

C.R.E.A.T.E. Your Dream Wedding in 5 Easy Steps!

Creating a beautiful wedding doesn't have to be difficult, time-consuming, or expensive. Just follow these 5 steps to C.R.E.A.T.E. the wedding of your dreams with less stress and less money than you thought possible. Plus, when you follow this simple system, your wedding will be the talk of the town for months to come!

1. Comfortable

I am constantly amazed at the number of brides who don't care about their guests comfort. Even though this is your day, the comfort of your guests should be a top priority. If your guests aren't comfortable, they won't appreciate or remember anything else you've done to make your day special.

Some comfort do's and don'ts:

Don't rent a facility for 200 when you are expecting 250.

No matter what anyone else tells you, only 8 people can fit comfortably around a 60" round table.

Make sure there are adequate restroom facilities.

Don't make your guests wait 2 hours to eat or stand in the food line for 30 minutes. (In a later section I will divulge a special trick for a super fast food line!)

Provide hand sanitizer and hair spray in the women's restrooms.

2. Refreshment

Snacks or hors d'oeuvres, drinks, dinner, and dessert or wedding cake all fall within the realm of refreshment. The choices are up to you. At a bare minimum guests should be offered a beverage and dessert or wedding cake. Most brides choose to offer a meal as well.

Here are some tips that work whether you choose a simple or elaborate affair:

Allow your guests to eat while waiting for you to arrive.

Prepare a special menu for the kids. Hot dogs and chicken tenders, along with mac and cheese are favorites. The parents will love you for thinking of their little ones.

Have small baskets of snack mix, pretzels, or wrapped chocolates on each table.

Limit the drink choices. Coffee, tea, lemonade, and bottled water should satisfy everyone. Of course, you may want to offer punch with dessert. Look for a couple of great recipes in following sections.

Offer guests a way to take home dessert or wedding cake. Not everyone will be ready for dessert when it is served, but would appreciate a box or bag to take home for later. Plus, you won't be left with cake to eat for weeks! (Read *Details: 26 Simple Ideas That Will Transform Your Day* to learn the secret formula to cut down on waste with all your food.)

3. Enjoyable

So, everyone is comfortable and has had something to eat and drink. What's next? It's party time! A relaxing atmosphere, good company, and music help to make the day fun.

Things to keep in mind:

Make sure the traditions of cake cutting, toasts, garter toss, and first dance happen in a timely manner. Many of your guests will want to witness these events before they leave. Don't make them wait around all night.

Have your DJ or emcee make announcements as things are happening, so that no one misses out.

Keep the music at a level where conversation can be heard.

Play music from different time periods and genres. Your guests will all have different likes, try to accommodate them a little.

While floor length linens look nice when first walking into a room, they are a nightmare for guests. Choose lap length linens instead. The room will still look great, you will save a ton of money, and your guests will enjoy themselves so much more since their legs won't be wrapped up in the tablecloth all night.

4. Amazing

This is what people will remember. Making your guests comfortable, providing food and drink, and planning for your guests enjoyment all set the stage. Amazing is where your day shines- and you get to decide how. One word of caution here: Less is more. Choose just one or two ways to really stand out. Anymore than that, and you run the risk of nothing standing out.

With that said, let's look at some options:

- For starters, you could choose to take one aspect and “supersize” it.

Your wedding could be held at an unusual location, such as a zoo. Add a “zany” factor by playing “In the Jungle” for your recessional. (Yes, I’ve seen it done!)

Serve a gourmet meal. This can cost less than you might think. Check with your local college culinary program.

If you are expecting lots of children at your reception, entertain them with a clown, magician, moonwalk or babysitter. A really low cost, effective way to keep the kids busy is a child-sized table filled with coloring books, crayons, and small toys.

- Decorating is another way to make an impression.

Think big! Coordinate everything from the church entrance, to the altar, all the way to the centerpieces on the reception tables.

Think small. For instance, concentrate on just the altar at the church and the cake table at the reception. These are the areas your guests will be focusing on the most.

Room layout can take your wedding from ordinary to “Wow!” Consider placing tables in clusters or in an “L” shape, instead of rows. You can even mix round and banquet tables, or use tables of differing sizes. You add interest without spending a penny!

- If you are fortunate enough to have truly talented friends or relatives, one of the following can make your wedding unforgettable.

A vocalist or instrumentalist to perform the music.

A graphic artist to design your wedding programs or invitations.

A baker to take your wedding cake from concept to stunning reality.

5. Total Effect

In the end, all of the above elements work together to C.R.E.A.T.E. the day you’ve dreamed of. Planning a wedding doesn’t have to be expensive or a hassle. Almost every decision you need to make falls into one of the above steps. If you plan your big day by this

system, you will C.R.E.A.T.E. a day that is uniquely yours with less stress and less money than you every imagined. A day that you, and your guests will remember for many years to come!