

Guide For Brides

Planning Your Big Day For Less

(NAPSA)—Tying the knot doesn't have to mean saying "I do" to an expensive wedding. The key is to stay creative and flexible.

Still, the average wedding these days costs \$29,334, according to The Knot Real Weddings Survey.

So how can you cut costs and still have a beautiful wedding? Experts say simple things, such as swapping flowers for balloons, can quickly add up. "Creatively displaying colorful balloons can transform a space for a fraction of what you'd spend on large floral displays," explains Charli Penn, managing editor of WeddingChannel.com. "You can also skip the elaborate bridesmaid flowers. Have maids carry a beautiful posy instead—a small, rounded bouquet consisting of one type of flower."

Penn offers these additional tips:

Host A Family-Style Reception

Instead of presenting your dinner course by course, serve a communal meal. Use a fixed menu and have a large portion of each dish at every table. Comfort foods, such as miniburgers, macaroni and cheese and pizza, are served best family style.

Marry At Home

If you plan it right, hosting a wedding in your own backyard can save you lots of money...but only if you keep the guest list small. To pull it off, serve a simple meal and take the do-it-yourself decor approach (think: mason jars



A wonderful wedding for less can be yours when you have bridesmaids carry a small, rounded posy of just one type of flower rather than an elaborate bouquet.

filled with homegrown flowers as centerpieces).

Elope, Then Party

Throw a post-elopement bash in lieu of a traditional reception and you stand to save thousands.

Your party can follow whatever dress code or theme you'd like, and the memories can still be magical.

Register For Your Honeymoon

Now that you've emptied your pockets on the wedding, how can you afford a honeymoon? Register for activities or money toward your flight or hotel with a company like Traveler's Joy or Starwood, which offer couples the chance to put a little honeymoon fun ahead of new flatware. To set up a honeymoon registry, visit WeddingChannel.com/registry.

For more tips and information, visit www.weddingchannel.com.