



Unique Party Favors and Gifts | www.beau-coup.com

cultural wedding customs and traditions

brought to you by Beaucoup Wedding Favors

african
armenian
chinese
czech republic
dutch
french
german
greek
indian
irish
italian
japanese
korean
mexican/philippino/spanish
scottish
swedish
vietnamese

There are some who would say that wedding ceremonies have become highly commercialized affairs, more focused on the details of the reception than the purpose of the event, which is to witness and celebrate the coming together of two people in matrimony. It is true that over the years the planning and execution of weddings has spawned an entire industry of vendors from clothing designers, to caterers, to musicians, to photographers, videographers, florists, and professional planners. Not to mention the countless books and magazines, as well as seminars, and bridal shows that specifically target brides-to-be, and cover all aspects of the planning process to help create the perfect wedding. But what is the perfect wedding? There are plenty of wedding planning kits out there complete with a checklist to help guide couples through the process. Though thoughtful, one can't help but feel that the checklist might hinder the imagination, and lead the bride to believe that the elements on the list, and only those elements are what make the perfect wedding. The point is, there is a formula that is widely used, and if you've attended a few weddings, you should be familiar with the routine. Though convenient, weddings executed in this fashion meet the danger of becoming forgettable.

In a nation as rich in diversity as the United States, it is not uncommon for couples to come from colorful ethnic backgrounds. Many brides and grooms would love to marry in the tradition of their native ancestors, but being products of American culture as well, want to have the white wedding they've always envisioned. There is an abundance of solutions to satisfy all of these desires. Bringing culture to a wedding is not only a fantastic way to share something personal with the guests, but a sincere tribute to the families who have come together. Some couples may choose to have destination weddings, requesting guests to fly to their native country to partake in an elaborate, traditional wedding ceremony. But such a feat is not easy to pull together, and most couples who entertain the thought might be intimidated by the scope of their ambitions. For similar effect at much lower difficulty, try incorporating some aspects of culture into a classic white wedding. This can be as simple as having an ethnic menu instead of "beef or chicken", or serving sangria or sake for toasting instead of champagne, or yet, including polka, or bhangra in the musical repertoire. The smallest out of the ordinary gesture can set the mood for an entire once in a lifetime event.

Needless to say, the stars of the wedding are the bride and groom. Isn't it only natural to showcase their lives, and spotlight their love? The most poignant weddings will touch the hearts of those in attendance and make even the most distant relative and that friend of a friend of a friend feel as if they've known you all their lives. The wedding doesn't have to be small and exclusive to be intimate and personal. Even the smallest attention to detail and thinking outside the package can make an otherwise cookie-cutter wedding into a distinct affair that reflects the couple's nature, and ensures that their special day makes an indelible impression on all.

fortune cookie place card holders italian favor wraps Japanese cherry blossom favor dishes

cultural customs & traditions by country

African: You may have heard of "jumping the broom". It is a tradition whose origin is debated, but whose significance is agreed upon to be a symbol for the start of the couple making a home together. Cowrie shells can be used to accent table decorations. The shells represent



Unique Party Favors and Gifts | www.beau-coup.com

purity and beauty.

Armenian: A saying that is regarded as a cultural tradition, "may you grow old on one pillow", can be woven into a theme for the wedding. Print the phrase on invitations, or engrave on a silver keepsake as a guest favor.

Chinese: Perform a traditional tea ceremony where the bride serves tea to her parents, and her new in-laws as a symbol of respect. To update the tradition, the groom can serve tea with his new bride. The color red represents celebration and prosperity, and the Chinese character "xi" or double happiness bestows the wish of a happy life for the couple. Chinese weddings are festive celebrations in the full capacity of the word. The bride and groom are required by etiquette to make the rounds and toast each table individually to the loud cheers of the group visited. Sometimes members of the wedding party can be called upon to drink in place of the bride and groom in the event either party cannot hold his or her liquor.

Czech blican: Traditionally the bridesmaids make a wreath of rosemary for the bride to wear. An updated version can be made with roses and baby's breath.

Dutch: A wonderful custom is to create a wedding "wish tree". At the reception a beautiful tree branch is placed next to the bride and groom's table, and paper leaves attached to pieces of colorful ribbon are placed at each guest's place setting. Guests write their special wish for the happy couple on their leaves, which the bride and groom can then read and hang on the tree.

French: The groom customarily walks his mother down the aisle before arriving at the alter to be married. This is a lovely gesture that can be easily adopted and will surely elicit a collective "aww" from the audience.

German: Breaking dishes, pots, or anything that will break into pieces and then cleaning it up together is said to bring good luck to the bride and groom just before the wedding. In fact another version of the popular custom is for friends to bring over all matter of junk they can gather for the couple to clean up. The idea is to prepare the bride and groom for facing life's trials together. It's a somewhat harsh custom, but one that is rich with meaning nonetheless.

Greek: In the Greek tradition, the bride and groom are honored as queen and king for the day, and so are bestowed, usually by the best man, crowns of gold, or orange blossoms.

Indian: Indian weddings are traditionally multi-day affairs, and involve many intricate ceremonies, such as the painting of the hands and feet of the bride called a mehndi. Garlands are presented to guests of honor instead of corsages, and lots and lots of flower petals are thrown for good luck. It is tradition for the closest male relative to sprinkle flower or rose petals on the married couple to fend off evil spirits.

Irish: The traditional wedding ring is called a claddagh, and depicts two hands holding a heart bearing a crown. The hands represent faith, the heart love, and the crown honor. Another accessory for the bride is a lucky horseshoe. Tie one with ribbon around her bouquet for that walk down the aisle. But make sure to hang it with the points up, it is said to catch and hold all the good luck. A popular Celtic design is the love knot. It is a pattern created by using continuous, unending lines that intertwine. The design represents eternity, unity, and fidelity. A lucky four leaf clover can symbolize, "One leaf for Hope, the second for Faith, the third for Love, and the fourth for Luck!" Include mini pots of shamrock for décor (don't last long after they're cut). The national symbol of Ireland is the heraldic harp since ancient Ireland honored the harpist above all other musicians, and it was they who played for the highest officials. Another tradition in Ireland is, instead of clinking glasses to get the couple to kiss, a guest would stand up and sing a song, or recite a poem with the word "love" in it.

Italian: One of the oldest traditions is the giving of candy-coated Jordan almonds. Meant to represent the bittersweet nature of marriage, these treats are given to guests wrapped in tulle, or pretty pouches, and in quantities of 5, which is a lucky number.

Japanese: The Japanese ritual of "san-san-ku", or three by three exchange is rich with meaning. It is performed by the bride and groom; each takes 3 sips of sake from each of 3 cups. The first 3 represent three couples, the bride and groom, and their parents. The second 3 represent three human flaws: hatred, passion, and ignorance. "Ku", or 9 is a lucky number in Japanese culture. And "do" means deliverance from the three flaws.

Korean: Ducks and geese are animals known to mate for life. In Korean culture this makes them the perfect symbols of fidelity and are incorporated into weddings.

Mexican/Philippino/Spanish: In Latin culture the groom gives his bride a gift of 13 coins, or arras, representing Jesus and his 13 apostles. These are blessed by the priest and bear the groom's promise to care for and support his wife. For the reception, a festive mariachi band



Unique Party Favors and Gifts | www.beau-coup.com

would bring an abundance of fun to the party.

Scottish: The unmistakable sound of bagpipes will surely evoke the pride of Scotland. Incorporate them into the procession. Traditionally, the groom adorns his bride with a sash in the colors of his clan to welcome her to his family.

Swedish: An old, and adorable Swedish custom is for the bride to carry coins in her shoes. One silver coin in her left shoe from her father, and one gold coin in her right from her mother to ensure that she will never go without.

Vietnamese: It is customary for the mother-in-law to bestow upon the bride pink chalk, which symbolizes a rosy future for the couple.