



# Wonderful Weddings



## Wedding traditions from across the globe

The individual nations of the world have their own enchanting customs to celebrate the union of two people. With a little thoughtful planning, any of the ancient customs can be incorporated into a modern wedding to salute to the uniting of two families. Here's a short list to pique your interest:

**Africa:** "Mayst thou bear 12 children with him" is still the common salutation to brides in remote areas. Many tribes marry the couple by binding their wrists with plaited grass.

**American Indian:** The groom wraps a woolen blanket around the bride to symbolize love and protection.

**Bermuda:** Newlyweds plant a tree in their garden. As it grows and strengthens, it symbolizes their love.

**China:** Two goblets of honey and wine are joined with a red ribbon - the centuries-old color of love and joy - and the couple exchange a drink of unity.

**Germany:** On the eve of the wedding, the friends of the bride smash pottery at her door. The loud noise is said to avert bad luck. To be sure of future bliss, the bride must sweep it up by herself.

**Italy:** Since Roman times, couples have walked through the village passing out cakes and sweets.

**Lithuania:** Parents of the couple serve them symbols of married life; wine for joy, salt for tears and bread for work.

**Mexico:** A white silk cord is draped around the couple's shoulders to indicate their union.

Later, guests hold hands in a heart-shaped circle while the newlyweds dance in the centre.

**Russia:** Wedding guests, other than family, receive gifts, rather than give them.

**Sweden:** Brides carry fragrant herb bouquets to frighten away trolls and grooms have thyme sewn into their wedding suits.

**U.S.A:** Early Americans gave honeymooners sack posset, hot spiced milk and brew, to keep up their energy.

### Choose diamond based on four Cs



When selecting a diamond, people should look for the four C's: cut, clarity, color and carat weight.

"Everyone is looking for a bargain, but there's really no such thing. You get what you pay for," says Fuat Tazbaz of London Jewellers in Markville Shopping Centre.

People should determine what should take precedence, size or quality. A large diamond can be purchased for the same price as a smaller one that is a better quality stone.

Quality is largely determined by the cut of the stone, says Charles Chung of Carats & Karats on Main Street, Unionville. This refers to the arrangement of the stone's facets. Grinding facets onto a stone allows light to enter, be broken and sent out again. A good cut reflects the most light.

Diamond clarity refers to a lack of naturally occurring inclusions or flaws. These tiny bubbles are part of the make-up of all diamonds. Often they're not visible to the naked eye but the highest quality stones are those which cannot be viewed through a microscope at 10 times the actual size.

Most diamonds have some color and colorless ones are very rare. However, these are ideal since a white or lightly colored stone reflects the most light and hence is most brilliant, says Vernon Hempen of Hempen Jewellers on Main Street, Markham. "A colorless diamond has the most fire."

Carat weight is probably the most popular determinant, says Tazbaz.

"Most people look at the size and weight of a diamond as the most important ... however, the other factors are just as relevant if not more so."

A ring, the symbol of eternity, placed on the fourth finger of the left hand has long symbolized marriage. Its origin goes back thousands of years when ancient Egyptians believed the heart to be the residence of intelligence, the will and the emotions - our soul.

The most direct line from our world to our soul was through a vein that ran from the fourth finger directly to the heart. The linking finger with the soul symbolized an eternal bond.

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