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WEDDING GUIDE

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Contents

- 4 Planning Your Wedding
- 10 Old, New, Borrowed and Blue
- 17 Hen Parties and Stag Do's
- 18 Ceremonies and Receptions
- 24 Jewellery
- 26 Photography
- 30 Look Your Best
- 40 Flowers
- 46 Finishing Touches
- 47 Cakes and Caterers
- 50 Honeymoon
- 51 Legalities and Contacts

Planning

Of all the events anyone has had to attend or organise, a wedding is not only the most important but also the most complicated. Everything, down to the tiniest detail, has to be pre-thought and meticulously planned for the day to go perfectly, helping to ensure that any potential disasters are avoided, from missing wedding cakes to absent guests!

When planning your wedding, timing is just as crucial as your budget. It can be extremely stressful when things don't go according to your flawless plan, so be sure to book things early enough to avoid disappointment. This table will help you to do this and you may be surprised at just how early some arrangements should be made!



AS SOON AS POSSIBLE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on the style/theme for the wedding	<input type="checkbox"/> Draw up a guest list
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on the budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Choose best man, maid of honour, bridesmaids, etc.
12 MONTHS IN ADVANCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Book ceremony, reception venues and caterers	<input type="checkbox"/> Start researching transport, photographers, florists etc, book honeymoon
<input type="checkbox"/> Start looking at dresses for both the bride and bridesmaids	
6 MONTHS IN ADVANCE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book transport, photographer/video and entertainment • Arrange hire of formal wear • Order wedding cake • Choose wedding dress and rings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order wedding stationery • Sort out final guest list • Check passports are valid • Book wedding night hotel • Arrange wedding insurance • Order floral decorations
3 MONTHS IN ADVANCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Send out invitations (and wedding list!)	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm final choices with florist
<input type="checkbox"/> Finalise honeymoon arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/> Finalise details with photographer/video company
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm wedding music, readings etc	<input type="checkbox"/> Visit hairdresser and book appointment for the day
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange stag and hen parties	
1 MONTH IN ADVANCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Try on outfits for alterations	<input type="checkbox"/> Write speeches
<input type="checkbox"/> Draw up a final list of who can come and prepare seating plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Buy presents for attendants
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm cake delivery
2 WEEKS IN ADVANCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Finalise reception details (confirm numbers etc)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm all arrangements (wedding clothes, timings etc)	
1 WEEK IN ADVANCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold wedding rehearsal	<input type="checkbox"/> Order honeymoon money
<input type="checkbox"/> Wear in wedding shoes	<input type="checkbox"/> Final hair and makeup practice
<input type="checkbox"/> Pack for honeymoon	
THE DAY BEFORE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Finish packing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm cake delivery - again!	
<input type="checkbox"/> Relax and look forward to the big day!	

If you're not sure you want to deal with the stress of having to arrange all this unaided, hiring a professional wedding planner can really help lift a weight off your shoulders. They can help make your big day memorable, as well as making sure everything goes according to plan, allowing you to relax and enjoy your special day.



Event Organisers

Enlisting the help a professional wedding planner can give you peace of mind in the months before your big day. A wedding planner will help you organise everything and do a lot of the legwork, meaning you will be far more relaxed, knowing that the wedding is being tailored to your every wish.

Unless you're having that all-important manicure, you won't have to lift a finger!

Building Dreams

When choosing your wedding planner, you need to take several traits into account; are they able to stay calm in tough situations? Do they have good contacts? Are they highly organised? A good wedding planner needs to be multi-talented: a facilitator, mediator, money-manager, artisan and builder of dreams!

Importantly, your wedding planner should be able to secure low prices on flowers, catering, photographers, entertainment and everything in between; their reputation depends on this. If you've ever been a bride, a groom, or even a bridesmaid, you'll know the kind of stress involved with planning a wedding, and often a wedding planner will end up becoming a kind of therapist if frazzled nerves come into play!

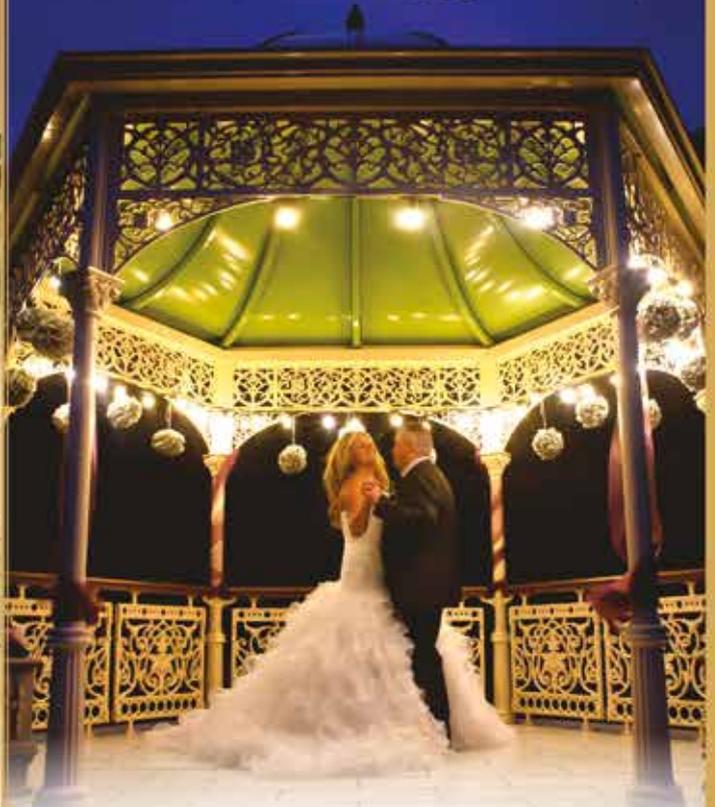
A wedding planner should also have a good fashion sense. He or she should know about colour schemes, themes, music, and flowers, whilst a good knowledge of different religions is of course imperative, since a wedding ceremony is often a religious one. They should also have good knowledge on a variety of customs and traditions, which are also part of many wedding ceremonies, and should be up-to-date on the latest trends to be able to keep you informed so that your wedding will be an event to remember!

Costs and Savings

If you are considering using a wedding planner, it can, of course, become expensive. Each wedding occasion is unique and the amount of research and detail required varies enormously. Due to this, it can be difficult to say how much the fees will be until you have discussed your requirements with a wedding planner and established what your plans are going to be.

Typically, there will be a management fee that can cost from around a few hundred pounds upwards, plus an hourly rate. This may sound expensive, but remember that a wedding planner should be able to save you money on most things, from cakes to stylists to venues, meaning you could well find that the savings they make for you cover the cost of their services.

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*Old, New,
Borrowed
and Blue...*



The Dress

The wedding dress is unquestionably the single most important element of the wedding to the bride. This is the dress they've no doubt been visualising since they were a young girl, when they dreamed of one day becoming a princess...

The choice of styles available is huge, brought about mainly by the increase in the range of venues in which it has become possible to get married. Due to this, the best option to find your perfect dress is the old-fashioned way; do some legwork!

More often than not, there will be one or two bridal shops near where you live, and these of course are your first stop. Even if they seem to be quite small shops, they will have a large range of options, and chances are you'll soon find one you love. If you don't, don't panic! Try visiting shops further afield in bigger towns or cities. Or, alternatively, contact a local bespoke tailor, where you can be the one to design the dress of your dreams.

Don't forget that coordinating bridesmaid dresses, shoes and accessories with your own is no mean feat either. You'll have to take the colours, style, and time it will take into account. It's a good idea to do this as soon as you can after the dress has been bought.



The Shoes

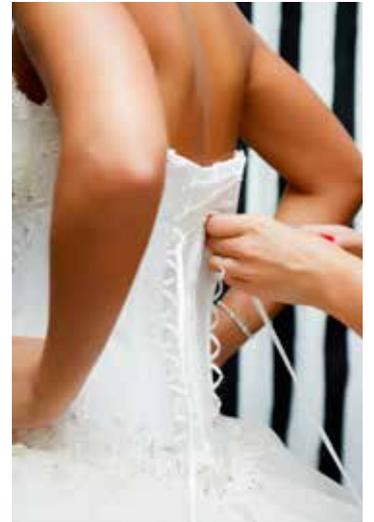
Getting the right shoes is essential in order for you to enjoy your day, as you don't want your perfectly pedicured feet to be covered in painful blisters by the end of the night! It's a case of finding the right balance. Comfort doesn't necessarily mean having to buy slipper-like flats!



When trying shoes, be sure to walk up and down the shop a few times to check if they begin to rub. If they do, they're not going to be ideal for a whole day! However, if you try a pair of shoes on that rub a little bit but that you just can't live without, the best idea is to wear them in for a few days in the week or two before your wedding. This way, they will at least be bearable by the time you wear them on your big day. Even if you



don't think your shoes are going to rub, it's always a good idea to have a pair of pretty ballet flats in your bag just in case you do end up needing them for one thing or another, rather than missing out on all the dancing!



The Lingerie

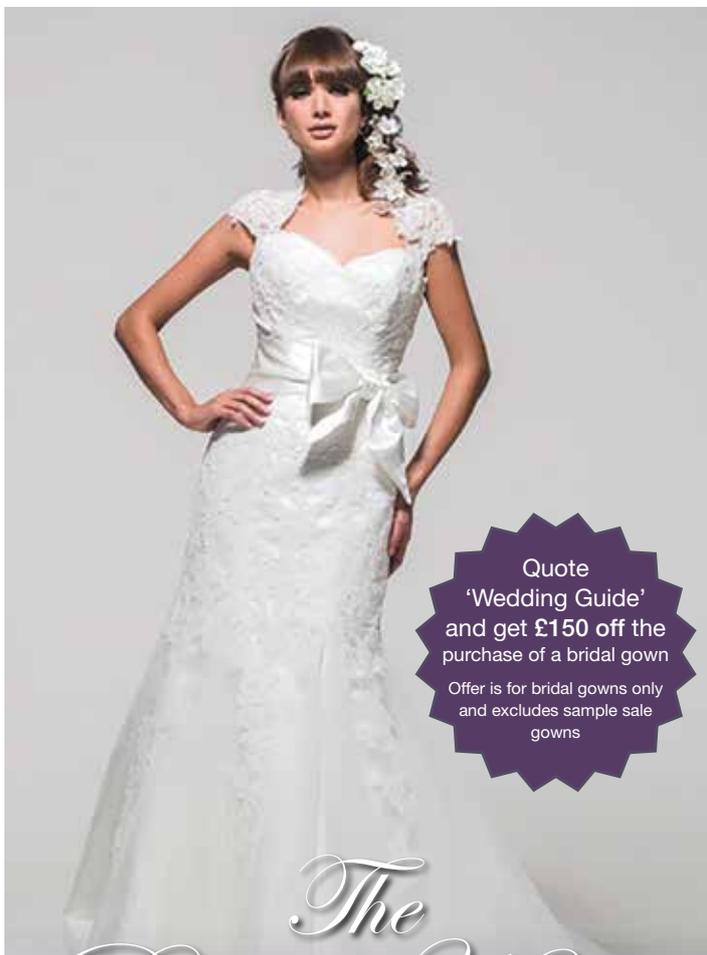
Another crucial aspect of bridal wear, which is often overlooked, is the lingerie. Many places sell bridal underwear and can help you with the fitting. The choices here are endless, offering everything from bridal basques, longline and low strapless bras, different cup styles, stockings, matching briefs and more, not to mention the traditional garter!



You will be wearing your lingerie all day; bear this in mind when trying things on to ensure that you're going to be comfortable. Well-fitted underwear is paramount; it can help shape your silhouette and complement your figure, and is guaranteed to be comfortable. If your dress is of quite a sheer material, make sure the underwear isn't visible beneath it.

Don't leave buying your lingerie until the last minute! Ideally, it should be purchased before your first dress fitting, so that your wedding dress can be measured around the underwear. Whilst looking for underwear, remember to take a look at some gorgeous new swimwear for your honeymoon too!





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A Family Affair has been operating in its boutique in the New Shambles, Kendal, for 18 years, run by its proprietor Christine Davidson providing Bridal wear, bridesmaid dresses, Men's formal hire and accessories.

Experienced designer and dressmaker Gillian Grove has recently joined the company to offer a new service of producing bespoke, hand-made wedding dresses. Gillian has in excess of 20 years' experience as a dressmaker and she specialises in wedding dresses. She will work from an on-site sewing studio, so that prospective brides can meet with her on the premises and discuss ideas whilst looking at the range of existing dresses and sketched ideas.

Christine says, "We are so excited to be able to offer this additional service so we can really give our brides what they want. If they can't find what they are looking for, or they want something really unique and interesting, we can make them. We can offer a service which is really comprehensive and we look forward to helping lots more brides."

In addition to wedding dresses, mother of the bride and groom, A Family Affair provides men's formal hire for all the wedding guests, day at the races or any formal event.



JULIA TASKER BRIDAL COUTURE

Based in the heart of the Lake District, only a 5 minute walk away from Lake Windermere, Julia Tasker Bridal Couture provides brides-to-be a personal one to one service in luxurious bridal boutique surroundings.

Julia is a wedding dress designer herself and she gives the utmost attention to all of her brides when choosing their perfect dress. At **Julia Tasker Bridal Couture**, brides have the opportunity to try a variety of wedding dresses from a portfolio of beautiful British designed and made dresses, from well-known and award winning designers, Sassi Holford, Caroline Castigliano, Ritva Westenius and new to the boutique in September 2014 – Stephanie Allin.

Also, if a bride is looking for a unique, one of a kind wedding dress, Julia continues to offer her established 'Couture Service' within the boutique, where a bride can have her dream dress designed and created for her, to her own specific requirements. Julia's boutique also offers brides a wide selection of bridal accessories, as well as a bespoke Mother of the Bride/Groom outfit design and creation service.

For further information about the boutique and its bridal services, visit www.juliataskerbridalcouture.co.uk and to keep up to date with all the boutique's news and events follow the boutique on facebook at facebook.com/juliataskerbridalcouture.

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UNIQUE WEDDING VENUE



A garden centre has made a radical leap into the weddings business. Crooklands of Dalton has always been a top destination for people buying plants and garden furniture. Now the spectacular function room is being booked out by couples wanting a marriage celebration with a difference.

Organising the wedding business is Jules Charnley, wife of Crooklands boss Marc. She said: "People wanting to get married in Dalton or the surrounding villages had started asking us of the room was available so we decided to take the leap."



"It's their special day so everything has to be absolutely right. I'm there to greet them as they get out of the car and I'm on hand throughout the day. We've really enjoyed it."

"I suppose it might seem unusual, having a wedding at a garden centre. But if we've had customers in the shop they've applauded the couple as they arrive."

With its extensive kitchens and function suite, Crooklands is able to cater for any requirements, from a buffet to a hog roast. The room is dressed to the couple's exact specifications with a capacity of 110 people for a Wedding breakfast and 220 at an evening celebration. It has been so successful there are 10 weddings booked in for this year. The venue, in a beautiful location at the edge of Dalton, even has an outdoor courtyard area where wedding photographs can be taken.



Nicola and Chris Clayton from Cleveland Avenue, Barrow, celebrated their wedding at Crooklands on May 24. Mrs Clayton, 30, said: "I chose it because it's local and it's so lovely. The room was beautiful."

Mrs Clayton, a hairdresser, and her 32-year-old husband, who is a shipyard welder, were delighted by the organisational help offered by Crooklands. Mrs Clayton said: "Jules is absolutely brilliant and she did such a brilliant job. "She just said: 'ring me if you think you've forgotten anything, even if it's 3am'."



Call Jules Charnley to discuss how Crooklands of Dalton can realise all your dreams for your special day.



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Hen Parties and Stag Do's

Originally, stag and hen parties were simple gatherings held the night before the wedding, marking the end of single life before they became committed to another. Now, it has become recognised as a perfect opportunity to get together with a group of close friends and family and party!

A stag or hen party can involve just about anything, depending on your budget and taste for adventure! Some people stretch the 'night' into a whole week, making the celebration into a holiday. The most important rule to remember on your hen or stag night is that no matter what the circumstances, there are to be no members of the opposite sex invited... apart from perhaps the stripper! These parties are a last chance to let all your inhibitions go, before you enter into the responsibility of marriage and children.

The night is traditionally organised by the best man or the maid of honour, and should take place a week or two before your wedding; whether you hire out a cocktail bar or go paintballing, you are likely to at least get bruised! If you're the one planning the traditional, hen/stag do prank, make sure that no one ends up hurt or arrested unless it's all part of your devious plan...



Your Options...

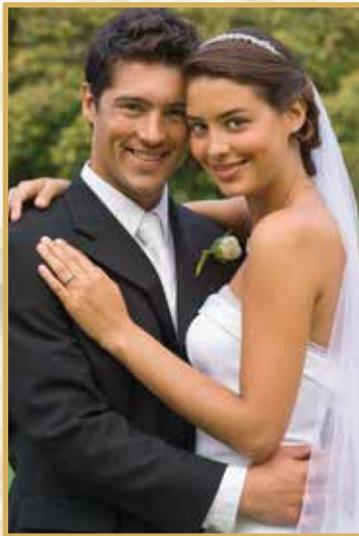
For both hen and stag nights, there are now a wide range of weekend breaks both in the

UK and abroad. Popular locations in the UK include Blackpool, Newcastle, London or the Lake District, whilst Barcelona, Prague, Dublin and Amsterdam could also be good options abroad, depending on your taste and budget.

For the adrenaline-junkie, there are activities such as paintballing, clay pigeon shooting, powerboat racing, racing-car track days, parachuting, sky-diving and a whole lot more! There are many businesses specialising in these types of event, meaning you could even get the chance to drive a tank, or live like James Bond for the day! For those wanting a more relaxing experience, the list is endless! You can do anything from champagne weekends to spa days, cabaret or theatre trips and even murder mystery evenings.

Last, but not least, don't forget that there are also some novel ways to shuttle yourselves around on the night, in anything from stretched limousines, to horse and carriage, to fire engines. Let your imagination run wild!

Ceremonies and Receptions



The ceremony and reception of your wedding can be the most demanding part of your wedding plan, but it is the main event for both you and your guests so it's important that you get it just right.

As well as churches, many hotels are licensed to hold civil ceremonies, meaning you have a great choice of romantic locations. This allows the wedding and reception to be in the same

place, simplifying transport considerations for you and your guests, but if you decide on a church wedding, the venue will usually be more than happy to add a bit of sparkle to your special day, so all you have to do is choose where you would prefer to celebrate. It should suit the style and theme of your wedding, be it traditional or contemporary.

Who's Coming?

Working out the number of guests coming to your wedding should be one of the first things you do. This way, you can choose a venue that can accommodate them all and get an idea of how much it will cost. Whether you decide on a country mansion, hotel, restaurant, golf club, park or hall you will need to book well in advance. This is especially so if your wedding is going to be during the summer months when the season is at its peak. Confirm all arrangements in writing and check that the prices given are final.

When organising your wedding reception there are a number of elements that you need to consider. To begin with, you should decide how much of your budget you want to spend on the actual reception. One of the major expenses will be the meal: caterers usually charge per head, so if you don't have a large budget you may want to think about ordering a buffet instead.

Make a list of how many guests you wish to invite and then work out how much the food and drink is going to be. It may be worthwhile visiting a wedding fayre; these are days organised by venues to which catering companies, florists and wedding cake specialists are invited, making them a great place to get information about everything you need for your big event.



Dazzling Decorations

Decorating a venue can be done in a variety of ways, and some of the easiest and most effective ways are flower arrangements, balloons and lighting. Balloons are always a great way to decorate your venue; they are fun and will appeal to all ages of guests, whereas a small flower bouquet centrepiece at each table will brighten up a room and can help tie colours together.

If your budget stretches far enough, you can hire people to do all the decorating for you, but a more cost-effective idea would be to ask friends and family to help you. Some venues will include decorators as part of their prices who will give you advice when it comes to picking colours and themes.



Entertainment



Deciding on what entertainment you want to provide your guests with can be a tough decision; do you want a live band or a DJ, or something out of the ordinary like a group of acrobats? Bands will usually have their own style of music, so check that they are going to be playing something that you and your guests will like and that it is going to be suitable for your wedding reception.

Hiring a DJ has the benefit of being able to provide them with particular songs that you would like them to play, and if they take requests, a lot of your guests are likely to enjoy choosing songs. Remember that your entertainer is only human; always have plan B at the ready in case they fall ill or have to cancel at the last minute.



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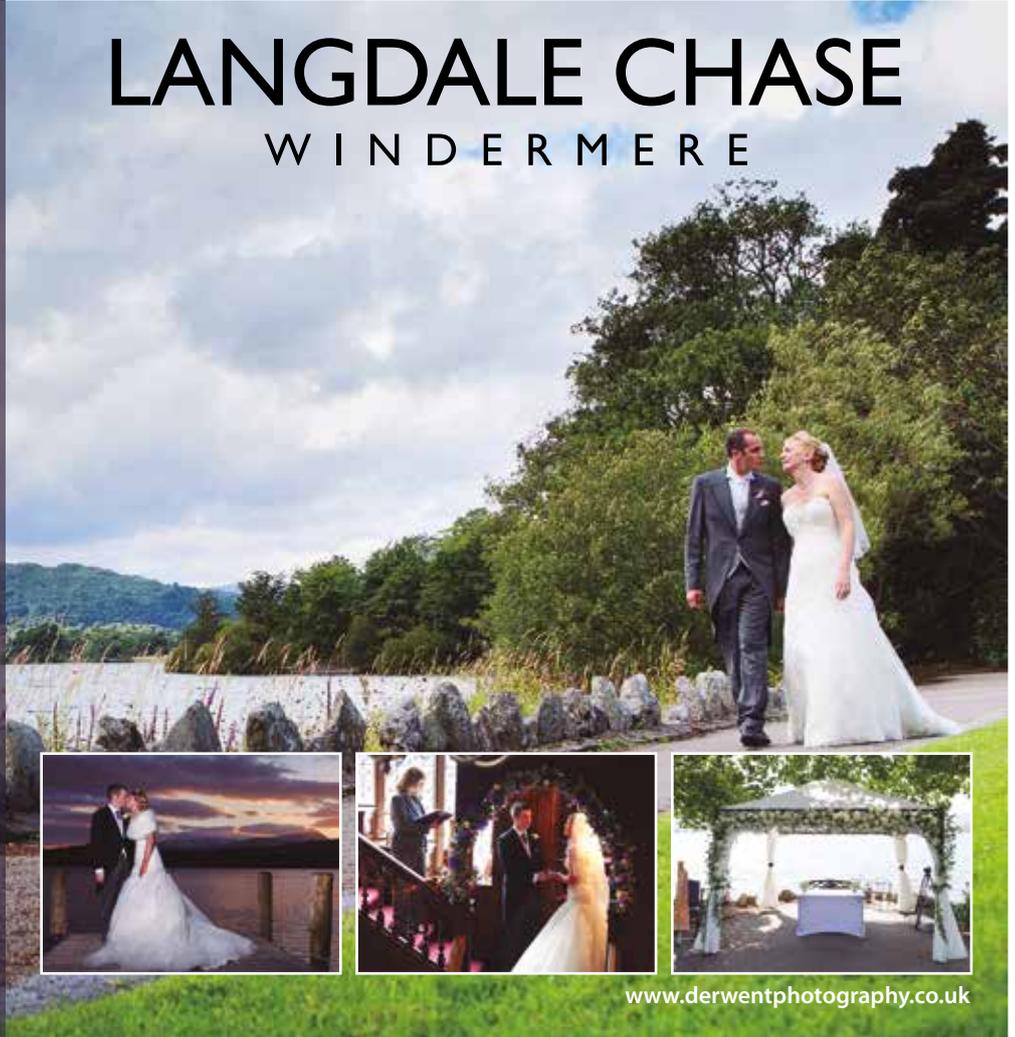
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Jewellery



Engagement Rings

Like proposing wasn't stressful enough already, you need to be sure to buy the perfect ring! If you are planning to buy your partner a diamond engagement ring, pay close attention to these universally-agreed rules on buying diamonds! After all, you're about to purchase a symbol of the most important relationship of your life.

The Five Cs

When buying a diamond engagement ring, familiarise yourself with the "Five Cs" – cut, colour, clarity, carat and of course, cost! How much you spend is a personal matter, but the most important piece of advice is to buy something that she will definitely like. Look at the jewellery she already owns. How does she react to other women's engagement rings? Does she ever express an interest in a certain style, or point out particular rings she likes?

Alternatively, you could speak to her girlfriends and female relatives, if you can trust them with your secret! A good jeweller should allow you to buy the ring you like and return it for another size or style.



The Wedding Rings

With so many styles on offer, choosing the right wedding rings can be quite a daunting task. It's not only the styles that need considering either: metals, settings, and of course prices all need taking into account. The choice is endless. The key is to choose a ring that reflects you and your partner's individual style and taste. Other important factors to consider when choosing a wedding ring are your budget and lifestyle. Couples should buy the finest quality ring they can afford, this way, it will stand the test of time and is less likely to become damaged.

Choosing the metal is a very important decision too, as it will affect the cost and the style of the ring you choose. Traditionally, wedding rings are made of platinum, white gold or yellow gold, and more modern options include tungsten carbide and palladium which are more hard-wearing options, ideal for either of you working a practical job.

The jeweller you choose should offer you all the help and advice that you need, as well as years of experience. Needless to say, making the right decision is crucial as your rings will need to last a lifetime.



Bridal Tiaras

Tiaras are probably the most popular hair accessory for brides on their wedding day, so how do you decide which one is right for you? Bridal tiaras, known as the 'princess of headpieces' come in many shapes, sizes and designs, so much so that it can be difficult to choose between them. Considerations to make include:



- Your face shape. If your face is long, avoid a tiara altogether as it will make your face look even longer; a bridal headband may be a better option for you. If you have a round face, a taller tiara can have a slimming effect.
- Tiaras can work with any hairstyle if you make sure to pick the one that suits your proposed hairdo. In general, the best hairstyle for a tiara is the half up-do.
- Match the tiara to your dress style. A simple dress may make an elaborate tiara look tacky, whereas a larger, more detailed dress is likely to drown out a simple one.
- Pick a tiara which is comfortable! It's no use buying one that gives you a headache after half an hour.

Bridal Headbands

Bridal headbands are the most functional option and can be just as beautiful and princess-like as a tiara. Suitable for all wedding types, they fit flat to the head and are available in many different styles. When shopping for a headband, consider:

- Do you want a detailed headband? You can choose a simple one or one with rhinestones, pearls or gemstones decorating it.
- Headbands are perfect for outdoor or beach weddings as they help keep the hair out of your eyes!
- Bridal headbands work with absolutely any hairstyle, whether you have pixie-cut hair or long, flowing locks.
- Some bridal headbands will come with an attached veil. Would you prefer this, or a veil on its own?

Other Wedding Jewellery

When shopping for further jewellery, bear in mind that strapless dresses usually suit rounder shaped necklaces, whilst a v-neck looks better with pearl pendants and drop necklaces. Consider the beading and embellishments on your dress. If you have a lot of detail at the top of your gown, try no necklace or just a simple necklace, or even a simple choker. If your wedding dress has beaded detailing, try to match the detail of your wedding jewellery to this.



Don't shy away from long chandelier earrings, but consider your hairstyle as they could get caught, and simple stud earrings are a good alternative. If your dress has long sleeves, steer clear of bracelets, they may damage the dress and will hardly be seen.

Don't forget your bridesmaids' jewellery! You could give them a necklace and earrings set as a thank-you present for their help, as well as a memoir of your special event.



Photography

In years to come, your wedding photos will bring happy memories of the day back into sharp focus and are the perfect keepsake. This considered, it is easy to see why choosing the right photographer is such an important decision.

Each photographer will have their own style in which they prefer to shoot, and you need to ensure that these photos are going to be in-fitting with your vision of the day. The best photographers are always in demand, meaning early booking is the only concrete way to avoid any disappointment. Start by looking through the photographer's website or ask for their portfolio to give you a feel for their shooting style, but remember that as the customer you can still request the kinds of shots you do and don't want, no matter who you finally choose.

Get Creative

Standard poses, such as the wedding-party line up or the cutting of the cake are always very popular, but you could always try and make your album unique by doing something creative and different. A good example of this are still-life pictures: they can record special wedding day details which you may not otherwise remember and capture a mood. These photos could include things like your dress on its hanger, your old sneakers tossed next to the wedding shoes, the bridesmaids' bouquets resting on a table, and so on. The possibilities are endless, let your imagination run free!

Another idea could be to set up a fun photo corner. Ask your photographer to set up a backdrop to create an open photo booth at the reception, so your guests can have portraits taken in small groups. Keeping two sets of these proofs means you can have one to send to each guest with your thank you notes, and one to keep for yourself to add to the album. An alternative is to hire a photo booth so that guests can take the snapshots home with them as a fun memento.

If you'd prefer a more ambient set of photos, have you thought of getting a parting shot? Ask your photographer to shoot pictures once the party has finished and people are leaving, perhaps a final look at rose petals scattered on the grass, or of the low-burning candles lining the aisle.

Many couples now also put disposable cameras out for their guests to use, an idea which is really catching on around the world! These give you the chance to see all those special moments that you might have missed out on at the time, including many silly, fun shots which will reflect the light-hearted, happy mood. The only downside to this idea is that developing all the photos can be expensive, especially if many are blurry.

Film It

These days, almost everyone ends up with some kind of DVD documenting their wedding day, varying in quality depending on who is wielding the camera! If you would like to have a DVD that actually bears repeated viewing and does justice to your fantastic day, then call in the professionals: they know how to wield the camera, their batteries won't run out, and above all they will be able to compile all their footage into one DVD which you and your guests can buy, leaving you with the perfect way to relive your amazing day.





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Choosing your wedding photographer can be one of the most important decisions you make for your wedding. After all, this is the person you are asking to record the most wonderful day of your life and turn it into images for eternity - it is no wonder that this can seem a little bit daunting! How do you decide?

There are really four things you need to consider:

1. Do you like their work?

So many photographers have honed their skills into a certain style; some are more natural reportage, some stick to black and white. Have a look at a few different approaches and think about what will suit you and your wedding. Ask yourself, does this work move me? Does it capture the emotion of the day?

It is a good idea to ask to see a complete album so you can check for consistency.

2. Do you get on with them?

It is your day and your vision and you have to have someone that you trust to capture it. Have you struck up a rapport? Communication is key. Someone who takes notes while you are discussing your wedding plan is a good start! And do double check that you are meeting the actual photographer that will be there on your day.

3. Do they have credibility?

The work should speak for itself, but strong testimonials can give an insight into how clients have found the rest of the service. Membership of photographic bodies such as the Society of Wedding and Portrait Photographers or the British Institute of Photographers can let you know you are dealing with a professional. You could also ask them what qualifications they have or if they have won any awards.

4. What should I expect to pay?

Yes, as with everything, you often get what you pay for. A professional photographer is going to charge around £1000 upwards. If it seems a bit steep remember this is for posterity. You will be enjoying these images for a very long time to come - when your dress and shoes no longer fit you and the cake is long gone! Your photography is what you will have to remember your wedding and pass on to future generations.

By Eleanor Postlethwaite of Elle Jones Photography

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Look Your Best



Exquisite Hair

A special wedding hairstyling is fundamental for your special day. Make sure that you have the style worked out well in advance and have all necessary appointments made with a professional stylist that you trust wholeheartedly. It is a good idea to have it cut about a week before the wedding day so that it still retains its shape but has had time to settle.

To ensure your hair complements your overall look on your wedding day, discuss your dress and accessories with your hairdresser so that they know exactly how to prepare your hair for the occasion. In advance, regular washing and conditioning, along with massaging your scalp will stimulate the blood flow and encourage the growth of healthy hair.

Makeup and Beautification



When it comes to choosing your make-up for the wedding, caution is advised. It can be tempting to let your beautician pile on a lot of expensive makeup, but this can ruin the natural look you are aiming for on your wedding day.

Know your skin colour! This might seem obvious, but it is a good idea to go to a colour-matching at a makeup stall or beauty salon in the week or two before the wedding, any sooner and you may find your skin colour has changed, especially if your wedding is in the peak summer months, as you may tan more than you think! Make sure your foundation matches your skin tone exactly, and check it in natural daylight.

Beauticians recommend that you get yourself to a salon every few weeks in the run-up to your wedding for a manicure and pedicure, which normally includes a foot massage to stimulate the skin to keep them looking and feeling healthy - can't complain!

Moisturise your hands daily and soak your feet in warm water with massage oil for about ten minutes, then use a foot scrub and rinse. Try using essential oils to give you that fresh invigorated feeling and do this two or three times a week to help get rid of any hard, dry skin. Keep your nails filed two or three times a week as well, and condition them and your cuticles by rubbing in olive oil once you've finished.

Cleansing, exfoliating and moisturising your skin everyday in the run up to the wedding will keep it glowing and healthy. If you are worried about spots, use an aqueous (water-based) cream which you can buy from your local pharmacy. This way you aren't putting oil on your skin which increases the chance of spots, but you are still hydrating the skin and encouraging it to heal and clear.

Facials and face masks will also help to remove any blemishes and impurities in the skin, as well as feeling and smelling luxurious, but be aware that having one a few days beforehand might lead to a blotchy face on the actual day! The same applies to waxing, especially on your eyebrows or upper lip; there is always the possibility of grazing, and red patches are almost inevitable. Always do a patch test in the crook of your elbow before using a face mask to make sure you're not allergic to it, you don't want a blotchy, peeling face on your big day.



Diet and Exercise

One of the best ways to stay looking great in the lead up to your wedding is to live as healthily as you can. Exercising before your big day will contribute massively to your overall mental well-being, helping you to de-stress and think clearly when you're in danger of feeling overwhelmed.



As well as helping you to lose weight, eating a balanced diet in the run-up to your wedding will strengthen your hair and nails and make your skin glow. For the best results, start a six month countdown so that you look as radiant and healthy as possible on your wedding day. If you are running out of time, don't panic! Even brides who only have a few weeks to prepare can still see some stunning results.

A healthy lifestyle is an essential part of your preparation. Exercise helps to flush away the toxins that cause blemishes in the skin so aim for at least 30 minutes per day. Eating a balanced diet, with meals that are the right size for you, will prevent

weight gain and strengthen your entire body from your hair to your bones. If you eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, drink around two litres of water a day, reduce your alcohol consumption and cut-down on smoking, it will all help to keep your skin looking blemish-free and radiant.

Finally, getting a good night's sleep of about eight hours for one or two weeks before the big day will prevent puffy eyes, dark circles and bags, ensuring you look alert and healthy during your wedding.

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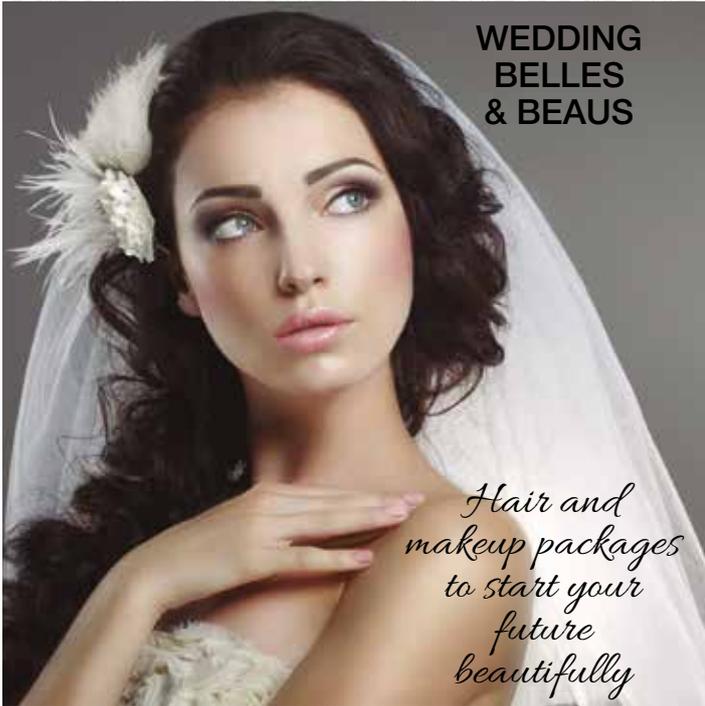
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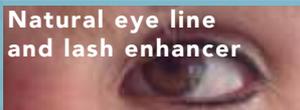
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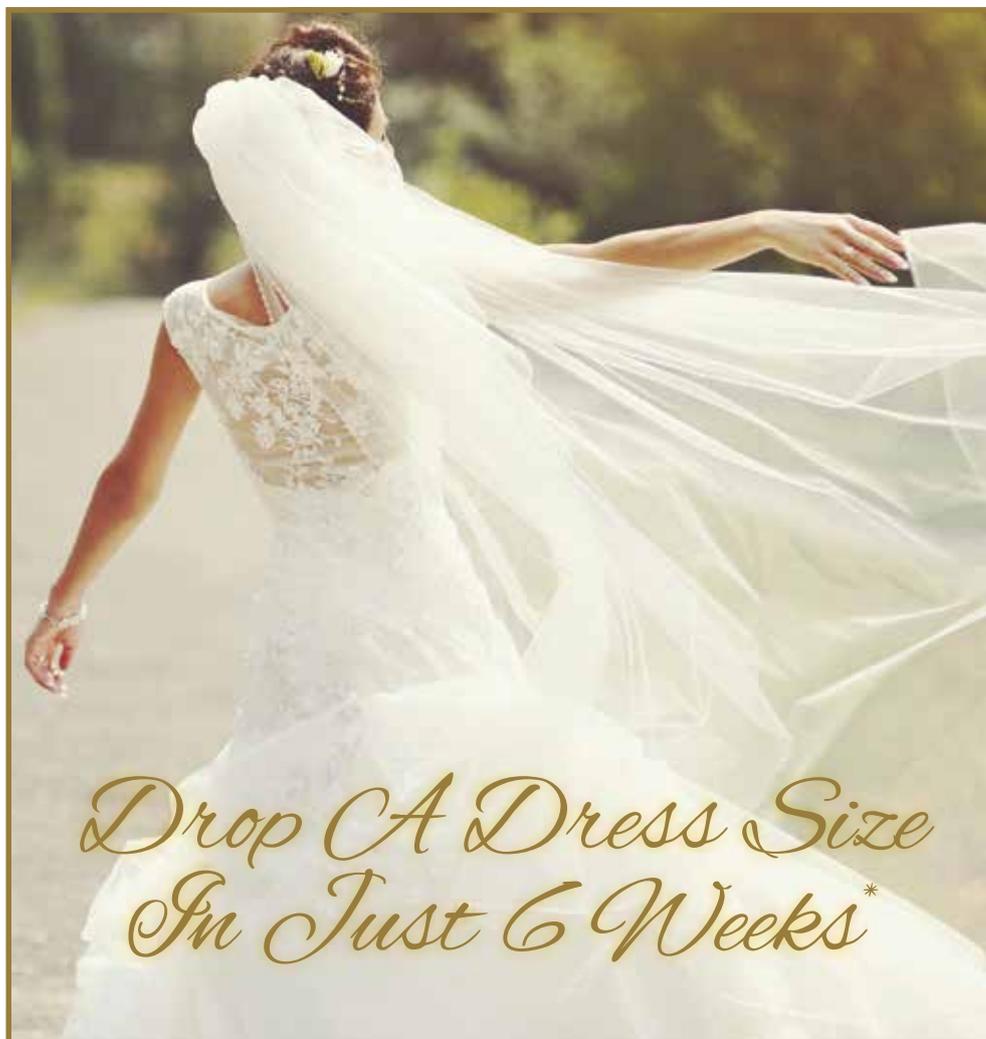
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Flowers

Flowers are an essential part of any wedding, whether they are in the form of a modest bouquet or a floral extravaganza. They have played a role in weddings since the time of the ancient Greeks: the bride would carry a posy of herbs to represent fertility, and today flowers are abundant at weddings across the entire world. However, the kind of flowers you decide on and how many you want is very much dependent on both your preferred style and your budget.

The Bouquet

The most important wedding flowers are those of the bride's bouquet. You could choose anything from a few simple blooms to an ornate tumble of blossoms. Some brides prefer pure white bouquets, made using lilies or roses and understated green foliage which can symbolise purity and happiness. Bold designs and colours are equally popular: exotic flowers such as orchids or African violets can accentuate the beauty of a white dress.

When you pick your bouquet, consider choosing complementary bouquets for your bridesmaids, as well as a matching buttonhole for your groom and any other attendants. It is customary for your bridesmaids to hold smaller, matching bouquets than that of the bride, with a lesser variety of flowers. You may be able to keep the cost down if you limit the most expensive and exotic flowers to the bride's bouquet.



Venue Decoration

In addition to the bouquets and buttonholes, most weddings also use flowers to provide decoration in the church or other place of ceremony, as well as the reception venue. Remember, you can transport the flower displays used for the ceremony to your wedding reception, meaning you don't have to buy as many flowers as you may have expected.

Ask your florist if they can supply this service for you; otherwise, recruit a trusted member of your wedding party who owns a large car or van! You generally don't need more than a couple of large flower arrangements for the front of the ceremony, but you may also like to decorate the end of each aisle. If your flower budget is limited, concentrate on the wedding reception displays, for example, you could have candles down the aisle instead of flowers.

Plan to have a centrepiece for each table, as well as a few extras for places like the cake table and bar area. Traditional table centrepieces can be quite tall, and this often makes it difficult for your guests to conduct conversations across their table, so it may be worth considering other, more contemporary designs such as a tight rosebud circle or short-stemmed daisies for lower, more practical ideas.

Flowers can express your emotions on your big day through their symbolic meanings: irises for faith and wisdom, lilies for truth and honour, or lily of the valley for happiness. Of course, the classic red rose is still the most romantic of all flowers, representing true love. Just avoid yellow roses: they signify jealousy!



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Finishing Touches

When it comes to finishing touches the list is endless and will depend on the budget you have allocated for your big event. One of the many things you'll have to think about is how you are going to arrive at your wedding, do you want to use a horse and carriage for a princessy feel? Or would you prefer to arrive in elegant style in a vintage Rolls Royce or something a bit more extravagant? The choice is yours!

As for the reception, there is more to think about than just the catering and seating arrangements. You also need to decide how you are going to decorate the venue, if at all, and choose everything from bouquets and table centrepieces to balloons and bunting.

Extra entertainment is also worth looking into and there is a huge range available. Consider what you think will go best with your wedding, as well as the age range of your guests: young children are easily bored and parents may appreciate a magician or face-painter to keep them amused.

Don't forget to decide on what wedding favours you wish to give your guests. The favours can be anything you want, but with a bit of creativity they can be memorable and fun! From personalised biscuits, cakes and chocolates, to a mini champagne bottle with you and your partner's names and wedding date printed on the label, to lottery tickets, the possibilities are limitless! If you prefer a traditional approach, you can give each guest 5 almonds, representing health, happiness, longevity, fertility and wealth.

For a spectacular finish to your perfect day, nothing beats the excitement of a firework display. If you are planning on doing this, it is best to speak to a local professional or your wedding venue who will be able to advise you on the suitability of your location and the choice of displays available.

Gifts

There's no denying that writing up your 'wedding wish list' is an exciting prospect. The idea of writing a list of presents you would like to receive from your guests may feel conceited to begin with, but you'll soon get into the swing of things!

When compiling the list, be realistic in what you ask for. Above all, try to include mainly practical things that you will definitely use in day to day life. After all, an opportunity to get your new life kitted out for free does not come up every day!

First of all, do your homework. Start looking for a wedding list service at least two months before you plan to send out your invitations. Do some research: ask friends who have recently been married who organised their list and whether or not they were happy with the service they received. What would they have changed? How easy was it to create their list? Were their presents delivered on time? This will help you to narrow down your options when you check out the various services available.



Cakes and Caterers

Whatever your budget, both hotels and external caterers will be able to offer expert advice on various options to make every penny count, ensuring the festivities are worthy of the occasion.

When choosing a caterer, seeking recommendations from family and friends is always a good idea; it is often difficult to judge the standard of service on offer just by looking at brochures. Caterers can usually supply table linen, crockery and cutlery, and can often also provide drinks. If the caterers are supplying the drinks they may only charge for bottles opened, but if you provide the drinks they may charge a little extra to serve them.

The caterer should visit the site of the reception prior to the wedding day to decide what further equipment and facilities they will need to bring with them. For a small buffet, they will bring the food already prepared and may only need washing up and coffee making facilities, whereas a larger event may mean the caterer needs to bring a cooker or a fridge.

Most caterers will clear away afterwards, so discuss when the clearing away will be done and let them know if serving staff will be required after the meal to serve drinks. Ask if a member of staff will act as Master of Ceremonies for you so that you have someone to cut and serve the wedding cake too.

The Cake

Symbolically, the cake is one of the most important elements of the day, with pride of place at the reception. According to tradition, it represents fruitfulness and fertility and is said to bring good luck to all that eat it, so it needs to be a delicious creation as well as a beautiful one! These days wedding cakes come in all shapes, sizes and colours, and you can be as creative as you like. From dazzlingly detailed to chicly simple, your cake should be a work of edible art.



Lucy's

Turning an occasion into a celebration

Organising something different for the Hen and Stag prior to the 'big occasion' can be a difficult and daunting task, even for the most organised person. Nowadays these events generally involve arranging more than one activity and invariably for a full range of ages. Looking for not only something that fits the bill for everyone but also accomodating the needs of a larger group certainly limits some of the options.

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Alternatively, **Lucy4 Wine Bar & Bistro** can offer you **Nibbles and Tipples** whilst sampling **Cockt4ils** galore! If, however, you don't want to venture out from where you're staying in The Lakes, don't worry **Lucy's Inside Out Catering** will come to you and cater for your needs.

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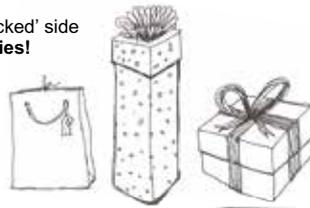


Lucy's on a plate Restaurant in the centre of Ambleside enables you to celebrate the company of friends and family in a relaxed and informal environment – with the Conservatory seating up to 35 and a private dining area that can accommodate 16 guests on one large table means that there are plenty of options to consider.

Lucy4 Wine Bar & Bistro is a fiendish find for those wishing to unveil their more 'wicked' side - cockt4ils together with mix and match food served until 10.30pm It's **Perfect 4 Parties!**

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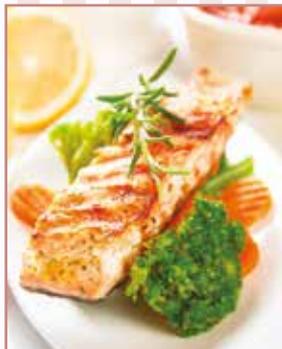
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The Honeymoon

Make sure that you plan well in advance so that you can put as much preparation into it as possible – remember that the planning element of your honeymoon should be a romantic and enjoyable experience for both of you. Leaving it too late will simply increase your stress levels, something you want to avoid, especially once you start planning all the other arrangements for your wedding day.

The first thing you need to do is to decide what it is you both want out of the honeymoon. Is it just sand, sea and seclusion that you are after? Or are you looking for something more adventurous, such as exploring and trekking through the jungle?

Remember that there are two of you and you both want to enjoy your time away; if you can't agree on what you want to do, try to be flexible and find a happy medium. Once you have decided this, your next step will be to set a budget. Knowing how much you have available to spend means the serious planning can begin!

Be sure to include spending money in your budget and not just the cost of the actual holiday so that you can go shopping, sample the local cuisine or try something you've never done before like scuba-diving.

When planning, it is important to take these things into account:

- How many weeks holiday can you take?
- Which part of the world do you want to visit?
- Think about what time of the year you are travelling. Will the weather at your honeymoon destination be what you want at that time?
- What type of accommodation are you looking for? Hotel, self-catering etc? And what level of facilities will you need?
- How are you going to travel? Land, sea or air?
- Will you need any permits, visas or medical vaccinations for your chosen destination?
- Is your passport up-to-date?

Visit travel agents and scour the internet to find out as much information as possible on your chosen destination. Many tour operators offer honeymoon packages, which save you time planning your own itinerary, or can offer you a tailor-made vacation. If you mention you're on a honeymoon during your flight, they may upgrade you to business-class or first-class seats!

And finally, if you are planning a surprise honeymoon for your partner, make sure you advise them on what clothes to pack and ensure they have all the necessary documentation and vaccinations!

Happy Honeymoon!



Legalities and Contacts

Some venues have facilities to allow you to get married in a permanent outdoor structure. Remember that even if you are retreating to a romantic hideaway to get married, on the day of the wedding you will need at least two people to witness the marriage and sign the register for it to be official.

Legal Formalities

Before you can get married, there are certain legal formalities to be fulfilled. Both bride and groom must attend the register office in the district where you live to individually inform them of your intention to marry, a process known as 'giving notice'.

It doesn't matter if either of you move, although you must have lived in the district for the preceding seven days. You must do this personally, and it is advisable to make an appointment to do this, as it takes about half an hour.

You must also then make arrangements with the district where you wish to be married. 'Giving notice' can be undertaken up to a year before the wedding, to show that you are both free to marry. You will need to provide your passport, birth certificate, proof of address and driving licence. You will be asked about you and your partner, including full names, addresses, ages, occupations, nationalities and whether you've been married before.

If either of you are under 18, there will be some forms that must be completed by your parent or guardian. After giving notice, there must be at least fifteen clear days before you can marry.



Charges

You will have to pay fees for each individual part of your marriage, each district has different prices, so check with your local register office for more information. Be sure to include these fees when considering your overall budget, as well as any other costs that arise when booking a church or other ceremonial venue.

Religious Ceremonies

If you are planning a Church of England wedding, visit the vicar of the church where you live. The vicar will register the marriage for you so that there is no need to involve the local superintendent registrar.

Usually, you must live in the district where you plan to marry, unless the building is your usual place of worship. Please check fees with the vicar where you are planning to marry, as prices can vary enormously depending on location, accessibility, popularity and size.

Civil Ceremonies

At a register office, you need to arrive fifteen minutes before the ceremony. The registrar will then ensure that all information is correct on the day, they will see you and your partner separately, in order to confirm the details.

At approved premises, the ceremony is similar to a register office marriage, but any additional vows may be added and non-religious music and poetry/prose can be included, but there are certain words and phrases that must legally be included.

REGISTRY OFFICES IN LANCASHIRE

ACCINGTON

Mechanics Institute, Willow Street, Accrington BB5 1LP
☎ 0845 053 0021
✉ registrarsAccrington@lancashire.gov.uk

BURNLEY

Lyndhurst House, Todmorden Road, BB10 4AB
☎ 0845 053 0021
✉ registrarsBurnley@lancashire.gov.uk

CHORLEY

Devonshire House, Devonshire Road, Chorley PR7 2BY
☎ 0845 053 0021
✉ registrarsChorley@lancashire.gov.uk

FLEETWOOD

New Central Library, North Albert Street, Fleetwood FY7 6AJ
☎ 0845 053 0021
✉ registrarsFleetwood@lancashire.gov.uk

LANCASTER

4 Queen Street, Lancaster LA1 1RS
☎ 0845 053 0021
✉ registrarsLancaster@lancashire.gov.uk

LYTHAM

The Library, Clifton Street, Lytham FY8 5EP
☎ 0845 053 0021
✉ registrarsLytham@lancashire.gov.uk

ORMSKIRK

Charter House, Derby Street, L39 2DF
☎ 0845 053 0021
✉ registrarsOrmskirk@lancashire.gov.uk

PRESTON

Park Hotel, East Cliff PR1 3JT
☎ 0845 053 0021
✉ registrarslancashire@lancashire.gov.uk

REGISTRY OFFICES IN CUMBRIA

BARROW

Nan Tait Centre, Abbey Road, Barrow-In-Furness LA14 1LG
☎ 01229 407511
✉ barrow.registeroffice@cumbria.gov.uk

CARLISLE

Lady Gillford's House, Petteiril Bank Road, Carlisle CA1 3AJ
☎ 01228 221122
✉ carlisle.registeroffice@cumbria.gov.uk

COCKERMOUTH

Fairfield, Station Road, Cockermouth CA13 9PT
☎ 01900 706960
✉ cockermouth.registeroffice@cumbria.gov.uk

KENDAL

County Offices, Kendal LA9 4RQ
☎ 01539 713567
✉ kendal.registeroffice@cumbria.gov.uk

MILLOM

The Council Centre, St Georges Road, Millom LA18 4DD
☎ 01229 407511
✉ millom.registeroffice@cumbria.gov.uk

PENRITH

Town Hall, Penrith CA11 7QF
☎ 01768 212106
E: penrith.registeroffice@cumbria.gov.uk

ULVERSTON

The Town Hall, Ulverston LA12 7AR
☎ 01229 404170
✉ ulverston.registeroffice@cumbria.gov.uk

WHITEHAVEN

College House, Flatt Walk, Whitehaven CA28 7RW
☎ 01946 506190
✉ whitehaven.registeroffice@cumbria.gov.uk

WIGTON

Wigton Library, Wigton CA7 9NJ
☎ 01228 221122
✉ wigton.registeroffice@cumbria.gov.uk



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