



9 WAYS TO SAVE MONEY ON YOUR WEDDING RECEPTION

After over 40 years of helping bridal couples plan their weddings, I've refined the following ideas as the easiest and most common ways to reduce the total costs for your wedding reception:

1. Invite fewer guests. It sounds silly, but this one choice can have the single largest impact on your total budget. Caterers charge by the person for food and staff costs are tied to number of guests. Often, having fewer guests will mean that you are able to choose a nicer menu that would be beyond your budget for a larger group. Smaller venues often have lower rental rates.
2. Schedule your wedding for early afternoon. An afternoon reception is usually shorter than an evening reception, resulting in lower staff costs. It is perfectly acceptable to offer only light appetizers or a light lunch for an afternoon reception. Guests will expect a dinner to be served at an evening reception.
3. Have your wedding during the week. Saturdays are the most popular days for weddings and venue rates are always highest on weekends. Many locations offer lower rental rates on Fridays or Sundays and even lower on weekdays. Caterers and other vendors often will charge less for receptions held on weekdays.
4. Pick a date during the off season. Most weddings in Puget Sound are held May through September. Have your wedding during the slow season when venue rates are usually lower. Many wedding vendors offer lower prices or other incentives during their slow season as well. (As an example, my company, Snuffin's Catering, offers free passed appetizers during our off- season.)
5. Choose a location that includes tables and chairs in the rental rate. Having to rent your own tables and chairs can add substantially to your total cost. Equipment delivery, labor and pick-up add to rental costs.
6. Choose a location and caterer that will allow you to provide your own alcoholic beverages. Clubs, hotels and other locations that provide liquor service make a substantial amount of their profit on alcohol sales. Providing your own beverages can save a great deal of money. Check with your caterer to see if they allow you to bring your own beverages and if they charge corkage fees.
7. If dancing is not the focus of your reception, a personal playlist on an iPod can provide a pleasant backdrop for the reception. Special songs for your first dance and those with your parents can easily be chosen to suit your taste.

8. Have your friends and family set up and decorate the venue. Friends will offer to help you with your wedding – let them! Just remember not to burden your family with too much clean up so they can enjoy the whole day!
9. Use disposable serving items instead of china & glass. Not only are china and glassware more expensive than disposables, their use also requires additional staff for set up, bussing and dishwashing.

By choosing one or several of the above money saving ideas, you can reduce the total costs for your wedding reception.

*****My most important piece of advice** is saved for last: decide what's most important to you about your reception and allow enough in your budget to accomplish that dream. Make less costly choices on items that are not as important to you.

Your wedding day should be joyous and stress-free. Once you've made your choices, relax and have a wonderful day!

Sharon Snuffin is president of Snuffin's Catering, the award-winning caterer in the Tacoma area of Washington State. She can be contacted at sharon@snuffins.com. Menu and pricing information are available at www.snuffins.com.