

# Look at these 11 zany wedding traditions from around the world

1. **Germany: Baumstamm sägen (sawing the log)**  
After the ceremony, the bride and groom have to use a two-person crosscut handsaw to cut a large log in half — while still in their bridal clothes. This symbolizes the ways in which they must work together in the future (although, to make it a bit quicker, the log has sometimes already been partially sawed through by the fathers of the bride and groom).
2. **The southern USA: Burying the bourbon**  
In some parts of the South, the bride and groom bury a (full!) bottle of bourbon upside-down at or near the site where they'll say their vows. This must be done one month before the wedding in order to ward off rain on the wedding day and, whether the weather plays along or not, the bourbon will be dug up, shared and enjoyed during the reception.
3. **Canada: Silly sock dance**  
In Quebec and other French-speaking parts of Canada, the older, unmarried siblings of the bride and groom perform a dance at the reception while wearing ridiculous, brightly-colored, knitted socks. Guests can show their approval of the dancing display by tossing money at the siblings, which is then (generously) donated to the bride and groom.
4. **Guatemala: Breaking the bell**  
After the wedding, everyone typically goes to the groom's house. Hanging over the doorway is a white ceramic bell filled with rice, flour and other different types of grain — all of which represent abundance. As the couple arrives, the mother of the groom welcomes them and ceremonially smashes the bell, bringing the couple good luck and prosperity.
5. **Scotland: The blackening of the bride**

- A few days before the wedding, there is the “Blackening of the Bride,” where the bride (and sometimes the groom) are “captured” by friends and family, covered in filthy things like beer, treacle, spoiled fish, feathers and flour, then paraded through the streets for all to see. The plan is that, if they can get through this trial, marital strife will be a breeze.
6. **France: Le Pot de Chambre (yes, the chamber pot!)**  
As the wedding reception draws to a close, French newlyweds are presented with a real chamber pot, filled with the leftover bits of alcohol from the wedding (and sometimes extra delights like melted chocolate, banana or even toilet paper.) The couple must consume it all before leaving, so as to build up strength before the, er, taxing wedding night ahead.
7. **India: Joota chupai (hiding the shoes)**  
When the groom takes off his shoes on the way to the mandap (altar), the bride's family promptly try to steal them and hide them. The groom's family must try and protect the shoes at all costs — and so the battle of the families begins! If the bride's family gets away with the shoes, the groom must pay to ransom them back.
8. **Spain: Cortar la corbata del novio (cut the groom's tie)**  
After the wedding, usually during the reception, the groom will be surrounded by his groomsmen and closest friends, who will cut the tie from around his neck. The tie will then be cut into small pieces and auctioned off to the wedding guests, bringing good luck to everyone who manages to get a piece.
9. **Czech Republic: soup from a single spoon**  
The first course of a Czech wedding meal is soup. The

- bride and groom are wrapped together in a towel or sheet and then must eat their soup from one bowl, with one spoon between them — sometimes with their hands tied together, too. This symbolizes the way in which they will have to work together in the future.
10. **Mexico: El Lazo (the lasso)**  
After a Mexican couple has pledged their vows, their family and best friends “lasso” them together with a special rope. This rope can often be very elaborate, made of crystals or beads and is tied in a figure-eight shape to symbolize the couple's lasting unity. This has some similarities to a Celtic hand-fasting (thought to be the origin of the phrase “tie the knot!”)
11. **Russia: Vykup nevesty (buying out the bride)**  
When a Russian groom comes to pick up his bride, the bridesmaids will meet him at the door with a list of challenges he must pass before he can proceed. He might have to sing songs, recite poems — or pay a ransom. Often, his first ransom offer will buy him an alternate bride (usually a male friend in a dress and veil) before he offers more and finally gets his love.

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## ‘I do,’ take two: Guide to a second marriage

Couples are returning to the altar in increasing numbers, as second and third weddings are becoming ever more popular. Pew Research Center indicates that, as of 2014, 64 percent of divorced or widowed men have remarried, compared with 52 percent of previously married women. Lavish second weddings were once uncommon, but that trend is also shifting. Couples who are taking another crack at marriage are tying the knot with renewed vigor and with weddings that may rival some first-timers'. Men and women who are remarrying after divorce or being widowed may not know how to approach planning their upcoming nuptials. The following are some guidelines to making the wedding sequel a success.

**Wardrobe**

Couples who have been married before often find that they have more leeway with regard to their wedding wardrobes than they did when tying the knot for the first time. Brides may choose something less traditional than a long, white dress. In fact, this can be a time to let loose and select something that is festive or even funky. This also may provide a great opportunity to choose clothing styles from different cultures or ties into one's heritage. This freedom also allows brides to broaden their horizons with regard to where to buy their wedding wardrobes. Grooms may opt for something more casual than a tuxedo or coordinate with their brides-to-be so they are on the same creative page. Colored tuxedos and vintage suits are acceptable, even though such attire might have raised a few eyebrows the first time

around. **Guest list** The guest list doesn't have to be a source of anxiety. Others will understand that there may be a melange of people at a second wedding. Children from previous marriages as well as divorced spouses or former parents-in-law are not out of the question. Even if exes will not be included, make sure they know about the nuptials in advance of others. It's common courtesy, and it can help head off feelings of ill-will. Some couples choosing to tie the knot again scale back the size of the wedding this time around, feeling something smaller and more intimate — with only the closest of friends and family — is more suitable. **Registries and wedding gifts** Considering couples who have been married previously likely have many of

the housewares and items for daily living that first-timers may not, registering for these gifts is not necessary. What's more, some of the same guests may have been present at first marriages and gifted then. In lieu of gifts, couples may ask guests to donate to a specific charity or forgo gifts altogether. **Vows** Couples can use experience to draft vows that have personal meaning to their unique situations and make the wedding ceremony even more special. People getting married again can impart their own personalities into the ceremony and party to follow. There are no hard rules governing second weddings, so couples can plan their weddings with good times in mind.

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## In case you have to trim the wedding list ...

Weddings are a time to celebrate, and many couples hope to invite as many people as possible to share their excitement. A 2014 study by researchers at the University of Denver found that couples who invite at least 150 guests to the wedding may have happier marriages. The study examined 418 people who were single at the beginning of the study and married five years later. It found that 47 percent of those people who had gotten married in front of at least 150 guests had “high-quality marriages,” while those with 50 or fewer guests fell short. While guests make weddings more enjoyable, and may increase the propensity to enjoy a more successful marriage, couples must be practical and consider their wedding budgets when creating their guest lists. The average American wedding includes 120 guests, according to a 2015 Newlywed Survey released by WeddingWire. Couples who are finding it difficult to create and pare down their guest lists can employ the following tips.

- Create initial lists.

When jotting down potential guests' names, write down everyone you want to invite, regardless of budget. Then list the must-have guests for the wedding. This should include the family and friends with whom you interact on a regular basis. Create a separate column for guests who don't make the must-have list.

- Separate friends from friends' friends. If you don't see people outside of events set up by mutual friends, you should not feel obligated to invite those people to the wedding. They are more likely friends of your friends and not your close friends.
- Know the guest list ceiling. Catering halls or reception rooms often can only accommodate a certain number of people. Know this number before making a final list. The limits of the space may serve as the catalyst for trimming the guest list.
- Consider coworkers carefully. Think about whether you'd still be friends with your coworkers if the company dissolved tomorrow. If not, you should not feel obli-

gated to invite them.

- Have we met? If you don't remember interacting with a person (your parent's long lost friend from high school) or the person has never met your significant other, then they probably can be cut. If parents insist on inviting someone you barely remember, they should help defray the costs.
- Cut out the kids. Even though children's dinner costs may be lower than adults', inviting children can significantly increase the guest list. A no-child policy at the reception can save money.
- Avoid uncomfortable situations. Unless you have remained particularly close, keep former boyfriends and girlfriends off of the guest list.
- Ask for an unbiased opinion. Give the editing pen to someone else if you cannot make a decision. This person may help weed out extraneous guests.

Paring down a wedding guest list can be a difficult process, but couples should work together and respect each other's concerns when creating their final list.

Super sighs



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