



Wedding Reception

The wedding reception is the first time you formally receive your relatives and friends as a married couple. Properly planned, it becomes one of the most joyous parties that you and your groom will ever host.

It can be as simple and demure as champagne and hors d'œuvres, or encompass an elegant five-course dinner and dance.

Selecting the reception location really depends on how many guests you are inviting. Your reception can be held anywhere: on a yacht, in a beautiful hotel, in a restaurant, in a loft, at a country club, etc. If you are being married in a season and locale noted for good, reliable weather, there may be a lovely garden or arboretum available. Also contact some of the restored historical mansions; they make delightful fairy-tale backdrops for a wedding feast.

Whatever you decide, know that the services of a professional banquet facility or caterer can greatly enhance and expedite the planning of your reception.

Once you have decided your preferred setting, the estimated number of guests and your financial resources, you are ready to begin interviewing for reception sites and caterers.

Reserve your reception facility well in advance and promptly pay any necessary deposit.

Visit the reception site and design a suitable floor plan. Decide also whether you will have a formal or semi-formal receiving line. Consider grouping furniture to stimulate conversation without obstructing traffic flow.

There can always be one table designated for the wedding party and one table for the parents. Seating arrangements at the bridal table are usually the bridal couple in the center, maid of honor at the groom's left, best man at the bride's right. Seat the other attendants, alternating men and women, as space provides.

At a sit-down event, the order of service should be bride, groom, maid of honor, other attendants, parents and guests. Once all have been served, the best man and/or the maid of honor present the traditional toast to the bridal couple.

Cake-cutting comes after dinner. The bridal couple will cut the first slice and share it. Then the caterer's staff finishes serving while the newlyweds visit with guests.

The last reception ritual, before the bridal couple leave, is the bride's tossing of her bouquet and the groom's flinging of the garter.

Finally, you and your groom will leave the reception for your honeymoon, with rice or birdseed being tossed by guests, or a balloon or dove release... all representing wishes for fertility, prosperity and happiness.