

50

WAYS TO SAVE

Your wedding should be exciting and we want you to dream big, but sometimes skimming some elements off to allow for others is a must. But what to save on? Here's our 50 easy ways to make sure your budget brings you everything you really want

RANK YOUR PRIORITIES What is really most important to you? Focus on areas that make your heart go pitter-patter, and you'll feel OK about skimping on the rest. As for your guests, many say the venue and entertainment are the most memorable parts.

RECRUIT FRIENDS Think of it as cost-free outsourcing. Gather your inner circle and play to their strengths. For example, ask that pal with the beautiful handwriting to write your invitations.

BE RUTHLESS WITH THE HEAD COUNT The easiest way to whittle down your guest list is to omit children and co-workers. When it comes to couples, invite spouses, fiancés, and live-ins only.

SPEND ON THE PARTY, NOT THE PARTY Do you really need five bridesmaids? Keeping the numbers down for your wedding party means less money spent on bouquets, boutonnieres, presents, and transportation.

EMBRACE THE OFF-SEASON Opting for a wedding outside of the summer or festive season will automatically cut vendor costs by up to 20%. If this isn't offered, haggle!

A BLANK CANVAS IS NOT ALWAYS BEST Choosing a venue that already has gorgeous decor will save you a bundle. Hiring beautiful Chiavari chairs and a unique lighting setup can really transform a space, but can you afford it?

HIRE AN EXPERT It's sometimes possible to save money by spending it on a wedding planner because they 1) are not shy when it comes to haggling, 2) have years of experience working with brides on budgets, and 3) have good relationships with vendors.

SAY YES TO ALL-INCLUSIVE Choosing a venue with built-in extras like a personal wedding coordinator, on-site ceremony location, decor extras or a drinks reception can save you serious sponds. These extras add up to thousands you won't have to spend.

CREATE YOUR OWN DOT-COM We're serious paperie fans, but if you're on a tight budget, you might decide to save on paper, printing, and postage by sharing your wedding details online. A simple blogspot or wordpress blog is user friendly and free.

FORGO A PROGRAM Think about it – if you were at the wedding, would you really miss the program? If you're keen to include one, maybe display it on a large chalkboard that's visible to all instead?

TAKE UP HUNTING Bargain hunting, that is. You can find everything from fabric and trim to antique Mason jars on eBay, Etsy or at local flea markets. Half the price, twice the charm.

BUY IN-SEASON Flowers that are in season and don't have to be flown in from far flung climes are often more budget-friendly. Have a savvy chat to your florist.

CHOOSE SOME 'YOU' SHOES Buy shoes that you'll actually wear again after the wedding - something you more than likely won't do with white heels. Metallic and nudes are the obvious choice, but if you want to wear bright pink, polka-dot pumps that you'll love forever, all the better, we say!

SUPERSIZE YOUR FLOWERS Choosing bigger buds means you'll need fewer stems, thereby helping your bottom line. African marigolds, hydrangeas, gladiolus, and stargazer lilies easily fill a room and a ribbon-tied bunch of baby's breath or lavender gives a dreamy, romantic feel. Or go bold and bright with single oversized sunflowers.

MAKE YOUR FLOWERS WORK OVERTIME One of the simplest ways to save can also be one of the loveliest. Let potted flowering plants act as both living centrepieces and favours that guests can tote home. Clever!

SCORE A SAMPLE GOWN Sign up for bridal boutique's mailing lists and keep an eye on social media to see when sample sales are happening. Shop a size too big and have it custom altered to fit.

EAT FAMILY-STYLE BBQs, buffets and round table feasts add ambience and act as an icebreaker. How about a rustic Italian feast of gourmet pastas, pizzas and antipasti? Or a vintage tea party? Think 'festive ambience' instead of 'Sunday roast'.