

BRIDAL

Cake tradition has long history

Next to the bride, the wedding cake takes centre stage at many weddings.

Generally on display for the duration of the reception, the cake will be featured in photos afterward and will be part of memories forever.

Today's sumptuous wedding cakes are the distant descendants of an ancient Roman ritual. Wedding guests would pelt the bride and groom with grains of wheat to encourage a fertile union. Eventually, bakers made small wedding cakes of wheat that the groom would break above the head of the bride, letting guests nibble the fallen crumbs, sharing in the newlyweds' good fortune.

In the Middle Ages, sweet buns replaced the wheat cakes. In England, wedding guests would pile these buns into a tall pyramid and urge the bride and groom to kiss over the top of the stack. A French baker, who witnessed the spectacle, decided the wedding pyramid needed sugar frosting, and thus was born the first multilayered wedding cake.

Until the 18th century, wedding cakes were usually dense, dark fruitcakes. With the introduction of refined flour, they evolved into the fanciful architectural works we see today.

There is an endless variety of cake choices today, ranging from traditional to unusually decorated, from intricately sculpted to simple sophistication.

The choice of cake decoration depends largely on the wedding style. Consult with friends on the best caterer, or ask the reception location coordinator to recommend bakeries.

Look at pictures of each person's work to get an idea of designs, and ask for tasting samples to determine the quality of the cake and the flavour.

Typically, there are three types of wedding cake bakers: commercial bakeries, caterers and noncommercial wedding cake bakers.

A commercial bakery is the most common source for cakes and offers a large selection of flavours and designs, although they may not be able to deviate from set creations.

Caterers often provide wedding cakes in addition to meals and include the price for cutting the cake. Designs and flavours may be limited, so ask for pictures and taste samples before making a decision.

Noncommercial bakers generally work from home and specialize in unique wedding cakes made to exact specifications. This is an increasingly popular option for cakes that are true masterpieces.

Cake flavours have traditionally been vanilla or chocolate, with white butter cream frosting and pastel flowers or ribbons. Today, however, the choice of flavours is limitless, depending upon tastes.

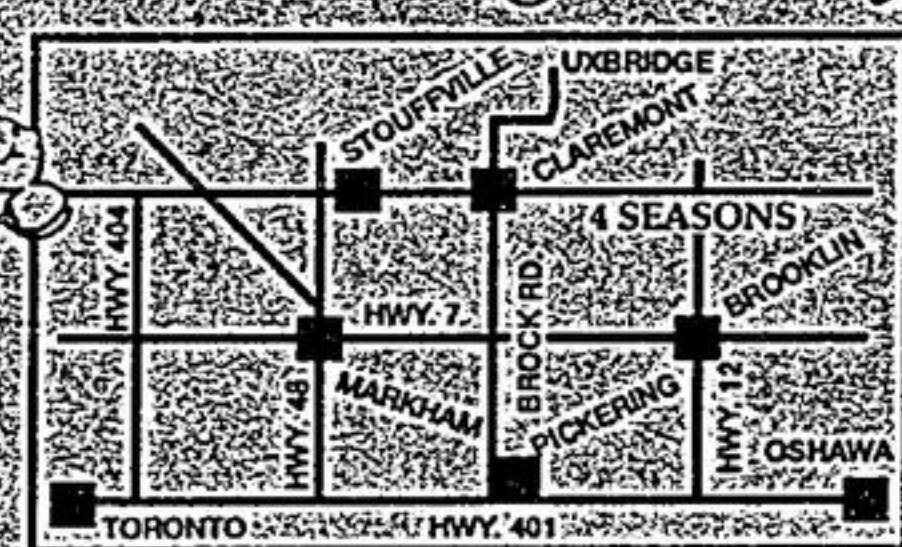
Cakes should be ordered no less than six to eight weeks before the wedding. The baker will need to know how many people it will serve, as well as flavours and other details.

A new trend, the groom's cake tradition, is growing in popularity again, particularly at the rehearsal dinner. Serving the cake at this event rather than at the wedding is a clever idea because it doesn't compete with the wedding cake.



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Wedding show offers handy tips

Looking for the perfect wedding show to attend?

Consider the second annual Port Perry nuptial fest on Nov. 1 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., hosted by Unique Wedding Shows. Visitors will walk through tulles draped with silk gardenias, taste sensational samples of wedding cake, and take in entertaining stage presentations.

Those attending should have pen and paper handy for tips during the fashion show, and be ready to collect business cards from the many wedding professionals available.

There will also be prizes to be won. Mandy Vance of Bowmanville attended a Unique Wedding Show early in September and went home with an elegant wedding band set.

April Tindall, proprietor of Unique Wedding Shows, will be hostess of the celebrations.

Port Perry is but one of three shows April will be holding this fall.

Along with wedding shows, April is also a wedding coordinator for busy brides-to-be. For ticket reservations and more information call April Tindall at 1-888-544-LOVE.