

2011 Alternative Wedding Trends

Written by Elizabeth Liberatore

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Cara Davis, blogger of Cheap Ways to Tie the Knot, has compiled fresh and affordable alternatives on traditional favorites for brides on a budget. "I set out to write a how-to guide for couples looking to pull off the day of their dreams on a \$5,000 or less budget. I created the blog to continue to flesh out those ideas and other ways to save money as they set up their first home together." While tradition never goes out of style, Davis says, "This generation is looking to bring the levity and celebration from the reception into their ceremonies - making the whole thing one big party." Check out these innovative and trendy twists on weddings that put creativity and personalization on the forefront of a couple's big day.



As elegant and timeless a floor-length wedding dress is; a knee-length dress can be just as special for a bride on her day. Whether it's vintage, glammed up or dainty, a shorter dress can fulfill a bride's expectations without exceeding her budget. Davis especially loves the mini dress trend because of its practicality. "You can wear it afterwards," which is major plus.



2. Fun with Color

Beige, Ivory and Pale Pinks are so last generation. Couples who opt for unconventional and funky colors can "wow" their guests with a bold taste of their personalities. Brides can let their bridesmaids be uniquely their own with non-matching dresses that coordinate in patterns or complementary color combinations. Go big (bold in the case) or go home!

3. Alternative Gift Registries

Opening one to many crock-pots and blenders is a bore, which is why couples are registering for gifts that will help them in a practical way: everything from registries at travel agencies to auto dealers offering gift certificates toward the purchase of a new vehicle. Couples are being as creative as they want: they can request gift cards to home improvement stores to offset costs of home renovation, or register for local restaurants so they can continue dating as newlyweds on a budget.



4. Punchy Personalization

Sure, the structure of the wedding remains the same but the setting is anything but. Couples now and days are planning their weddings at different times (brunch), incorporating mixed-matched furniture for an Anthropologie ambiance and giving personalized souvenirs to guests, like an old-fashioned photo booth with picture strips.

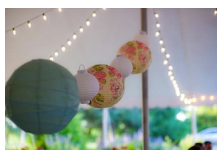
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5. Eco-friendly Finds

Put Mother Nature on this wedding's guest list because eco-conscious couples are utilizing outdoor spaces, reclaimed furniture, flea market finds and even sustainable rings to celebrate in a big way without a big environmental impact. Green weddings can also feature locally grown food and seed-lined wedding invitations that can be planted.



6. The Rustic South

Today's vintage and rustic weddings are all about embracing simplicity and infusing new life into old things. From location (barns or old warehouses) to furniture and décor (antiques and flea market favs) to apparel (vintage clothes and even brooch bouquets), many couples are going for the nostalgic feel of the old South.

7. Cultural Cues

Many couples are looking to add levity to their big day and are incorporating pop culture trends to do just that. Culturally significant themes like retro Asian flavors and ethnic icons like sushi, ninjas, geisha girls and Chinese lanterns are being used in inventive ways. Vintage board games are showing up as Monopoly pieces in bouquets and Scrabble letter tiles as signs for the buffet. Get creative, think Andy Warhol-y.



8. Toodle-Loo Wedding Cake

A wedding cake may be a piece of art but it's also a great portion of a couple's budget. Couples have been introducing nontraditional desserts into their weddings. From quintessentially cute cupcakes, Whoopie Pies, macaroons and even an ice cream bar for guests to create their own sweet snack.



9. Paper Flowers

While a flower bouquet is both gorgeous and fragrant, it only lasts a few days after the ceremony. Many brides are opting for DIY projects like rolled paper flowers or brooch bouquets to keep their floral arrangement as a keepsake. Grooms and groomsmen can compliment the bride and bridesmaids arrangements with a paper or brooch boutonniere.

While couples are getting more creative with everything from their attire, décor, location to registries, a lot can be expected for the upcoming 2012 wedding trends. Trendy wedding blogger, Davis says, "We're going to see more couples embrace the locavore trend - sourcing local foods for their receptions and incorporate regional or cultural specialties into the wedding. A lot of this is about embracing tradition, but in a modern way. As we get more global and digital, couples want to incorporate the local and historical into their weddings to provide a sense of connection."

For more ideas visit Cara Davis' Blog, Cheap Ways To... <http://www.cheapwaysto.com/>.