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Afternoon Despatch & Courier

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BIG DAY ON A BUDGET

With the rupee at an all-time low and prices steadily rising, don't spend your life savings on your wedding day. **Rhea Dhanbhoora & Priyanka Singh** get tips from experts in the industry to find out how to have the most special day of your life without emptying your bank account

Destination weddings, box invites, imported flowers and designer dresses may be the flavour of the season when it comes to weddings but all these things make it harder to deal with the depreciating rupee. You don't have to compromise on your dream wedding though. Follow these tips by a few experts so you can have your perfect décor, trousseau, jewellery, hairdo, invites and photographs without spending an exorbitant amount on them. Read on as we tell you how to plan the perfect budget wedding.

PLAN IT PROPERLY

Candice Pereira and Jarret D'Abreo are the cheerful duo behind Marry Me, wedding planners who see to everything to do with your wedding to make it the perfect day. You can get in touch with them by logging on to www.marrymeweddings.in. In the meantime, Candice gives us a few budget wedding planning tips:

- Consider having your wedding during off season. This way you can book the venue of your choice at a lower cost.
- Rope in your friends and family to help. Maybe you have a friend who is a DJ and can put together a song list for your mehendi that you can play off an iPod. Or maybe you have a friend who is a great speaker and can help comper your events.
- Get creative and spend time personalising the details, but put it together yourself. Make it a fun afternoon with your girlfriends to help make your save-the-date cards and assemble your giveaways.
- Think of unique venues. Maybe you have access to a lovely bungalow or garden space which would be perfect for one of your events. It also gives your guests a nice mix of venues between hotel ballrooms and private spaces.
- The honeymoon is all important, but you could plan a trip to a unique destination in India itself; there is so much to discover right here!

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Don't break the piggy bank trying to fund your wedding. See what experts are telling us about a budget day

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Afternoon

WOMAN'S WORLD

8hrs

4hrs

6hrs

48hrs

8hrs

12hrs

16hrs

48hrs

Pet Peeves

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PICTURE THIS

Photographer Stuti Sakhalkar is the girl behind the wedding photography company, The Cheesecake Project. She offers photography services for weddings, couple shoots and films. If you want a wedding album with candid shots and beautiful pictures, drop her an email at stuti@thecheesecakeproject.com. She gives us tips for budget photography planning:

- Assign responsibilities for the candid photographer as well as the photographer for documentation and the videographer. There is no point having 6-8 photographers all shooting the exact same thing.
- If your candid photographer is someone like me, who will be photographing every ritual and covering all relatives, then you do not need a documentation photographer for the wedding rituals. The documentation or regular photographer can be hired only for the reception-stage pictures. This is what I usually advise clients who give me full responsibilities of their wedding shoot.
- Do a photo-booth at fun events such as cocktails and sangeets. Have the photographer shoot only that instead of normal portraits of guests. This is a big hit with guests and also gives you something new to have in the album. This usually works out cheaper as the photographer doesn't have to work the room as much.
- For special shoots such as couple shoots, plan your shoot well with your photographer, with regards to outfit, location and time of day to avoid last minute hassles, costume colours clashing with the background location, harsh or low lighting and so on.
- Most importantly, if you like the work of a photographer/videographer and want them to cover your wedding, book them as early as possible to save money and also before they are booked by another client.

ADORN THE VENUE

Wedding decorator Nitinn Raichura from Perfect Décor tells us, "Quality will always score over quantity. Weddings of a lifetime can be achieved even on a tailor-made budget. It's often difficult for me to convince a client that a budget wedding doesn't mean compromising on quality. This year, with increased prices and with recession staring people in the face, there will be an impact on weddings. In fact the effect is already visible with fewer events and even some cancellations. Everyone is looking for a budget wedding." To organise budget décor, contact them at www.weddingdecorators.com. He gives us venue and décor tips to make planning on a budget easier:

- Opt for community halls, society compounds and school lawns instead of ballrooms and banquet halls. Keep the guest list to a minimum concerning the couple.



>> Candice (left) from Mary Me Wedding Planners will help you with everything from your wedding venue to beautiful table placements (above)

- If you are booking a premium venue, confirm all hidden expenses and overheads before you book the place.
- Confirm the venue eight months in advance to get a good deal.
- Organise pre-wedding events such as sangeet, mehndi and cocktails at home or in your society compounds/terrace. This way you can cut down on invitees and overall cost.
- For decorations, state your budget to the decorator and work out a plan together.
- Avoid expensive, imported flowers and stick to local varieties.

INVITE RIGHT

Your invites are an important part of your budget, but are sometimes forgotten because you send them out before. However, Nitinn from Perfect Décor says this step is important as well. He gives us some tips:

- Let it perform its basic function — to invite and guide the guest to the venue.
- Give the elaborate card a miss and stick to simple, elegant designs.
- E-cards are more popular these days.
- Call reminders are cheaper than cards.
- Give your number and email address so you and your guests can save on the cost of acceptance cards and postage.

TROUSSEAU TUSSLE

Brides often go overboard with their

trousseau and later repent spending a bomb on something that they will rarely wear again. Experts from Peppermint Diva (available at Ogaan, Aza, Fuel and Amaara stores) tell you how to tighten your purse strings while buying your outfit.

- Pre-plan the look that you want for all your functions — starting from the engagement ceremony, mehendi, to the day of your wedding. This keeps compulsive shopping at bay and you'll find that last minute shopping leads to overspending.
- While shopping for your trousseau, visit various exhibitions and store promotions to get a variety of options to choose from as per your budget.
- Pick up clothes in different styles as you can mix and match them instead of picking up 10 different outfits. This will allow you to experiment with your look.
- Don't follow trends blindly. A particular trend may be in fashion now, but down the line in a few years, it may not be and it will be just lying in your wardrobe. Always buy outfits which are classic and simple.
- Buy limited outfits for your trousseau and don't go overboard. After all, how many times are you going to wear that super heavy lehenga in the future?

JEWELS & STONES

While jewellery can be an investment, there are still chances of buying too much. Owner of jewellery brand Mirari (www.mirari.com) and jewellery designer Mira Gulati tells us how to save when you buy wedding trinkets.

- The cost is always the key factor to planning a wedding. While any bride would love to be decked in diamonds set in pure white or yellow gold, it is not always pocket-friendly. Especially when you are planning an inexpensive wedding. Instead of wearing several pieces of jewellery, work with one big statement piece.
- A bride should consider the style of her outfit and look for accessories that will complement it. Buy clothes with more embellishments, so even though you may be low on jewellery you will not lose your sparkle.
- Jewellery lasts for a lifetime, so make sure you pick pieces that you can wear for a long

time. Practicality and wearability are important, so brides should incorporate pieces that are not just for 'the day' but things they can wear all their life. For example, you can buy a polki set or a detachable multi-layered piece which can be worn later for different occasions.

- Instead of buying one huge necklace, buy three or four necklaces that can be worn together to look like a big piece. In the end you will have different jewellery pieces that you can use instead of being stuck with one really large piece.
- Jewellery is a long-term investment. Pick timeless designs instead of trendy pieces. If something is in vogue today, it might be out of style tomorrow. You do not want to keep reselling your diamonds or getting your gold reset often. You lose about 10% of the value every time you resell or exchange the pieces. In case you have an intricately designed gold piece, remember that a significant amount is lost when gold is melted down and then re-moulded.

FOR YOUR LOVELY LOCKS

Hair styling is another aspect that brides tend to overspend on. Get in touch with celebrity hairstylist Jawed Habib at www.jhairbeauty.com for a great wedding hairstyle. He gives us his tips to save yourself from spending too much on your locks:

- A bride can opt for a pre-bridal hair package before the wedding, which includes hair cutting, hair spa and colour or texture transformation. Wedding packages are mostly much more cost-effective than opting for these treatments separately.
- Using the right kind of shampoo, conditioner and styling products will help to maintain your hair and save on damage control treatments later. So, start taking care of your hair in advance.
- On your wedding day, an elegant, classy and glamorous updo with a brooch and accessories looks great and the style is not too expensive to do.
- For your reception, you can opt for an open hairstyle with volume, curls or straight look. All of these are inexpensive.
- Using buns, extensions, brooches and accessories helps in a great way to have fabulous wedding day hairstyle without the bride spending too much, so make good use of them.

WHERE'S THE FOOD?

Apart from discussions over how the bride and groom look, another talking point for guests is food at a wedding. Sarah Faad Dalvi from Bullet Biryani catering service, whips up delicious wedding food. Get in touch on www.facebook.com/BulletBiryani. She tells us how little things can prevent you from overspending on food.

- Apart from having vegetarian starters with potato or paneer, pick chicken instead of mutton ones. When you serve meat that not everyone might eat, it will go to waste.
- Give your caterer an approximate estimate of how many vegetarians and non-vegetarians you're expecting. That will save you a lot of your money.
- There's no point in preparing a dish which is tasty but too spicy for most of your guests as the food will go to waste. These are small things, but they matter a lot.
- Don't have an elaborate dessert counter if you are having a small wedding. After people have eaten their dinner, they have little space left for dessert. So, limit how much you order for dessert.
- These days, weddings have several starter counters. People are almost full by the time the main course arrives. Limit your starter spread if you don't want the main course to go to waste.



>> For great wedding pictures such as this one, get in touch with Stuti from The Cheesecake Project