

BRIDAL CORNER

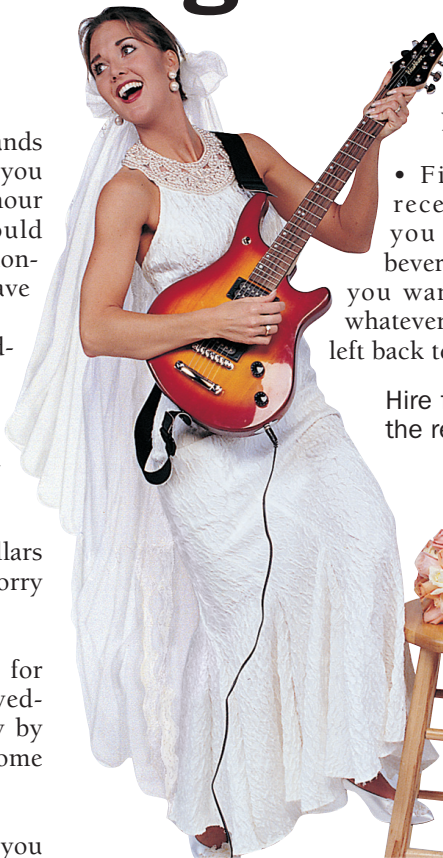
Wedding on a budget: How to shave off costs

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Special to The IFP

Weddings, as you probably know, can cost thousands of dollars. From the attire to the music to the food, you can easily spend \$5,000 or more for a two to three hour event. If you don't have that kind of cash or would rather spend the majority of your budget on your honeymoon, don't despair. There are ways you can shave dollars off your wedding costs.

If you're looking to save some dough at your wedding, try these cost-saving tips:

- Set your wedding date during the off-season. The rates of many services are lower during the off-season.
- Rent wedding attire. You'll save hundreds of dollars renting gowns and tuxedos, and you won't have to worry about the costs of cleaning.
- Purchase ordinary accessories and adapt them for your wedding. Accessories made specifically for weddings can be expensive. Save yourself some money by sprucing up an ordinary item like a journal with some lace and beads and turning it into a guest book.
- Hire vendors you know. Not only will they give you



great service, but they'll probably give you a great deal, too.

- Find a venue for your reception that will allow you to provide your own beverages. You can buy what you want to serve and return whatever unopened packages are left back to the store.

Hire friends to play music at the reception.

- Do your own flowers. You can purchase inexpensive flowers and accessories at craft stores

and save a bundle making your own arrangements.

- Make the food yourself. Prepare food for your wedding ahead of time and freeze it. Then just serve it with some fresh produce from the grocery store.
- Hire a non-wedding photographer. Find a friend who dabbles in photography and ask them to take your wedding photos for a flat fee plus supplies, or better yet, provide disposable cameras at each table at your reception and let your guests snap photos. Sometimes candid make the best photos.
- Pay your bills with a credit card with a reward program. You might earn enough money or frequent flyer miles to cover the airfare to your honeymoon destination.
- Work with an airline to get a group discount on plane tickets for your guests if you're having a destination wedding. Your guests will appreciate the savings and you might get a free or reduced plane ticket.

These are just some things you can do to save yourself some money. Remember, you can still pull off a beautiful wedding with all of the frills without a lot of expense. All it takes is some effort and ingenuity.



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