

BRIDAL FACTS & FIGURES

Tips To Help Wedding Guests Say “I Do” To Savings

(NAPSA)—An invitation to a wedding is generally considered good news, but the expenses associated with attending one—especially an out-of-town event—may present more than a few financial challenges.

Fortunately, there are ways to save on your expenses as a wedding guest or member of the bridal party. Here are a few tips for travelers to avoid wedding guest debt:

- Do your homework when it comes to travel arrangements. If you have to fly, book as far in advance as you can to take advantage of discounted rates, which can be found by visiting a Web site that compares prices. Keep in mind that you may be able to get cheaper rates if you are prepared to fly early in the morning or late at night.

When deciding whether or not to rent a car, first crunch the numbers and consider all the expenses involved in getting around while you are there.

In some cases, it may actually save money to rent a car for a couple of days, especially if you have other guests to share expenses with. But in other situations, you may save by taking public transportation to and from the airport.

- Explain your situation to the bride and groom. If you are a bridesmaid, for example, you may be able to persuade the bride to choose an inexpensive option for bridesmaid’s dresses, preferably a dress that can be worn more than



When you say “I do” to attending a wedding, you don’t have to spend more than you can afford. A little advance planning can help you save on travel and hotel expenses.

once. Or perhaps the bride can help you find an inexpensive place to stay, or suggest other guests you might be able to share a room or transportation with.

Brides may be interested to learn how to take advantage of group booking Web sites that some hotels offer for guests. At Hampton hotels, for example, brides can manage group reservations on its online group booking site at hampton.com/wedding.

Brides can book five to 25 affordable guest rooms online and then use the Guest List Manager to review and update reservation information 24/7, and the Personalized Group Web pages to keep everyone updated on details for the big day, such as important times and directions.

- Save on food expenses. Some accommodations offer a coffeepot

and a microwave for heating up food—or better yet, a free breakfast buffet.

For meals other than those eaten with the bridal party, make sandwiches or snacks in your room. Also, pack an individual refillable water bottle to keep yourself hydrated throughout the day and to save on beverage costs.

- Use loyalty program points such as Hilton HHonors, Hertz #1 Club and/or Delta SkyMiles. Depending on the loyalty program, travelers can save on car rental costs and hotel accommodations, or even purchase wedding gifts with extra loyalty points.

- Gift wisely. You don’t want to scrimp on a wedding gift, but your friends will understand if you don’t go overboard. Find out where they are registered and shop from their registry, which should offer a range of prices. Purchase a more inexpensive gift or split a larger wedding gift with a friend.

Another option is to offer help-out with the wedding if you have any special skills or talents the happy couple might like to use. If you’re a photographer, for example, you may want to donate your skills to take the wedding photos. If you are a caterer, you may want to donate some of the wedding day food.

Being practical about planning can help keep your friend’s special day from leaving a lasting dent in your wallet.