

Halloween Weddings: Fab or Frightening?



By GalTime Lead Ambassador, Yakima/Tri-Cities, Jenny Tiegs, for GalTime.com

A bridal party dressed as fairies and pirates? Freshly carved pumpkin centerpieces? Frankenstein groom and a equally frightening bride? A hand-tied bouquet crawling with rhinestone spiders? Halloween weddings are a real thing, and it might be the theme of your upcoming nuptials.

We checked in with a Nadia Digilov, author of best-selling wedding book, *Getting Married in New York*, to find out how to plan an All Hallow's Eve affair that's more treat than trick.

"A wedding is a celebration of a marriage between a couple and

therefore should not be confused with a tacky Halloween party,” Digilov said. Instead, Digilov encourages the couple to infuse the holiday spirit with subtle touches that can add the aura of mystery and romance to the wedding day.

“Anytime I tell people I had a Halloween wedding, they always kind of laugh,” explains newlywed of two years and teacher Meghan Robison.

So why would she or anyone else set a wedding date of October 31?

“Halloween has long been a favorite in my family,” explains teacher and Halloween newlywed Meghan Robison. “We decorate our houses for Halloween the way most people would decorate for Christmas. We both have Halloween trees – mine was actually a wedding gift from my parents. Halloween is non-stressful, involves no gift-giving or expectations, and it lets creativity and magical imagination run wild!”

To keep it all organized (and not kitschy), Robison organized her ideas on inspiration boards (remember how we did this pre-Pinterest?) and kept on track with a binder so she or a vendor weren’t tempted to get too crazy.

This is the trick with a Halloween wedding: Celebrating the holiday and the marriage without crossing the line into tacky territory. Of course, you’ll want a bit of “wow” – that’s what Halloween is all about. Digilov suggests doing this while still keeping the event elegant.

Here’s what our wedding expert Digilov and holiday-enthusiast Robison advise to making the event gorgeous, not ghastly.

Too freaky: Anything plastic! Say no to the fake Halloween pumpkins, skeleton heads, jewelry and fangs, Digilov says. Also, no masks or hiring actors to wear monster costumes and scare your guests as they make their way to the bathroom. No one wants to be responsible for sending Aunt Barbara to the

hospital after a big fright. Also be mindful of children who might be attending as the line between imaginary and real is hard to decipher for a young child (and even some adults after a few cocktails).

Fabulous: Robison set the stage with vendors and friends by referring to the event as “masquerade” theme and being clear there would be no “blood, guts or gore” (full disclosure: her bridal party did don masks and her parents did don Dracula teeth as the bride and groom left the ceremony). These details made the day, she says, without going full-throttle Halloween.

Use textures, colors and lighting to enhance your wedding. When picking fabrics, think luxurious like velvet and silk. When accenting with colors, use rich and deep tones like reds, purples, golds, and bronze. Lighting is also very important and can be used to create a mysterious ambiance. Dimmed lighting is perfect when using candelabras, fireplaces and antique looking lanterns. Digilov reminds brides and grooms that you want your guests to be intrigued and looking forward to the mystery of what is going to happen next, not looking over their shoulder with fear and anxiety.

Start planning: If your wedding is next year, don't rush to buy up everything Halloween at the craft store now. Since you'll be skipping plastic skulls, there's no need to panic about the season passing while you plan. Elegant ways to infuse Halloween, as Digilov suggests below, are available year-round.

Here are some ideas to infuse Halloween into your wedding day:

Mysterious Venue. Let the venue dictate the ambiance. Do you live in an area with historical building or a place that is rumored to be haunted? These physical structures lend themselves to immediately giving your wedding that spooky feel.

Mood Lighting. The lighting should be dim. Sources for

lighting should include candles, either placed in candelabras, in the fire place or safely on the table. If your venue has a working fireplace, building a real fire is also a perfect way to create ambiance and light, not to mention some heat on a cold, fall night. Keep your eye open for antique looking lanterns to use with candles as well. Robison's loved ones danced in a hauntingly dim hall lit by moons, stars and tiny votives that dangled from the chandelier.

Sumptuous Colors. Veer away from bright orange and black paired together. Consider golds, dark purples, black and rich chocolate to convey the feeling of the season, not just pumpkins. While the flower girls in Robison's ceremony donned bright orange dresses and fairy wings, the adults were swathed in black and eggplant, with rhinestone pins to class up the creep-factor.

Signature Cocktail. Pour your theme into bright orange, spicy cocktails crawling with sugar-spider garnish and served next to bowls of eyeball candy. The bar can be a little more outrageous than other areas where guests dine, dance and watch the couple take their vows. Robison chose smoking green and purple beverages and treated guests to a late-night candy bar with spiced pumpkin cakes and cinnamon donuts.

Surprising Guests. Instead of providing guests with a program outlining what is happening next and in what order, Digilov says to find a way to reveal what is next to your guests shortly before it happens. By doing this, you are keeping your guests in anticipation mode. For an example, instead of advising everyone of a Halloween theme wedding when sending out the invites, surprise the guests as soon as they arrive by having staff at the entrance hand out small lanterns to each guest/couple to carry in order to "lead the way" into the ceremony room. As guests wait for the wedding to start, provide them with a short piece of paper on their chair that explains that they just walked through a haunted hallway or provide them with a scary story about the venue to get them in

the mood. After the ceremony and upon arrival at the reception, have entrance staff provide guests with masquerade masks, instead of encouraging your guests to wear costumes. When the guest walk in, they will see lighting and decorations that hint at Halloween, but won't feel the need to use a tablecloth as a ghost costume.

"I know people were skeptical about the theme from the beginning," Robison admits. "I think they were...blown away by how off-base they were. It was like a magical fairytale dreamland! People still tell me how much fun it was and how much they would love to do it all over again! I would do it over again in a heartbeat."

I having glittery pumpkins rather than bouquets of roses makes your heart skip a beat, then do what makes you happy, Digilov says. It's always important to represent yourselves as a couple at your wedding, but also wise to make sure you're not cringeing at your wedding photo five or ten years down the road.

A beautiful fall background with hints of orange, black and gold is stunning and timeless. A plastic skeleton hanging from the rafters and you with spider webs and fake blood standing next to a ghost groom? Not so much.