

Wedding Invitations Q & A

When should you send invitations?

Invitations should go out eight weeks before the wedding -- that gives guests plenty of time to clear their schedules for the day and make travel arrangements if they are out-of-towners. It also lets you make the RSVP date a little earlier -- say three weeks before the wedding date -- so you can get a final head count and start making a seating chart (if you'll have one) before the final-week-before-the-wedding crunch begins. If you will be inviting lots of out-of-town guests or your wedding date is on or near a holiday, you may want to send a "save the date" card about six months before the wedding date to give your guests more time to plan.

What if most of the guests will be from out of town?

The best thing to do if you're marrying far away from where most of your guests live -- especially if it's a tourist area -- is to send out a save-the-date card with accommodation and travel information.

This "card" can be as simple as a letter (a computer printout is fine) letting guests know your wedding date and giving them any travel/hotel/car rental info they may need. You can do this right now, if you like; if you want to wait a bit on accommodations info, it's fine to send a save-the-date card now and send that information in a separate mailing about three months before the wedding.

How should the invitation be worded?

It's an eternal question: How will the invitation be worded? As most newly engaged couples know, this can be a touchy subject because what's read between the lines is who's hosting (that is, paying for) the wedding. Today, many etiquette rules are totally bendable.

TRADITIONAL WORDING. It is customary in a formal wedding invitation to spell out everything, including the date and time of the wedding. For example, the invite should read Five o'clock in the evening not 5:00 p.m. Each bit of information occupies its own line and no commas are used, except between the location of the wedding and the city and state in which it will take place. Today, a whole roomful of people could be paying for the wedding, including the couple themselves, the bride's parents, the groom's parents, stepparents, grandparents, and the list goes on. It's important that you give credit where credit's due -- whoever's footing most of the bill, deserves to lead off the invitation.

The reception & wedding will be held at the same place. Do we need a separate reception card?

All you have to do is add a single line to the bottom of your ceremony invitation: "Reception to follow." Just make sure your ushers know where to direct guests after the ceremony, so they're all taking the most convenient route to the reception area.

Do we have to send "thank you" cards?

In today's fast paced world some believe that an email or an "in person thank you" at the wedding or bridal shower is enough. We believe that this is the reason that a personal thank you note means even more than ever before. A thank-you note should be sent to everyone who gives you a gift; especially since this may be the only way the gift-giver knows you actually received it.