

16 Must Have Free Tools For a *Dream Wedding*



The coolest planning tools,
resources and websites

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16 Must Have Free Tools For a Dream Wedding

Wedding planning used to be done the old-fashioned way with a series of books, magazines, specialty planning guides and worksheets. Thanks to the internet, cell phone apps and other digital devices, planning is easier than ever. While there are still planning books and calendars available on the market, there are also a number of free tools that can be accessed from just about anywhere, all designed to make planning your wedding less stressful and more fun.

1. The Wedding Budget Calculator

- <http://www.free-online-calculator-use.com/wedding-budget-calculator.html>

A budget calculator is an important tool to have, especially if you have strict parameters that you must stay within. This one works in several ways, including:

- Allowing you to plug in several variables. Simply enter the amount of your overall budget, the size of your bridal party, and the number of guests. Hit enter, and the calculator spits out approximate budgets for each of your major wedding expenses.
- Breaking down each expense into smaller parts. You can click on the 'plus' sign to the left of each category and get an approximate breakdown for each expense, such as gown, tuxedo, favors, and bridesmaids gifts.
- Letting you print out your budget. Once you have your budget looking the way you want it, you can easily print a copy (or copies) to add to your wedding binder, or to tack onto your wall so that you are motivated to stay within your budget as you plan.

The Wedding Budget Calculator also allows you to add and remove categories to fit your wedding, and gives you several blank areas for any unforeseen expenses, or things that do not fit in the allotted categories.

2. Wedding Checklist Tool

- <http://www.weddingwire.com/wedding-checklists.html>

This tool makes wedding planning easy by letting you know the dates that you should have certain things done or booked by. It keeps you organized and on track. You won't have to worry about running out to find a photographer at the last minute, or having to hire the only DJ in town that's available on your date because you waited too long to hire one.

Several features of the Wedding Checklist Tool are: it is broken down by months, and starts approximately nine to twelve months before the date of your wedding. It is also easy to print, and can be used regardless of whether you are actually taking a full year to plan for your wedding.

Just check off the items as you complete them. The coolest thing about this Wedding Checklist tool is that all the common wedding items are included. If something does not apply to you, skip it. You can also add things, if necessary.

3. The Knot

– <http://www.theknot.com>

Not only is The Knot a useful wedding magazine, but its website is handy as well. It is chock full of wedding ideas and suggestions for everything from wedding favors to tips on how to choose the perfect dress. You can even register for gifts on the site!

Make sure to check out the chat rooms. This is where you will get advice and ideas from other brides. The planning guides are useful as well.

One caveat, however, you will encounter plenty of advertising throughout the site. Also, the timelines and budgets may not directly apply to you. Stick to the advice sections and try to avoid anything that seems overly commercialized.

4. Wedding Wire

– <http://www.weddingwire.com>

If you've been looking for an all-in-one vendor source, then your search is over. Go to the Wedding Wire site, and start by entering your zip code. Then set yourself up with a free account and use the awesome tools in the "My Planner" section. The tool in "My Seating" is a particular favorite of many brides who are stumped about where to seat their guests.

You'll also find real bride reviews for hundreds of vendors in your local area. Again, beware of advertising everywhere. You might see a few local vendors not mentioned on the site, so be on the lookout for those not included – it does not mean that they are not recommended, just that they have been overlooked.

5. Bride To Bride Boutique

– <http://www.bridetobrideboutique.com>

If you are on a strict budget or simply want to stay earth-friendly and find a gently worn "recycled" gown, then you cannot go wrong with Bride to Bride Boutique. Whether the brides on the site cancelled their weddings, wore their dresses and had an awesome time but have no place to store them, or simply want to see their precious dress make another bride happy, this is place where their dresses are resold.

Bride to Bride Boutique is the ultimate website to connect with other brides to buy, sell and trade wedding items. You will save money on everything from bridesmaid's gifts, favors, tuxedos and attendant gowns and even centerpieces.

Why buy something new if you can re-use something in new condition and save money at the same time?

6. Wedding Bee

– <http://www.weddingbee.com>

Are you stuck and unable to come up with any ideas for your bridesmaid's gifts, favors or centerpieces? Wedding Bee is the place where your inspiration will come back to life. This blog is chock full of information, reviews and ideas. Wedding Bee has new posts every hour around the clock. From wedding inspiration and real bride stories, vendor reviews and casual bride chat, there's always something going on.

The site's posts are broken down by city, type of advice or item, making it easy to find exactly what you're looking for. There are even boards where you can post questions or see what other brides are up to. You never know what you will find on Wedding Bee.

7. DIY Bride

– <http://www.diybride.com>

Sometimes it helps to make things yourself. Whether you are having a hard time finding exactly what you want in a store, want to save money by making something for less than it costs finished, or just want to inject a little more of your personality into your wedding festivities, you can find ideas, plans and more on the DIY Bride site.

The DIY Bride website is an outstanding resource for all things DIY. The plans are broken down so that whether you are a beginner or an advanced crafty bride, you can find something that you can accomplish well. Some projects are simple,

while others are more complex. Either way, the end result will leave you proud of the things that you made for your own wedding.

8. Etsy

– <http://www.etsy.com>

Picture eBay without the auctions, and instead of selling obscure items or designer clothing, the sellers are listing things that they have made or antiques. That is Etsy, the number one online marketplace for handmade goods and crafts.

Whether you want to find a series of wedding favors that no one has ever seen before, or want to give your attendants something personal that they will treasure forever, you'll find it on Etsy. Even if you aren't sure that what you want, you'll find oodles of ideas for wedding inspiration and inexpensive accessories here.

9. The Bridal Wishlist

– <http://thebridalwishlist.blogspot.com/>

You'll find inspiration galore on the Bridal Wishlist blog. Between reviews of expensive designer wedding dresses and invitations to trunk shows, there are hundreds of ways to make your wedding day more beautiful. An antique comb, an adorable flower girl dress and some offbeat venues are just a few of the gems you'll find.

While it may take some time to sift through the site, you'll see some of the coolest and best stuff to buy for your wedding. You don't have to stick to exactly what the site says, but you may end up with a whole list of ideas that you can apply to your own tastes.

10. Offbeat Bride

– <http://offbeatbride.com>

Does your dream wedding include a canoe ride to your ceremony location, a reception that consists of a picnic in the park and a bunch of photographs taken from a hot air balloon? If so, the Offbeat Bride blog might be just the place for you.

Although it is full of unusual ideas for freethinkers, the Offbeat Bride blog is not just for untraditional brides, as it often features ideas that will save you a bundle of cash. It is hard to go wrong with this combination of cool ideas and ways to save money.

11. Pinterest

– <http://www.pinterest.com>

In case you succumbed to the Pinterest phenomenon, this site allows you to create inspiration boards and then “pin” pictures to them. You can set up different boards for centerpieces, wedding dresses, bridesmaid dresses, gifts, and even invitations. You can also check out other people’s boards for ideas, and pin their pictures to yours.

Starting a Pinterest account and setting up your boards at the very beginning of your planning is the best way to go about it. This way, by the time you need to start ordering things, you already have a bunch of ideas in mind.

12. Wedding Plandroid App

- https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.rmarsh.weddingplandroid&feature=related_apps

Want to plan your entire wedding (and keep track of everything) from your Android phone? Wedding Plandroid will let you do just that. From to-do lists to budgeting tools to vendor lists, this app keeps track of just about everything.

13. Easy Weddings Planner App

- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/easy-weddings-planner/id496360981?mt=8>

iPhone users will love this wedding planning app. It has a notebook function where you can “jot down” everything from reminders to questions to ask your potential vendors, and functions as a guest list manager and seating planner. Basically, if you need it, this app does it.

14. Another Tweet on the Wall App

- <http://www.anothertweetonthewall.com/>

By setting up a special hashtag, your guests can post comments and compliments about your wedding on their Twitter accounts. This app will then collect them and project them onto a wall to be viewed at your reception.

15. The Wedding Party App

- <https://www.weddingpartyapp.com/>

As your guests take pictures of your wedding ceremony and reception with their smart phones, they can upload them to this app. It will gather all of your pictures in one place, and make them viewable to everyone in attendance.

16. Top 100 Wedding Planning Blogs

– <http://www.weddingblogs100.com/>

Sometimes it takes more than one blog to find what you're looking for. If you've been through all of the sites listed here are and are still feeling lost and uninspired, check out this site. This is a comprehensive list of the 100 best wedding planning blogs. With this list, you're sure to find something inspirational!

Congratulations and good luck with your wedding plans! **Please contact me with any questions and to find out if I'm a good match for your wedding day.**

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