

Chapter 6

Having my Dream Wedding on a Budget — How Can I Make it All Work?

It may seem dismal at best. You may search through wedding websites or scour bridal magazines and then compare what you see to your budget and begin to panic. How can I really have a dream wedding to fit my budget? At this point in the planning, many a bride has freaked out with the notion that they won't have enough money to support the day they had always envisioned. This simply isn't true! If your vision doesn't seem to match the reality of the wedding planning situation, then take a step back and consider what could be acting as an obstacle. It may be that you're not asking the right questions or that your expectations are too high. It may even be that you're not looking for the right ways to stretch your dollars. You can make this all work, and though it may involve a change in approach and mindset, this can all work out for you in the end.

Learn to be Creative

If you are crafty, then you may very well have half the battle already won. If you have the ability to make anything on your own, you will save bundles of money right away. Make your own favors or even bridal accessories. You want to be sure that this is tastefully done, but if you have the talent run with it. This can come in handy too when it comes to making your own programs, seating cards, and even invitations. If you know what you're doing and can test out the end product before guests receive it, then you are already set up to save money through your own creativity.

Creativity doesn't just have to lie in arts and crafts though it can also be in the approach that you use with your vendors. If you work in Public Relations for example, figure out ways to successfully promote your vendors for free in

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exchange for discounted or even free services. Vendors love the notion of reaching other potential clients and if you have the ability to help them with that, they may be willing to work with you on your costs. Get creative in the package that you work to create with your vendors, or in the way in which you ask for the services to be delivered. This all ties into a bit of flexibility as well, but if you have the ability to use some imagination and creativity you will be pleasantly surprised at what it saves you in the end.

Figure Out How to Be Flexible in Your Planning Efforts

If you've never been a flexible person, you should learn how to be now. Part of planning your dream wedding to suit your budget is to be flexible on the things you want, or at the very least to find substitutes. This is no time to be set in your ways, nor is it the time to be unwilling to budget. This goes back to the beginning of the wedding planning process where you focused your efforts on the fine art of prioritization. If you simply must have a certain venue for sentimental reasons, then be willing to budge on the day of the week or time of year that you hold your festivities. If you are set on a certain type of cake, look around for the bakery that will provide it to you at the lowest cost or find a close alternative. If something is important to you then you should have it, but be flexible enough to know that some things will have to change shape a bit. This is an important element of budget wedding planning—and these days everybody has to watch the money they spend at least a little bit.

Shop Around for the Best Possible Deal

As with any good bargain shopping effort, shopping around is crucially important. If you want to save money, you have to be willing to shop for it. You don't just walk into a specialty store to buy all of your groceries, do you? Most people shop around and search for the best prices on the items that they need to keep their refrigerator stocked and their stomach full. Your wedding is really no different! Shop around and don't settle for the cost or word of just one vendor, find out if

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there is somebody better or that offers more value. If you don't like what you're hearing from one vendor, then move to the next.

As you begin meeting with vendors, it helps to have a list to work off of. Do your research and come up with at least 2-4 vendors for each category of your wedding planning. Make appointments, ask questions, and go on fact finding missions to see who offers the best services at the lowest possible prices. This does involve a good amount of preparation and work, but in the end it is so worth it. It helps to have options, and when it comes to your wedding planning you want to really bank on those options to get exactly what you want at the lowest price out there. Having a dream wedding on a budget is about changing your mindset, asking plenty of questions, shopping for the vendors that give you the greatest value at the lowest price, and ultimately making it all work. If it means a little extra work for you, it's worth it in the end if you save bundles of money, isn't it?

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