

Bridesmaids

ATTENDANTS BY YOUR SIDE



The task of selecting bridesmaids can be fun and exciting, however it can also be stressful and worrisome. Below are some things to keep in mind when selecting your bridesmaids:

- The number of bridesmaids and groomsmen in your bridal party greatly depends on the size and style of your wedding.
- You don't have to have an equal number of bridesmaids as groomsmen
- It is typically a nice gesture to invite at least one of the groom's sisters to be a bridesmaid, but it is not a breach of etiquette should you choose not to.
- Do not feel obligated to invite someone to be in your wedding just because you were in theirs
- Keep in mind that bridesmaids, especially the maid of honor, are there to assist you on your wedding day. When choosing bridesmaids make sure they are dependable and won't let you down on this important day.

BRIDESMAID FASHIONS

Selecting your bridesmaid attire can be difficult, especially with all of your bridesmaids weighing in with their opinion.

- The current trend in bridal party apparel is selecting one color for your bridesmaids, and allowing them to select from a variety of dress shapes. This ensures that each bridesmaid gets the best fit for her body type.
- Many bridal salons offer a range of dresses all in the same shade and fabric, but in different styles
- Also check local department stores for a wide selection of dresses
- It is customary for each bridesmaid to pay for her own dress, keep price in mind when selecting dresses. The average price for a bridesmaid gown ranges from \$150-225.
- If the shoes are to be dyed, have them all done together by the same specialist to ensure uniform color

ATTENDANTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Maid/Matron of Honor

- Assists bride with pre-wedding tasks
- Hosts a bridal shower with bridesmaids and attends all pre-wedding parties
- Helps address invitations
- Arranges a date for bridesmaids' fittings
- Pays for her own wedding attire and accessories (except for flowers)
- Attends to the bride throughout the day, running errands and tying up loose ends
- Helps the bride dress for the ceremony
- Arranges the bride's train and veil at the altar, and holds the bride's bouquet while she exchanges rings with the groom
- Holds the groom's ring
- Signs the marriage certificate as a witness
- May offer a toast to the bride and groom
- Helps the bride change clothes after the reception, and takes charge of her wedding gown
- May assist the best man with transporting gifts to the bride and groom's home

Bridesmaids

- Help organize and run the bridal shower
- Record gifts at the shower (usually only one bridesmaid)
- Assist maid of honor with pre-wedding shopping and tasks
- Pays for her own wedding attire and accessories (except for flowers)
- Help the bride dress for ceremony



BRIDAL SHOWERS

In the months leading up to the Wedding Day, it is customary for the maid of honor and bridesmaids to throw a bridal shower for the bride. Bridal showers are meant to help stock the bride and groom's home, as well as to be a time for the bride to relax and celebrate with her closest friends.



Q:

Who Throws the Shower?

Typically the bridesmaids and maid of honor throw a shower for the bride; however, anyone may throw a shower. Some etiquette guides frown upon a member of the bride's family hosting the bridal shower; however, this is changing. Often the groom's family or friends of the bride may throw a shower for the bride or for the couple.

Q:

When Do You Host a Shower?

A shower can be hosted any time during the engagement period, but the most common time is one to three months before the wedding. Any closer than one month to the wedding and the bride may be too overwhelmed by the upcoming wedding to take the time to enjoy herself.

Q:

Where Do You Host a Shower?

You can host a shower at a variety of places, from your home to a nice downtown restaurant. It is up to the mood of the shower, as well as the type of event the bride would prefer. Some great places to have showers are: tearooms, old homes, private room in a restaurant, a spa or a park. Be creative, there are so many unique places to host a party, just be sure to make it comfortable and fun!

Q:

Who Do You Invite?

The best thing to do is to ask the bride for a list of guests she would like at the party! That way you don't forget about someone, or you don't invite someone the bride didn't invite to the wedding. If the shower is going to be a surprise, try asking the bride's mother for suggestions. It is also important to invite the groom's mother and sisters. Typically, it is bad etiquette to invite anyone to the shower who isn't invited to the wedding; however there are some exceptions. If the bride is having a small wedding, and there are people who aren't invited to the wedding, but have expressed an interest in coming to a shower then it is acceptable to invite them.

SHOWER THEMES

Lingerie Shower: Have guests bring anything for the bedroom, this can range from bathrobes, to candles to lingerie! For favors for the guests have little sachets or mini-bubble baths!

Kitchen Shower: Guests bring gifts for the kitchen! Also have each guest bring their favorite recipe and start a recipe book for the bride!

Around the Clock: Assign each guest a time of the day, then have them bring a gift that can be used during that time. This can range from kitchen, to bedroom, to electronics!



Honeymoon Nights: Assign each guest a different theme for each night of the honeymoon. Guests then bring things to fit that theme! Example: Hawaiian Theme-bathing suit, leis & pina colada mix.

Couples Shower Themes

BBQ: Have a backyard grill out and have guests bring gifts relating to grilling out!

Tailgate Party: If the couple is a big fan of a certain football team have everyone bring tailgate items, ranging from tents, to chairs to a cooler!

Stock the Bar: Assign each guest a type of alcohol to bring to help stock the couples bar!

YOUR TINIEST PARTY MEMBERS

Flower Girls



How do you choose?

Your flower girl should probably be a young girl, usually under the age of 10. Oftentimes, brides choose family members such as sisters, nieces or cousins. You can even choose to honor a friend of the family or a daughter of a close friend. It can also be a great way to include the groom's family members in your wedding party. You can even choose to have two flower girls go down the aisle together. That way, they give each other moral support!

What is her role?

Your tiny party member walks out after the bridesmaids and before the bride scattering the aisle with flower petals along the way. You may want to prepare her before she makes her debut. There are some great books about being a flower girl which can be found in your local book stores. Let the parents know what their role will be during the ceremony. A good idea is to have the parents sit in the front row, so the little girl can see them on her walk down the aisle. Then, when she reaches the end, you can choose to have her sit with her parents, or remain standing with the rest of the party.

What should she wear?

Most of the time, the flower girl wears a white dress with a sash that matches the bridesmaids' dresses. Another popular choice is to have a mini-version of the bridesmaid dress created. Most bridal shops will have books you can look through and choose from, or you can hire a tailor to make the dress.

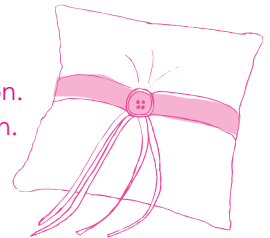
Ring Bearers

The ring pillow

The ring bearer is a special member of your party, who is usually a male about three to eight years old. In the past, the ring bearer would carry the rings on a pillow tied down with a ribbon for the groom to remove before giving to the bride. Nowadays, the ring pillow usually carries faux-rings to represent the real ones, while the Best Man holds the real rings safe in his pocket.

Where do I find a teeny tux?

Your tux rental store can usually provide a rental of the groomsmen's attire in a tiny, ring bearer version. You can also check children's clothing stores and department stores, as they will also have a selection.



A "THANK YOU" FOR YOUR MAIDS AND MEN

Your bridesmaids and groomsmen have invested a lot of time and money into your special day. Show your appreciation with a hand-picked gift!

For the Maids

Between hosting bridal showers, your bachelorette party, attending pre-wedding events and purchasing a bridesmaid dress your attendants have invested quite a bit of time, as well as money into your wedding. A nice way to show your appreciation is with a gift. These gifts vary depending on your personal taste. Often a bride gives all the bridesmaids the same gift, but you may choose to personalize it by choosing something unique to each bridesmaid. These don't have to cost you a fortune either.

Some gift ideas:

- Cute personalized totes in your wedding colors
- Monogrammed towel wraps
- Spa gift certificate
- Jewelry
- Cosmetic Bags
- Picture frame (with a pic of the two of you inside)
- At home mani/pedi kit

For the Men

While the men are usually less involved with the wedding process, they still pitch in quite a bit, too! From helping plan the bachelor party to overall groom support, these guys are the ones that your groom depends on!

Some gift ideas:

- Personalized travel/bathroom kit
- Flask/bar accessories
- Cufflinks
- Cigar box and cigars
- Pocket watch
- Cooler filled with treats

BACHELORETTE PARTY



After months of planning the Bride has earned the chance to let loose with her girlfriends and party! The bachelorette party represents a send-off for the bride from her friends into marriage, one last "Hurrah!"

The bachelorette party is hosted by the bride's closest friends, typically her bridesmaids.

Things to Consider

- 1** Keep in mind the wishes of the bride! Not all brides want a crazy night out with strippers and drinking, some just want a quite night with their closest friends.
- 2** Decide who will be paying for the night, the Bride should NEVER have to pay for any activities at her party. The hosts may split the cost, or often they will ask all attendants to pitch in a set amount.
- 3** Pick a date. Choose a date that is a few weeks before the wedding. There is nothing worse than a puffy and tired bride on her wedding day!
- 4** Transportation: Be sure to arrange for transportation to and from all bridal events. Consider hiring a limo; the cost may not be too bad when split between all guests. Another idea is to recruit groomsmen to be your "chauffeurs" for the evening!
- 5** Themes: The most fun bachelorette parties have a theme! What other time can you dress up in silly outfits in public? Themes can range from simple to more elaborate. Some theme ideas: 80's wedding, vegas nights, or country club wives.
- 6** Fun and Games: No bachelorette party is complete without games. These range from "Who knows the bride best" games, to games you can buy, to creating a list of things the bride has to do before the night is over. Have fun and be creative!

POSSIBLE PARTY THEMES

- Sex and the City Party** Dress to impress and take over the town! Start the night by meeting at one location and then take a limo to a chic, uptown bar for some cosmopolitans. Stock the limo with music and champagne for a drive through the city before hitting some of the best hot spots!
- Spa Day Party** For the more low-key bride plan a spa day either by making a "at home spa" or booking a day at the spa. Include champagne, lunch, facials, mani/pedi's and more pampering treatments!
- Scavenger Hunt** Make a list of crazy and random items that have to be found around town, not bought. Divide into two or more teams, each with a video camera to document the fun. First team to collect all items and meet back at one location wins! Afterwards, spend a night playing bachelorette games and celebrating!
- Weekend Get-Away** Why keep your party to one night? If schedules and finances permit, plan a beach, mountain or Vegas weekend with the girls!

