



The  
Changing  
Face of  
Engagements

Facts and figures  
about modern-day  
engagements

# Weddings

January 2019

A Special Supplement to

**Statesboro Herald**



Proposing In Public

•• The do's and don'ts of  
restaurant proposals

Making It Official

•• The types of officiants

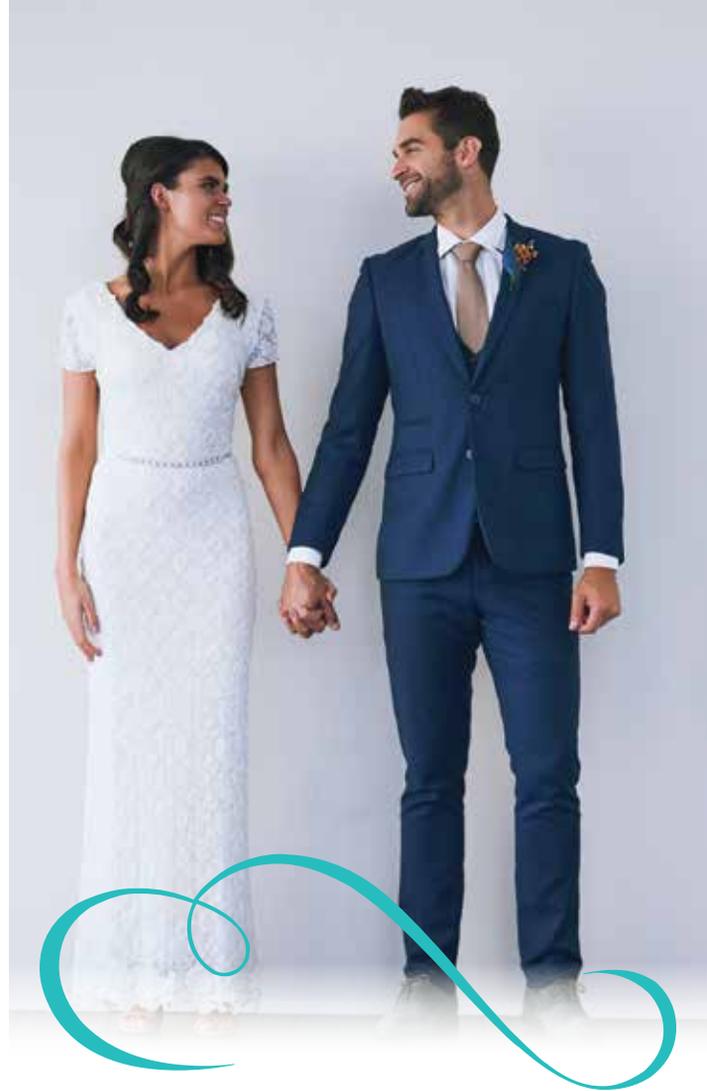


# Weddings

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**Statesboro Herald**



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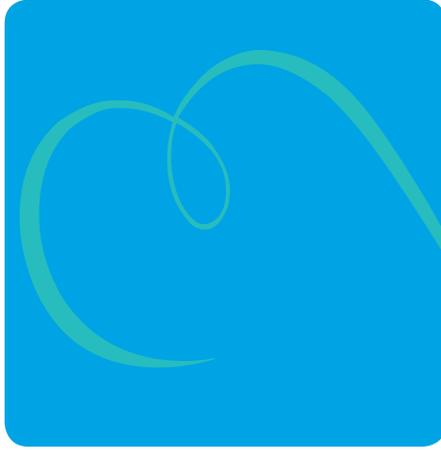
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This is a supplement of The Statesboro Herald • P.O. Box 888 • Statesboro • [www.statesboroherald.com](http://www.statesboroherald.com)



## Facts and figures about modern engagements

Getting engaged has and always will be a big deal. While marriage proposals are often steeped in tradition, some facts and figures about modern day engagements, courtesy of the 2018 Newlywed Report from WeddingWire, show just how much this special moment and all that surrounds it is changing.

- **The pressure to make marriage proposals extraordinary appears to be on the rise**, at least for Millennials. Of the nearly 18,000 respondents who shared their stories via WeddingWire's 2017 Newlywed Survey, 72 percent of Millennials said they feel pressured to make their proposals highly unique, while only 45 percent of Gen X respondents indicated feeling such pressure.
- Proposals might be changing, but **getting down on one knee appears to be an enduring tradition** that Millennials plan to keep in style. Eighty-two percent of Millennials indicated they got down on one knee to propose. In addition, the tradition of asking for parents' blessing also remains popular among Millennials, 72 percent of whom sought such blessings before proposing marriage.
- The average cost of an **engagement ring was \$5,000**.
- The pressure to pick out the right engagement ring appears to be subsiding. That's because 50 percent of survey respondents indicated they picked out the ring

together.

- Married-couples-to-be also appear to like **comparison shopping in regard to engagement rings**. The majority of purchasers looked at between two and seven rings before making a purchase.
- While online shopping has changed consumer behavior in myriad ways, **couples still prefer brick-and-mortar stores when buying engagement rings**. Thirty-one percent of purchasers bought rings online, but 63 percent made their purchases in-person at brick-and-mortar stores.
- **Christmas Day is the most popular day to pop the question**, followed by Valentine's Day. Christmas Eve, New Year's Day and New Year's Eve round out the top five.
- How to spread the news of an engagement is perhaps the biggest change surrounding engagements. Engagement parties were once the go-to way to spread the good news, but just one in four couples now have engagement parties. Nowadays, **86 percent of couples spread the news via social media**. In fact, 10 percent of parents find out about their children's engagements via social media.
- The days of a short engagement seem to be a thing of the past. **The average engagement now lasts 13 months**, and 28 percent of couples are engaged for 16 months or longer.

# Tips for a **successful marriage proposal**



**P**eople ready to “pop the question” may wonder about the right way to initiate an engagement proposal. Because a marriage proposal is such a memorable moment in a couples’ lives together, those doing the

proposing often go to great lengths to ensure things go smoothly. While there is no proposal playbook, these guidelines can assist those ready to take the leap.

**Add a personal touch.** It’s easy to get caught up in making a

marriage proposal a spectacle or something worthy of a social media post. But taking a sweetheart back to a special place that recalls a significant moment can set the backdrop for a memorable proposal. Incorporating the place you first met or a special song into the proposal can make it that much more personal and meaningful.

**Embrace the old fashioned.** It may be romantic to step back in time and followed the traditions of yesteryear. Show respect to future in-laws by speaking to them about intentions to propose and ask for their blessings. Get down on bended knee when asking for a sweetheart’s hand. Such gestures add up to meaningful expressions of love.

**Consider timing.** A person may be so excited to propose that he or she fails to consider how the other person in the relationship is feeling. If that person is overwhelmed by

work projects or stressed about upcoming events, consider waiting to propose at a more relaxed time.

**Enlist help from others.** It can be a challenge to keep your excitement hidden while collecting information about a future spouse’s likes and dislikes. Ask friends and close family members to be your accomplices so that information can be gathered without generating suspicion. This can be especially helpful when finding the perfect ring.

**Keep it simple.** The more complex a proposal, the more opportunities for things to go wrong. Simplicity, even if it means keeping the proposal to yourself until the question has been popped, can make for an extra special moment. Marriage proposals happen every day. With humor, confidence and a heart full of love, popping the question can be a success.

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# The dos and don'ts of restaurant proposals



**M**arriage proposals inside restaurants are popular ways to pop the question. Many couples find proposing over a candlelit meal is a romantic way to get engaged, providing a perfect setting to begin a life together.

Even though restaurant proposals have been popularized by television sitcoms and movies on the big screen, those taking this route should do some homework before sitting down to eat. As with all components of wedding planning, it's essential to get the proposal right to create lasting, positive memories.

**DO** choose a place with the right ambience. If you do not have a favorite restaurant in mind, go online and do some research for picturesque or romantic establishments. Many online reviews now include images, which can help you find the right setting.

**DO** make a reservation. An engagement should not be left to chance. Call ahead and speak with a manager and mention that you will be orchestrating a proposal. Find out if the restaurant will help you make it extra special. Some may decorate your table with favorite flowers or provide a specific champagne once the proposal has been accepted.

**DON'T** propose at the beginning of the meal. Set the scene with conversation and start to enjoy as much of the food as possible. Take time to enjoy the service, food and beverages. Some appetizers and a little wine in your stomach can ease pre-proposal jitters as well.

**DON'T** forget the ring. The ring is its own spectacle, but there are ways to present it in an even more glorious light. Plan ahead so that the ring is tied to an exquisite tea cup brought out during dessert service. Or, if you're worried about putting the ring in the hands of others, bring along a hand-painted plate that asks "Will You Marry Me?" The wait staff can cover the question with the entrée or a dessert. As your partner eats, the message will become clear.

**DO** expect a scene. Proposing marriage in a restaurant is bound to cause a big reaction — tears included. If you're not comfortable with public displays, you may want to reconsider popping the question in such a public setting.

**DO** consider a weeknight. Restaurants are less busy on weeknights than weekends, so you can expect a more intimate setting Monday through Thursday than you might find Friday through Sunday.

Restaurant proposals are traditional, and there are various ways to make them just right.

# Alternatives to engagement rings



• sapphire

Engagement rings are often sizable investments. Money magazine reports the

**average engagement ring costs around \$5,800.**

An engagement ring symbolizes the start of a lifelong commitment and may even set the tone for a couple's wedding day.

Jewelry styles are personal, and grooms-to-be should carefully research their significant others' preferences in terms of precious metals, colors and gemstones. Even though tradition holds that a diamond gemstone is classic for engagement rings, these precious stones are not the only options. In fact, before World War II, just 10 percent of proposals involved diamond engagement rings. That number jumped to 80 percent by 1990. However, many modern couples now lean toward other offerings not only for the uniqueness they provide, but also for the potential cost savings.

Those seeking something unique can embrace these engagement ring options.



• amethyst

• **Amethyst:** This vibrant, lavender-hued stone can be breathtaking when cut the correct way. Purple shades have long been associated with royalty, making an amethyst fitting for such an occasion as special as an engagement. Because amethysts, which are less expensive than diamonds, are a seven on the Mohs scale for gemstone hardness, they can be very durable.

• **Knot rings:** These rings do not have a center stone. Rather, they're designed to be a tied knot or infinity symbol. These rings can be particularly sentimental as they represent true, unbroken love.

• **Opal:** Gemstones, like flowers, have been assigned certain meanings. Tying the engagement ring to one of them can infuse more symbolism into the relationship. Opal, for example, represents love, passion, creativity, spontaneity, and inspiration. Those traits seem tailor-made for surprise proposals.

• **Sapphire:** While sapphire stones often are blue, they can also be yellow, green, pink, and white. Sapphires are the third hardest mineral. A white sapphire can be the perfect diamond replacement.

• **Garnet or ruby:** Red is the definitive color of love. A Valentine's Day proposal can be made even more special by presenting an engagement ring with a red gemstone.

• **Moissanite:** The jewelry source Brilliant Earth says moissanite is a gemstone first discovered in 1893 by Henri Moissan in a meteorite that fell to earth. It is remarkably similar to a diamond in appearance and strength. Moissanite also has heightened brilliance, with a refractive index higher than that of a diamond.

Couples have many beautiful alternatives to diamonds that they can explore when shopping for engagement rings.



# Factors that can affect the **length of your engagement**



**E**ach year, millions of couples around the world tie the knot. But before couples walk down the aisle, the proposal to get married must take place. Many couples mutually agree to get engaged, while the experience may be a surprise for others who have thought about it, but may not have been sure when one partner or another would “pop the question.”

Upon getting engaged, couples may ponder how long their engagement should last. There is no perfect answer, and engagement length typically depends on personal preference and the needs of the couple. In fact, according to The Knot 2017 Real Weddings Study,

**the average length of an engagement is 14.5 months.**

A number of factors affect the length of a couple's engagement, and couples should not feel as if they need to hurry down the aisle. For example, couples who will be financing their own weddings may need a longer engagement than those whose parents will be chipping in. In such instances, longer

engagements give couples more time to save and may help them ensure their weddings are everything they hoped for.

Others may prefer a shorter engagement if they are financially stable and prepared to tie the knot. Couples in their late 30s may feel the tug of a biological clock and want to ensure there is ample time to get married and have children. A shorter engagement can facilitate that.

Some couples may have little choice in the matter, as the length of their engagements may be dictated by the availability of their favorite venues.

Military deployment, work commitments, medical issues, or travel responsibilities also may affect the length of an engagement.

Some couples may feel that an especially lengthy engagement diminishes their excitement about getting married. That “new engagement shine” can wear off as family and friends wait months or years for the wedding to take place.

Couples generally are advised to stick with what feels right to them regarding the length of their engagements. Just like all aspects of the wedding, couples can weigh the opinions of others but follow through with what works best for them.

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# Make **healthy habits** a part of wedding prep



Couples can exercise together to maintain physical and mental well-being as they count down to their wedding day.



**A**fter the big question is popped and loving partners decide to spend their lives together as a married couple, a whirlwind of activity will ensue. Although wedding planning is exciting, some couples may feel overwhelmed with all the decisions that need to be made before they can tie the knot. In this state of increased pressure, stress may build and health could falter. According to a Cornell University study, more than 70 percent of brides-to-be have weight loss on the brain, but shedding pounds shouldn't be the only health factor to consider. Here are some easy ways to stay mentally and physically fit in advance of a happy wedding day.

**Get daily exercise.** Exercise is important for maintaining a healthy body weight and keeping stress levels in check. Exercise also can boost mood. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends getting at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity each week. Strength training exercises performed at least twice a week complete a well-balanced exercise regimen.

**Slow down and relax.** Those who go full-throttle with all of their responsibilities — including wedding planning — may burn out. Stress can weaken the immune system and make people vulnerable to illness. Schedule some time for date nights with your fiancé, and don't overlook the benefits of hanging out with friends and getting away from wedding planning for a bit.





**Eat body-boosting foods.** The foods we eat can impact everything from energy levels to skin radiance. Foods like berries, sweet potatoes, broccoli, greens, green tea, and dark chocolate all contain antioxidants that boost the immune system, states The Food Network. Avoid drastic diets that can do more harm than good. Simply cutting 500 calories a day can help the average person lose a pound per week if weight loss is a goal. Simple ways to trim calories are to choose skim milk over whole milk and choose low-calorie snacks.

**Cut down on alcohol consumption.** Toasting to the future with a glass of wine may become rote in the months leading up to the wedding, but alcohol is a diuretic and a source of liquid calories. Alcoholic beverages dehydrate the body and cause it to hold onto water. When imbibing, stick to low-calorie cocktails like a vodka spritzer (60 to 80 calories) instead of a calorie-laden frozen margarita (300 calories).

Feeling and looking one's best starts long before the wedding day. By making health a priority, couples can start their new lives together on healthy footing.

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# Get the most out of **bridal shows** and **wedding events**

**R**ecently engaged couples may be excited to get a jump on wedding planning. Bridal shows can be a great way for couples to meet and familiarize themselves with local wedding professionals, all the while introducing themselves to the terminology of wedding planning.

Though they're a great source of information, contacts and samples, bridal shows also can be a bit overwhelming. Learning how to maximize time spent at shows can help couples plan their weddings as efficiently as possible.





**Start small.** If the idea of large crowds is unappealing, attend the more intimate, boutique shows that are often held at local reception halls and restaurants instead of the larger installations at convention centers and hotels.

**Scout out vendors.** Check the bridal show's website for lists of exhibitors and see if your desired vendors are on the list. But even if they're not, keep an open mind and use the show as a chance to compare offerings. If an event map is available, marking off must-visit booths can help save time.

**Pre-register.** Pre-registering for bridal events saves time at check-in, and doing so may make you eligible for discounted tickets.

**Come prepared.** Chances are each vendor is going to ask couples for information so that they can follow up with a phone call or email with more detailed offerings and estimates. Couples attending the show can expediate the process by coming equipped with labels that feature their names, contact information and wedding date. They can then stick the labels on sign-in sheets or use them like business cards.

**Dress comfortably.** Bridal expos involve a lot of walking and roaming around. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes. Consider a backpack or hands-free bag so you are not weighed down when collecting the swag and other handouts throughout the day.

**Ask questions.** When face-to-face with vendors, rely on their expertise but don't hesitate to ask questions concerning themes, colors, recommendations for honeymoon locations, invitation paper suggestions, and much more.

**Stay for the fashion show.** Many shows will offer a runway experience to present the latest gown and tuxedo offerings. This can be an entertaining way for couples to formulate their wedding styles.

Wedding shows introduce couples to vendors and set them on the path to making decisions regarding the planning of their weddings.



# How to handle **rain on your wedding day**

**B**rides and grooms fear the prospects of rainy wedding days. But even couples who have contended with everything from a few drops to an all-out deluge on their wedding days look back fondly on the ceremonies and receptions. In fact, how couples handle any precipitation can affect how happy the festivities may be.

**Have a rainy day game plan.** Rain affects outdoor weddings more than any other type of ceremony or reception. If the goal is to exchange vows outdoors, work with the venue to make this possible with a tent or gazebo. However, if the weather is especially foul and windy, move it indoors.

**Invest in golf umbrellas.** Couples who live in notoriously damp climates can purchase golf umbrellas, which tend to be larger

than the average umbrella, and keep them stationed in decorated stands to ease transitions between wedding sites and keep everyone as dry as possible.

**Wear waterproof cosmetics.** Women in the bridal party, including the bride, can ask their makeup artists to use durable, waterproof products. This can help salvage beautifully composed looks should some drops begin to fall.

**Know vendors' rain policies.** Some live musicians will not play in damp weather. Florists may need to make accommodations for arrangements blowing in the wind. Couples need to understand what they're responsible for and what may be covered if a weather event occurs. Wedding insurance may help cover the costs of nonrefundable cancellations.

**Move past it quickly.** It is okay to get upset if the weather turns for the worse. But don't dwell on it. Guests will sense negative energy, and couples should set the tone of sticking it through despite a little adversity — which can be a good lesson for the marriage as well.

**Embrace the rain.** While a couple probably won't wish for rain, there are some benefits to overcast skies, say the wedding professionals at Brides magazine. Flowers are less likely to wilt in rainy conditions. In the absence of bright sunlight, outdoor photographs can really pop. Rain is romantic and may compel couples and their guests to cuddle close.

Don't let rain on a wedding day become a drag. With preparation and perspective, couples can handle rainy wedding days.



# Wedding insurance can ease nerves

Wedding insurance policies put protections in place that can reimburse couples should weather or other issues interfere with their wedding day bliss.

Couples spend thousands of dollars on their wedding ceremony and celebrations. The cost of a wedding varies depending on geographic location, but according to the business and financial resource *Business Insider* and *The Knot* 2017 Real Weddings Study,

**the average wedding in the United States costs \$31,391.**

**Insurance policies can help couples protect their wedding investment.**

Special event insurance provides coverage for various scenarios, including extreme weather, damaged gifts, lost jewelry, vendor cancellations or no-shows, venues closing before the wedding, and canceled weddings, according to Travelers Insurance. Insurance also may cover other unforeseen scenarios, such as unexpected expenses from injuries during the wedding or spoiled food.

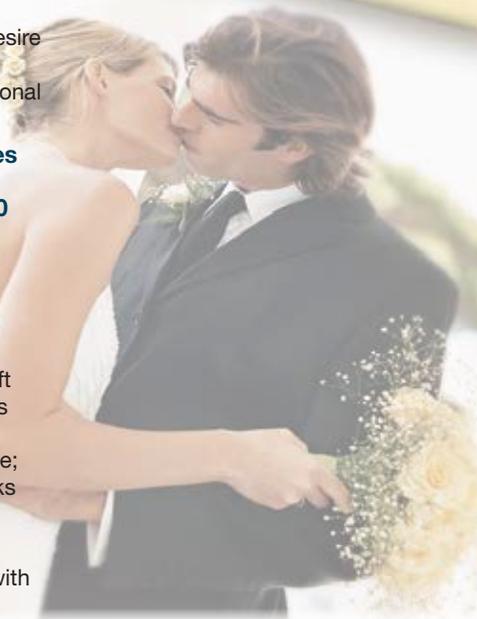
Policies will pay directly for any damage or injuries that occur, or reimburse the couple if the wedding is postponed or canceled. If weddings occur at home, some people's

home insurance or umbrella policies may cover certain wedding liabilities. Most wedding venues carry their own liability insurance, so couples may not have to overlap there. However, for those who desire extra protection for vendor mishaps, it is wise to speak with an insurance professional about special wedding coverage.

**Prices for wedding insurance policies can start at around \$100 to \$200 for minimum coverage and reach \$1,000 for more expensive ceremonies,** according to the financial advisement website NerdWallet.

Speak with an insurance agent and read policies carefully before purchasing one. Non-covered issues typically include theft or loss of an engagement ring; rainy days that do not classify as extreme weather; switching vendors after a deposit is made; and risky entertainment, such as fireworks or live animals.

Protecting wedding expenditures with insurance policies can provide couples with added peace of mind on their big days.



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# Wedding registry tips



**B**uilding a wedding registry is a task unlike any other couples may encounter during their lifetimes. Wedding registries are invaluable resources that provide engaged couples' loved ones with gift suggestions. In spite of that value, couples may find it daunting and even a little uncomfortable to build their wedding registries.

*Building a wedding registry can feel like walking a tightrope. Couples likely won't want to ask for too much or for gifts that are too expensive, but a poorly built registry can be a major inconvenience for guests. The following tips can help couples build adequate registries that benefit them without asking too much of their guests.*



**Register with more than one store.** It's important to register with more than one store. Doing so makes things as convenient as possible for guests and increases the chances they will be able to shop at stores they're familiar with. Unless your guest list is predominantly local, try to register with at least one national chain so guests who live in different regions can shop for gifts in-person if they prefer to do so.

**Make a large list.** Some couples are hesitant to make large wedding registries, feeling that doing so gives the impression that they're asking for too much. But large registries simply give guests more options to choose from. Many industry insiders advise

registering for two to three gifts per guest. That might seem like a lot, but guests will appreciate having all of those options.

**Don't hesitate to include expensive items on your registry.** Couples also may be hesitant to include especially expensive items on their wedding registries. However, the couples' parents and other close relatives may be honored to purchase more expensive items, so couples should not feel embarrassed to include them on their lists. It's also important to note that many retailers, after couples' wedding days have come and gone, discount registry items that weren't purchased. So even if no one purchases the more expensive items, including them on a registry may significantly reduce their cost for couples who want to buy such items themselves after tying the knot.

**Vary the prices of items on the list.** In addition to including more expensive items on the registry, make sure to include moderately priced and inexpensive items. This gives guests more options and ensures guests who might be spending a lot to travel to and from the wedding can still purchase gifts without digging too much deeper into their pockets.

**Periodically update the registries.** Periodically update your registries to remove items you have already received and to add items if many of the less expensive ones have already been purchased. This also makes things more convenient for guests.

Building a wedding registry is a unique task that couples can embrace as their wedding day draws near.



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## Did you know?

**A** first dance song at the wedding reception often sets the tone for the upcoming festivities and can exemplify just how newlyweds feel about each other. Couples may agonize over which song to choose, but there are many different resources available that can help couples narrow down their options. Spotify, the popular streaming music service, has compiled a list of the most popular wedding songs for 2018, based on global respondents. Their top pick was **“Perfect,”** by **Ed Sheeran**, a song that many might suspect was composed with wedding dances in mind. Sheeran’s “Thinking Out Loud,” Etta James’ “At Last,” John Legend’s “All of Me,” and Elvis Presley’s “Can’t Help Falling in Love” filled out the remaining top five spots on Spotify’s list.



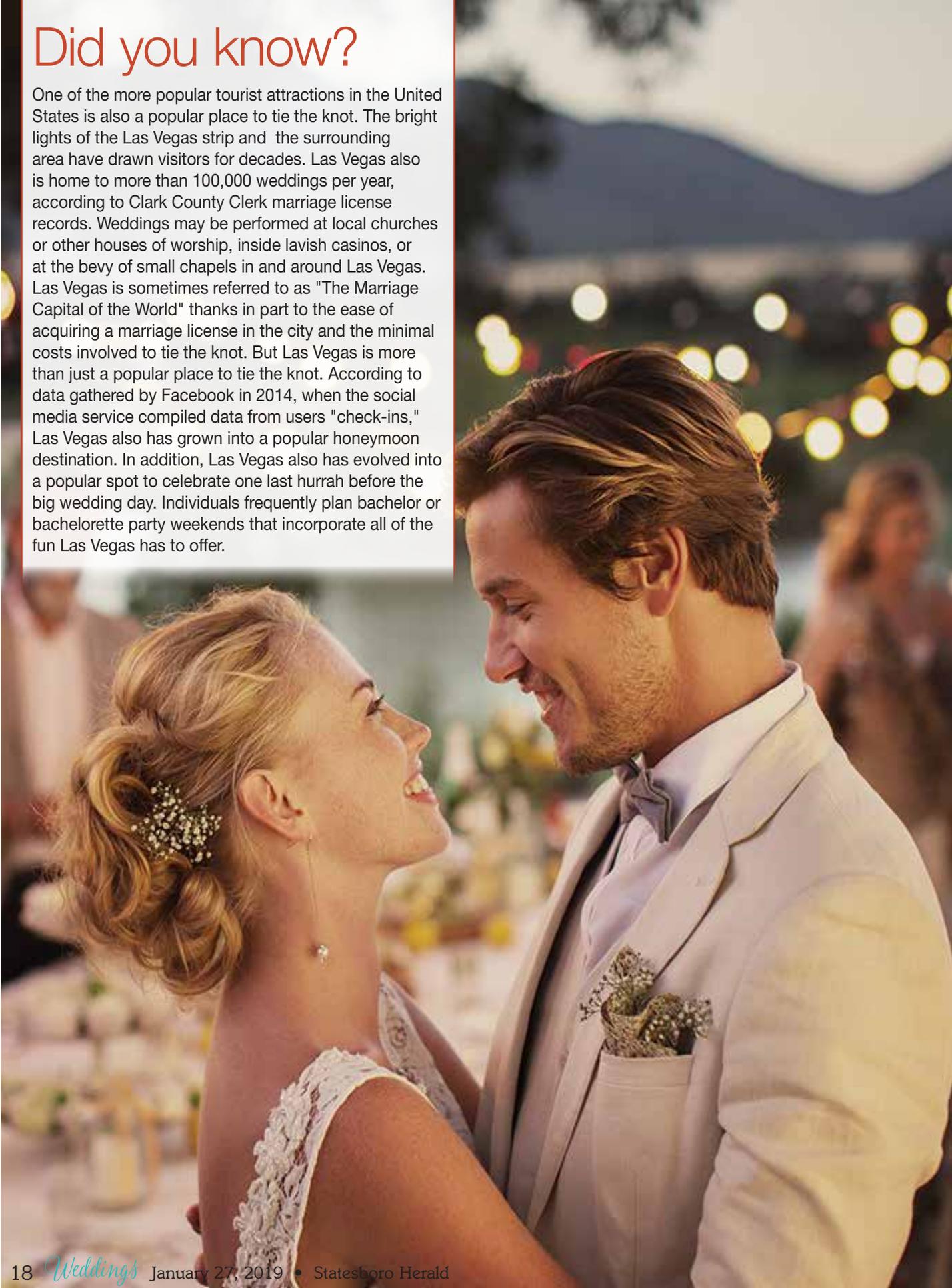
# Did you know?

**A wedding is a tough time to experience a bad hair day.** Clothing styles, time of day and weather all can dictate a wedding hairstyle, but ultimately one of the most important factors in a wedding hairstyle is finding a stylist who understands you and can exercise your vision. A patient, understanding stylist who is open to viewing different photographs and drawing inspiration from various places, as well as running through a few trial styles, can help brides (and grooms) look their best. In fact, trials are a must to ensure that a chosen style will work with your hair texture. If you plan to get your hair colored, professionals recommend doing so about three weeks in advance of the big day so it looks natural and any potential snafus can be remedied beforehand. Your stylist may suggest a light trim prior to the wedding so that the ends are fresh and healthy. And since you're putting your faith in a qualified stylist, trust their expertise and vision. Keep an open mind to their suggestions. You may fall in love with one of the options you hadn't considered.



# Did you know?

One of the more popular tourist attractions in the United States is also a popular place to tie the knot. The bright lights of the Las Vegas strip and the surrounding area have drawn visitors for decades. Las Vegas also is home to more than 100,000 weddings per year, according to Clark County Clerk marriage license records. Weddings may be performed at local churches or other houses of worship, inside lavish casinos, or at the bevy of small chapels in and around Las Vegas. Las Vegas is sometimes referred to as "The Marriage Capital of the World" thanks in part to the ease of acquiring a marriage license in the city and the minimal costs involved to tie the knot. But Las Vegas is more than just a popular place to tie the knot. According to data gathered by Facebook in 2014, when the social media service compiled data from users "check-ins," Las Vegas also has grown into a popular honeymoon destination. In addition, Las Vegas also has evolved into a popular spot to celebrate one last hurrah before the big wedding day. Individuals frequently plan bachelor or bachelorette party weekends that incorporate all of the fun Las Vegas has to offer.





# Did you know?

Should a person hear that a couple "tied the knot," it's immediately known that they got married. But just when and where does the term "tying the knot" come from? The phrase "tying the knot" is steeped in tradition, though the origins of the phrase remain open for debate. One origin story states that tying the knot can be traced back to the Roman empire, when brides wore girdles that were tied in knots, and the groom had to eventually untie those knots to consummate the marriage. Tying the knot also may be traced to the custom of handfasting. The marriage contract was established between a bride and a groom by joining their hands together and tying them. Although accounts vary as to whether the hands were tied only during the ceremony or later, this is believed to be an ancient Renaissance or Celtic tradition. Others speculate that the phrase traces its

origins to Hindu weddings in which brides and grooms tied a necklace of flowers as part of wedding tradition. Yet another theory suggests that the phrase can be traced back to the knotted string that supported beds prior to the use of metal springs. Therefore, in order to make a marriage bed, couples first needed to tie the knot. Knots also represent a difficult-to-break bond, which is why they have long been associated with marriage. In one unity tradition, couples may braid or knot together three strands, with one representing the bride, one symbolizing the groom and the third representing God as they join together in faith. Similarly, the phrase "getting hitched" is associated with knot-tying as well. The saying implies that two people are being tied together just like a horse is tied, or hitched, to a wagon.



# Wedding dress **fitting guide**



**B**ecause fashion preferences were once ornate and dependent on precise fits, ready-to-wear clothing really did not become widely available until the early 20th century. Such attire is now available in just about any retail store.

Because ready-to-wear clothing is so readily available, the average person may be unfamiliar with custom-made or tailored items. In fact, a couples' wedding may be the only instance in their lives when they require the services of a seamstress or tailor.

Fittings are a part of wedding planning, and here's how brides-to-be can navigate the process of finding and being fitted for a dress.

**Try on sample gowns.** The first step is to make your rounds to various gown shops and try on the samples they have available. Most sample sizes will not be the size you wear every day, so expect them to be ill-fitting. Do not be discouraged. Once a gown is chosen, the dress shop will take your measurements and order the gown according to the manufacturer's sizing

guide. Again, this can be shocking, since the size will likely be larger than what you wear in street clothes. Some shops will also order a little larger to allow for adequate tailoring.

**Schedule the first fitting.** The first fitting should be anywhere from eight to 12 weeks before the wedding date, according to experts at WeddingWire, an online wedding information provider. This is the time it takes to complete most standard alterations. Complex customizations can take even longer. Brides should also budget a minimum of \$500 for alterations, which may or may not be included in the price of the dress.

**Bring shoes and undergarments.** Remember to bring along the exact shoes and undergarments you will wear with your gown. A change in shoes or bra/corset can result in the alterations fitting poorly the next time. Bring these items along to all subsequent fittings.

**Speak up.** Martha Stewart Weddings suggests speaking up at fittings if anything is uncomfortable or needs tweaking. Seamstresses are masters at their crafts, but only if they understand the desires of the bride.

**Check the details.** The second fitting is designed to check that all issues from the first fitting have been addressed, the gown is comfortable and you can move freely. At the last fitting, ask the maid of honor to come along so that she understands how to bustle or help you handle complicated straps or closures.

Open communication with a seamstress and bridal shop can ensure brides-to-be get a dress that fits like a glove.

Many people play a role in a wedding. The bride and groom, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ring bearers, and flower girls are front and center on the day a couple ties the knot.

Another central, and very important, figure on a couple's wedding day is the officiant. Officiants perform the wedding ceremony and are the first to introduce the newlyweds to their guests as an officially married couple.

Various types of officiants can officiate a wedding, and understanding each type can help couples find the right one for them.

### Religious officiant

Couples who want traditional religious ceremonies often choose a religious officiant, such as a parish priest or rabbi, with whom they're familiar. For example, couples who grew up attending a particular church might choose the priest who's been preaching to them since they were children, while others might choose the priest at their current place of worship.

Religious officiants may be governed by certain rules that restrict them to performing ceremonies in a house of worship, which might rule them out for couples who want outdoor or destination weddings. Couples should inquire about such restrictions as early as possible in the planning process so they aren't caught off guard.

### Civil officiant

Civil officiants are officers of the court, such as a judge or justice of the peace. Many couples who are planning destination weddings abroad still choose to have a civil officiant perform a wedding ceremony at home. This is because some overseas officiants may not be authorized to marry couples in their home countries, meaning their marriages won't be recognized once they return home. Civil officiants make sure marriages are legal, and they also make great options for couples who just want to get hitched without a grand ceremony.

### Professional officiant

Professional officiants are not affiliated with a particular religious organization. That makes them great choices for couples who aren't religious as well as those who come from different religious backgrounds and won't be converting to the same faith. Professional officiants typically meet with a couple once or twice to get to know them before writing the speech they will give during the ceremony. Many will share the speech with the couple in advance of the big day, and some even allow couples to write the speech.

### Loved ones

Many couples ask a friend or family member to officiate their weddings, which can add a fun and very personal component to the ceremony. Couples who want to take this route should research local laws to determine the steps loved ones must take to become ordained ministers who will be recognized by the state or country where the ceremony will take place.

Officiants play a significant role during a wedding, and couples can choose one who best fits their personalities and ceremony preferences.



# Types of wedding officiants



# A wedding day **shaving** guide for grooms



A clean shave is a key component of wedding day grooming for men.

clean, comfortable shave. Grooms who do not already have beards should be clean shaven for their wedding days.

Brickell Men's Products advises that the first step to a good shave is to shower before shaving. The warm water and steam will open up pores and follicles, allowing the hair to protrude as much as possible out of the skin. The more it sticks out, the cleaner the shave will be.

Many men fail to prep their skin before shaving. It is important to rinse the face with a pre-shave soap and warm water to remove excess oil and dead skin that clogs razor blades.

Try a non-lathering or natural shave cream that does not contain the potentially irritating chemicals that create the lathering effect, but will still offer lubrication to help get a closer shave.

The right razor can make all the difference. While an electric shaver can serve in a

pinch, come the day of the wedding, work with a traditional razor, either disposable or cartridge style. Start with a fresh, new and sharp blade so it is effective. Some men prefer a single blade for a close shave, while others like razors with multiple blades. Grooms should use what has worked for them in the past, as now is not the time to experiment.

While shaving, go with and against the grain, or what feels comfortable to take off the hair without having to go over areas repeatedly and risk irritating the skin. Gillette advises rinsing blades often during shaving. However, do not tap the razor against the sink to dislodge the whiskers, as this can damage or dull the razor.

Finish up by rinsing with cool water and applying a moisturizer or specially designed aftershave product. It can take up to 48 hours for skin to heal after a shave and keeping it hydrated can diminish irritation.

**G**rooms are often content to let their brides-to-be shine on their wedding day. But weddings are a showcase of the two people getting married ... and grooms matter! Grooms can take steps to look handsome and polished, but may wonder what they can do to put their best feet forward when all eyes and cameras are facing their way.

Addressing skin care and proper shaving techniques is essential. Although shaving is a seemingly simple task, some men struggle through the process because they haven't mastered the basics for a

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# Secrets to at-home weddings



*Many couples preparing for their trip down the aisle follow the familiar sentiments expressed by Dorothy in "The Wizard of Oz." Such couples feel "there's no place like home" when hosting a wedding ceremony or reception.*

*There are many benefits to hosting a wedding at home. Homes often hold couples' most cherished memories, and hosting a backyard celebration or an intimate indoor ceremony at your own home or the abode of a loved one can be a cost-effective way to have a good time.*

*Here are some tips to help couples navigate hosting an at-home wedding.*

## **Assess the space**

The average home is not equipped to handle hundreds of guests, wait staff, caterers, and parked cars. Concessions in regard to comfort and safety will have to be made when drawing up the guest list. The wedding resource The Knot advises the general rule is 6 to 10 square-feet of floor space per guest for row seating. You'll probably need even more space for buffet tables, seating and a dance floor.

You will likely need to temporarily move furniture to comfortably fit everyone indoors — or rent a large enough tent for a backyard wedding.

## **Hire a cleaning service**

It's important to present a clean, inviting space when hosting a wedding at

home. A cleaning service will conduct a thorough cleaning before and after the festivities, freeing up your time for last-minute tasks or to embark on your honeymoon.

## **Book an officiant early**

Confirm with an officiant that they can oversee the wedding proceedings at your home. Many religious officials are not able to perform ceremonies outside of a place of worship.

## **Learn if it's legal**

Certain municipalities may require permits for parking on street, noise past a certain hour, closing of streets, and much more. Do your research. You may need to coordinate parking at a nearby lot (like a school closed on the weekend) and shuttle people to your home.

## **Consult with an insurance carrier**

Inquire if having such a large party at home is covered by your homeowner's insurance policy, particularly if your home is damaged or someone gets injured during the festivities. Supplemental liability insurance or an umbrella policy may offer greater protection.

Weddings at home can be a unique opportunity for couples who love the comfort and familiarity of their homes.



# Get schooled on wedding terminology

**C**ouples about to embark on their wedding journeys will likely learn a thing or two about party planning once their engagements are over and they are newly married. Wedding planning can seem overwhelming and a tad confusing at times, but a crash course in wedding terminology can help couples make more informed choices along the way.

- **Blusher:** A short, single-layer veil that covers the bride's face before the ceremony.
  - **Boutonnière:** A single flower bud worn by the men in the bridal party.
  - **Canapés:** Bite-sized appetizers served during the cocktail hour of a reception.
  - **Civil ceremony:** A marriage ceremony conducted by a council official or justice of the peace at a municipal location rather than in a house of worship.
  - **Cocktail hour:** Typically an hour-long interlude between the wedding ceremony and the main dinner of the reception. Guests have time to arrive and mingle before being seated.
  - **Dais:** A podium or platform raised from the floor where the bride and groom are seated.
  - **Deposit:** A percentage of the total cost of service given to a vendor to secure a date for their services.
  - **Escort (seating) cards:** Printed cards that direct reception guests to their seats.
  - **Fondant:** A sweet, pliable product used to decoratively cover layered cakes. It can be used in lieu of straight buttercream.
  - **Handle wrap:** Ribbon or fabric that wraps around the stems of a bouquet the bride and wedding party carries.
  - **Maid/matron of honor:** The title given to the woman who assists the bride and stands closest to her at the altar. "Maids" are those who are unmarried, while "matrons" are women who are.
  - **Master of ceremonies:** An individual who will work with the DJ or band to announce the various components of the wedding reception.
  - **Nosegay:** A small bouquet or flower arrangement typically given to the mothers of the bride and groom before the ceremony.
  - **Processional/Recessional:** Musical pieces that mark the entrance and exit from the wedding ceremony.
  - **Receiving line:** A line of the key people in the wedding who welcome and greet guests.
  - **Tablescape:** A word that describes the multiple components of centerpiece designs.
- Learning some basic wedding terminology can simplify wedding planning.

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Mr. & Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

announce the engagement of their daughter, \_\_\_\_\_

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son of Mr. & Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_.

The bride-elect is the granddaughter of \_\_\_\_\_.

She is the great-granddaughter of \_\_\_\_\_.

List education, employment and other, if desired:

\_\_\_\_\_

The groom-elect is the grandson of \_\_\_\_\_.

He is the great-grandson of \_\_\_\_\_.

List education, employment and other, if desired:

\_\_\_\_\_

The couple has planned to wed on: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want the announcement to read "No local invitations will be sent; friends and relatives are invited"? (YES) (NO)

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Bride's parents and town of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's grandparents: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's great-grandparents: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's parents and town of residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's grandparents: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's great-grandparents: \_\_\_\_\_

Ceremony information: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Who officiated: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride given in marriage by: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of bride's attire: \_\_\_\_\_

Maid/Matron of Honor: \_\_\_\_\_

Bridesmaids: \_\_\_\_\_

Flower girl: \_\_\_\_\_ Ring bearer: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's best man: \_\_\_\_\_

Groomsmen/Ushers: \_\_\_\_\_

Reception (location, hosts, servers): \_\_\_\_\_

Honeymoon: \_\_\_\_\_

Couple's permanent address: \_\_\_\_\_

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