

50 WAYS TO SAVE ON YOUR WEDDING BUDGET

Planning a wedding doesn't just pull on the heartstrings, your purse strings also feel the pull when deciding how much to splurge on your big day. Cakes, flowers, dresses and food, it all adds up, but here are some simple ways to save money and stretch your budget..

1. Consider second hand/vintage rings, or even an heirloom in the family.
2. Pick an unpopular day/season - weekend weddings bump up the cost.
3. Keep it a close affair. Stick to close family and friends to keep down the numbers and cost.
4. Consider an 'at home' venue. A BBQ reception can cut costs - weather permitted!
5. Buy a 2nd hand wedding dress (i.e. www.sellmyweddingdress.co.uk) or sell yours when you are married.
6. Become best friends with eBay.
7. Avoid the 'W' word. You don't *have* to mention that the cake, flowers or décor is for a wedding, avoiding the W word can keep costs down.
8. Utilise your friend's talents. Do you know dressmakers or florists, cake makers, photographer or chefs?
9. DIY invites. It's therapeutic too.
10. Cut costs of photographers and let your guests capture the moments. Add disposable cameras to each table for guests to use and hand in before they leave.
11. Find out if you can bring your own alcohol.
12. Instead of a three tier wedding cake, consider one tier and cupcakes instead - or have a 'fake' tier.
13. Make your own flower arrangements, buy flowers in bulk from a warehouse, or even grow your own!
14. Use lastminute.com secret getaways for your honeymoon.
15. Price up the difference between a church and registry office ceremony.
16. Serve your wedding cake as dessert.
17. Find a friend with a fancy car.
18. Let the bridesmaids buy their own dress - sticking to the colour theme of course.
19. Do you own hair and makeup, or ask your beauty-savvy friend to do it for you.
20. Make your own table favours.
21. Ask a friend to DJ.
22. Don't do a free bar, make a punch instead; when it's gone, it's gone.
23. Consider a wedding abroad, in a country less expensive.
24. Seat more guests on bigger tables to avoid spending on lots of table decorations.
25. Shop off-season. Find pink accessories after Valentine's Day for half the price.



MY WEDDING NOTEBOOK

Everything you need to organise your dream wedding

26. No one will see your shoes under your dress, don't over spend on them.
27. Provide a buffet instead of a meal.
28. Gets quotes rather than settle at the first price, haggle.
29. Consider faux blooms as opposed to real ones, and re-sell afterwards.
30. Make your own playlist and plug in your iPod.
31. Jet off on your Honeymoon mid-week.
32. Hire an all-inclusive venue.
33. Send your wedding invites online and save on postage costs.
34. When selecting flowers, choose bigger blooms and buy less stems.
35. Have a daytime wedding.
36. Hold the ceremony and the reception at the same place.
37. Instead of a meal, provide Afternoon Tea.
38. Make Champagne go further by providing a champagne cocktail on arrival instead of a full glass.
39. Hire a wedding planner - they aren't shy to haggle and will bring costs down for you (and stress levels).
40. Purchase using your credit card. Most credit cards incorporate an insurance policy, which means if the worst happens and you need to cancel, or the company cancels on you, you will be covered.
41. Cut back on luxuries temporarily. Instead of spending out on that weekly pedicure, put the money in a pot and watch the money stack up.
42. Shop in the sales for your wedding dress and accessories.
43. Ask for vouchers towards your honeymoon or money towards future projects instead of gifts you may not really need.
44. Settle for a suit instead of a tux.
45. Do your own catering.
46. Check Groupon regularly.
47. Set a budget and stick to it.
48. DIY decorations.
49. Find a venue that offers a wedding package under £1,000.
50. Throw a stag/hen day not a weekend.