

REAL WEDDINGS STUDY (annual)

Sponsors: XO Group Inc. (parent company of TheKnot.com and WeddingChannel.com)

Release Date: March 7, 2013

Sample: 17,500 brides married in 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

Average wedding budget: US\$28,427 (not including the honeymoon)

Average wedding gown cost: \$1,211

Average marrying ages: 29 for the bride, 31 for the groom

Average number of guests: 139

Average number of bridesmaids: 4 to 5

Average number of groomsmen: 4 to 5

Most popular month to get engaged: December (16%)

Average length of engagement: 14 months

Most popular month to get married: June (17%)

Percentage of destination weddings: 24%

Top 8 Wedding Trends (What Happened in 2012)

Brides are spending more on their weddings. The average wedding spend keeps growing year over year (\$204 per guest in 2012).

Brides are focusing more on creating an experience for guests. More than one in four brides provided additional guest entertainment and spent more on those activities.

Same-sex couples have longer engagements and are older when they get married, compared to traditional couples. They're also more likely to have a casual wedding, fewer guests (but spend more per guest) - and, they're less likely to have a bridal shower or a bachelor/bachelorette party, but they're more likely to have an after-party, engagement party, and couples party.

Casual and fun weddings are more popular. Seventeen percent described their nuptials as "casual" in 2012, compared with 16% in 2011, 14% in 2010, and 12% in 2009.

Weddings taking place in religious institutions are also declining. Only 35% of brides held their weddings in a house of worship in 2012, down from 41% in 2009. And, more couples (33%) are having a friend or family member officiate the ceremony up from 29% in 2009.

Honeymoons are back. After several years in which fewer couples were taking honeymoons, in 2012 77% said they took a honeymoon.

Blue is the most popular wedding color (33%), followed by purple (26%), green (23%), and metallics (23%).

More couples issue save-the-date notices (68% in 2012, compared to 57% in 2009). Twenty-eight percent created these online, versus 19% in 2009.

THE KNOT MARKET INTELLIGENCE DESTINATION WEDDINGS STUDY (annual)

Sponsors: XO Group Inc. (parent company of TheKnot.com and WeddingChannel.com)

Release Date: June 18, 2012

Sample: Almost 3,000 U.S. couples who held a DW in 2011 or 2012 (polled Dec. 2011-Jan. 2012)

HIGHLIGHTS

Destination weddings are growing in popularity.

In 2011, nearly 1 in 4 (24%) couples had a destination wedding; this has grown from 20% in 2009.

66% of international destination wedding brides and 45% of domestic destination wedding brides opted for a destination wedding because they wanted a special, fun or exotic locale. The second most popular reason why international brides chose a destination wedding was to host a more intimate affair with fewer guests (65%), while domestic brides wanted a destination that was special to them as a couple (44%).

Destination weddings have an average of 86 guests (vs. 77 guests in 2009).

Breakdown: 96 guests for domestic U.S. destination weddings vs. 62 guests for international DWs

70 percent of destination weddings take place in the continental United States (FL, CA, and NV are the top three locations domestically; internationally, the top choices were the Caribbean [39%], Mexico [24%], and Hawaii [20%]).

Destination weddings are lasting longer - 60% last three or more days. (Nearly half of the international destination weddings last four or more days.) And, 51 percent of DW couples use a wedding planner. Another note: 69 percent of DWs are held outdoors.

Destination wedding couples keep their guests in mind.

Destination wedding couples are spending more on a per-guest basis than their more traditional wedding counterparts. The median destination wedding spend is \$404 per guest internationally, and \$225 per guest domestically, compared with the national wedding average of just \$137 per guest.

The average total destination wedding spend is \$20,890 (not including honeymoon, engagement ring or travel expenses).

Aside from the traditional rehearsal dinner, after-party and next-day breakfast, 1 in 3 (32%) destination wedding couples plan a group activity like a sightseeing tour for their guests.

Of the couples who plan a group activity, more than half (53%) cover the cost for at least some of their guests. For those couples who contribute to the cost, they spend an average of \$2,598 internationally and \$2,280 domestically planning these group events. Couples are also considering their guests' expenses, with 2 in 5 (39%) paying for travel/accommodations for at least some of their guests.

The party continues even after the wedding. More than 4 in 5 international destination wedding couples and guests stay at the wedding destination beyond the wedding date, while more than half of their domestic counterparts do the same. Nearly 9 in 10 couples still plan to take a honeymoon after the wedding, with 7 in 10 of them honeymooning in their wedding locale – either for part of the honeymoon or the whole trip. In addition, nearly 3 in 10 will have another party when they get home.

GREAT QUOTE:

"The idea of having a destination wedding is growing among our brides, and it goes hand in hand with the fact that most people no longer live where they grew up. When family is spread all over the country, a destination wedding is the perfect way to bring everyone together." (Carley Roney, XO Group Inc. co-founder)

DAVID'S BRIDAL "WHAT'S ON BRIDES' MINDS" SURVEY (annual)

Sponsors: David's Bridal, Inc., and Wakefield Research

Release Date: March 19, 2013

Sample: 500 interviews and surveys collected among women ages 18 and older who were engaged to be married or were married within the two months preceding the survey

59 percent of brides say online resources like Pinterest, Facebook, and blogs are the best places to find wedding inspiration.

With Pinterest celebrating its third anniversary this month, it has quickly become the ultimate tool for brides-to-be. Nearly half of brides (46 percent) wouldn't use an idea they found on a friend's Pinterest board!

Dress shopping isn't confined to the fitting room anymore! In fact, 68 percent of brides use technology during their fittings, from texting pictures to family to posting videos on a social media site.

Virtual wedding guests: Now trending, nearly half (49 percent) of all respondents say they would consider "skype-ing" their wedding.

Digital rule of thumb: 56 percent of newlywed women think it's important to have social media rules at the wedding.

The dress is off limits: 61 percent forbid their bridesmaids from uploading pics of the bride donning her dress before the ceremony.

My wedding, me first: 52 percent say the bride and groom must be the first to post a picture of their wedding to a social media site.

Facebook official: Up 11 percent from 2011, 59 percent of brides will update their Facebook status to "married" or update their new name within a day of walking down the aisle.

Regarding budgets, a whopping 89 percent of brides said they actually had a budget in place before they began planning their wedding. Regarding their budget totals, 44 percent of brides surveyed decreased their budget due to economic concerns, and only seven percent reported increasing the amount they were willing to pay for their big day.

Among brides looking to prioritize their spending, the majority is concerned primarily with the enjoyment of their guests. The David's Bridal survey discovered that good food and drink are non-negotiable: 63 percent of brides who decreased their wedding budget

said they wouldn't scrimp on a meal for their guests, and 60 percent wouldn't cut back on libations. Modern couples are quicker to pare down other big-ticket wedding expenses, like a wedding consultant, extravagant venue, flowers, and decadent decor.

#SOCIALWEDDINGSURVEY 2012 (occasional)

Sponsors: TheKnot.com and Mashable.com

Release Date: Nov. 29, 2012

Sample: TheKnot.com and Mashable.com readers

Among surveyed brides:

79% keep up on wedding websites and blogs

77% become a Facebook "fan" of wedding brands

61% download wedding planning app

78% buy wedding magazines

1 in 10 surveyed brides updated their engagement relationship status "within minutes" ...
1 in 3 did so "within hours" ... and 1 in 4 did so "the next day" ...

With wedding planning apps, 52% used apps as checklists ... 47% used them for wedding ideas and photo inspiration ... and 46% used them for planning and organization ...

64% said they think it's OK to use Evite, Paperless Post, and other online invitation tools for wedding-related events - but NOT for the wedding itself.

62% like that their guests post photos from their wedding on Facebook ... and, one in four say their guests check in from the wedding on Facebook.

With Pinterest, one in 5 share board with vendors and two in 5 share boards with bridesmaids and family.

Two thirds of the brides said they considered logging online during their honeymoon - and, three in four planned to share photos from their honeymoon.

ASSORTED SURVEYS

2013 Travel Trends Survey of travel agents (sponsored by Allianz Travel Insurance)

Couples spend nearly three times more on honeymoons than typical vacations (67 percent spent \$2,500-\$5,000, while 23 percent spent \$5,000-\$10,000).

Asked what their clients would do to reduce honeymoon costs, 28% of the surveyed agents said budget-conscious honeymoons favor all-inclusive vacations, while 22 percent said their clients would shorten the honeymoon's duration to save money.

71% of the surveyed agents' honeymoon bookings fell between May and September (June was the most popular month - 44%).

2012 American Wedding Study: Travel Edition (sponsored by Brides magazine)

While couples cut corners elsewhere, they continue placing a priority on honeymoons - with the average trip cost rising to \$4,900 in 2012 (from \$3,586 in 2011 - a 37% surge). 82% of the surveyed brides said they took a honeymoon (8.6 days was the average length; the trip was booked 5.1 months before the wedding, on average; and 24% of the honeymooning couples had a travel-specific gift registry).

43% of brides do the honeymoon planning alone, but 87% said they made the final trip decisions as a couple.

37% used travel agents for honeymoon planning (while only 13% said they used agents for non-honeymoon travel).

Honeymoon destinations included the Caribbean (34%), followed by the continental USA (24%), Hawaii (16%), and Europe (15%).

14% of the surveyed couples opted for a destination wedding (86 guests on average; \$23,800 in costs, on average).

Weddingbells.ca Annual Reader Survey (Jan.-March 2013; 2,200+ brides and brides-to-be in Canada)

Expected cost of a wedding in Canada - CAN\$23,458 (or \$27,658 counting the engagement ring, or \$32,358 counting the honeymoon)

69% of brides said they are likely to spend more than they had budgeted for; 40% strongly agree with that statement.

The most popular month to get engaged: December (23%)

The most popular month to get married: August, followed by September (49% of weddings will happen between July and September)

Average number of guests: 124

12% of Canadian brides plan to have a destination wedding.

89% of brides will spend at least one day away on a honeymoon. 26% of the honeymoon locations are picked by the bride alone, while 60% are joint decisions. 36% plan to use a travel agent, while 58% plan to book at least part of the honeymoon online. 59% will consider an all-inclusive resort, and 21% will look at cruises. 74% plan to spend their honeymoon outside Canada (the top choices: the Bahamas, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, and Greece).

98% of brides logged into a social network within the past 30 days, and 60% are active on Pinterest.

"Happy Honeymoon?" poll by AreYouRomantic.com

Almost one fifth of surveyed couples admitted they didn't consummate their marriages on their wedding nights. Among these couples, 32% said they (or their partner) were too tired, 14% said they'd had too much to drink (women chose this answer twice as often as men did!), 11% said family and friends were still around (men chose this answer more than five times more often than women!), and 10% said it wasn't important to them.

Some of the more interesting answers:

"He was playing blackjack all night."

"Too much sake and sushi consumed."

"It was consummated MANY TIMES before."