

Wedding Guest List Survival Guide

CC2.0 BY-NC-SA FLICKR SHAWN PLEW

The wedding guest list can become one of the biggest areas of stress for a bride and groom when planning their wedding.

It can also cause unnecessary friction between family and friends, causing upsets and strained relationships as a result.

Choosing your wedding guest list is something a wedding planner can't do for you, although we can certainly offer you advice. Check out my tried and trusted survival tips that will help you come out of the whole process unscathed and with a smile on your face.

How do I cut my wedding guest list without feeling guilty?

Most of us would love to invite everyone we know to our wedding to share this joyous occasion with us. However for the majority of bride and grooms, this isn't realistic.

How do you cut down your 200 wedding guest list into you 100 guest budget?

Firstly, sit together with your fiancé and organize your guests into 2 groups, the "Must haves" (group A), who are family and friends that must come to the wedding and the

remaining guests into "The not so must haves" (group B).

Begin to make your way through group B asking the following questions, 'How close are we to this person?' 'When was the last time we saw them?' and 'Would their attendance to our wedding affect our enjoyment of our big day?' Once you have honestly answered these questions, move onto the next area.

Maybe you could consider, making the wedding adults only, asking your parents to limit the amount of their personal invites (unless your parents are contributing to the bill), limit the amount of work colleagues or business associates you invite, and invite single people without a guest. Leave off distant relatives you can hardly ever see, the same should go for old school and university friends.

Also don't feel pressured to invite people to your wedding because you were invited to theirs. They had their reasons and possibly the budget to be able to do that, you don't.

How do I let people know children are not invited to the wedding?

Although some parents would jump at the chance of

having a day or evening out without the children, some might be offended or unable to attend without them. Understanding needs to be on both sides here.

It is also quite common for bride & grooms to only allow the children closely related to them to attend the wedding; if this is the case you must explain that to your other guests instead of saying no children are allowed.

Here are some methods you can use to transmit the right message effectively.

Tell your wedding party, parents, close family and friends what the situation is and ask them to spread the word.

Writing on the invite "adults only" is not an option, but stating clearly on the invite who is invited is. According to wedding etiquette, the names of the people on the invite are the only people invited to the occasion (i.e., Mr & Mrs John Smith).

If you state on the invite "Mr & Mrs John Smith and family" it generally means the children are invited too.

I would recommend however, that the name of each person be stated on the invitation individually, so

its meaning is not open to interpretation by the guest and will not encourage them to invite family members other than those stipulated.

In the event that you do have an RSVP for more than you invited, then it's acceptable to make a polite call to them, explaining that the number of guests you invite is restricted due to budget constraints.

Try not to make exceptions. Other families will probably notice and might take offence.

Should I allow single friends to bring a guest or date?

Of course it is only polite to enable single people to bring a guest to your wedding so they don't feel uncomfortable in the event they don't know anybody. However, if your budget won't permit this luxury you can take each situation on a case by case basis.

If any of your close family or friends are unmarried but in long term relationships, you might want to add their partner to the guest list.

You can then invite your single friends and explain your budget constraints to them - good friends will

understand. Equally, if the invite is declined due to the financial constraints of coming alone, and not sharing accommodation or transport costs etc, then you must also understand.

What if invited guests don't RSVP?

Never assume guests are not coming if you don't receive their RSVP. I know it can be a little time consuming for you, but call or drop them an email to double check.

It could be that the RSVP got lost in the post, or they thought they had replied but hadn't. They may have even verbally confirmed their assistance with your fiancé or a family member who forgot to let you know.

It's always better to be sure exactly who is turning up on your wedding day, than for people to turn up and face the embarrassment of not being catered for.

How far in advance should I send invites to guests?

The general rule is that invites should go out four to six weeks before the wedding. I however find this a little bit last minute for

people to prepare so I'm a big fan of sending out a "Save the Date" invites or email up to one year in advance, especially if you're having a destination wedding or inviting guests from far away to your local wedding.

You want to make sure they don't book anything else around that date which causes them to miss your wedding. So in addition, you can then send the invites out approximately 2 months before the actual wedding date.

Remember to be polite and understanding when transmitting any message that you feel might offend.

Also don't forget that it is your wedding, so stand your ground on your decisions and don't be swayed by difficult guests who try to persuade you otherwise.

Hopefully I've covered the main guest list issues you may have. If however, you want more advice or information on how to organize your guest list or any other aspect of your wedding don't hesitate to contact me on the email or telephone number below.

Bernadette Garside

ThePerfectWedding@TheCanaryNews.com