

# Wedding how's and why's: All you need to know

Your wedding likely will be one of the biggest days of your life. But it can come with many questions and puzzling dilemmas, and there isn't always a bridal expert around to help you with the advice you need. Here are some answers to common questions:

• *We're newly engaged and*

*have yet to introduce our parents. What's the best way to do it?*

Traditionally, your fiancé's parents call on your parents — extending an invitation, by letter of phone, for brunch, drinks or even dinner.

If your parents are divorced, your fiancé's parents might first

contact the one who raised you.

A note or call from his mother to yours is a nice gesture if your families live in different cities.

If your fiancé's parents haven't yet contacted yours, your parents might reach out to them, or you and your fiancé might invite everyone to get together and celebrate.

• *I'm worried about a blizzard ruining our wedding day! How can I prepare for the worst, just in case?*

Precautionary tips for winter weather on wedding day: Hire a snowplow operator to clear the parking lot at your ceremony site and your driveway; make sure your reception site will have a plow, salt available to clear snow and melt ice.

You might arrange to rent a four-wheel-drive vehicle for the day if it becomes necessary, or have friends who own them on hand to pick up guests, the cake, flowers, etc.

Give the ushers large umbrellas to protect guests from the elements as they enter and leave the church or synagogue.

Also, find out if there's a generator available at the reception site, in case of power outages. (If you think the site will be problem-

atic in the event of a storm, have an alternate site in mind.)

And be sure to provide plenty of hot cocoa, coffee and tea to warm everyone up!

• *How do I properly assemble our wedding invitations and enclosures?*

Your stationer can answer your specific questions about the invitations you purchase.

Generally, the traditionally engraved invitation is folded in half, like a book or card, with the type on top, the fold to the left.

Enclosure cards are usually put inside the invitation; they may also be placed directly on top of it before all are slipped inside the inner envelope. (Tissue paper inserted by the printer to keep ink from smudging may be discarded or left in place.)

Insert the invitation into the inner envelope with print facing out; then place it, unsealed, into the outer envelope, so that handwritten guests' names (Mr. and Mrs. Jones) are visible when the outer envelope is opened.

• *Am I obligated to feed the professionals who will be at my reception?*

Some professionals, such as your photographer, videographer,

musicians, may include meals for themselves in the contract you sign; others may not. There may be extra meals available at the reception — if any guests don't show or if the banquet hall/caterer provides more plates than are needed. Or, you may decide to order these extra meals.

Another option: arrange for the caterer to provide plates of sandwiches.

Remember — a wedding usually lasts at least five hours. Wedding professionals get hungry too. It's a nice gesture.

• *Why is it customary for a man to ask a woman's father for her hand in marriage?*

The bride was once considered her father's property. Marriages were arranged (and still are, in some countries) by matchmakers, who bartered for the bride with one of her close male relatives and the groom.

One vestige of this practice is the ceremony tradition of a father giving away the bride in marriage.

Another is the custom of attaching shoes to the back of the wedding car. Shoes have represented the transfer of authority every since the early Hebrews exchanged sandals to symbolize good faith when selling property. An Anglo-Saxon father gave authority over, and responsibility for, his daughter to the bride-groom by giving him one of her shoes.

Happily, brides are no longer considered property. Still, many fathers actually do appreciate the old-fashioned courtesy of being asked for their daughter's hand in marriage.

It's a special time for groom and future father-in-law to talk privately and get to know one another.



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## Top wedding songs

Today's popular wedding songs, according to Nancy Cook, author of a newsletter titled *Wedding Music Update*:

- Clarke's "Trumpet Voluntary" for the processional or recessional music in a traditional ceremony;
- "A Whole New World," from the movie *Aladdin*, for a bride and groom's first dance as husband and wife;
- "Love Is Here to Stay," a Gershwin song redone by Harry Connick, Jr., for a nontraditional ceremony or first dance.

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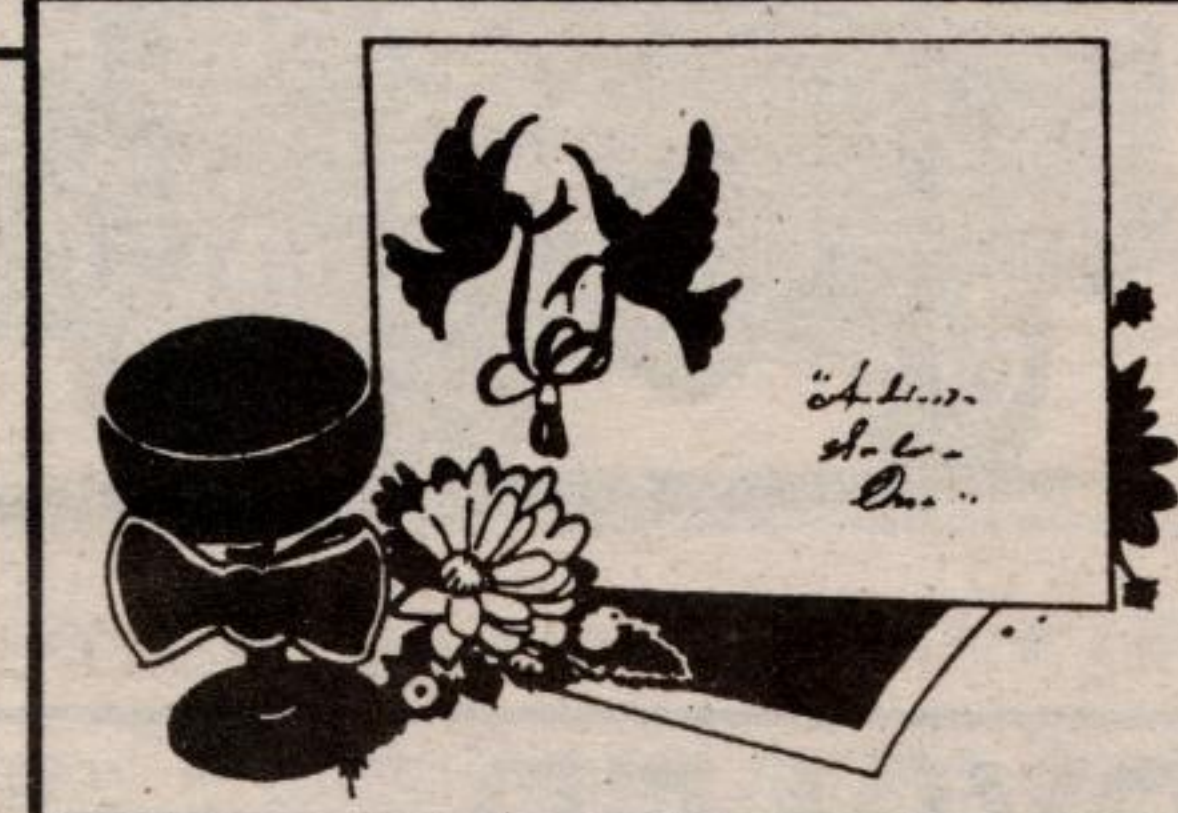
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