

# For The Wedding Ethnic Traditions

As people migrated to America, they brought their traditional customs with them. Since America is the true melting pot of the world, "next generations" tended to not only follow the old traditions, but seemed to expand them to include other ethnic ideas.

## african american

- ✿ Many African American brides have chosen to blend cultures. However, some are still choosing to wear traditional African clothing.
  - ✿ Although white is still being used in bridal bouquets, bouquets of jeweled tone flowers that complement the brighter colors are also being used. These include antheriums and birds of paradise.
  - ✿ Strips of kente cloth, raffia, lotus pods, and African beads are also used in the decorations.
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## chinese

- ✿ Chinese American couples are usually married in a Christian wedding ceremony.
- ✿ The bride loves a very full look to their flowers and often prefer pink orchids. They also like cherry and apple blossoms because they symbolize new life.
- ✿ Chinese weddings use red, pink, and lavender flowers and ribbons. White ribbons and flowers are never used because they signify death. Red is considered good luck at a Chinese wedding; therefore, it is a prominent color when choosing flowers or decorating.
- ✿ Numbers are also an important consideration. Groups of nine and six are used because they sound like the words for prosperity and wealth in Chinese. Two is also used because it means double happiness.
- ✿ Nothing is put in groups of three or four because the word three sounds like death in Chinese.
- ✿ Traditional Chinese weddings hold a tea ceremony after the wedding and before the reception to pay respect to the older generation. The bride will change into a kwah (red jacket and skirt decorated with a phoenix and dragon). She will then serve tea to the mother of the groom. At the ceremony, the bride will receive the heirloom jewelry.
- ✿ The bride changes back into her wedding gown after the tea ceremony.

- ✿ At the reception, the newlyweds go from table to table toasting the guest. The guest will then give to the bride and groom a red envelope containing money.
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## english

- ✿ Couples in the countryside walk with their wedding party to the church along a path covered with orange blossoms.
  - ✿ The bride will carry on her arm a horseshoe decorated with ribbons for good luck.
  - ✿ Weddings are usually held at noon with a "wedding breakfast" (luncheon) after the ceremony.
  - ✿ The bridal party consists of *young* girls and no groomsmen.
  - ✿ The wedding cake is a fruitcake topped with marzipan. The top tier is called a "christening cake" and is served at the birth of their first child.
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## filipino

- ✿ It is customary to pin money to the bride and groom during the money dance. Often there is a competition between the family and friends of the bride and those of the groom.
  - ✿ A bell made of flowers and ribbons holds two doves and is placed high above the guests' heads on one side of the reception. At the end of the reception, the couple pulls on the ribbons releasing the doves as symbols of everlasting love.
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## french

- ✿ The bride keeps her trousseau in a hand-carved wedding hope chest. It is carved with symbols of wealth and prosperity.
  - ✿ During the ceremony, the couple drink from the wedding cup, the "coupe de mariage."
  - ✿ As the couple departs from the church, they walk on laurel leaves that have been strewn across the pathway.
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## german

- ✿ On the wedding eve, a party called the Polterabend takes place. The couple is teased and dishes are broken.
  - ✿ A carriage drawn by black horses carries the bride or couple to and from the church.
  - ✿ Red ribbons and garlands are placed across the exit and the groom must pay a ransom or promise a party to exit. This is called Rapping the Couple.
  - ✿ Traditional foods of spiced wine, beer, and marzipan are served at the reception.
  - ✿ The bride carries a bouquet of multicolored flowers.
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## hawaiian

- ✿ The bride wears a muumuu and lei of flowers around her shoulders instead of carrying a bouquet.
  - ✿ Grooms wear a lei of leaves.
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## hispanic

- ✿ White is the preferred color for the bridal bouquet because it represents purity and virginity.
  - ✿ Along with the flowers mentioned, most Hispanic weddings include an additional bouquet for the Virgin Mary.
  - ✿ A single long stem red rose is presented to each mother as a thank you.
  - ✿ The newlywed's car is decorated with flowers and ribbons.
  - ✿ The Wedding ceremony includes *Padrinos* (sponsors) who place a lasso around the bride and groom as they kneel at the altar as a way of symbolizing that they are tied together.
  - ✿ Three special candles are lighted during the ceremony, both mothers light two outer candles and the bride and groom together light the center or unity candle.
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## irish

- ✿ The wedding band is designed with two hands holding a heart beneath a crown. The hands on the ring are facing in to signify that the bride is married.
- ✿ The couple is showered with flower petals for good luck.

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## italian

- ✿ The bride carries a busta (wedding bag) to hold gifts of money.
  - ✿ Candy covered almonds are served at the reception to signify the bitter and sweet of marriage. As favors they are wrapped in threes to signify health, wealth, and happiness.
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## Japanese

- ✿ The Japanese American can either be married in a Christian, Buddhist, or Shinto wedding ceremony.
  - ✿ The Shinto ceremony is the most common. It is usually performed in a Shinto shrine and orchestrated by a Shinto priest. There are no fresh flowers, only a natural garden setting with plenty of greenery.
  - ✿ Japanese like the colors red and white in their floral pieces. Red stands for good luck and white means purity. Black is never used because it symbolizes funerals.
  - ✿ The reception is very important. Often the wedding couple is put on display.
  - ✿ Nothing is grouped in fours because it signifies death.
  - ✿ The wedding cake at many receptions is a floor to ceiling rubber cake with a small edible portion.
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## jewish

- ✿ The bride's bouquet is made from her favorite flowers which usually include stephanotis, gardenias, lilies, and roses. Season colors are often taken into consideration.
- ✿ Before the ceremony the Badeken ceremony takes place. In this ceremony, the groom places the veil over the bride's face.

- ✿ The bride and groom are married under a canopy called a chupah. This canopy structure represents the Jewish home. Although the chupah comes in a variety of sizes and are made of different materials, they all have openings on all four sides and must cover the heads of the bride and groom. The Rabbi, who conducts the ceremony, dictates on how the chupah can be decorated.
  - ✿ During the ceremony both parents, best man, maid of honor, bridesmaids, and the groomsmen join the bride and groom under the canopy.
  - ✿ The wedding band for the ceremony must not have jewels.
  - ✿ At the end of the ceremony, the bride and groom sip wine from the same goblet. This signifies they will share all of their life together. The goblet is then wrapped in material and placed on the floor. The groom then stomps on the glass, breaking it. At this time, everyone yells "Mazel Tov." (In some weddings, a light bulb is substituted for the glass because it is easier and safer to break.)
  - ✿ Jewish men wear a small skullcap called a Kipah or Yarmelke while in the sanctuary.
  - ✿ The Shabat is the Sabbath that begins on Friday night at sundown and ends on Saturday night at sundown. No wedding ceremony can be performed during the Sabbath.
  - ✿ At the reception, a blessing is said over the Chalah (braided egg bread) before the meal is served.
  - ✿ The bride and groom are carried up on chairs during this celebration.
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## latin american

- ✿ The flower girl and ring bearer are often dressed as a miniature versions of the bride and groom.
  - ✿ During the ceremony, a disk filled with coins is held by the father of the bride to signify the dowry.
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## native american - navajo

- ✿ The bride and groom wash their hands in a ceremony to wash away past evils and memories of the past loves.
  - ✿ Both the bride and groom wear silver concho belts, jewelry made from turquoise and silver to shield against hunger, fatigue, illness, bad fortune, etc.
  - ✿ The ceremony takes place facing the east, the direction of their future.
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## persian

- ✿ Persian weddings are either Jewish or Moslem.
  - ✿ These weddings feature large show arrangements.
  - ✿ The Moslem ceremony is simple and usually includes the immediate family.
  - ✿ Many Persian brides do not have a bridal party. A sister often accompanies them.
  - ✿ Corsages are not worn because the fabric of the Persian dress is very delicate.
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## russian

- ✿ Champagne glasses are thrown on the floor after the toasting. If the glasses break, the couple will have happiness in their marriage.
- ✿ If they want their first born to be a girl, they tie a doll onto the wedding car. If a boy is wanted as the first born, a bear is tied onto the car.

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