

## Elegant Wedding Receptions That Don't Cost The Sky

By Samuel Abdullah

A wedding reception is easily the biggest expense for a bride and groom, with receptions in Chicagoland averaging at \$17,000.

Engaged couples tend to splurge on the reception, thinking they want to throw the most important party of their lives. The sad deal is the reception is probably not the part they'll remember the most about their big day.

Holding your wedding reception in the banquet hall or a function room of a classy hotel will look rich and gorgeous, and most definitely take a lot of work out of your hands. But there are ways to have a remarkable reception without an equally remarkable cost.

Restaurants will prove to be cheaper, although not by a wide margin. Consider areas open to the public, such as parks, beaches, flower gardens or even a butterfly sanctuary. you'll have to secure permits from your local city hall, and ever, may have to pay a small fee.

Another downside would be other people may gatecrash easily, as it is open to the public, so also think about more private spaces such as art galleries - it would be helpful if you or someone you knew already worked in one - and your own backyard.

Traditionally, wedding receptions were hosted at the house of the bride's parents and you could just continue that particular tradition. Of course, in all these venues, you'll have to spend on renting chairs and tables, decorations, catering and entertainment, but if you plan all these carefully, you'll still spend much less than if you had your reception in a hotel or a wedding hall, where you might spend \$200 per plate.

It is almost a certainty that couples won't be concentrating too much on the details at their actual reception. And it's the details that cost extra.

Chances are, your guests won't particularly remember elaborate table settings either, so it would serve you well to just keep it simple, yet charming.

Make do without elaborate floral arrangements and ice sculptures as centerpieces, sometimes a simple basket of daisies or a dish of bright, glassy stones will already be charming enough.

You can save a lot of money if you do your own planning and execution, but it helps to enlist your friends, who will most likely be quite willing to help. Hey, it's a wedding, after all.

If having a potluck wedding is unacceptable, you could ask your friends and relatives to cook certain dishes as their wedding gift to you.

If you're having a big wedding, ask more friends to show off their cooking skills. But do arrange for matching servers and containers to transfer these dishes to on your big day, to keep with the overall look of your wedding.

Some of the most elegant weddings are the simplest. Take this cue and you'll find that the biggest expense of your wedding won't be so expensive after all.

### About the Author

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