

# Music mistakes to avoid

Wedding guests are usually anxious to head to the reception, where they can let loose and party. Music is an essential component of a lively and fun wedding reception, and there are some musical miscues couples should look to avoid to ensure the music is not memorable for all the wrong reasons.

- **Blocks of silence:** Nothing makes time seem interminable more than silence. Always have a constant flow of music to avoid awkward silences. This includes the time guests are waiting prior to the ceremony as well as when they're entering the cocktail hour. Music will help everyone feel comfortable, and it creates a pleasing atmosphere, so make sure music plays throughout the festivities.

- **Second-guessing a professional:** In an effort to curb costs, some couples provide their own playlists via an mp3 player or a streaming service for the music. This is often a mistake. Hiring a professional means you will not have to worry about managing music on top of your many other wedding day responsibilities. A band or deejay usually also serves as the emcee for the event, announcing key moments of the reception as well as getting guests up on the dance floor.

- **Playing only one type of music:** Playing too many songs from one genre of music will alienate some of the guests who simply are not interested in that type of music. Professional deejays or performers know how to offer a great mix that will appeal to the masses, and they are often well worth the cost. Try to span different decades and genres to keep as many of your guests on the dance floor as possible.

- **Failure to make a song list:** Some songs you may feel are essential to the wedding and others may be on a do-not-play list and are associated with negative memories. Band leaders and deejays are not mind readers. Give your band leader or deejay ample time to review your requests so that he or she has time to find a song that may not be in his or her collection.

- **Dancing to long songs:** Pay attention to a song's length, and choose spotlight dance songs wisely. Remember that guests will be watching you dance with parents or each other, and a five-minute song can seem neverending while others are waiting around. Avoid very long songs, as the mix of music should be upbeat. The wedding isn't the time to play "American Pie" by Don McClean,



Steering clear of wedding music mistakes means couples have a greater likelihood of throwing spectacular parties.

Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" or Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Free Bird."

- **Inappropriate lyrics and volume:** Keep the music at an acceptable volume, and avoid songs with suggestive language or curse words

that are inappropriate in a family setting.

Music is a key element of any good party, including a wedding reception, and it's essential that couples take steps to avoid any musical miscues.

# Making use of wedding leftovers

In an effort to create a once-in-a-lifetime event that is remembered by all in attendance, many couples will admit to going a tad overboard with their weddings. From ultra-stretch limousines to bachelor/bachelorette parties in Las Vegas to course after course of food and beverages, some weddings are a lesson in excess. When the party has winded down, conscious couples can ensure that some of the excesses of the

wedding get repurposed for good use. And that begins with the food.

Many wedding caterers, in an effort to ensure no guest goes without their fair share of food, grossly overestimate the amount of food needed for the reception. That means there may be plenty of appetizers and main courses leftover, all of which couples have paid for. There are a number of ways that food can be saved and given to others.

### \* **Create classy take-home packages.**

People have become much less averse to taking home food they cannot finish from restaurants. As portion sizes continue to grow, taking a portion home to enjoy later is both cost-conscious and a healthy idea. While a wedding may be a formal event, it shouldn't preclude guests from feeling comfortable taking home any uneaten food, particularly if they like the food. Provide the reception center with decorative to-go boxes or containers that can be used to package any food guests want to take home with them. Small, handled paper or fabric tote bags will make the leftovers that much more portable.

- \* **Donate leftover food.** Neighborhood food banks may be willing to accept food donations from your wedding. Although many deal with only nonperishable foods, some will pick up both. Before the wedding you can inquire within certain organizations to find out which specialize in what area of food collection. Feeding America ([feedingamerica.org](http://feedingamerica.org)) has an extensive list of food banks and food-rescue programs available online. Some organizations can pick up food and deliver it within the same day to a soup kitchen. If you cannot find an organization to help, you may actually be able to donate your food to livestock. Some farms and recreational farmers will feed pigs leftover food. This is a way to ensure food will not go to waste.

- \* **Help reduce waste.** You can speak with your wedding caterer about cutting down on the amount of food without making it overtly noticeable to guests. First, consider a sit-down dinner where portions are carefully measured rather than buffet where amounts are estimated. Also, removing extra courses such as dessert or breakfast bars can further keep down the amount of extra food as well as the cost.

- \* **Take it home.** If you will not be traveling to your honeymoon directly after the wedding reception, you can have the catering staff package the food and you can bring it home. Keep your freezer empty and put the food inside. When you return from your honeymoon you will have plenty of dinners already premade so you can enjoy life as newlyweds. Otherwise, you can invite friends over to view honeymoon photos and serve the food as refreshments.

- \* **Recycle flowers.** Food may not be the only item leftover at the end of the night. Guests who may not have taken home favors or centerpieces will leave behind many beautiful items that would normally end up in the trash. Flowers and gifts can be donated to a hospital or senior center to brighten the atmosphere. Be sure to keep just a few favors available for people who send gifts in the mail since they weren't able to attend the festivities.

There are a number of ways to ensure that the excesses of a wedding can be put to good use. By donating food and other items or simply taking them home with you, you can stretch your money and resources further.



Leftover food from the reception can be taken home, given away or donated to the needy.