

Hot trends in wedding cuisine

Once a couple has officially tied the knot, the newly recognized man and wife and all of their guests will retire to a party room where they can mingle, dance and enjoy a good meal.

In the past, standard fare like prime rib and roasted chicken dominated wedding menus. But today's weddings cater to people of various culinary tastes, and couples and their guests can expect more upscale and creative cuisine to be rolled out for wedding receptions. The following are a handful of the more popular trends with regard to wedding cuisine.

Miniature bites

Many people say good things come in small packages, and when it comes to miniature versions of favorite foods, they may be right. Instead of large meals that fill guests up fast, they can munch on smaller bites of their favorite dishes. How about a piece of meatloaf topped with whipped mashed potatoes? A cherry tomato with a small piece of mozzarella cheese makes a mini caprese salad. Turning favorite foods into bite-sized adventures can add a touch of whimsy to the reception.

Breakfast for dinner

Some couples are circumventing high price tags for their weddings by choosing to hold the festivities at less expensive times of day. Brunch-themed weddings are a big hit with those who would much rather dine on a stack of pancakes than a dish of pasta. Omelet stations, croissants and a bevy of other breakfast table fare can be enjoyed any time of the day.

Dim sum

Dim sum allows guests to sample different

foods without filling up. Carts of dumplings and other small plates of appetizers can be wheeled around so everyone can choose what they want and what they want to avoid.

Gourmet comfort food

People love familiar comfort foods, but now gourmet comfort foods are shaking up wedding receptions. Mac-and-cheese with gouda and brie or chicken pot pie with a puff-pastry crust are a few offerings that can add glamour to down-home cooking.

Food with a show

Instead of passed foods or buffet stations, couples are opting to make food an experience for guests. An oyster bar with a chef serving fresh seafood or a dessert master whipping up flambé is a feast for the eyes and mouth.

Interesting buffet stations

Keep guests on their toes with various meal stations. A bountiful display of artisanal cheeses, fruits and breads will be a cheese lover's dream. These stations also can be appetizing focal points around the room and ensure all guests get a bite of what they like best.

Family style

Rustic and informal weddings have grown in popularity. Rather than food being brought to the guests or participants lining up in buffet lines, family-style dining allows guests to share conversation and pass the peas at the same time. Larger, rectangular tables allow more guests to sit with one another and serve themselves food from community plates located in the center of the tables.

Food and beverage pairings

Food-forward wedding couples are of-



fering guests mouthwatering appetizers matched with a cocktail. A slider and a craft beer or a dumpling and a shot of saki are examples of this trend.

Nontraditional 'fake' cakes

Instead of a multi-tiered cake or the cupcake fad that is starting to fizzle, couples are now opting for something new. Desserts that mimic the look of cake, but aren't quite that combination of sponge and frosting are trending. Crepes, pies, cookies, and doughnuts are acceptable and can add a creative spark to the cake-cutting ceremony. When offered along with dessert

stations, guests can certainly get their fill of sweet delights.

Vegan and gluten-free options

Chances are one or more people attending the reception will be on a restricted diet. Rather than relegate these guests to dining on side dishes and patchwork meals, certain couples are building entire offerings around vegan and gluten-free foods.

Couples are getting creative with their food and beverage offerings at their weddings. Guests never know which culinary wonders they will encounter as they gather to wish the newlyweds well.

~~~~~ Wedding dress fitting guide ~~~~~

Because fashion preferences were once ornate and dependent on precise fits, ready-to-wear clothing really did not become widely available until the early 20th century. Such attire is now available in just about any retail store.

Because ready-to-wear clothing is so readily available, the average person may be unfamiliar with custom-made or tailored items. In fact, a couples' wedding may be the only instance in their lives when they require the services of a seamstress or tailor.

Fittings are a part of wedding planning, and here's how brides-to-be can navigate the process of finding and being fitted for a dress.

- Try on sample gowns. The first step is to make your rounds to various gown shops and try on the samples they have available. Most sample sizes will not be the size you wear every day,

so expect them to be ill-fitting. Do not be discouraged. Once a gown is chosen, the dress shop will take your measurements and order the gown according to the manufacturer's sizing guide. Again, this can be shocking, since the size will likely be larger than what you wear in street clothes. Some shops will also order a little larger to allow for adequate tailoring.

- Schedule the first fitting. The first fitting should be anywhere from eight to 12 weeks before the wedding date, according to experts at WeddingWire, an online wedding information provider. This is the time it takes to complete most standard alterations. Complex customizations can take even longer. Brides should also budget a minimum of \$500 for alterations, which may or may not be included in the price of the dress.

- Bring shoes and undergarments. Remember to bring along the exact shoes and undergarments you will wear with your

gown. A change in shoes or bra/corset can result in the alterations fitting poorly the next time. Bring these items along to all subsequent fittings.

- Speak up. Martha Stewart Weddings suggests speaking up at fittings if anything is uncomfortable or needs tweaking. Seamstresses are masters at their crafts, but only if they understand the desires of the bride.

- Check the details. The second fitting is designed to check that all issues from the first fitting have been addressed, the gown is comfortable and you can move freely. At the last fitting, ask the maid of honor to come along so that she understands how to bustle or help you handle complicated straps or closures.

Open communication with a seamstress and bridal shop can ensure brides-to-be get a dress that fits like a glove.