

Great Ideas and Plans for Wedding Parties and Celebrations

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The Pre-Wedding Parties

As social events go, there aren't many that can top a wedding. The wedding reception really, is when the fun begins. But let's not forget about the parties that precede the wedding, the engagement parties, the bachelor and bachelorette parties, the wedding shower and the rehearsal dinner. These pre-wedding parties can be great fun, too. Here is a run-down of each:

The Engagement Party

A great way to announce the upcoming nuptials is with an engagement party. Traditionally, the parents of the bride hold this event a month or so after the couple announces their engagement. However, there are no set rules and they can be held at home, at a restaurant, or anywhere the host prefers. Engagement parties for the most part are intimate affairs of a casual nature.

Their purpose is to give bride and groom an opportunity to meet each other's family members and close friends. If the couple's parents live far apart, it's not uncommon for the groom's family to hold a second engagement party. Typically gifts are not given. Invitations can be hand-written or even verbal. If you need to plan for food, include an RSVP.

The Bachelor/Bachelorette Party

The stereotypical bachelor party consisting of a wild night of drinking and strippers is giving way to more coordinated events. Although still quite popular, these parties are being replaced by guys getting together to watch a major sporting event either live or on TV, or to spend a week-end together skiing or fishing, or even by holding a poker tournament.

Traditionally held the night before the wedding, this too is changing and these parties are being coordinated earlier, for reasons that don't need to be explained. For a long time, the wedding shower was the 'bride's party.' Bachelorette parties are a relative newcomer to the wedding scene and they, too are coordinated by the bridal party. Make no mistake; these parties can be just as wild as the bachelor parties. But they can also involve a simple, relaxing day at the spa.

The Wedding Shower

Wedding showers are great social events designed to give the soon-to-be couple the things they'll need when they move into their new home together. It's also a way to add to a bride's trousseau. Many of today's wedding showers are themed, and can be anything from a recipe shower to a camping shower in which the gifts would include things the couple could use on their camping adventures.

Wedding showers should be held a few weeks before the wedding date and only those guests who have been invited to the wedding should be invited to the shower. Some women are lucky

and end up having more than one wedding shower.

Rehearsal Dinner

This is a time to relax and get ready for the big day that lies ahead. Rehearsal dinners are generally for the bridal party only and they're held immediately after the wedding rehearsal. They're held early so all can rest up and they're usually held at the home of the bride or groom's parent or at a restaurant.

10 Exciting Bridal Shower Game Ideas

The bridal shower is an opportunity for the women in the future bride's life to honor her with a simple luncheon or get together filled with good food, fun and games. Many bridal showers feature a series of games that are not only a great deal of fun but also allow a bonding opportunity for all of the women at the party and sometimes serve the purpose of completing a task for the bride to be.

A game that encourages the participants to get to know each other is always a fun game with which to start the party. One game you can play is known as the Name Tag Game which encourages guest to mingle with the other guests. In this game, the hostess writes the name of each of the guests along with a word related to weddings such as veil, favors, groom, etc on a name tag.

The rules of the game are that you are not allowed to say the word on your name tag or else you lose your name tag to the person who got you to say the word. If you acquire one or more additional name tags you are tasked with not saying any of the words on either your name tag or any of the other tags.

If you say the word on your tag, you have to relinquish it to the person who got you to say the word and if you say the word on one of the other tags, you also have to give that person the tag plus you have to introduce them to the person from whom you had acquired the tag. There is usually a pre-determined time limit for this game and the person with the most tags when time runs out is the winner.

The Purse Game is another popular bridal shower idea. This is a simple game where the hostess draws up a list of items likely to appear in a woman's purse and assigns a point value to each item ranging from 1-5 depending on how unusual the item is. For example car keys might be a 1 on the scale, a mirror a 3 and an eye lash curler a 5.

The hostess might also choose to allow 10 bonus points for the woman who can produce the most outrageous item from her purse. The woman with the most points wins the game. Another variation of this game is to have a list of items and call out the items one at a time. The first woman to find each item and hand it to the person judging the game wins one point. After the entire list has been completed, the woman with the most points is proclaimed the winner.

Another common bridal shower game is the Television Couple Game. In this game the hostess will read out the first names of a television couple and the guests try to guess the last name of the couple. A few examples clues along with the answers are George and Jane Jetson, Al and Peg Bundy, Ward and June Cleaver. One point could be awarded for each correct answer or a point system could be established to award more points to more obscure references. This game is also sometimes called the Famous Couple Game and includes references to celebrities or political figures and their real spouses such as Bill and Hillary Clinton.

Bridal Shower Bingo is another simple bridal shower game. This game is played just like regular bingo except that instead of using letters and numbers for the spaces, each space is filled with a word or words that relate to weddings, love or marriage such as wedding dress, favors, eternal, true, rings, etc. The host makes up the bingo cards ahead of time and puts a piece of paper with each word used on the cards into a large bowl. During the game, the hostess will draw out a word and read it aloud and each participant will mark that square on their card. The first person to complete an entire row, column or diagonal wins the game.

One bridal shower game that can be a real benefit to the bride to be is a simple drawing. The hostess may purchase a few inexpensive gifts for the drawing and ask each participant to fill out an envelope with their name and address to enter the drawing. The hostess then picks out a name for each prize. This is a fun game because it offers the participants a chance to win a prize plus it really helps out the guest of honor because she can use the envelopes to send out her thank you cards after the party.

The Who Am I Game is another bridal shower game that encourages guests to interact with each other. In this game, the host prints out pictures of characters from romantic books or movies and tapes one character to the back of each guest so that other guests can see the picture but the person wearing the picture cannot. The point of the game is to ask other guests questions where the answer is either yes or no to try to determine who is on the picture on your back. At the end of the party, each guest takes a guess at who is depicted in the photo on their back.

The Wedding Jumble is another fun bridal shower game. For this game the hostess will prepare a list of words related to a wedding day such as toast, limousine, receptions, and vows. Next the hostess will scramble each word so that the letters are out of order and provide each guest with a copy of the scrambled words. The guest will be given a set amount of time to unscramble the words and the person who unscrambles the most words wins. If more than one person gets all of the words correct then the person who did so in the fastest time is the winner.

The Wedding Day Obstacle Course is another game that can really help out the bride. In this amusing game each guest is timed individually on how fast they can complete a series of tasks such as wrapping a wedding favor, addressing envelopes, filling out a place card, assembling a centerpiece, or whatever other projects the bride has in progress that can be incorporated into the game. Not only is this a game that is both fun to watch and participate in but it also helps the bride to complete some of the tasks on her list.

The Bridal Shower Memory Game is also very popular. The typical way to play this game is to have a tray filled with various household items. Bring out the tray and allow the guests to

study the items for a few minutes and then take the tray away and ask questions about the items such as, where the spoon was and what color was the spatula. This game could also be modified to have one of the guests bring the tray out and then leave the room to take the tray away. You could then catch the guests by surprise by asking questions about the person who carried the tray such as what color shirt were they wearing or on which finger was she wearing a ring instead of asking questions about the contents of the tray.

The Price is Right Game can also be a great deal of fun at bridal showers and can serve to benefit the bride as well. For this game the hostess will purchase about 10 different items that will be useful for the couple such as towels, soap dispensers, household cleaners, etc. and have the guests try to guess the price of either all the items combined or each item individually. This is not only a fun game but the bride also gets to keep the items, which makes it useful for her.

All of these games are a lot of fun to play at a bridal shower and they encourage the guests to get to know each other in a casual atmosphere. Some of these games even serve the purpose of helping to complete some of the bride's last minute projects. The fun of these games is that they help people to get to know each other better which is helpful especially if the bride and grooms' families don't know each other well.

Bachelor Party Ideas

The tradition of the bachelor party may date as far back as the 1800s. The stereotype of a bachelor party is a last night of debauchery for the groom and his friends before the wedding but in more recent times soon to be grooms are looking to less traditional activities to mark their final days as bachelors.

While there are still would be grooms, who opt to spend the last hours before their wedding partying with alcohol and female exotic dancers, many men are choosing a less traditional route such as camping trips, sporting events, daredevil activities and even co-ed bachelor parties that include the soon to be bride and her friends. These types of activities are much less likely to get the groom in trouble with his bride not to mention that they won't leave the groom feeling too sick to even remember his wedding day.

Camping is one alternative to the traditional bachelor party. You may choose to either rough it by backpacking to a location with only the gear on your back to help you survive the elements for a few days or you could choose to drive to a spa facility that offers well appointed cabins and five star gourmet meals. Whichever option you choose, you are bound to have a great deal of time relaxing and enjoying the company of the rest of the participants in your bachelor party. A camping trip offers the groom a quiet atmosphere to reflect with his friends on the journey he is about to take.

Sporting events are another great alternative to the usual bachelor party ideas. You may find that married life does not offer you as much free time to spend with your friends as you used to have so take this chance to enjoy a little bit of fun with your friends. Whether you choose to partake in a sport of your choice or purchase tickets to see your favorite professional athletes it

is sure to be a great opportunity to bond with your male friends in the last few days before your wedding.

It is wise to try choosing a sport that all of your guests will be able to participate in especially if you plan to include very young or very old guests. In this situation playing a game of football may not be the best idea but taking everyone to play a round of golf might be an activity that all of the guest can enjoy.

Still another activity that translates well into a bachelor party idea is getting a group of friends together to try an adrenaline pumping, activity geared for thrill seekers such as sky diving or white water rafting. The exhilaration gained from these activities coupled with the fear factor makes them a perfect activity for bonding with your friends. These daredevil activities will cause you and your friends to bond during the excitement leading up to the event as well as the thrill of accomplishing a new activity.

While these types of activities are great for male bonding, it is important to remember that they are risky activities and there is the danger that you might be hurt during these activities. If this is your bachelor party idea of choice you might want to consider holding your bachelor party well in advance of your wedding to avoid last minute injuries that delay the wedding.

Co-ed bachelor parties that coincide with the bachelorette party are becoming increasingly popular as well. One common practice involving these adjunct parties is to have the bachelors and bachelorettes meet at separate restaurants for dinner and then join each other at a nightclub to cap off the night with some dancing and a few drinks.

These types of parties can be a great deal of fun because they allow both the bride and the groom some time apart to spend time with their friends and then they reunite the couple at the end of the night in a chance for them to spend time with all of their friends without the pomp and circumstance that is likely to accompany their wedding reception.

The debauchery of stereotypical bachelor parties is not the only way to enjoy a fun-filled bachelor party that gives you the opportunity to bond with your friends. Camping trips, sporting activities, extreme adventures and even co-ed bachelor parties are redefining the traditional bachelor party. These bachelor party ideas not only serve to keep the groom out of trouble but also offer the opportunity to enjoy a new adventure.

Bachelorette Party Ideas

Bachelorette Parties are not quite the time-honored tradition of bachelor parties but they are increasing in popularity. While bachelor parties date back as early as the 1800s as a final night of debauchery for the soon to be groom and his friends, bachelorette parties have only become popular recently and they seem to be more about embarrassing the soon to be bride than enjoying a final night of freedom.

It is true that some brides choose to partake in a raunchy night of frivolity including male exotic dancers and large quantities of alcohol but the majority women opt for a variety of different activities. Some of the more unique bachelorette party ideas include nightclubhopping excursions, spa retreats, dancing lessons or even a movie night. Regardless of the activity of choice the common theme in most bachelorette party is to embarrass the bride in a light-hearted and fun way.

Nightclub hopping is one of the most popular bachelorette party ideas. These parties often start out with a dinner at an elegant restaurant followed by stops for drinks and dancing at some of the most popular nightclubs in town. A good way to do this is to hire a limousine for the evening to drive all of the girls from destination to destination. A limousine is a great idea for a number of reasons.

First it provides the opportunity for all the girls in the party to travel together for the evening plus it is also an elegant way to travel so it adds a sense of regality to the evening. While all of those reasons are worthwhile perhaps the most important reason to hire a car for the night is to ensure that everyone arrives safely at their destination. The girls in the bachelorette party will often create a veil for the bride to wear on the night of her bachelorette party.

The appearance of the veil doesn't matter as long as it is obtrusive and calls a great deal of attention to the bride. It's also typical for this type of party to send the bride on a scavenger hunt on the night of her bachelorette party. The other girls will usually get together ahead of time and create a list of activities for the bride to accomplish or objects to obtain. This type of bachelorette party is a great way for the bride to enjoy a night of dinner, dancing and drinks with her friends.

Spa retreats are another popular bachelorette party idea. For this party idea the bride to be and her friends get together at a spa where they can enjoy relaxing massages, facials, manicures, pedicures and other treatments while also making use of steam rooms, saunas and hot tubs. In addition to all of the treatments available most spas also provide wonderful meals chosen from a menu of low fat dishes.

This type of bachelorette party offers the bride the chance to relax and connect with her friends while forgetting about all the stress involved with planning a wedding. Many brides get too caught up in the minute details that they forget to enjoy the process of planning but a spa retreat bachelorette party is the perfect remedy for this situation.

Still another popular bachelorette party idea that is a little more risqué is a night of exotic dancing lessons. These types of parties are becoming increasingly popular especially as classes such as pole dance classes are beginning to spring up in popular health clubs. For these parties the girls usually gather either at a private home or a dance studio and a professional dancer comes in to teach the girls about the art of seduction through exotic dance. This can be a fun way for the girls to let loose and have fun and may inspire the bride to be to try out a few new moves on her wedding night.

Another unique bachelorette party idea is for the maid of honor to host a movie night. The host could make sure to rent plenty of movies that the girls will enjoy and stock up on movie theater style goodies or create her own menu of hors d'oeuvres. After the bride is married she

will most likely make a lot of compromises in movie choices but her bachelorette party movie night could be her last chance to sit around with her friends watching tear-jerker or romantic movies. This type of bachelorette party is just a fun way for the girl to get together to talk and have a good time together.

The bachelorette party is a relatively new phenomenon but the idea is picking up steam and bachelorette parties are becoming more prevalent. The bachelorette party does not have the same connotations as a bachelor party. They are generally not seen as last nights of freedom but rather a night to bond with the girls.

Planning a Bridal Shower

There are plenty of details to consider when planning a bridal shower. Some of these considerations include, who will throw the bridal shower, when will the bridal shower be held, who will be invited to the wedding shower, how do you choose a theme for the shower and what type of menu will be served.

The bridal shower is a chance for the women in the bride's life to honor her upcoming nuptials and give her a few useful gifts for starting her new household. While there are no clear cut answers to any of these questions this article will outline the more traditional answers to these questions and will also include some variations on traditional ideas.

Deciding who will throw the bridal shower for the bride is the first thing to consider. Traditionally the maid of honor hosts the bridal shower with the assistance of the bridesmaids. However, in recent years it has become increasingly popular for others to be involved in planning the bridal and it is not unheard of for a bride to have multiple bridal showers. For example the mother of the bride may throw a bridal shower for the wedding party and the women in the family while the maid of honor may throw a shower that includes friends of the bride and the bride's co-worker may also throw her a shower in the office.

Timing is also an important factor to consider when planning a bridal shower. The rule of thumb is that the bridal shower should be held relatively close to the wedding date but not too close that it begins to infringe on the bride's wedding preparations. For this reason it is not appropriate to hold the bridal shower less than two weeks before the wedding date.

However, it is also not appropriate to hold the wedding shower very early in the engagement before the couple has had the opportunity to create their registry. In general the bridal shower should be held as early as two months before the wedding date but not later than 2 weeks before the wedding date.

A crucial element to planning a bridal shower is drafting up the guest list. While it is not obligatory to invite every woman on the guest list, it is appropriate to invite all of the bride's female relatives as well as her close female friends. If the maid of honor and the mother are hosting separate bridal showers they may want to coordinate to ensure that they do not have overlapping guests.

Care should be taken to avoid inviting anyone to the shower that has not been invited to the wedding. Also, there has been an increasing trend where the bride and groom participate and the showers are co-ed. While these showers don't follow tradition they can be a way for the groom to share in the fun with his friends as well.

The theme of a bridal shower is another planning aspect that should receive careful consideration. It is important to choose a theme that reflects the personality of the bride. For example throwing a lingerie party for a shy bride may not be appropriate but throwing a beach themed bridal shower for a surfer may be a good idea. The theme of the party is important because it can affect items such as decorations, favors and games. When choosing a theme for a bridal shower, it is important to choose a theme based on the taste of the bride and not the taste of the hostess.

The traditional menu for a bridal shower calls for light hors d'oeuvres that can be eaten in a cocktail hour type setting. However, when planning a bridal shower the hostess is free to choose whatever menu she wishes. It could be either an elaborate sit down dinner for a shower that includes the elderly relatives of the bride, a barbeque for a shower that includes the groom and his friends or even a night at a fancy restaurant for shower that is thrown by the bridesmaids and includes friends of the bride.

Planning a bridal shower can seem daunting because there are so many options but it is important to remember that you are not bound by traditions and are free to choose any theme, menu and location that the bride will enjoy. The key to planning a great bridal shower is to keep the bride's taste in mind during the planning effort.

Planning a Rehearsal Dinner

The rehearsal dinner is one element of the wedding planning that can be confusing for the future bride and groom. Questions such as do we really have to have a rehearsal dinner, what do we do at the rehearsal dinner, who pays for the rehearsal dinner, who is invited to the rehearsal dinner and do we have to invite out of town guests are planning questions that remain unanswered for many couples.

While the rehearsal dinner may just seem like another expense and another task that needs to be completed, it's important to not skip out on this wonderful opportunity to get together with close friends and family members for a night of relaxation in a casual atmosphere before the wedding. This article is intended to answer some of the questions surrounding the planning of a rehearsal dinner and to provide the couple with some necessary information to help them plan a successful rehearsal dinner.

While a rehearsal dinner is not necessary, it is a good opportunity to get together with close friends and family members to thank them all for their participation and assistance during the planning of the wedding as well as their participation in the actual wedding itself. The rehearsal dinner gives the couple the chance to extend their thanks to everyone who has been involved with the wedding planning or who has simply supported them in their efforts.

The rehearsal dinner can also be the opportunity to relax and unwind before the wedding. The couple is able to put aside their concerns over their upcoming nuptials and enjoy the time with family and friends. The rehearsal dinner has become a common tradition in weddings but the couple is not obligated to host a rehearsal dinner if they choose not to do so.

The typical activities involved in a rehearsal dinner include meeting at the site of the ceremony to run through the logistics of the ceremony and then gathering at a particular location, a restaurant, catering hall or even a friend's house, to enjoy a meal together. During the dinner the couple usually takes the opportunity to thank all their guests for their love and support and may choose to honor their wedding party with gifts at this time.

There are also usually a series of informal toasts at the rehearsal dinner. The parents of the couple will also usually thank the guests and offer a toast to the couple. Any of the guests at the rehearsal dinner are also free to offer a toast or a few words of wisdom to the couple. While the wedding is shrouded in traditions and expectations, the rehearsal dinner is typically a relaxed atmosphere with no set agendas.

The subject of who pays for the rehearsal dinner is another confusing topic. Tradition holds that the parents of the groom assume the financial responsibility of the rehearsal dinner but more and more couples are opting to bear the burden of the rehearsal dinner on their own. There are a couple of factors that are contributing to this changing trend.

First the medium ages of couples getting married is on the rise and couples who marry at a later age are typically more financially established and capable of affording to finance the rehearsal dinner themselves. In addition the responsibility of paying for the rehearsal dinner is typically accompanied by the responsibility of planning the rehearsal dinner and many couples are unwilling to relinquish the planning responsibilities. The couple wants to ensure that the rehearsal dinner reflects their personalities and tastes and therefore assumes all responsibilities for planning the rehearsal dinner.

Although the original intent for the rehearsal dinner was to include those who are actively involved in the ceremony, the couple is free to invite any other guests that they choose to join them in the rehearsal dinner. The rehearsal dinner is an opportunity for the couple to thank everyone who has supported them throughout their wedding planning and also to just relax and have a good time with friends and family outside of the formality that often surrounds a wedding.

With this in mind it is appropriate to invite anyone that you want to share in this sentiment. The couple may also wish to include out of town guest in the rehearsal dinner in order to thank them for making the trip to be with them on their wedding day. While including out of town guests is a wonderful gesture, it is important to understand that the couple is not obligated to do so.

If it would be too financially cumbersome to include all of the out of town guests, the couple could consider hosting a smaller event such as an evening of drinks and appetizers for this larger group. Although everyone participating in the ceremony should be included in the rehearsal dinner the guest list is not restricted to these individuals and the couple can choose to include anyone they wish.

Planning a rehearsal dinner can seem daunting as the rules are not clearly defined but it is this flexibility that makes planning a rehearsal dinner such a fun challenge. From the invitation list to the activities the couple is under no obligations to adhere to any strict guidelines in planning their rehearsal dinner. Although planning a rehearsal dinner is not obligatory, many couples opt to do so because it is such a wonderful opportunity to thank their loved ones for their continued support.

Planning Your Honeymoon

Almost as fun as planning your wedding is planning your honeymoon. You want your first trip together as husband and wife to be memorable and it's tempting to take an 'anything goes' approach. After all, you're likely to get lots of wedding gifts in the form of cold, hard cash so why not?

Well for one, you want to be able to eat and see the sights when you arrive, so you've got to use some discretion when making your arrangements. Many couples find that it is possible to have a great honeymoon, even if they're sticking to a budget and all it takes is some planning.

When is the best time to plan the honeymoon? Obviously sooner is better, especially if you intend to travel to a popular destination during peak season. But at a minimum, while you are putting together your wedding budget, it's a good idea to allocate funds for this adventure together and work from there.

To help determine an appropriate budget, you've got to think about your possibilities, and of course, you've got to be realistic. A good way to start planning your honeymoon is to think about the things you both like to do in your free time, think about places you've only dreamed of visiting, and think about what you realistically intend to do while away. You can also use the Internet or a travel agent to help you come up with honeymoon ideas.

Once you've selected a destination, it's time to get busy making your travel arrangements. Special deals are out there, but you've got to be aggressive in your search for them. Don't despair; it'll likely be worth the effort. And the great deals might not always involve getting the lowest price. It's the extras that'll turn this ordinary trip into something extraordinary. Perhaps the deal includes getting a suite with a breathtaking view, or being greeted with a bottle of champagne.

When you're down to only 3 months left until the wedding date, you should have your travel arrangements firmly in place. Know where you're going, how you're getting to the airport (after the reception) and once you arrive at your destination, how you'll be getting to your accommodations. Once you're in place, the rest of the vacation can run its course. If you wish, you can plan some day trips in advance. This far out, also make sure vaccinations and passports are current, if applicable.

A few weeks before your departure, start gathering the things you'll bring with you on your honeymoon: camera and film/memory cards, swimsuits, day and evening wear, traveler's checks, tickets, documents, confirmation numbers for ALL reservations (including person's name if possible), and a bit of local currency for tipping. Set aside somewhere safe.

Then as the approaching days become more stressful than you can handle, close your eyes and picture yourselves lazily lying around your honeymoon suite, with not a care in the world except how soon you'll be able to return!