

10 WAYS TO THROW A *beautiful* BUDGET WEDDING

Think cutting costs = a simple wedding?
Think again. Here's how to throw an
unforgettable day without spending a fortune.



WORDS: SARAH DAWSON IMAGE: iSTOCK



UNIQUE SPACES MAKE SUPER-COOL – AND AFFORDABLE! – WEDDING VENUE CHOICES

1. VENUE

The venue is often the biggest spend, so if you want to save money here it pays to think outside the box. Instead of country houses and hotels, consider places that aren't traditional venues such as village halls, schools and art galleries. If you're after a laid-back do, see if you can hire out a local field for your celebration. If your parents or in-laws have a big garden, why not think about holding your reception at home? The savings are huge, plus you get to totally put your stamp on it – win, win! Another way to shave some zeros off your spend is to book off-peak, whether that's mid-week or in the evening. And don't be afraid to haggle on price!



GET CREATIVE AND MAKE YOUR OWN SEATING PLAN. THAT WILL GET YOUR GUESTS TALKING

3. FOOD AND DRINK

There are loads of ways to save on the cost of feeding everyone, it just takes a bit of creativity! Hire a food truck to serve up some delicious street food to your guests, instead of a typical sit-down meal. It can work out way cheaper, and will earn you serious cool points. **Feast-it.com** is a great place to find a street food van for your day. Get your guests involved and throw

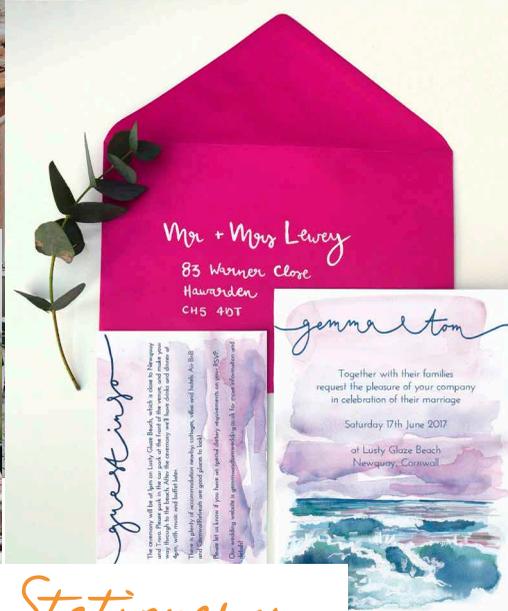
a fun 'Bake Off' competition, where they all bring along a sweet treat for the ultimate dessert table. Prize for the winner, obvs. Don't forget to keep an eye out for great booze deals in the supermarket too – take advantage of these and then fill an old wheelbarrow, tin bucket or bath with ice and bottles for guests to just help themselves (if your venue allows).



SAVE THE COST OF A FORMAL SIT-DOWN MEAL WITH A FUN STREET FOOD TRUCK INSTEAD

2. Stationery

If you're on a budget don't worry about sending proper Save the Dates – an email will work just as well. If you're not down with emailing an invite for the main event, check out Etsy for gorgeous printable designs that are a fraction of the cost of professionally-printed invitations. You just download a template, add your details then print at home. Instead of printing order of service, menus and seating plans, pick up second-hand chalkboards on Gumtree or eBay and get a friend with nice handwriting to pop the details on there, or get creative with photos of your guests.



4. FAVOURS

Of course, if you're on a tight budget you can do away with favours altogether (no one will complain, we promise), but there are plenty of ways to still provide a little something for your guests without a big spend. Rope in talented friends – if you know a great baker, ask if they'd mind making a batch of mini biscuits for favours. Mates with a farmer? Perhaps they could spare some mini bottles of apple juice? A sprig of lavender is a beautiful, budget-friendly favour, or fun illustrations by you and your groom of each guest always go down well, even (err, *especially*) if you have zero artistic skills!



6. Transport

We've all got one relative or friend who loves their car – big time, so make their day by asking if they'd show off their fancy motor and drive you to your wedding. They'll see it as a huge honour, and you get to save £££s! Alternatively, get in touch with a local vintage car club so see if any members would be willing to offer you a ride on the big day. If swish cars aren't your thing, why not arrive at the venue in something entirely different – maybe a friend has a cute vintage VW camper van you can rock up in, or an old-school Morris Minor? Think of the amazing photos!



5. FASHION

If you've got your heart set on a particular dress or designer, but it's a bit out of your budget, all is not lost. There are some fantastic websites (**preloved.co.uk** and **stillwhite.co.uk**) where recent brides sell their much-loved bridal gowns at greatly reduced prices, or you could brave a sample sale (not quite as terrifying as *Friends* made out, but be prepared for some determined Bridezillas!) – just do your research first. The High Street has also seriously upped its game when it comes to big-day fashion, so whether you're looking for yourself, your maids or your groom, it's well worth considering.



THE HIGH STREET IS KNOCKING IT OUT THE PARK WITH BUDGET-FRIENDLY BRIDALWEAR



7. ENTERTAINMENT

First thing's first, no one expects to be entertained non-stop at a wedding – they're here to see their faves get married. But if you want to throw in some surprises, it is possible to keep it cheap. Make your own photo booth with a DIY backdrop (strips of crepe paper will do the trick), download the

free printable props from **planyourperfectwedding.com**, leave a Polaroid camera with a few spare rolls of film and let your guests get on with it. If you're having an outdoor do, leave a croquet set out for people to use and if it's a winter wedding, pop a few board games in a room with a roaring fire.





FLIPPANO AN DOL FATTO

9. MUSIC

Check out your local music college for students who are happy to perform during your ceremony at a reduced fee – that’s your string quartet sorted! Instead of forking out on a well-established band, you can always approach one of your favourite street performers to ask if they’d consider playing at your reception. Ed Sheeran started out as a busker, so you might be onto the next best thing! Get your mates involved and ask a few of them to create a cool party playlist on their iPod or Spotify – it’s an excellent alternative to a pro DJ, just make sure there’s something for everyone. Three hours of hard-core hip hop might not be the MIL’s cup of tea...



MARNI V PHOTOGRAPHY AND MEGAN ELLE PHOTOGRAPHY

AS LONG AS THE DANCEFLOOR IS FULL IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MUCH YOU SPEND ON THE MUSIC!



MARNI V PHOTOGRAPHY AND MEGAN ELLE PHOTOGRAPHY

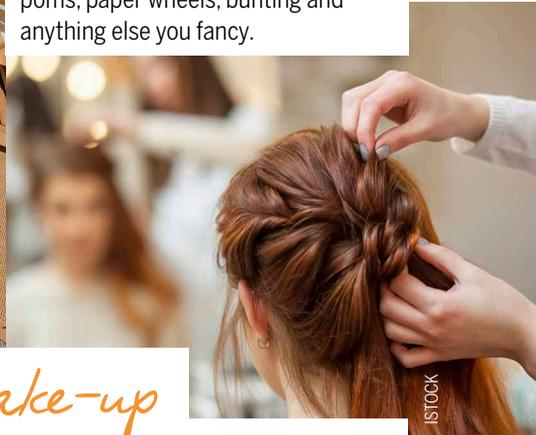
TRANSFORM A PLAIN VENUE WITH CUTE, LOW-COST DECORATIONS YOU CAN MAKE YOURSELF

8. DÉCOR

Flowers look gorgeous, and always bring that wedding vibe, but they can come with a hefty price tag. To keep costs low go for seasonal blooms and plenty of (cheap as chips) foliage, displayed in vintage cans and old jam jars. Even better if you can pick the flowers from your own, or your parents' garden. eBay is the budget bride's best friend and you'll find lots of recently-married couples selling off their big-day décor at rock-bottom prices. But the easiest way to decorate your venue or marquee on a budget is DIY. Bulk-buy ribbon, twine and crepe paper and get your wedding party over to make pom-poms, paper wheels, bunting and anything else you fancy.



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10. Hair and make-up

Not everyone can afford a professional make-up artist on the day, so to cut costs head to a beauty counter at a department store with your maid of honour and take advantage of their free makeovers. Get your MOH to take notes, then practise recreating the look at home, before the big day. If you're getting married close to home, check with your usual hairdresser whether

they could do your wedding hair – chances are they will work out cheaper than a dedicated wedding hairstylist, plus you already trust them 100%. If you have someone in your bridal party who's a whizz at hair and make-up, ask if she would mind getting the bridesmaids ready on the day – just make it feel like fun with a cool playlist and a glass of champagne for everyone. 💎