

Selecting & Cutting the Wedding Cake

Your wedding cake is the grand finale of your wedding! It should be delicious but it should also be beautiful. Cutting the cake is a big photo moment. Everyone remembers a marvellous cake and your photos of the cake cutting will live on, and on.

Choose a cake that's compatible with the venue's style, the season, your dress, the flower arrangements, or the menu. If you want coloured accents (such as sugar flowers or icing ribbons), give your baker sample fabric swatches. If you're getting your cake from an independent designer or bakery, check out the baker or designer's reputation. If your friends haven't referred you to anyone, ask your caterer or banquet manager for recommendations.

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The bride's cake -- the one cut by the couple at the reception -- is traditionally eaten as dessert. The groom's cake is usually darker and richer (often chocolate). Give slices to guests as a take-home. If you plan to send cake home you will need to supply a box! Wedding cake often is priced by the slice -- the cost ranges widely, from \$1.50 to \$15 per slice.

Generally, three tiers will serve 50 to 100 guests; you'll likely need five layers for 200 guests or more. If the reception is in a room with high ceilings, consider increasing the cake's stature with columns between the tiers. Make sure there is a designated cake table that allows the most elegant presentation possible. A round table is perfect for round cakes, but a linear cake design may call for a rectangular table. Keep in mind that the more complicated the cake, the higher the price tag.

Plan to cut the cake early in the reception. A good time is when guests are eating a sit-down dinner, or, if it is a buffet service, while all your guests are getting their food and moving around the room. This keeps your guests from crowding around you during the cutting ceremony, stumbling over the photographer's equipment, and making you hot and sweaty during the photos. This early cutting of the cakes also allows everyone to see you cutting the cakes and the cakes are ready for your guests when they are ready for cake. (Cutting the cake late in the reception means that half of your guests may have left without enjoying their traditional piece of wedding cake.) If you are having a groom's cake, in addition to your cake, consider providing a cake box so your guests can take cake home with them.

After checking your make-up, arrange yourself, your headpiece, and your train to one side of the bride's cake. Take the long, slender knife in your right hand and place the tip of the knife on the lowest, edible tier of cake. Make sure you have an elegant cake serving set. It will be in all your photos for years to come. The last thing you arrange is your new husband's hand over yours on the knife. Do not cut the cake yet! Stop and smile at the photographer who will probably take 15-20 exposures of the two of you with the cake, from different angles and with varying speeds and light exposure in order to get details of the cake decoration as well as details of your faces.

When you do cut into the cake, either cut off a corner (if it's a square cake) or cut a V-shaped piece from the lowest, round tier, not next to a column. (The columns support the rest of the cake above and they need cake left around them to give them support.) This piece of cake should fall out onto a plate.

Just as your husband took his marriage vows first as a safety net for you before you took your marriage vows, similarly he will take a fork and feed you a bite of cake from the plate first, symbolic of sharing with you his life, his wealth, and his future. Then you will take another fork and feed him a bite of cake, symbolic of sharing with him your life, your wealth, and your future.