

How to pick the perfect wedding dress

Planning a wedding requires making many different decisions. The choice of wedding attire is among the most crucial decisions that couples must make. Whether the wedding is traditional or customized to suit couples' personalities, brides and grooms want to look their best when they say, "I do."

Many brides-to-be spend a significant amount of time looking for their ideal wedding dresses. What defines the right gown depends on personal preference and is unique to the person doing the search. For example, a dress that sets a fairy tale scene for one bride may not necessarily align with the tastes of another. According to Bridal Atelier, the average bride-to-be tries on try three to seven dresses before finding the right one. The following tips can help those shopping for dresses find a look that makes their big day even more special.

1. Don't get hung up on perfection

Many brides get caught up as they search for the one dress they consider perfect. No dress is likely to check every box. Getting hung up on a desire to find a dress that has it all may make it hard to see the beauty in other dresses. Remember, with the talents of an experienced tailor or seamstress, most dresses can be tweaked to suit your vision of the ideal gown.

2. Consider the season
Getting married during the hazy and humid days



'YES' TO THE DRESS — Brides-to-be will want to consider many different factors — from their figure to the time of year they're getting married — before deciding to say "yes" to the dress.

of summer is an entirely different experience than tying the knot during the heart of winter. The fabric of the wedding dress should complement the season, whether it's lightweight and breezy for a warm day, or more substantial and cozy when darting to the ceremony in snowfall.

3. Flatter your figure
Chances are brides-to-be know which cuts and styles are most flattering. Mimic those style choices in the wedding dress. If you want to take focus off of full hips, choose a basque or asymmetrical waistline. Gowns with substantial straps or higher necklines

may be better if you have a larger chest. Sheath and mermaid style gowns are options if you are confident with your figure and want to show off your curves.

4. Try a bit of this and that

Don't go into a wedding dress appointment with firm parameters. Although you may have a ball gown style in mind, after trying on other options something with a less voluminous silhouette may actually catch your eye. Many brides also automatically defer to strapless gowns, when various straps and sleeves can be very appealing.

5. Arrive with a firm

budget

Weddings can be costly. It's important to set a budget for the wedding dress just as you will with other expenses. There are plenty of dress designers across a wide spectrum of price points. A willingness to consider and ultimately purchase a less costly dress can help you stay on budget.

Browsing through magazines and looking online can provide wedding dress inspiration as well. Also, when in doubt, defer to the experts at bridal shops who have experience choosing dresses that brides are inclined to love.



WEDDING HAIR — Certain hairstyles have exhibited some serious staying power and can look timeless in photos and videos for years to come.

Popular wedding hairstyles

Much goes into being photo-ready on your wedding day. After months of planning, the wedding day is the couple's time to really shine, and many go to extraordinary lengths to look their best. Gowns and tuxes may garner their fair share of attention, but hairstyles also can help couples look their best.

Couples can wear their hair how they see fit, but certain hairstyles have exhibited some serious staying power and can look timeless in photos and videos for years to come.

- **Classic low bun or chignon:** This is one hairstyle that certainly has withstood the test of time. A bun can be as sleek as a bride desires, or tendrils can be pulled out to frame the face, and the bun can be anything from minimal to messy. Pulling hair back may be more comfortable on warm days and there's no frizz to worry about if Mother Nature fails to cooperate.
 - **Vintage curls:** Brides whose dresses harken back to a bygone era may want to complement that style with a hairdo that also speaks to that moment in time. For example, the intricate pin curls of the 1920s likely will tie into a gown with an empire waist.
 - **Fancy ponytail:** Like a bun, a ponytail can pull hair away from the face for comfort and style. It's a bit less formal than a bun and can be styled in many different fashions, even incorporating braids.
 - **Side-swept waves:** Evoke movie-star drama with a hairstyle that features hair pulled to one side and cascading waves down the length of the face.
 - **Loose waterfall braids:** Carefree boho looks run the gamut of styles. One to consider is loosely plaited waterfall braids that add whimsy. Additional braided options also work well for less formal weddings.
 - **Half-up, half-down:** This hairstyle offers the best of both worlds. It enables the hair to be pulled back on top, and then the bottom is left loose, whether straight or in curls or waves.
 - **Ballerina top knot:** This is a take on the bun. But rather than pinned at the nape, it is high on the crown of the head.
 - **Short bob or pixie with accents:** Shorter hair also can look stunning. A bob or pixie cut can be enhanced with sparkling barrettes or woven-in flowers.
 - **Halo braid:** This braid is fashioned so that it goes over the top of the head and mimics the look of a crown or halo. It may negate the need for a tiara.
- Men also have plenty of options to get their hair wedding day-ready. Classic shorter cuts feature close-cut sides and more length on top, which can be spiked, tousled or even slicked back depending on personal preference. However, any length hair is in fashion, and grooms can don buns, ponytails, natural texture and much more.

Tips for choosing a wedding makeup artist

A wedding gives couples a chance to shine and celebrate their love for one another. Naturally, all eyes are on the happy couple on their wedding day, and that means brides and grooms want to look their best. For those planning to wear makeup, relying on a skilled makeup artist can make a big difference in how couples look in videos and photographs.

Professional makeup artists will be acquainted with techniques that can enhance individuals' looks on their wedding day. Makeup artists recognize which products to use to ensure a flawless face lasts all day. This person also can take the pressure off the bride having to do makeup herself, meaning the bride can sit back and relax for a half hour or more and enjoy being pampered. Techniques like lash applications, contouring and highlighting require skill, and skilled makeup professionals are well-trained in these areas.

When shopping around for makeup artists, couples with limited knowledge of what to expect can look for certain factors to help them make the most informed decision.

Professional products

There may be a stark difference between cosmetics and beauty products purchased at the drug store and the professional-grade items used by makeup artists.

Professional products have been engineered for specific applications. They tend to be long-wearing and luxurious.



BEST FACE FORWARD — When shopping around for makeup artists, couples with limited knowledge of what to expect can look for certain factors to help them make the most informed decision.

Look for a makeup artist who uses top-notch brands.

Trial application

A bride's vision and the makeup artist's vision may not be one and the same.

Only after a trial application can you determine if the makeup artist is able to deliver the look you desire. It's important for a bride-to-be to go to the trial appointment with an open mind and reserve judgment until the application is complete. A professional can make suggestions on a color palette and products that will complement skin tone and needs.

Masters 'striking' but 'natural'

Many brides desire natural looks on their wedding days, but fail to understand that this is one of the most

photographed moments in their lives. High-definition cameras and lighting can affect how makeup appears in film and in photographs, as well as what a complexion and pores will look like.

Taking photos during the trial appointment will help you see what you will look like in pictures, which may be different from how makeup appears when looking in the mirror. Chances are a bride will need to be much more made up than she thinks when asking for natural. A qualified artist can strike a balance between natural and photo-ready.

Touch-ups

Some makeup artists are willing to be available for a short time before the start

of the reception. This gives them the opportunity to touch-up makeup if needed after the ceremony when most of the posed photos are taken. Also, adjustments can be made at this time if a bride wants a "nighttime" look.

A makeup artist can help couples look their best during their weddings, making them a worthy investment of time and money.

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