

The Super-Bride's Guide For Dodging Wedding Pitfalls

Gloria Hander Lyons



Blue Sage Press

The Super-Bride's Guide for Dodging Wedding Pitfalls

Copyright © 2007 by Gloria Hander Lyons

All Rights Reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including but not limited to photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without the prior written permission of the author.

Inquires should be addressed to:

Blue Sage Press
48 Borondo Pines
La Marque, TX 77568
www.bluesagepress.com

ISBN-13: 978-0-9790618-4-4

ISBN-10: 0-9790618-4-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2007902132

First Edition: April, 2007

The information in this book is true and complete to the best of our knowledge. All recommendations are made without guarantee on the part of the author or Blue Sage Press. The author and publisher disclaim any liability in connection with the use of this information.

Printed in the United States of America

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Pitfall #1: It's Got to Be Here Somewhere!.....	3
Getting organized	
Pitfall #2: You Spent What?	7
Setting a wedding budget	
Pitfall #3: The Runaway Guest List.....	9
Creating the guest list	
Pitfall #4: An Invitation to Disaster!.....	13
Tips on ordering invitations	
Pitfall #5: A Cast of Thousands.....	21
Choosing the wedding party	
Pitfall #6: Get Me to the Church on Time	25
Choosing the ceremony site	
Pitfall #7: Where's the Party?	29
Choosing the reception site	
Pitfall #8: A Word About the Great Outdoors.....	35
Tips for staging an outdoor wedding	
Pitfall #9: What's a Girl to Wear?	39
Tips for purchasing the wedding attire	
Pitfall #10: Let Them Eat Cake!	47
Choosing the baker for your wedding cake	
Pitfall #11: Tiptoe Through the Tulips	51
Choosing the wedding flowers	

Pitfall #12: Let's Be Candid	55
Choosing the photographer/videographer	
Pitfall #13: The Sounds of Music	59
Choosing the wedding musicians	
Pitfall #14: A Bride Without a Ride	63
Choosing wedding transportation	
Pitfall #15: It's All in the Details	65
Choosing the wedding accessories & decorations	
Pitfall #16: By the Light of the Moon.....	81
Deciding on the honeymoon	
Other Helpful Hints	85
On the Day of the Wedding	87



Introduction

The Super-Bride's Guide for Dodging Wedding Pitfalls

The good news is: you've found your perfect mate, you're head-over-heels in love, and you've decided to take the wedding commitment plunge. You've been dreaming all your life about this special day and how wonderful it will be. The bad news is: now you need to plan the big event.

It doesn't have to be all bad news, of course. Planning a wedding can be fun as long as you aren't overwhelmed by the details—and there are a lot of details involved.

But all you need is a little guidance to avoid some of the more common pitfalls of wedding planning. This book offers practical tips to help reduce stress during the planning process and keep your wedding on track.

It includes: a plan to get you organized, advice on setting and sticking to a budget, money-saving tips, helpful hints, and fun ideas to make your wedding unique.

It's a welcome relief for busy brides on a limited budget.



"I dreamed of a wedding of elaborate elegance, a church filled with family and friends. I asked him what kind of wedding he wished for. He said one that would make me his wife." Unknown





Pitfall #1: It's Got to Be Here Somewhere!

Coordinating all the details of a large event like a wedding can be exasperating. Not only are you spending a fairly large sum of money, you'll be making hundreds of decisions, managing numerous wedding vendors, mediating family disputes, dealing with your own emotional issues, and juggling all of the above with the added pressure of a looming deadline.

How do you keep track of all these details without losing your sanity? The secret for planning any large event can be summed up in one word: ORGANIZATION.

The easiest way to organize all the parts of your wedding is to purchase a three-ring binder and add pocket dividers for each of the following categories:

Guest List & Invitations
Wedding Party
Ceremony Site
Reception Facility
Wedding Attire
Wedding Accessories
Photographer/Videographer

Baker
Florist
Caterer
Musicians
Transportation
Honeymoon

As you make decisions and purchases for your wedding, place the details into the appropriate section of your wedding binder.

All information pertaining to your wedding should be kept in your binder, including receipts, contracts, names, addresses, phone numbers, fabric swatches, etc., so that you or those assisting you will know where to find it.

Keeping everything in one place will make your planning much less stressful. You'll have instant access to all your wedding information whenever a question arises—and it will.

Remember that organization is the key to keeping your wedding plans on track and keeping your stress level to a minimum. So be vigilant about adding all your receipts and contracts to your binder.

This book will become your anchor in the storm as the wedding planning escalates toward the final event. Guard it with your life, because it truly can be a life saver!

Helpful Hints:

- If you are planning a fairly large wedding, don't try to do everything yourself. Delegate as many of the tasks as you can to willing family members or friends. And don't forget to ask your groom for help; he will be able to make a valuable contribution and feel less like an outsider. Planning your wedding should be fun—not exhausting. Try to enjoy the process with your groom and create fond memories that you can carry with you into your marriage.

- Be weather-wise when choosing the date for your wedding. Don't set the date during a snowy month if you live in a state that is prone to blizzards and avoid hurricane season if you're headed for a tropical island. Other weather-related issues to consider: rainy season, tornado season or unbearable heat waves if you live in an area where these conditions occur.

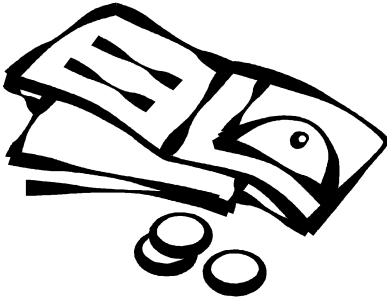
- Try not to become obsessed with making your event perfect. All brides dream of having the perfect wedding, but keep in mind that mistakes are going to happen and not everything will turn out the way you had hoped. Try to keep things in perspective and remember that the most important issue is the marriage—not the wedding.

- If you plan to change your last name and probably your address when you marry, there are dozens of institutions, companies and organizations you'll need to notify. Below is a list of a few to include on your list:
 - Driver's license
 - Social security card
 - Passport
 - Voter registration
 - Car registration
 - Insurance policies
 - Post office
 - Checking and savings accounts
 - Employer
 - Credit cards
 - Library card
 - Magazine subscriptions

Fun Ideas:

- Cover your wedding binder with attractive fabric or paper to make it more special and unique. It will also be easier to locate if it doesn't look like an ordinary binder.
- Cover a medium-size cardboard box that has a lift-off lid, or a hat box, with pretty fabric or paper to make a wedding memory box for saving invitations, dried flowers, photographs and other memorabilia from your wedding parties, bridal showers and wedding event.
- Keep a daily journal during the wedding planning process. Be sure to include your feelings, special moments, surprises, disappointments and humorous happenings. It will be fun to read years later. And even more special to share with your daughter or future daughter-in-law when they start to plan their own weddings.





Pitfall #2: You Spent What?

Yes, this is one of the most important events of your life and probably the biggest party you'll ever throw, but out-of-control spending can wreck this train before it leaves the station.

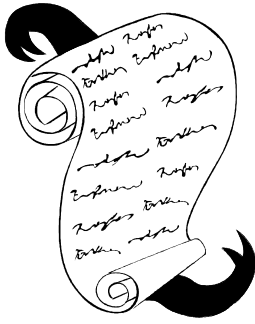
Before you start to shop, meet with those who are paying for the wedding, whether it is you and the groom, your parents, his parents or a combination of all three, and set a firm and realistic budget. Make a list of everything you'll need to purchase for your wedding. Decide which categories are most important to you and the groom and divide your funds accordingly.

Do you want an outrageously expensive dress? Do you want a fantastic band at your reception? Do you want 300 guests or just a few guests at a fabulous destination? Negotiate each category and assign a dollar amount for each one.

Financial rifts are the number one cause of discord between married couples. Don't start your life together on a really bad note. Agree on your budget before making any purchases. Keep it at the front of your binder for easy access and stick to it as closely as possible.

Helpful Hints:

- Set your wedding budget slightly smaller than you think you can actually afford. This will give you a margin for error in case one or two items turn out to be more expensive than you expected.
- If you and the groom are having trouble agreeing on your wedding priorities, it can help to write each important category, such as cake, photography, food, music or wedding dress on an index card. Spread the cards out on a table and move them around until you both agree on the order of importance. Transfer the list to a piece of paper and use it to plan your wedding budget.
- As you make the purchases from your wedding list, be sure to replace the estimated costs with the actual amount you paid for each item. Some items will cost more than you allotted and others might cost less. You'll need to adjust the figures accordingly as you shop, in order to stay within your budget.
- Don't automatically assume that just because you have a limited wedding budget you can't afford the services of a wedding consultant. Sometimes advice from an expert can save you money in the long run by helping you to avoid costly mistakes and recommending reputable vendors. You might consider hiring a wedding planner for limited planning assistance or just for the day of your wedding to help with the last minute "rush".



Pitfall #3: The Runaway Guest List

Setting a budget and prioritizing your funds will help determine the number of guests you can invite to the wedding. This is one area that can get out of hand quickly, especially when you're dealing with the emotional issues of family members.

This decision will be the first test of your partnership with your future husband to present a united front against all odds. It is, after all, your wedding, and the two of you need to set your budget priorities with regard to the number of guests you are willing to accommodate.

The more people you invite, the larger the reception facility and amount of food you will need, which means you will have less money to spend on the other categories for your wedding—such as cost of food per guest, entertainment, flowers, wedding attire, honeymoon, etc.

Only the bride and groom can decide what their priorities are for the number of guests to invite, because it will directly affect all the other budgetary decisions made for the wedding. Do you love the idea of being surrounded by hundreds of well-wishers or would you prefer to share your special day with just a few close friends and family members?

After you've agreed on the number of guests to invite, be sure to make a typed master list of all their names, including addresses and phone numbers, and keep it in your wedding binder. You will need to refer to this information numerous times during your wedding planning process.

Number each address on your list that will receive an invitation. For example, one through 50, or however many addresses (not guests) there are on the list. This will help you determine the number of invitations to order and the number of postage stamps you will need to purchase for mailing the invitations.

You can use your master guest list to record the R.S.V.P. responses from your guests. These responses will determine the amount of food and/or cake you will need to order for the wedding.

Also, allow a space on your guest list to record any gift received and when you mailed a thank you note.

Your master guest list is important information that you will need during the planning process for your wedding, so take care to create an accurate and legible document.



Helpful Hints:

- When sending response cards with your invitations, write the invitation number (the number that corresponds to the address on your guest list) on the back of the enclosed response card. If the guest forgets to fill in a name on the response card, you will know who sent it.
- Simplify the gift-giving process for your guests. Register at a couple of stores: one upscale department store for more expensive items like china and crystal, and a discount or home improvement store for less expensive, practical items like small appliances. Make sure the stores are accessible both locally and nationally for out of town guests.

Money Saving Tip:

- If you're looking for ways to cut wedding costs, the guest list is a good place to start. On a limited budget, you have basically two choices where the number of guests is concerned: having a modest wedding with a large crowd, or the wedding you really want with fewer guests. Of course you want to include your close friends and family, but do you really need to invite all of your parents' friends, associates and neighbors? Unless you have an unlimited wedding budget, trim the guest list down to the absolute "must-invites".