from a paid service. The less stuff you outsource, the more you save in the long run. Some common examples of wedding aspects you can DIY are floral arrangements, table and wall decorations, props, and invitations. Instead of renting a photo booth or hiring a professional photographer, you can set up a camera on a tripod. Your guests can set it on a timer, or you can assign a friend for picture-taking duty. You can even DIY the food if you have the time, energy, and talent. Nothing makes a wedding reception more special than a home-cooked meal or two personally prepared by the bride and groom.

Before DIYing some aspects of your wedding, the most important thing to consider is to make sure that you are determined—and, more importantly, qualified—to pull it off. The same thing applies to outsourcing a task to friends or family. Otherwise, the decorations might look tacky, the food might be poorly prepared, and everything that might possibly go wrong will pile up at the worst moment.

13. Do not overspend on your wedding cake.

If you have the time and skill to bake your wedding cake, then you have one less problem to worry about. Otherwise, the average cost for a wedding cake is \$350. It can range from \$150 to \$700 depending on its size, ingredients, level of design, and flavor. Not to mention the time and labor costs.

The best solution for budget-conscious couples is to stick with a simple wedding cake. Buy the necessary ingredients and materials from a local grocery store or bakery instead of going for the imported stuff. Then you can find someone with the talents—a friend, family member, anyone else you trust—to bake the cake of your dreams. Just make sure you provide them with the specific design and enough time.

You can even go further and not get a traditional cake at all. Try something like a cupcake tower with multiple flavors. Cupcakes are cheaper and easier to make, and they can also be guest favors if you make a ton of them.

14. Find a substitute for the diamond ring.

Diamond has always been the traditional gemstone used for wedding rings. Which is no surprise that they are so expensive. Breaking tradition is not bad, so do not feel guilty about choosing a different gemstone—or none at all—for the rings. The value of your marriage should never be based on the amount you spend on rings and other material things. So if you're on a tight budget for your wedding plans, skipping the diamond ring saves a ton of money.

Wedding bands are fantastic alternative options for diamond rings. There are also other gemstones like emeralds, sapphires, and rubies. The ring band's material also does not have to be expensive gold. Alloys like stainless steel may not look as shiny but make for much more durable bands in the long run.

15. Buy a used wedding dress.

Wedding dresses are traditionally worn only once. Unless you want to reuse yours after ten or fifteen years for your renewal vows, how about buying a used one instead? Just because a dress is used does not mean its quality is poorer than the brand new ones. You can browse the Internet for used wedding dresses in good condition. They are usually sold for a discount at the Facebook marketplace, resale groups, or on websites like Craigslist and eBay. You can also find dozens of reliable websites dedicated to re-selling hardly used wedding gowns and dresses.

16. Choose your wedding vendors wisely.

Dedicate some time to shopping around for the best wedding vendors and suppliers. Ask about their services, pricing, discounts and promos, and timetables. Double-check their reputations by

reading online reviews and, if possible, asking people who previously booked with them. Compare the food options and prices offered by different caterers. Before booking a venue, schedule a personal visit to get a feel of the place. If you're going to spend money for your wedding, make sure to leave no stone unturned.

17. Communicate constantly with your wedding vendors.

Once you have chosen the vendors to whom you will outsource some components of your wedding, maintain a clear line of communication with them. Make sure they are aware of your budget, schedule, and expectations. Discuss any possible risks and how to avoid them. Give them time to prepare everything, whether it's the food, music, décor, or seating arrangements. Prepare contingency plans in case anything goes wrong. Professional wedding vendors have worked with all kinds of people, so they might usually offer solutions that best fit your budgets. Do not hesitate to ask them for suggestions on improving the flow of your wedding ceremony and reception.

18. Pick your priorities.

A low-cost wedding is always bound to have tradeoffs. You and your partner must decide which aspects of the wedding are most important because these are the ones that the budget will prioritize. The priorities are all up to the ones who are about to get married. To make things easier, make a list of your top five priorities. All the rest can still be accommodated by your budget if possible but can also be skipped entirely if needed.

19. Find an affordable all-inclusive wedding package.

An all-inclusive wedding package includes essential components like catering, tables, seating, venue, floral arrangements, and decorations. Some may even include photography and car rental services. If you have the time and patience, you might find a wedding bundle that fits your budget. Some of these packages are customizable to suit your personal tastes. You can usually save more money if you shop for individual wedding vendors. But for the right price, an all-inclusive wedding package from companies like [The Knot](#) is a good alternative for couples who are short on time.

20. Never try too hard to impress your guests.

Your wedding is all about you and your future life partner. It is a special occasion meant to be celebrated with the people you love. Every decision you make in the wedding planning process must be based on your preferences and no one else. Weddings are not meant to impress people with expensive dresses, gourmet food, fancy pictures, or impressive vows. If the guests you invite are the ones who genuinely care about you, they will support your wishes and enjoy your wedding no matter what.

Good luck with your wedding plans!



Now you have just learned a few essential tips on wedding budget planning. Whether you apply them to your wedding or suggest them to someone else, we're happy that we can help others save money on one of the most memorable days of their life. Feel free to comment below if you have any thoughts or suggestions about this guide!

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