

Budget-Friendly Tips for Holiday Weddings



By Cara Davis

The countdown to the holidays has begun. With it comes the only time of year that's simultaneously joyous and stressful. For some, this season will bring with it the event of a lifetime: a wedding. Those planning holiday winter weddings have several opportunities to save money and lessen the stress burden for themselves and their guests.

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1. Deck the Halls.

Most event locations will have already decked the halls for the holidays, allowing you to piggyback their efforts for a

low-cost wedding. Go with Christmas hues of gold, red and green – or go for a silvery winter blitz. Strings of white Christmas lights will transform any room into a holiday paradise.

2. Silver Bells.

Create budget large-scale ornaments as decorations using Styrofoam balls spray-painted and covered in glitter. Or create groupings of bare branches spray-painted white and covered in silver glitter. Paper ornaments, like these ornament greeting cards, make great wedding invitations or wedding favors.

3. Seasons Eatings.

Comfort food is a popular winter wedding choice (think soups, pasta, pot pies and mac-n-cheese). Don't shy away from cost-cutting measures like serving family-style or buffet. Consider a hot chocolate, cider, eggnog or coffee bar to which your guests can immediately help themselves (plus, you'll save hundreds by skipping the alcohol).

4. Marshmallow World.

Gingerbread houses make quaint table centerpieces, as do natural greenery and berries. Cocoa mixes or cookie cutters also make inexpensive wedding favors.

5. Peace on Earth and Online.

Couples are increasingly using online wedding planning tools, like creating or sending save-the-date and invitations online (40-percent increase over the last two years), personal websites and online RSVP services (23-percent and 31-percent increases respectively) and using social media to communicate wedding details (78-percent increase), according to TheKnot.com. Brides and grooms also have the option of registering online for gift cards at sites

like CardAvenue.com, which is a great option for guests already overwhelmed with holiday shopping lists.

6. Jingle Bell Rock.

If you chose to have your wedding around the holidays, it's likely a favorite time of year for you. As such, incorporating favorite holiday tunes into your wedding reception is a must, and a fantastic way to get your guests into the holiday spirit. Pandora is an excellent, economical method to pipe in some yuletide carols at the appropriate time during your reception.

When all is said and done, you'll begin your first happy new year together, and that's something to celebrate indeed.

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